

## UNIT 2

# THE ART OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by Zaynab Abdi

**After completing this lesson, students will be able to:**

- respond to text through discussion, short stories and plays
- ask and answer simple and higher-order questions to guide/assess reading (e.g., why is the author saying this right now? Why did the author choose this word? How is this different from what I read somewhere else?)
- give an informed personal and analytical response to a descriptive and informative text
- reading to analyse descriptive/argumentative essays
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- reading to analyse descriptive/argumentative essays
- distinguish between the connotative and denotative meanings of words, both similar and dissimilar denotations and their appropriate use in a variety of writing and texts
- demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings;
  - a. interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyse their role in the text
  - b. analyse nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations



**Main Theme:** Entrepreneurship

**Sub Theme:**

- Entrepreneurship-Role in a society.
- Success stories of entrepreneurs
- women empowerment

### Pre-Reading Questions

- What do you already know or assume about Muslim women's entrepreneurship?
- Narrate a historical example of successful women in business, especially from the Muslim community.
- What are your expectations regarding the challenges Muslim women might face in starting and running their businesses?

## The Art of Muslim Women's Entrepreneurship

by Zaynab Abdi

When I think about women in business, I always go back to the Muslim leader Hazrat Khadija (رضي الله عنها). She was the first wife of Hazrat Muhammad Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as well as a successful businesswoman who controlled one of the most important caravan trades in her time. She was knowledgeable, respected, and business-savvy.

Although there were many obstacles for women business owners during that time, Hazrat Khadija (رضي الله عنها) shows us that achieving financial independence and self-sustenance is a real possibility.

Today, Muslim women all around the world are starting their own businesses. We see it at the Karmel Mall, where many of these women are not considered "legitimate" business owners, but they bring their own business acumen, ambitions, and successes that we can learn from. As female entrepreneurship grows, it's important to appreciate the achievements of our own community in business ownership, financial independence, and beyond.

Since I was very young I dreamed of owning my own business. Watching so many Somali women back home in Yemen and in the U.S start businesses and succeed motivated me to consider starting my own. But the question was: how?

I was so excited to plan and host one of Reviving Sisterhood's Economic Empowerment events for Muslim women, where the topic was How to Start a Business. As I thought about my

### While Reading Questions:

- ❓ How did Hazrat Khadija (رضي الله عنها) inspire the author in the context of women in business?
- ❓ What obstacles did Hazrat Khadija (رضي الله عنها) face during her time as a businesswoman?

### Teacher's Point



Hold a discussion on the given pre-reading questions for reading readiness.



business idea, I came to the session with lots of questions. What are the first steps to opening a small business? How will you know when you're successful? How do you manage failure? The event speakers offered so much experience, advice, and wisdom.

Anisa Haji started her own business fighting the skin-lightening industry, where dark-skinned women are always told that they aren't beautiful unless they're "Fair & Lovely." Anisa's skincare products are aimed at caring for melanated skin and inspiring Black and Brown women to appreciate their natural beauty.

Annie Qaiser's story is another example of passion guiding entrepreneurship. Her business is about embracing her South Asian heritage and its healing traditions in order to create natural wellness products. I loved learning about Anisa's and Annie's businesses. To see their creativity and their business outcomes was so impressive. Sisters who attended the event were adding their experiences, giving advice, and asking questions along the way.

One of the things that Anisa said was: "Remember what motivates you to start a business. What is the spark that pushes you toward entrepreneurship, and what is your end goal?" These questions are important in keeping business owners aligned with their intentions. Although we want to earn money and become financially successful, what often motivates an entrepreneur the most is a personal mission or passion. Especially for Muslim women business owners, community, awareness, changing narratives, or giving back may be just as important as profit. And that is what I call the art of entrepreneurship.

I had to ask myself, beyond starting a business, what do I really want to accomplish? What are my entrepreneurial goals and dreams? I realized that I am most interested in getting my own food truck so I can cook Yemeni food in Minnesota and introduce my Yemeni culture to my fellow Minnesotans. The thing that motivates me is my love for sharing a meal and connecting with people. I love cooking for others and building community over a warm meal, and I want to do that through this business. My next step after this event is to talk to owners of restaurants or food trucks so I can learn more about their journeys and the steps that I need to take to start my business. I am planning to find a small group of people from the office that I can cook for from my home and get feedback before starting big.

I encourage every Muslim woman to think about how their passions and their talents align and how they can turn that into a business.

We've been taught that a business market is a competitive place that we should stay away from, but there are so many examples from our own communities that show us the possibilities of overcoming business challenges.

We see women entrepreneurs develop a sustainable income from another source where they can help their family and their community. We need to follow the lead of these women and start our own businesses. Even if your business starts small or experiences failure, you are still uplifting yourself and your family financially, and you are becoming the next example of an entrepreneur for the next generation.

#### While Reading Questions

- What motivates the author to consider starting her own business?
- Who are Anisa Haji and Annie Qaiser, and what are their respective businesses focused on?
- What does Anisa emphasize about motivation in entrepreneurship, and why is it significant?

#### While Reading Questions

- How does the author plan to align her passion for cooking Yemeni food with her entrepreneurial goals?
- What message or advice does the author offer to Muslim women regarding entrepreneurship and community?



### About the Writer

As Leadership Development Coordinator, Zaynab Abdi supports Reviving Sisterhood's leadership programming and helped develop Economic Empowerment series to increase financial literacy and build wealth among Muslim women. She is also an advocate for girls' education and spoke at the United Nations about the importance of educating girls in countries where they are disadvantaged.



<https://www.revivingsisterhood.org/expressions/zaynab-abdi-entrepreneurship>



### Post-Reading Questions

- Reflect on the idea that motivation in entrepreneurship often stems from personal mission or passion. What motivates you personally, and how could it relate to your own entrepreneurial aspirations?
- Consider the notion of the "Art of Entrepreneurship" as discussed by the author. What do you think this means, and how does it apply to the examples provided in the text?



### Glossary

Words	Pronunciations	Meanings
entrepreneurship	/ˌɒn.trə.prəˈnɜːʃɪp/	the activity of setting up and running a business, typically with a creative or innovative idea.
businesswoman	/ˈbɪz.nɪsˌwʊm.ən/	a woman who is actively engaged in managing and operating her own business.
caravan	/ˈkær.ə.væn/	a group of travelers, especially merchants or pilgrims, journeying together for safety and mutual support.
financial independence	/faiˈnæn.jəl/ /ˌm.drɪˈpen.dəns/	the ability to support oneself financially without relying on others for income or financial assistance.
acumen	/ˈæk.jə.mən/	the ability to make good judgments and quick decisions, typically in a specific area, such as business.
ambitions	/æmˈbɪʃ.ən/	strong desires or aspirations to achieve specific goals or objectives.
empowerment	/ɪmˈpaʊə.mənt/	the process of giving individuals or groups the authority and means to make decisions and take control of their own lives.

skincare products	/ˈskɪn,keər/ prɒd.ʌkt/	products designed and used for maintaining or improving the condition of the skin, such as creams, lotions, and cleansers.
south Asian heritage	/saʊθ/ /ˈæf.ɪ.kən/ /ˈher.ɪ.tɪdʒ/	cultural and historical traditions, customs, and values associated with the region of South Asia, which includes countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
wellness products	/ˈwel.nəs/ prɒd.ʌkt/	products intended to promote physical and mental well-being, often through natural or holistic means.
community	/kəˈmjʊː.nə.ti/	a group of people living in the same area or sharing common interests, often providing support and a sense of belonging.
narratives	/ˈnær.ə.tɪv/	stories or accounts that describe events, experiences, or a series of connected events.
passion	/ˈpæʃ.ən/	a strong and intense enthusiasm or interest in something, often driving one's actions and choices.
food truck	/fuːd/ /trʌk/	a mobile restaurant on wheels that serves and sells food to customers at various locations.
yemeni culture	/ˈjem.ə.ni/ /ˈkʌl.tʃər/	the customs, traditions, and way of life associated with the people of Yemen, a country in the Middle East.
restaurant	/ˈres.tər.ɒnt/	an establishment where meals are prepared and served to customers in exchange for money.
competitive	/kəmˈpet.ɪ.tɪv/	involving or characterized by rivalry or the pursuit of success in a challenging environment.
sustainable income	/səˈsteɪ.nə.bəl/ /ˈɪŋ.kʌm/	earnings or financial resources that can be maintained over time without significant depletion or harm to resources.
uplifting	/ʌpˈlɪf.tɪŋ/	positively influencing or improving one's own situation or the situation of others, often in terms of financial or emotional well-being.



## Reading and Critical Thinking

- Q 1. Who is Hazrat Khadija (ؓ) and what role did she play in business during her time?
- Q 2. What motivates the author, Zaynab Abdi, to consider starting her own business?
- Q 3. According to Anisa, what is important for entrepreneurs to remember when starting a business?



- Q 4. What is Zaynab Abdi's personal entrepreneurial goal, and how does it reflect her passion?
- Q 5. How does the author encourage Muslim women to approach entrepreneurship in the text?
- Q 6. Why does the author believe it's essential for Muslim women to start their own businesses, even if they start small or face failures?
- Q 7. How do the stories of Anisa Haji and Annie Qaiser challenge stereotypes or cultural norms about beauty and wellness?
- Q 8. What are some key takeaways from the text that you find inspiring or insightful for aspiring entrepreneurs, especially Muslim women?
- Q 9. Can you identify any additional questions or areas of interest that arose for you as you read the text?



## Oral Communication

### 1. Group Discussion

- Discuss the topic "Entrepreneurial Motivation" or "Role Models in Business" in groups following the conventions of group discussion as guided by the teacher.

#### Instructions for Teachers

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Assign each group a specific topic from the text, such as "Entrepreneurial Motivation" or "Role Models in Business."
- Have each group discuss their assigned topic, summarize key points and share their own thoughts and experiences related to it.
- Encourage active participation, use of clear and concise language.

### 2. Role-Playing

- Take up different entrepreneur roles with the guidance of teacher and practice effective communication in business contexts. Discuss and choose scenarios for the particular role you choose.

#### Instructions for Teachers

- Create scenarios related to entrepreneurship and business ownership based on the text.
- Assign participants different roles, such as an aspiring entrepreneur, a mentor, or an investor.
- Have participants engage in role-play conversations where they discuss business ideas, seek advice, or negotiate partnerships.
- This activity helps participants practice effective communication in business contexts.

### 3. Interview Activity

- Conduct a mock interview of a successful Business Woman (role played by a student) about her career's strengths and weaknesses with a pre crafted set of questions.

### Instructions for Teachers

- Pair participants and assign one person as the interviewer and the other as the interviewee.
- The interviewee should take on the role of one of the entrepreneurs mentioned in the text (e.g., Anisa Haji or Annie Qaiser).
- The interviewer asks questions related to the entrepreneur's journey and business, and the interviewee responds in character.



## Vocabulary and Grammar

A hyphen (-) joins two words to have one meaning. Use hyphens in writing as compound nouns, verbs, and adjectives. For example: Not-so-pretty, Run-down, Editor-in-chief, Up-to-date, Bell-like, Fifty-one, Anti-nuclear.

### Exercise 1: Hyphen Use

Identify whether the following sentences require hyphens or not. If they do, place the hyphen(s) in the correct position.

- She is a well known author.
- The two year old toddler is very energetic.
- His computer skills are top notch.
- I bought a brand new car yesterday.
- The restaurant offers gluten free options.

### Exercise 2: Hyphenated Nouns and Adjectives

Fill in the blanks with the correct hyphenated nouns or adjectives:

- The \_\_\_\_\_ was decorated for the holiday season.
- My \_\_\_\_\_ is full of childhood memories.
- We attended a \_\_\_\_\_ conference on technology.
- She's a \_\_\_\_\_ writer known for her suspense novels.
- The school organized a \_\_\_\_\_ for charity.

### Exercise 3: Words Ending in "-ough"

Complete each sentence with the correct word ending in "-ough" from the given options:

- The weather outside is very \_\_\_\_\_ today. (rough/tough)
- I can't believe you ate the whole pizza! You have a big \_\_\_\_\_. (enough)
- The boat sailed smoothly through the \_\_\_\_\_ water. (plough)
- We'll need to work \_\_\_\_\_ this problem together. (through)
- He's trying to \_\_\_\_\_ the difficult math equation. (bough)



### Exercise 4: Creating Hyphenated Phrases

Create hyphenated phrases using the word "high" in different contexts. For example: "high-pitched."

- A \_\_\_\_\_ mountain
- A \_\_\_\_\_ school
- A \_\_\_\_\_ jump
- A \_\_\_\_\_ tide
- A \_\_\_\_\_ five

### Exercise 5: Hyphen Use in Compound Adjectives

Rewrite the following sentences, adding hyphens to create compound adjectives where needed:

- She is a woman of twenty years old.
- They live in a small sized house.
- The project requires a lot of time consuming research.
- He has a part time job and a full time commitment.
- The story was set in the late evening hours.

### Denotative Meanings

Denotation is the literal meaning of a word. It's the definition you would find in the dictionary. For example, if you were to look up the word "proud" in the dictionary, a typical entry would read, "having or showing self-respect or self-esteem". That's the denotation of the word.

### Connotative Meanings

Connotation refers to the emotions or ideas that you think of when you read or hear a word. Take the word "proud" again. While it has a clear-cut denotation, the word can have different connotations for different people. If you hear the word proud, you might associate it with negative meanings, such as egotistical, show-off, etc. It could also have positive connotations, such as self-confidence, talent, etc.

### Exercise 6: Identifying Connotative and Denotative Meanings

For each word, identify whether it has a connotative or denotative meaning.

1. snake

2. home

3. mansion

4. slim

5. skinny

6. house

7. cottage

8. childish

9. childlike

10. houseful

### Exercise 7: Connotative vs. Denotative Sentence Creation

Create two sentences for each of the following words: one using the denotative meaning and one using the connotative meaning.

1. fire

2. student

3. rich

4. patriot

5. queen



### Exercise 8: Choosing Words for Tone

Given different writing contexts, choose appropriate words with either similar or dissimilar denotations to convey specific tones. For example, select words to convey a formal, informal, positive, or negative tone in the given tasks.

- Create an informal social media post about a recent achievement.
- Write a negative critique of a restaurant experience.
- Draft a neutral email to a colleague about a work-related matter.

### Exercise 9: Exploring Similar Denotations

- Choose two words with similar denotations and use them in sentences where their connotations differ.
- Discuss the impact on the overall tone or message of the sentences.

### Exercise 10: Exploring Dissimilar Denotations

- Choose two words with dissimilar denotations and use them in sentences where their connotations align.
- Explain how the connotations of these words can still create a cohesive meaning.

### Literary Devices

A **euphemism** is a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something distasteful, inappropriate. Examples of common euphemisms include saying something like *passed away* instead of *died* or saying *We have to let you go* instead of *You're fired!* or unpleasant.

An **oxymoron** is the combination of opposite or extremely dissimilar words into a single phrase. *Deafening silence*, *alone together*, and *definitely maybe* are all examples of common oxymorons.

### Exercise 11: Analyzing Nuances in Word Meanings

**Nuance** is the sensibility to, awareness of, or ability to express delicate shadings (as of meaning, feeling, or value)

Examine the following pairs of words with similar denotations. Explain the nuances that make them different in meaning. Use each word in a sentence to demonstrate their distinctions.

#### 1. Furious vs. Enraged

Nuances: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Furious): \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Enraged): \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Slim vs. Slender

Nuances: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Slim): \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Slender): \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Polite vs. Courteous**

Nuances: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Polite): \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Courteous): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Sincere vs. Genuine**

Nuances: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Sincere): \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence (Genuine): \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 12: Creating Figures of Speech**

Create original sentences using various figures of speech (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification) to describe the given objects or concepts. Consider the role of these figures of speech in adding depth to your descriptions. (List of common objects/concepts will be decided and given by teacher e.g. love, time, silence).

**Exercise 13: Synonyms vs. Nuances**

Explain the nuanced differences between the given words. Write sentences demonstrating the appropriate use of each synonym in different contexts. (List of synonyms will be provided by the teacher e.g. happy, joyful, delighted).

**Learning Figures of Speech in Context**

Read the given text and attempt the exercises based on context.

**The Dance of Contradiction**

In a quaint little village nestled amidst rolling hills, there lived a woman named Eleanor. Eleanor was, by all accounts, an intriguing character. Her presence was like a gentle thunderstorm on a sunny day, a contradiction that the villagers could never quite fathom.

Eleanor's home was an old, dilapidated cottage, charming in its decay. Inside, the furniture was mismatched, each piece telling a different story. The dining table, although worn, hosted lively conversations where laughter echoed like a melancholic melody. In her garden, she tended to roses with thorns as sharp as a mother's love and petals as soft as a whispered secret.

Her attire was equally perplexing. Eleanor often donned dresses that seemed both out of fashion and yet somehow timeless. Her choice of words was equally enigmatic. She had a knack for saying the most uncomfortable truths in the gentlest way, using euphemisms that could make even the harshest realities seem like tender caresses.

One sunny afternoon, as Eleanor strolled through the village, a curious young boy approached her. "Miss Eleanor," he inquired, "why do you wear such old-fashioned dresses and live in that ancient cottage?"



Eleanor smiled, her eyes twinkling with mischief. "My dear," she replied, "these dresses and this cottage are like forgotten stories waiting to be rediscovered."

The boy was impressed with her reply. He couldn't help but be enchanted by the contradictions that defined Eleanor's existence.

And so, the village came to embrace the peculiar charm of Eleanor. She taught them that sometimes, it is in the contradictions and nuances of existence that the true beauty of the world can be found, much like the gentle thunderstorm on a sunny day.



### • Identifying Figures of Speech

Read the text carefully and identify instances of nuances, euphemism, and oxymoron.

For each example found, explain its meaning and impact on the text.

### • Nuances in Word Choices

Examine the words used in the text and discuss how they contribute to the nuances of the character and setting. For example, how do words like "quaint," "gentle thunderstorm," "mismatched," and "charming in its decay" create nuanced descriptions?

### • Euphemism Exploration

a) List the euphemisms found in the text (e.g., "forgotten stories waiting to be rediscovered"). Discuss the original, less gentle meanings behind these euphemisms.

b) Create a list of euphemisms that could replace harsh or direct phrases (e.g., "passed away" instead of "died"). Discuss the importance of euphemism in communication.

### • Oxymoronic Phrases

Identify oxymoronic phrases in the text (e.g., "gentle thunderstorm," "sharp as a mother's love").

Discuss how these phrases juxtapose contradictory elements and contribute to the characterization of Eleanor.

### • Writing with Figures of Speech

Write a short paragraph or story that incorporates nuances, euphemism, and oxymoron to create vivid and thought-provoking descriptions.

Ensure the intended effect of the figures of speech in writing.

### • Discussion and Analysis

In small groups or as a class, engage in a discussion about the significance of figures of speech in literature and everyday language.

#### Teacher's Point



Encourage students to read the passage carefully and explore figures of speech with reference to the context .  
Encourage students to share their interpretations of the text and how figures of speech enhance their understanding.



## Writing

### Guided Activity

Follow the steps of the process approach (brainstorming, structuring, mind mapping using a variety of graphic organizers, freewriting, and note-taking) to plan for writing a paragraph on: **Success Story of a Lady Entrepreneur.**

A simple text-based graphic organizer outlining key points on the topic "Success Story of a Lady Entrepreneur":

**Introduction:** Name of the Entrepreneur, Brief Overview of Her Business

**Early Life and Background:** Family Background, Education and Early Influence, Initial Career Experiences

**Business Ventures:** Company, Founding Year, Key Products/Service, Milestones and Achievements

**Challenges Faced:** Obstacles in Entrepreneurial Journey, How She Overcame Challenges

**Achievements and Impact:** Major Accomplishments, Influence on Industry or Community

**Personal Qualities and Skills:** Traits That Contributed to Success, Leadership, Innovation, Resilience, etc.

**Conclusion:** Summary of Her Success Story, Inspiring Takeaways



## Creative Writing

Write Success Story of a Role Model following the graphic organizer mentioned above.

### Teacher's Point



*This graphic organizer provides a structured framework for discussing the success story of a lady entrepreneur, covering her background, business ventures, challenges, achievements, personal qualities, and impact. You can use this as a guide to organize information and create a more detailed narrative or presentation.*