

## Somali Ethnic Studies: Unit 2, Lesson 3

### Marriage in Somali Culture

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Subject:** Ethnic Studies

**Duration:** 55 minutes

**Essential Question:** How do Somali marriage customs reflect the values of family, culture, and community, and how do they compare to marriage practices in other cultures? How have traditions changed or stayed the same through immigration?

#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain how Somali marriages serve as a bond between individuals, families, and clans.
- Students will be able to describe the differences between traditional arranged marriages in rural areas and modern dating practices (“shukaansi”) in urban Somali culture.
- Students will be able to define the terms “yarad” and “meher” and explain their significance in Somali marriage customs.
- Students will be able to explain the role of Islamic law in Somali marriage practices including divorce, retention, and the “*iddah*” period.

#### Standards:

- **Ethnic Studies**

**Identity:** Analyze the ways power and language construct the social identities of race, religion, geography, ethnicity, and gender. Apply these understandings to one’s own social identities and other groups living in Minnesota, centering those whose stories and histories have been marginalized, erased, or ignored.

**Benchmark:** Describe and analyze examples of how religions develop and change over time in response to differing social, historical, and political contexts, including, but not limited to Shamanism/Animism, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, **Islam**, Indigenous religious traditions in Africa and the Americas, and African diasporic religions. **(9.5.23.6)**

#### Materials Needed:

- [Google slides](#) for this lesson.
- Projector and screen for presentation slides
- Whiteboard and markers
- Handout of key vocabulary terms and definitions
- Access to computers or tablets for additional research (optional)
- Somali Marriage [crossword puzzle](#)

**Lesson Outline: Marriage in Somali Culture**

*Note: “DOK” throughout refers to Dept of Knowledge questions (Level 1: recall; Level 2: skills and concepts; Level 3: strategic thinking; Level 4: extended thinking)*

Estimated Time	Content	Materials
10 mins.	<p><b>Introduction (“Ignite”)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch the 2-minute (embedded) reel and ask the essential question: <i>How do Somali marriage customs reflect the values of family, culture, and community, and how do they compare to marriage practices in other cultures?</i></li> <li>● Have a student read aloud the learning targets for the lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can explain how Somali marriages serve as a bond between not just individuals, but also between families and clans.</li> <li>● I can describe the differences between traditional arranged marriages in rural areas and modern dating practices (Shukaansi) in urban Somali culture</li> <li>● I can define the terms “Yarad” and “Meher” and explain their significance in Somali marriage customs.</li> <li>● I can discuss the role of Islamic law in Somali marriage practices, including the concepts of divorce, retention, and the three-month grace period (Iddah).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Briefly discuss the significance of marriage in Somali culture and its role in societal structure.</p>	<p>Slide #1</p> <p>Slide #2</p> <p>Slide #3 Slide \$3</p>
10 mins.	<p><b>Vocabulary Pair and Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have students turn to another student nearby and look up key terms: <i>Xidid, Yarad, Sooryo, Meher, Divorce, Iddah, Raja,tu.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Slide #5</p>

DOK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then share <a href="#">the vocabulary list</a>.</li> <li>• Engage students in a quick discussion on how these terms may be similar to or differ from marriage practices in their own cultures.</li> </ul> <p>For extension, or homework, have students complete a <a href="#">crossword puzzle</a> using these terms.</p>	
15 mins.          DOK 3  DOK 3	<p><b>Traditional/Rural Marriage Practices (“Chunk”)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the marriage process in rural areas.</li> <li>• Discuss arranged marriages and the role of families.</li> <li>• Outline the steps: initial contact, agreement on the wedding date, and the payment of <i>Yarad</i>.</li> <li>• Highlight the significance of the bond formed between clans and families (<i>Xidid</i>).</li> <li>• Ask students: What is similar or different from what you are familiar with?</li> <li>• Ask whether they think there are differences between rural and urban weddings in their traditions.</li> </ul>	Slide #6
10 mins.	<p><b>Modern/Urban Marriage Practices (“Chew”)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss urban marriage practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Explain how couples date (<i>Shukaansi</i>) and express their intentions to marry.</li> <li>◦ Compare and contrast urban practices with traditional rural marriages.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Highlight that essential steps remain consistent, including family involvement.</li> </ul>	Slide #8
5 mins.	<p><b>Divorce Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the divorce process in Somali culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Discuss how a husband can initiate a divorce and the significance of the <i>Iddah</i> period.</li> <li>◦ Explain the concept of retaining a divorced wife (<i>Raja,tu</i>).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use examples to illustrate how divorce practices may reflect societal values.</li> </ul>	Slide #9
5 mins.	<b>Closing (“Review”)</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Facilitate a class discussion on how Somali marriage customs reflect broader cultural values.</li><li>● Encourage students to consider how these practices compare to those in other cultures they are familiar with.</li></ul>	
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**Assessment:**

- Participation in class discussions and activities, using the “[Do Your Part](#)” rubric.
- Completion of a short reflection assignment where students can express their thoughts on what they learned about Somali marriage customs and their significance – particularly how they have seen traditions change or remain the same in their family’s history and/or immigration process.

**Extension/Differentiation:**

- **Basic:** Provide additional support or resources for students who may struggle with vocabulary or cultural concepts.
- **Basic:** Have students complete the Somali marriage terms [crossword puzzle](#).
- **More Challenging:** Encourage students to research marriage practices in another culture and share their findings.