

# e-Edition Plus

A current events feature for teaching with electronic editions.

By Peter Landry

## Reaching out to Muslims by reaching out to students

In his first trip overseas as president, Barack Obama made a point of visiting the Muslim nation of Turkey.

As he reached out to the Muslim world with that visit, the President also made a point of meeting with students in Turkey's famous city of Istanbul.

Both moves were planned to show that the President wants to write "a new chapter of American engagement" with people who follow Islam, the world's second most widely practiced religion after Christianity.

By meeting with university students, Obama also wanted to show a commitment to engaging young people, who in the future will determine whether today's efforts lead to better relationships between countries.

"We can't afford to talk past one another, to focus only on our differences, or to let the walls of mistrust go up around us," Obama told the students.

"... That's where young people can be very helpful, because I think old people, we get into habits and we become suspicious and we carry grudges. ... Young people, they can get rid of some of the old baggage and the old suspicions."

Doing that, he said, will require breaking down stereotypes in both America and the Muslim world.

"I know that the stereotypes of the United States are out there," he said, "and I know that many of them are informed not by direct exchange or dialogue but by television shows and movies and misinformation.

"Sometimes it suggests that America has become selfish and crass or that we don't care about the world beyond us.

I'm here to tell you that's not the country that I know, and it's not the country that I love."

### Building partnerships

Since taking office, President Obama has said repeatedly he wants the United States to reach out and connect with Muslim nations, even those like Iran, whose policies the U.S. opposes.

On his trip to Turkey, the President made headlines by telling Turkey's government assembly – and the world – that the United States "is not and never will be at war with Islam."

"Our partnership with the Muslim world," he added, "is critical in rolling back a violent ideology" that has led

some extremist Muslims to embrace terrorism. Extremism, Obama said, is something "that people of all faiths reject" because "the future must belong to those who create, not those who destroy."

### Internet and more

As he did in his campaign for president, Obama challenged the Turkish students to use technology to break down barriers and solve problems.

"Your generation has come of age in a world that's been marked by change that's both dramatic and difficult," he said. "While you are empowered through an unprecedented access to information and invention, you're also confronted with big challenges."

"The world will be what you make of it," the President told the students. "You can choose to build new bridges instead of building new walls.

"If we don't reach high, then we won't make any progress."

Sipa Press Photo



**When he met with Turkish students, President Obama said that "if we don't reach high, then we won't make any progress" in efforts to engage other nations.**

# Talk About the News

- In recent years America's relationship with Muslims around the world has been strained. But from Iraq to Iran to Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia, Muslim concerns are connected to American concerns. As a class, talk about President Obama's pledge to engage Muslim nations in new ways. What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks? What approaches do you think would be the most effective?

Learning Standard: Engaging peers in constructive conversation about matters of public concern by clarifying issues, considering opposing views, applying democratic values, anticipating consequences and working toward making decisions.

# Explore Your e-Edition

- The concerns of Muslim nations range from negotiating peace between Israel and the Palestinians in the Middle East to the amount of oil produced by Saudi Arabia to ending the civil war in the Darfur region of Africa's Sudan. In teams or pairs, research Muslim nations of the world. Then find a story about one of them in the e-Edition and summarize for the class why this nation is in the news.

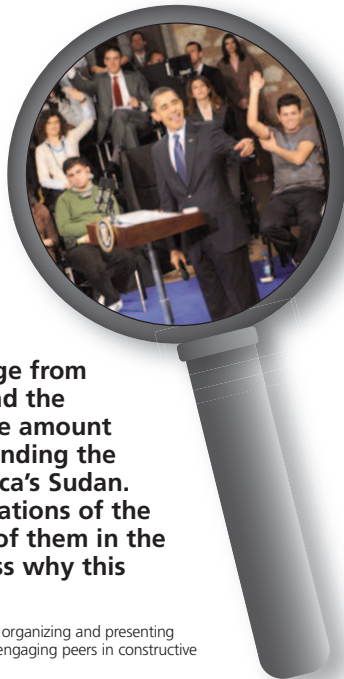
Learning Standards: Acquiring information from multiple sources; organizing and presenting the information; interpreting the significance of the information; engaging peers in constructive conversation about topics of interest or importance.

- Islam is the second most widely practiced religion in the world, after Christianity. From actions of the Taliban in Pakistan to the influence of Islamic leaders in Iran, religion often affects the news in Muslim nations. In the e-Edition, find stories involving religion in Muslim nations. Pick one and write a paragraph describing the issue and what you think will happen.

Learning Standards: Reading and writing fluently; planning, drafting, revising and editing texts; stating an issue clearly as a question of public policy, tracing the origins of the issue, analyzing various perspectives people bring to the issue.

- By meeting with students in Turkey, President Obama sought to engage young people in the effort to improve relations between America and the Muslim world. In the e-Edition, find an example of young people getting involved in an issue. Write a paragraph describing a benefit of their involvement.

Responding to a variety of oral, visual, written and electronic texts by making connections to students' personal lives and the lives of others; writing fluently for multiple purposes.



# How Well Did You Read?

Understanding what you read is a skill that will help you all through life. Review the story about President Obama and Muslims by answering the questions below.

1. According to the story, the students President Obama met in Istanbul were which of the following:
  - A. Elementary students.
  - B. High school students.
  - C. University students.
  - D. Middle school students
2. According to the story, which of the following did President Obama say is a source of stereotypes about the United States:
  - A. Television.
  - B. The news media.
  - C. Movies.
  - D. A and C.
3. Islam is:
  - A. The religion of Muslims.
  - B. The second most widely practiced religion.
  - C. A and B.
  - D. None of the above.
4. According to the story, which of the following is a nation whose policies the United States opposes:
  - A. Iran.
  - B. Turkey.
  - C. Istanbul.
  - D. The Middle East.
5. Which of the following did Barack Obama say is a danger of the way adult "old people" think:
  - A. They get into habits.
  - B. They become suspicious.
  - C. They carry grudges.
  - D. All of the above.