

Activities

Activity 2

Israel's Demography and Geography: What Do You Know?

Preparation.

Estimated Time: 1 class period • **Materials:** Copies of the “Israel and Geography Quiz”

Lesson Plan: Before reading the Israel 101 Booklet, students take a self-graded quiz to check what they know about Israel and its geography. Then they discuss their answers and the implications of some basic geographic facts about the country.

Background. Some historians claim that “geography is destiny-- in other words, a country’s geographical location determines its fate. While this theory may overstate the case, location is a critical factor for a country’s survival and development. For this reason, the “Israel 101” curriculum begins by highlighting basic geographic and demographic facts about Israel and the Jewish people.

Activity.

1. Tell students that before learning about the history and politics of Israel, they should know some basic geographic and demographic facts. To stimulate them to learn these basics, they will take a self-graded quiz. (Make sure that the quiz is given before the students read the Israel 101 Booklet.)
2. Pass out the quiz to the students (see below). Ask them to fill in their own answers. This is not a test! The purpose is to motivate students to engage in the topic.
3. Review the answers with the students, using the “Notes for Teachers” (see below).
4. Have the students review pages 2-3 of the Israel 101 Booklet, which graphically summarizes the information presented in the quiz.

Wrap-Up. Israel is a small country, with a small population of Jews. However, this small country is a significant source of interest to many people and countries in the world. We will take a closer look at Israel in the Israel 101 Booklet and see how these demographic and geographic facts affect its modern history.

A Quiz on Israel and Geography: What Do You Know?

Instructions: Choose answers to each of the seven questions below. When you check the correct answers, see if any of them are surprising to you.

1. Where is Israel located?

- a. In Asia
- b. In the Middle East
- c. In Africa
- d. Factually, in the Asian continent, but in the media, Israel is usually referred to as being located in the Middle East.
- e. In South Europe.

2. How many years has the State of Israel been in existence?

- b. Close to 100 years.
- c. Over 80 years.
- d. About 60 years.
- e. Almost 150 years.
- f. More than 2,000 years

3. The actual size of the State of Israel is:

- a. Roughly two times larger than California
- b. A bit smaller than New Jersey
- c. About eight times larger than El Salvador.
- d. About 10 times smaller than France.
- e. A bit larger than Taiwan.

4. Today, there are six major religions around the world. In each country, there may be several kinds of religions practiced by different citizens of that country. However, there is usually one religious majority in each country.

Rank the following religious groups in descending order according to which has the most countries with that religious majority, and estimate the number of countries that have a majority for each religious group.

- _____ Hindu
- _____ Roman Catholic
- _____ Easter Orthodox
- _____ Jewish
- _____ Protestant

5. What is the population of Jews in the world?

- a. 0.5 billion Jews
- b. 100 million Jews
- c. 14 million Jews
- d. 6 million Jews

6. What is the ratio of Israeli Jews to Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East?

- a. 1:2 (Israeli Jews: Arabs and Muslims)
- b. 1:4
- c. 1:10
- d. 1:25
- e. 1:55

7. What has happened to the Christian population in the Middle East?

- Christians benefit from freedom of religion in the Jewish State of Israel.
- The Christian population in Israel has dwindled since the modern State of Israel was founded.
- The Christians in Israel have the same experience as Christians in other Middle Eastern countries. They practice their beliefs privately and fear persecution.
- In Israel, Christians are not persecuted, and their population is growing.
- Middle Eastern countries accept Christians, and the number of Christians has remained stable throughout the Middle East.
- (a) and (d) above.
- (b) and (c) above.



A Quiz on Israel and Geography
Notes For Teachers

To the Teacher: When the students have finished filling in their quizzes, go over the correct answers with them in class. Read each question aloud and encourage students to raise their hands to indicate their answers so you can gauge the answer of the majority of the class. Reveal the correct answer and add any additional information that may be of interest. Some of the additional information appears below.

Question	Answer	Additional Information
1	d	Note that because it is surrounded by many Arab states, the media typically refers to Israel as being located in the Middle East. However, Israel is actually located between two continents – Africa and Asia. This is indicated in the map on page 2-3.
2	c	The modern State of Israel was established in May of 1948. So the modern State of Israel has been in existence for about 60 years. Basically, it was founded in the students’ grandparents’ (or even parents’) generation. It is a very young country, but it has accomplished a great deal, as students will see in the booklet.
3	b	The State of Israel is located on a very small piece of land. This may surprise many people, since Israel is mentioned so often in the media and maps are shown without any other countries around – so it appears large.
4		1. Islamic 2. Roman Catholic 3. Protestant 4. Eastern. Orthodox 5. Hindu 6. Jewish There are 56 countries with an Islamic majority; 49 with Roman Catholics; 20 with Protestants; 12 with Eastern Orthodox; 4 Hindu and only 1 Jewish country. Prior to Israel’s establishment, Jews were a small minority in every country they lived in.
5	c	In Israel, there are about 5.7 million Jews. The rest are dispersed in different countries around the world. There are a total of 14 million Jews worldwide. There are 143 times fewer Jews than Christians in the world. The 6 million in answer “d” is the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust during WWII.
6	e	There are 55 times more Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East than there are Israeli Jews. The Jewish population in Israel is about 5.7 million, while there are 300 million Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East.
7	e	Both “a” and “d” are correct (hence “e” is the overall correct answer). See the Israel 101 booklet for more details.