

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							