

RETHINKING IRAN WITH YOUR CLASSROOM

WOMEN,
LIFE,
FREEDOM

*DISCUSSING #MAHSAAMINI
AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN
THE CLASSROOM*



RETHINKING IRAN

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Using trauma-informed approaches, this learning module is intended to equip high school teachers with the tools to engage in guided discussions about the #WomenLifeFreedom uprisings in Iran, focusing on:

- » Empowering students and preventing the harmful impacts of retraumatization and vicarious trauma.
- » Engaging students in a safe way that encourages self-expression and prevents developing harmful self-perception.
- » Providing academically credible and accessible content to prevent misinformation.
- » How issues of gender, ethnicity, and religion intersect with regards to Mahsa (Jina) Amini and the demonstrations in Iran.
- » Introducing the #WomenLifeFreedom movement and forefronting the role of feminism in transnational activism.

Some materials may require subscriptions for full access. Check with your school's librarian to see if your school has access for materials that may have limited visibility.

PREPARATION

Start Class with a 5 Minute Impulse Check // Mindfulness Practice

- » Body Scan: [guided audio](#) and [instructions](#).

"It's Ok" Exercise // Healthy Reminders

It's ok

to not know — sometimes you may not know what to say.

It's ok

to feel before you react — sometimes we may feel pressured to respond.

It's ok

to be tired — take breaks.

It's ok

to take care of yourself — care is at the center of any social movement.

Creating Brave Space to Talk About Social Movements // Sharing Space

- » Begin by collectively creating a community agreement for the conversation:
 - » Ex: Agreeing to lean into compassion and understanding.
 - » Ex: [Saying](#) "ouch" if someone says something that hurts you and giving space to your feelings. [Saying](#) "oops" and apologizing if your intention did not match your impact.
- » Give students time to understand how they feel safest participating. Be mindful that some students may be facing security risks.
- » Use [silent signals](#) for anyone who prefers non-verbal communication.
- » Incorporate intermittent [journaling](#) time so students can reflect and process their emotions.
- » Consider using the [Harkness Method](#) to help [facilitate classroom discussions](#) using these [resources](#).

CURRICULUM 1: INTRODUCTION TO “#WOMENLIFEFREEDOM”

Background Information

- »» [“No Going Back”: Gen Z at the Forefront of Protests in Iran](#)

In-Class Content

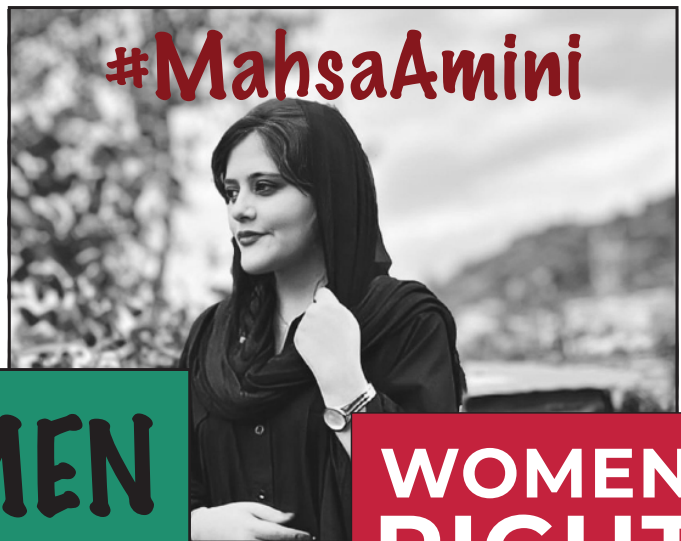
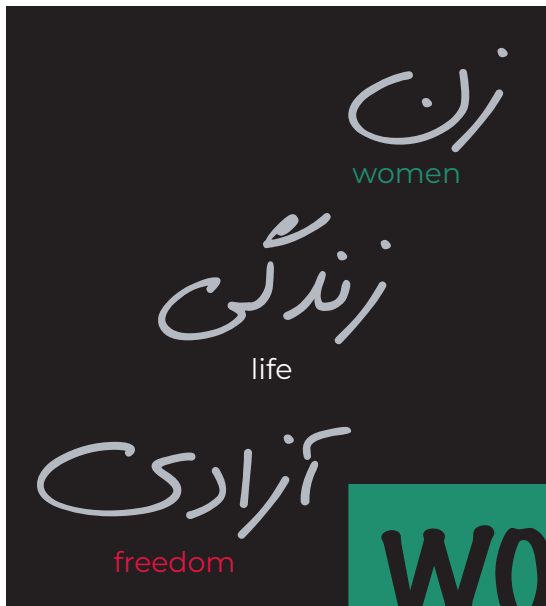
- »» [How Iran’s Gen Z Is Leading Protests in the Streets and Online](#)
- »» [Democracy Now Interview on School Girls Confronting Patriarchal System](#)
- »» [Democracy Now Interview on the Kurdish Slogan “Women, Life, Freedom”](#)

Discussion Topics

- »» What started the #WomenLifeFreedom movement?
- »» What did you think “Women, Life, Freedom” means and what are the roots of this phrase?
- »» What demands are being voiced?
- »» How are people showing up in the digital space vs. physical space?
- »» What roles do Gen Z and women have in this movement?

Artist in Training

- »» Art — learn about the [role of art](#) in the [#WomenLifeFreedom](#) and [#MeToo](#) movements.
- »» Create a banner, slogan, or stencil that you believe represents a movement that is personal to you.



CURRICULUM 2: THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Background Information

- » [How Iran's Hijab Protest Movement Became So Powerful](#)
- » [Do Muslim Women Need Saving?](#)

In-Class Content

- » [History of Iranian Feminist Activism and Hijab Mandates](#)
- » [For Iranian Women, the Uprising Was a Long Time Coming](#)
- » [Listening to Women in Revolutionary Tehran](#)
- » ["Woman, Life, Freedom": Iran's Protests Are a Rebellion for Bodily Autonomy](#)

Women Life Freedom Works Cited

Discussion Questions

- » What does bodily autonomy mean?
- » Muslim women have protested in India, France, and Switzerland against bans on the hijab. How do these protests overlap with the #WomenLifeFreedom movement in Iran?
- » What does it mean for bodily autonomy when men protest alongside women? What should be, or is, the role of men in struggles for bodily autonomy?
- » Many global movements are led by the most marginalized populations. What connections can you draw between #WomenLifeFreedom, #MeToo, and #BlackLivesMatter?
- » Music — reflect on [Freedom Songs](#) that became anthems during the Civil Rights movement and the [meaning](#) of the song [Baraye](#) by Shervin Hajipour.
- » Write song lyrics or a poem about a cause that matters to you.



INSPIRING MINDFULNESS // AFTER CARE

- » Conclude the discussion with a [5 Senses Grounding Technique](#).
- » Lean into closure activities that allow for joy in addition to a greater range of student responses.
- » Offer local mental health resources for students who may need extra support.

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