

# Maps of History: Israel in the Middle East

*Israel 101: Pages 2-3 and 6-7*

## Rationale and Goals

Historical developments can often be conveyed most simply by maps. This unit focuses on a series of maps about the development of the modern Middle East in general and of the modern State of Israel in specific. The captions under each map give a brief explanation of why the changes occurred. The unit's goals are:

- To give a concise historical overview about the evolution of the region and how and why modern Israel emerged.
- To underscore that after the fall of the ancient Jewish State, no other nation emerged in its place. During the Ottoman Empire's 400-year rule, the land was divided into unrelated administrative districts.
- To emphasize that all of the modern nations of the Middle East were formed only in the 20th century and that modern Israel is no different in this respect.
- To emphasize how the areas that Jews were entitled to settle kept changing and how Israel's areas of jurisdiction also kept changing.
- To show how Israel expanded after the 1967 War and how much land it relinquished to make peace with Egypt.

## Discussion Questions

- How do maps like those on pages 6 and 7 help tell the history of a region and a nation? How do they simplify the story of modern Israel and its current situation?
- How do the maps explain why Israel is said to have been “reborn” and Israel is referred to as “modern” Israel?
- Judging from the maps, how have wars affected the boundaries of the nations in the region, especially of Israel? How have wars affected the boundaries of other nations (such as the U.S. or European countries)?
- What is a “nation-state,” and when was the concept introduced in Europe? Why are borders so important to a nation-state? When did nation-states develop in the Middle East, and why was the concept new (and even strange) in the region?
- What other ways do you think the Middle East could have been divided? Why did Britain and France choose to divide the area into these particular nation-states? (A good reference on this is Efraim Karsh's *Empires of the Sand*.)
- What was the Palestine Mandate, and what were its original borders? How closely did the borders reflect the Biblical state of Israel? Why did the boundaries shrink between 1920 and 1923?
- Why did the United Nations recommend the Partition Resolution in 1947? How fair do you think the partition was? Why did Israel end up with more land than the Mandate envisioned, and what happened to the land that was to become the Arab state?
- What does it mean to “trade land for peace?” How has it worked for or against Israel?
- What do these maps tell you about Israel's relative size and security needs?

# Activities

## Activity 1

*What do you think? The Creation of the Modern Middle East*

**Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** 30 minutes • **Materials Needed:** Copies of student worksheet, pencils

**Lesson Plan:** Make sure that the students do not read the text of *Israel 101* before they engage in this activity. Give them a short introduction (see below), distribute the worksheets, and complete the activity according to the guidelines below.

**Introduction:** Although it is common knowledge that the modern State of Israel was formed in 1948, it is not well known that the Arab states were formed during the same period. This activity invites students to “guestimate” when the various Arab states were formed. Many students will be surprised.

**Activity:** Distribute the worksheets. Ask the students to fill them out by guessing when these states were established. For each Arab state, students should place a mark on either the “Before Israel” or the “After Israel” column and write an estimate in the “How many years?” column. When the students have done this, have them turn to page 6 and fill out the “Year Founded” column.

**Discussion:** Discuss the results of this activity with the students. How did their estimates compare with the facts? Were there serious discrepancies between the two? If so, to what do they attribute those differences?

**Wrap-Up:** It is not well known that the Arab states and the modern State of Israel were formed in the same period. It is also not well known that there had never been a Palestinian Arab state. Before World War I, the whole area in the Middle East was part of the larger Ottoman Empire, and people were relatively free to move around (as Bedouins did) throughout the Empire. This fact helps explain why the concept of Palestine was so new in the region.



# Activities

## Activity 2

### *Visual Representations of Israel's Changing Borders*

#### **Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** 1-2 hours • **Materials:** Poster board, paper. If available, computers can be used.

**Suggested Use of Activity:** As a motivating activity before the unit or as a summary to the unit.

**Background:** The maps in this unit convey a great deal of information. In order to help students better understand and remember the information, this activity has them try to transform the maps into different visual representations of the same information. For example, the maps graphically show (a) how the land contained in the British Mandate was reduced in the Partition Plan and (b) how the land captured in the Six-Day War was given up to make peace with Egypt.

#### **Investigation:**

**Introduction:** Have the students look at the maps (pp. 2-3, 6-7). Give them time to look at the maps, and then ask: “What can you learn from these maps?” Discuss their responses. Then ask them: “How else can you represent this information?” Students may suggest a wide variety of possibilities, such as a timeline, a comparison table, a single map with transparencies (each to represent that map at different times), a map-based PowerPoint presentation, a computerized map and the like.

**Activity:** Divide the students into groups. Give each group the task of creating a visual representation of the information that is different from the maps but that includes the information from the maps. Afterwards, have each group present its work to the entire class.

**Discussion:** Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each representation.

**Wrap-Up:** If some pictures can be worth a thousand words, some maps (and other visual representations) can be worth several pictures. For example, to say “Israel gave up territory it captured in the Six-Day War” does not have the same impact as comparing appropriate maps of Israel and Egypt before and after the peace treaty between these two nations. In studying and understanding the evolution of the State of Israel, it's important for us to know how to learn from and use maps and other visual representations.

#### **References:**

Edward Tufte's books on the visual representation of information: *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (Graphics Press: Second edition 2001); *Envisioning Information* (Graphics Press: 1990).

[www.edwardtufte.com/tufte](http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte)

# Activities

## Activity 3

### *International Support for Zionism: Using Primary Documents*

#### **Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** 1 class period • **Materials:** *Israel 101*, printouts of the Balfour Declaration, sections of the League of Nations British Mandate for Palestine, and sections of the UN Partition Resolution.

**Lesson Plan:** Have the students compare and contrast the three documents, then lead a class discussion to distill the main points and situate them in historical context. This activity will introduce students to seminal documents in the history of modern Israel and give them experience in reading primary documents. It will also introduce them to the League of Nations and the United Nations.

**Background:** Britain's Balfour Declaration (Nov. 1917), the League of Nations British Mandate for Palestine (1922), and the UN Partition Resolution (Nov. 1947) were seminal documents in the establishment of modern Israel. All three gave progressively more international endorsements to the Zionist dream and the Zionist hope of reestablishing the Jewish State. Using the maps (1917-1967), students can see how the territory promised for the Jewish homeland altered and how these international endorsements evolved.

#### **Activity:**

1. Instruct students to read the documents, paying particular attention to the following issues:

- Who issued each of these documents, and why did they have the authority to do so?
- What goals did each of the documents endorse?
- What land was promised or recommended in each of the documents? How and why were they different?

*(Note to teachers: The Balfour Declaration is vague about territory because no "Palestine" officially existed and Britain had not yet won World War I. After it won the war, the defeated Ottoman Empire ceded its sovereignty to Britain and the other allies. The Mandate and the UN Partition Resolution were very specific about territory, as indicated by the maps on page 7, though the area allotted became progressively smaller.)*

- In what ways did each of these documents propose to help reestablish the Jewish homeland?
- What promises did each of the documents make about non-Jews who were living in the area allotted for a Jewish homeland?
- What are the similarities and differences between what the three documents endorsed? (Note to teachers: Balfour was vague about what a Jewish homeland would be. The Mandate was very specific about encouraging Jewish settlement but did not mention a state. The Partition Resolution clearly recommended establishing a state, but on a small portion of the original Mandate.)

# Activities

## Activity 3

2. Lead a class discussion addressing the issues raised above, and raise these additional questions:

- Why did the League of Nations and the UN have the right to set up the Mandate and recommend Partition?
- What do you think was fair or unfair about the plans laid out in these documents?
- Often, official documents are the result of long negotiations and diplomacy, and the language in the final document can seem vague as a result. Do you think the language and ideas laid out in these documents are vague and can be subject to different interpretations? What kind of research would you do to find out the original intent of the authors of the documents?
- How important do you think it is to have this kind of international endorsement for the establishment of a state?

**Wrap-up:** The Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations Mandate, and the UN Partition Resolution were the seminal documents that gave international support for the Zionist movement and for the reestablishment of the State of Israel.

# Resources

## *Internet Sources*

### **Overview**

[www.mapsofwar.com/images/EMPIRE17.swf](http://www.mapsofwar.com/images/EMPIRE17.swf)

Ninety-second slide show of maps, showing empires that controlled the Middle East from 3000 B.C.E. - 2006

[www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/446550C4-827C-47E3-BEF3-0A3E3741E35E/0/mapstorypart1.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/446550C4-827C-47E3-BEF3-0A3E3741E35E/0/mapstorypart1.pdf)

Maps of Israel from 1077 B.C.E. - 1949

### **Maps of Israel and the Middle East 1900 - 1947**

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/me1930map.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/me1930map.html)

Countries of the Middle East with the European countries associated with each one (1930)

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/partmap.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/partmap.html)

Original map of the United Nations Partition Plan (1947)

### **Maps of Israel and Middle East 1948 - 2007**

[www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/CD41289E-0875-4D84-A2D1-5BBF34BCF91A/0/mapstorypart2.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/CD41289E-0875-4D84-A2D1-5BBF34BCF91A/0/mapstorypart2.pdf)

Excellent maps of specific areas gained and ceded with each war, Armistice agreement, and unilateral disengagement. Also excellent maps of Jerusalem's changing boundaries.

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/borders.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/borders.html)

Distances between Israeli population centers and Armistice lines.

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/dates.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/dates.html)

Larger map of North African and Middle Eastern nations with dates of independence

[www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/Sinai+Redeployment-+1980-1982.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Israel+in+Maps/Sinai+Redeployment-+1980-1982.htm)

Steps of Israel's phased withdrawal from Sinai after peace treaty signed with Egypt (1979)

## **Books**

Barnavi, Eli (ed., 1992). *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present*. (New York: Schocken Books).

Eban, Abba (1984). *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Summit Books).

Karsh, Efraim (2001). *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923* (Harvard University Press; New Ed. edition).

## **Video and DVD Interactive**

Eban, Abba, et al (2002). *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* (boxed Set, including two DVD videos and a DVD-ROM Interactive).

<http://www.thirteen.org/heritagedvd>