DEMOGRAPHICS
Demographics about Muslim Americans are often hard to come by, as the U.S. Census is forbidden by law from asking about religious belief and affiliation. For that reason, numbers cited for the total number of Muslims in the U.S. vary greatly. Some estimates are as high as 6-7 million. A 2007 survey by the Pew Research Center puts the number at 2.35 million Muslim Americans, which is 0.7% of the total population. 77% are U.S. citizens.

AMERICAN-BORN MUSLIMS make up 35% of the Muslim American population, with African Americans composing 20% of the total American-born Muslim population.

FOREIGN-BORN MUSLIMS (65% of the total Muslim American population)
- 24% are from Arab countries
- 18% are from South Asia
- 8% are from Iran

MUSLIM AMERICANS COMPARED TO THE GENERAL US POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Muslim Americans</th>
<th>General Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes Arabs and Europeans)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/mixed</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Newsweek magazine (2007) “Muslim Americans represent the most affluent, integrated, politically engaged Muslim community in the Western world.”


INSTITUTIONS
According to a preliminary survey by Ihsan Bagby cited in Time magazine’s August 30, 2010 issue, there are about 1,900 sites operating as mosques in the United States, ranging from small storefronts and houses to large buildings with community centers. Additionally, of the hundreds of thousands of non-profits in the United States, hundreds of these are operated by Muslims; they include local and national charitable or relief, social service, advocacy, arts, cultural, educational, outreach and political or advocacy organizations. There are also thousands of Muslim American groceries and butchers, restaurants and other retail stores.

ENSELAVED MUSLIM AFRICANS
Beginning in the 1500’s and continuing into the 1800’s, Muslims made up a significant percentage of the West African slaves who were brought to North, South, and Central America during the centuries of the Atlantic Slave trade. Many of these African Muslim slaves maintained their Muslim practices.
despite pressure to abandon them. While Muslim slaves were a minority, with estimates ranging from 10 – 30% of the total slave population, they were a distinctive minority. They often possessed some education, came from cosmopolitan backgrounds, and possessed a high sense of self-esteem, making them an important leadership element in the American slave population. Additional information can be found at Intersections International (listed on the Curriculum Resources page).

**HISTORY OF MUSLIM IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S.**

The earliest Muslim immigrants came between the late 1800’s and early 1900’s from the area then known as Greater Syria (modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan and parts of Turkey and Iraq). Most came for economic reasons and worked as laborers or merchants.

With the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire, and the period of Western colonial rule in the Middle East, a new wave of immigrants arrived. Many of the new Muslim immigrants came as a result of political as well as economic reasons, with many joining relatives who had arrived earlier in the United States.

Following World War II, additional Muslims came to the United States, many from countries outside of the Middle East, including the former Yugoslavia, Albania and the former Soviet Union; they often came to escape religious or political repression. Immigration also accelerated from India and Pakistan after the 1947 partition of the Subcontinent, with many members of former elite families coming to attain more education and technical training than was available in their countries of origin.

The change in immigration laws in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson dramatically increased the number of Muslims immigrating to the U.S., primarily for higher education. Some of the best and the brightest students in the Middle East and Asia came to this country to pursue higher education, mainly in the fields of engineering, science and medicine. After graduation, these students became professionals and many became leaders in their fields.

**PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIMS**

According to a 2010 Gallup World Religion Survey, Americans are more than twice as likely to express prejudice against Muslims as they are against Christians, Jews and Buddhists. Nearly two-thirds of Americans said they have little or no knowledge of Islam, yet a majority have an unfavorable opinion of Islam. According to the poll, just over half of the respondents said they felt no prejudice against Muslims, while 43% acknowledged having at least "a little" prejudice against them. According to Gallup:

- 53% of Americans have an unfavorable view of Islam
- 47% disagree with the statement that most Muslims around the world are accepting of others from different races
- 81% disagree with the statement that most Muslims believe that women and men should have equal rights

An August 2010 *Time* magazine article found:

- 55% of Americans believe that U.S. Muslims are patriotic Americans
- 46% of respondents believed that Islam is more likely than other faiths to encourage violence against nonbelievers
- 35% oppose a mosque in their neighborhood
- 24% of respondents believe that President Obama is a Muslim; President Obama identifies as Christian

The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that in 2001, after September 11, the FBI recorded a 17-fold growth in anti-Muslim hate crimes.