

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), the Khartoum Declaration (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) and a longer discussion (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.