



H is for Henna | ABC's of AAPIs

This lesson plan encourages students to look beyond the aesthetic of traditional art like hennas and dive into the history and meaning of cultural practices that they see in their world and take at face value.

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In partnership with the Asian American Advocacy Fund (AAAF), WQED Education took AAAF's ABC's of AAPIs coloring book project and created lesson plans for educators to use in the classroom to provide a creative activity and resource for AAPI Studies.

Time Allotment: 1 class period

Learning Objectives

- Learn about hennas
- Create a design of their own

Prep for Teachers

- Print enough copies of the coloring sheet and poem

Supplies

- "H is for Henna" coloring sheet
- Markers
- Paper
- Coloring utensils

Learning Activities

Henna or Mehndi, is the art of using the henna plant to paint on the body. It has been practiced in parts of India, Native South/American Indian, Africa, Egypt, and the Middle East for centuries.

1. Split students up into groups and assign each group a different thing to research (using reputable sources).
 - What is henna?
 - What is the history and significance of henna? - Research the history for the following cultures: India, Native South/American Indian, Africa, Egypt, and the Middle East.
2. Have students report out their findings to the class.
3. Next, look up some different henna designs to study. What design elements and imagery do they see? Ask students to see how the designs vary from culture to culture. This can be done individually or in small groups. Share out to the group.
4. Distribute copies of the coloring sheet and put students into small groups to read and analyze the poem.

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5. Have students write their own version of the poem based on their findings, their reflections.
6. Have students create their own henna/Mehndi designs by tracing their hand on a piece of paper.
7. Have students sketch their designs. Encourage students to incorporate traditional shapes and patterns.
8. Share their original designs as a class