

# ISRAEL'S SEARCH FOR PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS



*Israel 101: Page 20*

## Rationale and Goals

- To emphasize Israel's willingness to compromise for peace from 1937 to 2000.
- To point out the number of times Israel has withdrawn from captured territory and from territory it could legitimately claim (such as the four communities in the West Bank).
- To emphasize the dates and terms of Israel's peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt.

## Discussion Questions

- Review the history of peace efforts between 1937 and 2006. What patterns do you notice? What generalizations can you make about Israel's and Arab states' willingness to compromise, and about what main factors make peace agreements possible? (Read the brief description for each peace/compromise initiative and review "Evolution of the Region" and "Wars and Terrorism" pages to help draw some conclusions.)

*(Note to teachers: Israel was willing to compromise on land issues. The peace agreements were based on bilateral negotiations, and both President Sadat and King Hussein were willing to come to Israel.)*

- If you were a nation that had faced the wars and terrorism that Israel has faced, what would be your main priorities for a peace agreement? Given what you learned about Israel's geographic position (see introductory map pages), what do you think Israel's bottom lines would be for any peace agreements?
- After reviewing the various peace initiatives, do you think Israel could have done more to bring about peace with its neighbors, and if so, what could it have done?
- In the Israel-Egypt and Israel-Jordan peace agreements, what did Israel cede and what did Jordan and Egypt cede?
- In 1947, the United Nations recommended a two-state solution: a Jewish state and a Palestinian Arab state. The Jews accepted this recommendation, but the Arab states rejected it and the very idea of a Jewish state. In recent years, various diplomatic initiatives have been promoted to implement the two-state solution. Compare these two situations, in terms of Israeli and Arab readiness for compromise, international support for the initiative, and other factors. What, if anything, has changed since 1947?
- In 1957, after the Sinai War, Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula. In 2000, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Southern Lebanon. In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza. In each case, what response did Israel expect? What was the actual response? Based on these three examples, what are the advantages and disadvantages of withdrawal from Israel's point of view?
- What forms of war or enmity did Arab/Muslim states in the region use against Israel? How have they changed since the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan?

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*(Note to teachers: The following forms of war were used against Israel: (a) states of war, (b) economic boycotts (secondary and tertiary), (c) diplomatic pressure, (d) exclusion from regional groupings, e.g. in the U.N., and (e) propaganda against Israel. Since the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, there have been no major wars between Arab states and Israel. Subsequent wars have been launched by non-state terrorist groups who get support from Arab states that are still in a technical state of war against Israel. Jordan also ended its state of war with Israel in 1994. The degrees of change for the other forms of war are debatable; they should be researched and discussed by the students.)*

- What political parties were in power when Israel signed its peace agreements? What does this tell us about Israeli views on peace?

*(Note to teachers: The right-wing Herut Party, led by Menachem Begin, signed the peace agreement with Egypt. The left-wing Labor Party, led by Yitzchak Rabin, signed the peace agreement with Jordan. Israeli political parties across the political spectrum have sought peace.)*

# Activities

## Activity 1

### *The Long Road to Peace in the Middle East*

#### **Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** 1.5 class periods • **Materials:** Photocopies of Activity Sheet, pens, pencils, *Israel 101*

#### **Activity:**

##### **Part 1: Introductory Discussion**

1. After presenting today's topic (Israel's Search for Peace with Its Neighbors), ask students how many Arab states/countries (they think) surround Israel. Take a poll and see what the students know. As the students call out the names of Arab states, write a list of these states on the board. Tell students to note that there are many Arab states and that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. If the students do not list the names of all of the Arab states, add the missing names to the list.

(Answer: There are 21 Arab states in the Middle East. See maps on page 2-3.)

2. Next ask students: Among these 21 states, which ones have been especially hostile to Israel in the past (i.e., initiated and/or participated in wars against Israel) but today have peace treaties with Israel? (Answer: Egypt and Jordan.) Ask students: When were the peace agreements established (in what year/how many years ago)? Which Arab nations continue to be hostile and have no peace treaties with Israel? Which Arab nations have a moderate stance against Israel, even without a peace treaty (e.g., Morocco, Saudia Arabia, Dubai, Oman, etc.)? Circle the states that are written on the board, according to what the students say.

3. In addition, discuss the following question with the class:

“Regarding the main Arab countries that are hostile to Israel, has Israel really tried to compromise for peace? How far has Israel been willing to go in order to achieve peace with its neighbors? In other words, what are the facts?”

##### **Part 2: Analysis of Israel's Peace Efforts**

1. **Group Work:** As a follow-up to the above question, tell students that they will be able to analyze Israel's peace efforts from before the founding of Israel. In class, have the students read the first paragraphs on page 20 (in blue). As an example of how they will analyze events, read the first entry with them (“1937: Zionists accepted Britain's Partition Recommendation with some reservations,” summarized in the Activity Sheet as “The Peel Plan”).

In class, ask the students to answer the following questions:

- What was the name of proposal and year?
- Who were the potential partner(s) of Israel?
- What was the proposed deal?
- Who initiated the deal?
- Reaction of Israel?
- Reaction of the potential partner(s)?
- Outcome?

For example, for this first entry, students might answer the above questions as follows:

- What was the name of proposal and year? **Peel Plan, 1937.**
- Who were the potential partner(s) of Israel? **Leaders of surrounding Arab nations.**
- What was the proposed deal? **A two-state solution, one state for the Jews and one state for the Arabs living in the area.**
- Who initiated the deal? **Great Britain.**
- Reaction of Israel (actually, the pre-State Yishuv)? **Accepted the plan.**
- Reaction of the potential partner(s)? **The Arabs rejected the plan.**
- Outcome? **The two-state recommendation was not implemented.**

2. Divide the students into groups and distribute the activity sheet. Divide the 10 remaining entries on page 20 among the student groups. Each group should analyze its entries by using the above categories, which are included in the Activity Sheet.

3. After the students have completed their group work, have each group report on their work. What surprised them? What did they learn?

4. After completing the analysis of the 11 entries, ask students if they see any interesting patterns. For example, how often was the “two-state solution” suggested? What were the various responses? Another example: How often did Israel unilaterally withdraw from conquered territories? What were the various responses?

Revisit the questions you asked students at the beginning of the activity (see #4 above). The answers to these questions are:

- Israel has compromised for peace. This is a common theme in modern Israel’s short history.
- Israel has been cooperative with mediators, such as the U.S., the European Quartet and the U.N., who have tried to help broker peace in the Middle East.
- Israel is willing to continue compromising for peace with its neighbors, despite the hardships and hostilities against it throughout the years.

Explain that in the next unit, students will focus on a very important peace attempt with the Palestinians: the Oslo Accords.

**Wrap-Up:** A review of modern Middle Eastern history, as it relates to Israel and the Arab states, is that Israel has been willing to compromise for peace and has made many offers for peace. Twice these efforts have resulted in peace treaties—with Egypt and Jordan—but in many cases the Arab states have refused to negotiate or to recognize the state of Israel, and they have continued their hostilities towards Israel.

## Activity Sheet

Record and analyze each of the peace proposals below by filling in the chart. For details on each proposal, see page 20 in the booklet.

Name Of Proposal	Year(s)	Potential Partner(s) Of Israel	What Was The Proposed Deal?	Who initiated the deal?	Reaction of Israel?	Reaction of the Potential Partner(s)?	Outcome?
Peel Commission Plan							
U.N. Partition Plan							
Post-1948 Armistice Agreements							
Post-Sinai War							
U.N. Resolution 242							
Peace Treaty with Egypt							
Oslo Accords							
Peace Treaty with Jordan							
Unilateral Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon							
Unilateral Disengagement from Gaza and parts of West Bank							
Platform of Israel's Kadima Party							

# Activities

## Activity 2

### *U.N. Resolution 242*

#### **Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** One-half or one class period • **Materials:** *Israel 101*, Internet access for U.N. Resolution 242 ([www.mideastweb.org/242.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/242.htm)), the Khartoum Declaration ([www.hsje.org/histo\\_documents/khartoum%20resolution.htm](http://www.hsje.org/histo_documents/khartoum%20resolution.htm)) and information about how U.N. Resolution 242 was drafted at the U.N. ([palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1948to1967\\_un\\_242.php](http://palestinefacts.org/pf_1948to1967_un_242.php)) and a longer discussion ([www.ncafp.org/projects/middle\\_east/un\\_res242.pdf](http://www.ncafp.org/projects/middle_east/un_res242.pdf))

**Background:** The 1967 U.N. Resolution 242, known as the “land for peace” resolution, was to bring about a lasting peace. It remains the underlying principle for all peace agreements between Israel and its neighbors. However, this very short resolution has been the subject of much controversy because interested parties interpret its meaning differently. It is very important to understand what U.N. Resolution 242 actually says and what the framers of the resolution intended when they went through the diplomatic struggles to draft it in the U.N. Security Council.

Have students break into groups. Have them reread pages 7 and 13 of *Israel 101* about the 1967 War. With this background, have them evaluate Resolution 242.

1. Have students read U.N. Resolution 242 and answer the following questions. (Answers for teachers are in parentheses.)
  - Who does the resolution say started the war? (The resolution doesn't say.)
  - Why does the resolution call for the two main clauses to be read together? (The assumption was that land would be traded for peace through negotiations.)
  - What territories does the resolution call on Israel to withdraw from? (It doesn't specify. It says “Territories,” not “the Territories,” which has caused much of the controversy about its meaning.)
  - What does the resolution say about Palestinians and a Palestinian state? (It doesn't mention Palestinians. It was assumed that territorial negotiations would be between Israel and Jordan, Egypt, and Syria.)
  - What does it say about refugees? Is it referring only to Palestinian refugees or also to Jewish refugees from Arab countries? (By using the general term refugees, it is referring to both Jewish and Palestinian refugees.)
  - What does the resolution mean by the term “safe and secure borders?” Whose borders had been unsafe and insecure? (Israel's borders had been vulnerable.)
2. Israel accepted U.N. Resolution 242, but the Arab League responded with the “Three Nos” in its Khartoum Declaration. Have students read the Khartoum Declaration and list its main points.
3. Given the controversy about what the resolution intended—whether Israel should withdraw from all the territories or just some of them—particularly because of the absence of the word “the” in front of territories, ask students how they would try to determine what was intended. After a brief discussion, have them read the online source listed above about how the resolution was drafted and what the authors intended. Have each group come up with its own conclusions and present them to the class.

***Discussion:***

After students have done this work, ask them a variety of questions about peace-making efforts after the 1967 War.

- What do they think the framers of U.N. Resolution 242 intended?
- Why has there been controversy about its meaning? What conclusions can they draw about diplomatic language?
- Why did Israel accept Resolution 242?
- Why did the Arab League issue the Khartoum Declaration?
- In what ways were the failed peacemaking efforts after 1967 typical of the problem in establishing peace between Israel and its neighbors?

***Wrap-up:*** U.N. Resolution 242 established the principle of exchanging land for peace, but the problems that prevent peace have also caused controversial interpretations of the land-for-peace formula.

# Activities

## Activity 3

### *A Letter to the Editor*

#### **Preparation:**

**Estimated Time:** 1 class period • **Materials:** *Israel 101*

**Lesson Plan:** Using the information from the previous activities, students will write essays responding to the claim that both Israel and the Arab nations are equally responsible for the violence in the region.

#### **Activity:**

1. Present students with the following challenge. The following letter has been published in the local newspaper:

Dear Editor,

As an American citizen who values honesty, justice and fair play, I have been following the Middle East conflict for the past 30 years. To my way of thinking, both the Arab side (the Arab states and the Palestinians) and the Israeli side are not making peace because they are both dedicated to war. They are engaged in a cycle of violence that doesn't seem to have an end. Obviously, neither side wants peace. Neither side has offered serious plans for peace. Otherwise, by now there would have been peace in the Middle East.

So, in my humble opinion, all I can say is "a plague on both of your houses!"

Sincerely,

A Concerned American

2. Ask students to write their own letters to the editor, in response to the above. Make sure that they consult page 20 of the booklet.
3. Have the students share their work. Discuss their letters in class.

# Resources

## *Internet*

Pre-state peace efforts

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/prestate\\_peace.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/prestate_peace.html)

Overview of Israeli peace efforts

(1) [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/10\\_Peace.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/10_Peace.html)

(2) [www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/guide%20to%20the%20peace%20process/](http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/peace%20process/guide%20to%20the%20peace%20process/)

(3) [www.standwithus.com/pdfs/flyers/peace.pdf](http://www.standwithus.com/pdfs/flyers/peace.pdf)

Arab economic boycott of Israel (1945-2005)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Arab\\_boycott.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Arab_boycott.html)

Israeli government statement on plans to withdraw from Sinai (1957)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/iswithdraw.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/iswithdraw.html)

White House statement on Israeli withdrawal from Sinai (1957)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/ike021757.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/ike021757.html)

U.N. Resolution 242 (Land for Peace formula), 1967—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/meaning\\_of\\_242.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/meaning_of_242.html)

See U.N. Resolution 242: [www.standwithus.com/flyers.asp](http://www.standwithus.com/flyers.asp)

Quote from Abba Eban following 1967 War—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf7.html#b](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf7.html#b)

Arab bias against Israel in the U.N. (1970s-2006) —[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/israel\\_un.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/israel_un.html)

Israel's proposed plan for Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and West Bank (1977)

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/AutonomyPlan.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/AutonomyPlan.html)

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's address to the Knesset (1977)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/sadat\\_speech.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/sadat_speech.html)

Text of peace treaty between Egypt and Israel (1979)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/egypt-israel\\_treaty.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/egypt-israel_treaty.html)

Israel-Egypt relations—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/egyptisrael.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/egyptisrael.html)

Description of ways Arab countries worked to isolate Israel (1989);

see #2: "The Arab Countries – from a State of War to a Process of Peace"—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/shamirpro.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/shamirpro.html)

Israel-Jordan negotiations for peace, cooperation (1991-1997)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/isjorneg.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/isjorneg.html)

[www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Jordan%20Negotiations](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Jordan%20Negotiations)

Text of peace treaty between Israel and Jordan (1994)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/isrjor.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/isrjor.html)

Oslo Accords: Israeli withdrawal from disputed territories, establishing framework for Palestinian self-government (1993)

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop.html)

"What Israel Has Done for Peace" (1979-2002)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/10\\_Peace.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/10_Peace.html)

Israeli Cooperation with Arab Countries (1979-2005)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Arabs.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Arabs.html)

Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon (2000)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/lebwith.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/lebwith.html)

[www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Lebanon%20Negotiations](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Lebanon%20Negotiations)

Brief overview of Israeli peace efforts, overview of Israeli unilateral withdrawal

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/30\\_unilateral.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/30_unilateral.html)

Description of plans to evacuate Gaza (August 2005)—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/37\\_Gaza.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/37_Gaza.html)

# Resources

Samples of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel rhetoric by Arab leaders and spokespeople (2001-2005)  
[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf25.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf25.html)

Statement by U.S., U.N. and European Quarter on Middle East peace (2005)  
[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/quartet092005.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/quartet092005.html)

Status of peace efforts as of June 2006—[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/28\\_plans.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/28_plans.html)

Analysis by Daniel Pipes of effectiveness of peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan (2006)  
[www.factsandlogic.org/outstanding\\_pipes2.html](http://www.factsandlogic.org/outstanding_pipes2.html)

## *Video*

The following video is available at no charge (except for shipping) from:  
[www.israelupclose.org/stories.html](http://www.israelupclose.org/stories.html)

Volume 9: *Environmental Studies: Arabs and Jews*  
(Focuses on the Arava Institute of Environmental Studies, where Jews and Arabs study and work together.)

