

If you only have 15 minutes ...

The mudhif (/muh-DEEFF), an ancient town hall constructed from reeds, is a building of strong cultural importance to the Iraqi people. The mudhif symbolizes Iraq's deep cultural heritage with ties to the world's oldest recorded civilization, the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was located in the southern part of modern-day Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It is often called the 'Cradle of Civilization'.

On your own, or with a small group, answer the following questions:

- 1) The article reports that **4000 (Total)** Iraqi Americans live in Houston and only approximately **7 (Value)** of that population are 'Marsh Arabs'. Calculate what percentage of Houstonian Arab Americans are Marsh Arabs. (Formula: **Value** divided by **Total** multiplied by 100 { $V/T * 100 =$ } *Use a calculator if necessary.*¹
- 2) Considering your answer from Question 1 along with information provided in the article, why do you think such a small percentage of the Arab population in Houston would find it important and comforting to build a mudhif? *Answer in 1-2 complete sentences. Use a highlighter to highlight context in the text that supports your answer.*²

When you/your group are finished, prepare to present your answers to the class during a whole group discussion.

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

¹ 0.175%

² Answers will vary but could include that the mudhif is a symbol of Marsh Arabs' homeland (In December of 2023, building a mudhif was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List), it is a reminder of their ancient heritage (The mudhif is a 5,000-year-old structure and part of the legacy of the Sumerians. It gives insights into an ancient society that has succeeded in sustaining itself but is threatened with extinction.)