

Activities

Activity 2

Testing the Media's Knowledge about Settlements

Preparation:

Estimated Time: 2 class periods. • **Materials:** Internet access or TV stories/newspaper articles about the conflict

Background: When reporters discuss the conflict, they often appear to be unaware of some of the basic facts in Unit 7. This activity will give students an opportunity to assess the media's knowledge. Since articles and TV reports appear regularly about the conflict, have students search for and pick a recent article that makes reference to the issues in Unit 7 and write a report assessing its accuracy. (Students can work in pairs.) This activity will also help students learn to use critical thinking skills about what they hear and read in the media.

Activity:

Give students the information in the background and have them spend one class period (or assign this as homework) to find an article about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

1. Students should carefully read the chosen article.
2. Students should write a short essay or list the facts in the article, evaluating their accuracy.
3. Students should then present their findings to the class.
4. Conduct a class discussion touching on some of the following issues:
 - How accurate was your journalist?
 - What were some of the issues your journalist got wrong? How many of the journalists repeated the same error?
 - What were the main errors/correct points in all the articles?
 - What does this research tell you about how to read media reports? What critical thinking would you use to evaluate reports? (What sources did the journalist use? How reliable were the sources? How much did s/he assume the reader already knew? Did s/he have a bias? What was it?)
 - What is the impact of these errors in public opinion about the conflict?
 - What background do you think is necessary for journalists to have when they are assigned to cover stories as complicated as the Arab-Israeli conflict?
 - Would you want to write a letter to the editor correcting the error? Why or why not?

Wrap-up: The fact that something is in the media does not necessarily mean it is a fact. It is important to keep an open mind but also to use the media critically, especially when it comes to conflicts that have a long history.