

Activities

Activity 4

*International Support for the Jewish Homeland in the Palestine Mandate and for the Establishment of Israel:
Studying Some Primary Documents*

Preparation:

Estimated time: 1-2 class periods • **Materials:** Internet access or printouts of the suggested documents, *Israel 101*.

Background: A review of some key historical documents can bring alive the reasons, ideas and conditions that prompted the international community to support reestablishing the Jewish homeland in Palestine and the reestablishment of the State of Israel. Students reviewing these key documents will also gain experience in working with primary sources.

Activity:

1. Divide students into groups of four and have them review the following short documents, or have each group responsible for one or two of the documents.
 - Balfour Declaration, 1917, at www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/balfour.htm
 - Emir Feisal and Felix Frankfurter Correspondence, March 3-5, 1919, at www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Feisal-Frankfurter-Correspondence.htm
 - Winston Churchill statement reported in the *New York Times*, April 2, 1921, at query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9402EEDE103FEE3ABC4A53DFB266838A639EDE&oref=slogin
 - Lord A.J. Balfour, “Defense of the Palestinian Mandate,” 1922, at www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1922balfour.html
 - British (or Churchill) White Paper, 1922, at www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/brwh1922.htm
 - Recommendation by UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) at www.mideastweb.org/unscoop1947.html (scroll down to Part I, “Plan of Partition with Economic Union Justification”)
 - Israel’s “Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel” at www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Declaration+of+Establishment+of+State+of+Israel.htm
2. Have students choose a spokesperson of each group to report on the documents they read.
3. Begin a general class discussion to compare and contrast the documents.

The main themes that should be highlighted:

 - The Jews are indigenous to the land.
 - The Jews have the right to restore their homeland.
 - The scattered Jews should be brought together again in Palestine.
 - The Jews developed the land and established a national culture in Palestine.
(The Declaration is particularly good on this point.)

Wrap-Up: These documents indicate that the international community recognized the Jews as indigenous to the land, that the Jews had already begun settling and improving the land and redeveloping their national culture even before the Mandate was established, that the Jews continued to improve the land and bring prosperity to the region, and that the hope was the two national movements—Arab and Jewish—would complement one another.