

ARAB and MENA Identity Data Collection Options

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Below are three options for collecting identity data from Arab and Middle East or North African (MENA) communities—developed by an interdisciplinary team of scholars in conjunction with ACCESS, the largest Arab American community non-profit. All options should include either a write in option or, if more feasible, check boxes for the top six examples within each category. The goal is to more accurately capture the way people identity themselves.

OPTION 1 (Streamlined/Combined Question):

This option is informed by the U.S. Census question that combines race and ethnicity, tested in the 2015 National Content Test. This option represents a slightly modified Form G (Appendix G-4 in the document [2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa](#)).

What is the person’s race or origin?

Mark all boxes that apply AND print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.

Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. _____

Asian – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc. _____

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. _____

Middle Eastern or North African– Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc. _____

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. _____

Some other race of origin – Print race or origin. _____

Multi-Racial – Print race(s) or origin(s). _____

OPTION 2 (The Separate Ethnicity and Race Option)

For this option, a MENA ethnicity question was simply added that mirrors the Hispanic ethnicity question used in most major surveys. The standard OMB race categories will remain the same. This option is adapted from Form A in the document titled “2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa,” U.S. Census.

Is the person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

*Mark one or more boxes **AND** print origins.*

- No**, not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin
- Yes**, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes**, Puerto Rican
- Yes**, Cuban
- Yes**, another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin – Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.

Is the person of Middle Eastern or North African origin?

*Mark one box **AND** print origins.*

- No**, not of Middle Eastern or North African Origin
- Yes** – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.

What is the person’s race?

*Mark one or more boxes **AND** print origins.*

- White** – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.
- Black or African Am.** – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native** – Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Asian** – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.
- Some other race of origin** – Print race or origin.
- Multi-Racial** – Print race(s) or origin(s).

This option allows for an examination of ethnicity and race independently. This may be reasonable and necessary for certain research questions and institutions interested in differences by race and ethnicity. MENA ethnicities should be removed from the White category examples to prevent leading participants to a particular racial group.

OPTION 3 (Add a MENA Category to an Existing Race/Ethnicity Question)

This option entails adding a MENA box to an existing data collection instrument. The MENA box will be structured according to the format of the existing instrument.

Suggested language and formats include:

Middle Eastern or North African or Arab – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.

If the form that is used includes MENA groups as examples in the White racial category, be sure to remove them if using this option.

These collection options were designed collaboratively by affiliates of the Center for Arab Narratives, a program of ACCESS and the Arab American National Museum.

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