

Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Israel and Palestine: The Roots of Conflict

Subject

Contemporary History

Grade level

9-12

Duration

Two class periods

Objectives

Students will

- research the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and
- write a personal account from the point of view of an Israeli or a Palestinian student.

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Paper, pens

Procedures

1. Discuss the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict featured in the video. These questions will help focus the discussion:
 - Who is involved in this conflict?
 - What region is at the heart of the conflict? Describe the claim that both groups have on this region.
 - What is Israel? When was it founded and by whom?
 - What is the Zionist Movement?
 - Describe the role of the U.S. in the establishment of Israel, a Jewish state.
 - How did the Holocaust affect the formation of a Jewish homeland?
 - What is the PLO? Whom does it represent?
 - Which nations are opposed to a Jewish state? (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt)
 - What was the intifada? Who was involved and what caused it?
 - What effect did World War II have on the conflict?
 - What caused the rise of militant Islam? What is its link to modern terrorism?
 - What is Hamas?
 - Briefly summarize the following leaders' association with and role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Yasser Arafat, Menachem Begin, Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter, Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon.

2. Have students conduct research on the conflict. Encourage them to try to understand both sides of the conflict. The following Web sites offer useful information:
 - The Road from Oslo (see "Parallel Realities")
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/oslo/>
 - BBC News: In Depth: Israel and the Palestinians (see "Voices from the Conflict")
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2001/israel_and_the_palestinians/
 - CNN: Mideast: Land of Conflict (see articles under "Issues")
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/mideast/>
 - Washington Post: War and Peace in the Middle East (see "Life in Wartime" photo essay)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/world/issues/mideastpeace/>
 - Online NewsHour: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (see "Newsmakers: Two Views of the Conflict" and "Coping with Conflict")
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/conflict/
3. After students have completed their research, have them write a personal account such as a letter or journal entry, from the point of view of an Israeli or Palestinian student. Their accounts can be written in the present day or in the past, but they must reflect a major event in the history of the conflict and should include several details based on research. Challenge students to consider how it must feel to live in the midst of such a conflict.
4. Have students work in pairs to critique each other's work. Was the account believable? Was it clear when and by whom it was supposed to be written? Did the account include relevant facts based on research? Did it reflect how a young person might feel living in the midst of conflict? Students should revise their writing based on the critique.
5. Collect the accounts and make copies for everyone in the class. As a homework assignment, have students read the accounts and come prepared to discuss them the next day.
6. To conclude the lesson, lead a discussion about the accounts. How did students imagine it would feel to be involved in such a conflict? Did they imagine differences between Palestinian and Israeli students? How might their experiences be similar? What was most challenging about writing this assignment? Do students think it is difficult for most Americans to understand the emotions behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Why or why not?

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; demonstrated a clear understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; wrote a thoughtful account that included several relevant details based on research.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; demonstrated an adequate understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; wrote a thoughtful account that included some relevant details based on research.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; wrote an incomplete account that did not include relevant details based on research.

Vocabulary

Islam

Definition: A religion whose followers believe in one God (Allah) and practice the teachings of the Koran, their sacred text. People who follow Islam are called Muslims.

Context: Islam is the dominant faith in Arab countries.

Israel

Definition: A Jewish state established in 1948

Context: Located in southwest Asia on the eastern Mediterranean Sea, Israel is the Jewish homeland.

Palestine

Definition: A historical region at the center of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Context: Palestine is holy to Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization)

Definition: A group that represents Arab people of Palestine who were displaced by the establishment of Israel

Context: Yasser Arafat is the leader of the PLO.

Zionism

Definition: A Jewish movement that arose in the late 19th century to reestablish a Jewish homeland

Context: Although opposed by most Arabs, Zionism has gained support by other nations.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following standards from the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Civic Ideals and Practices

Credit

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