

LESSON PLAN ASSIGNMENT
Strom Thurmond Institute for Teachers

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I. Introduction

After a unit of study on the Middle East, including the geography, history and current political problems of the area, students will read two speeches made by parties with opposing viewpoints on the Arab-Israeli situation. After reading the speeches, students will portray the characters of a Jewish citizen of Israel and a Moslem citizen from the former state of Palestine. Instead of a classroom debate, students will present opposing sides of the story to the class as would be told by their character, using information from the two speeches as well as material reamed from the text.

11. Connection to Classes/Textbook

This lesson is to be used with a sixth grade social studies class on world civilizations. It will be incorporated with a unit of study on the Middle East - focusing on the religious and cultural divisions in Israel between Jews and Moslems and how those divisions have led to bloodshed, wars and a wound that is difficult to heal.

III. Estimated Time

The unit of study on the Middle East will last approximately three weeks. This particular lesson, including reading the speeches, small groups of students looking for points to use in their presentations, and the character portrayals will last approximately two class periods of forty-five minutes each.

IV. Objectives

- to critically analyze one of the speeches by looking for facts to present
- to identify emotionally charged statements to use in the presentations to "convince" the rest of the class of a position
- to locate examples of bias from the opposing speech and to prepare rebuttal statements to use against the other "character"

V. Background Information

For thousands of years people living in the Middle East have fought over land, the birthplace of three of the world's major religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Conflict heated up in 1948 when the nation of Israel was created as a homeland for the Jewish people. The creation of the country of Israel upset many Arabs, some of whom had been living in this territory - which they called Palestine - for many hundreds of years. These Arabs, known as Palestinians, wanted this territory set aside for a Palestinian homeland. As a result of this situation, Israel and its Arab neighbors have fought

several wars against each other since 1948, and violence has broken out many times. In 1987, Palestinians began an uprising known as the intifada to regain certain lands claimed or occupied by Israel. In trying to put down the intifada, Israel has killed, arrested and exiled many Palestinians. Finally, in late 1991, Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab nations met in Madrid, Spain, for their first peace conference. Below are excerpts from the opening speeches, given on October 31, 1991, by then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Haidar Abdel-Shafi, the leader of the Palestinian delegation.

As students read these speeches, they will note how each side uses recent and distant history to support its position. Students will mark examples of bias, as well as fact, to use in their presentation

SPEECH BY YITZHAK SHAMIR

"To appreciate the meaning of peace for the people of Israel, one has to view today's Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel against the background of our history. Jews have been persecuted throughout ages on almost every continent. Some countries barely tolerated us, others oppressed, tortured, slaughtered and exiled us. This century saw the Nazi regime set out to exterminate us. The Holocaust, the catastrophic genocide of unprecedented proportions which destroyed a third of our people, became possible because no one defended us. Being homeless, we were also defenseless...

No nation has expressed its bond with its land with as much intensity and consistency as we have. For millennia our prayers, literature and folklore have expressed powerful longing to return to our land. Only the Land of Israel is our true homeland. Any other country, no matter how hospitable, is still a temporary station on the way home.

Regrettably the Arab leaders, whose friendship we wanted most, opposed a Jewish state in the region. With a few distinguished exceptions, they claimed that the Land of Israel is part of the Arab domain that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf...

In its declaration of independence on May 15, 1948, Israel stretched out its hand in peace to its Arab neighbors, calling for an end to war and bloodshed. In response, seven Arab states invaded Israel...

We repulsed the Arab onslaught, prevented Israel's annihilation, declared its independence and established a viable state and government institutions within a very short time. After their attack on Israel failed, the Arab regimes continued their fight against Israel with boycotts, blockades, terrorism and outright war...

Arab hostility to Israel has also brought tragic human suffering to the Arab people. Tens of thousands have been killed and wounded. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs who lived in Palestine were encouraged by their own leaders to flee from their homes. Their suffering is a blot on humanity...

We, who over the centuries were denied access to our holy places, respect the religion of all faiths in our country. Our law guarantees freedom of worship and protects the holy places of every religion...

I stand before you today in yet another quest for peace, not only on behalf of the State of Israel, but in the name of the entire Jewish people, that have maintained an unbreakable bond with the Land of Israel for almost 4,000 years...

We are a nation of four million. The Arab nations from the Atlantic to the Gulf number 170 million. We control only 28,000 square kilometers (11,200 sq. miles). The Arabs possess a land mass of 14 million square kilometers (5,6000,000 sq. miles). The issue is not territory but our existence...

Today it is a dream, but we have seen, in our own lifetime, some of the most fantastic dreams become reality. Today, the gulf separating the two sides is still too wide, the Arab hostility to Israel too deep, the lack of trust too immense, to permit a dramatic, quick solution. But, we must start on the long road to reconciliation with this first step in the peace process..."

- "3 Speeches": The Areas is 'A Dangerous Battleground'. The New York Times. November 1, 1991.

VOCABULARY

sovereignty - political control
persecuted - mistreated
oppressed - treated cruelly exterminate - destroy
genocide - large scale killing
millennia - thousands of years
hospitable - friendly
domain - territory
repulsed - drove back
annihilation -destruction viable - working
reconciliation - peaceful settlement

SPEECH BY HAIDAR ABDEL-SHAFI

"We, the people of Palestine, stand before you in the fullness of our pain, our pride, and our anticipation for we have long harbored a yearning for peace and a dream of justice and freedom...

As we speak, thousands of our brothers and sisters are languishing in Israeli prisons and detention camps, most detained without evidence, charge or trial, many cruelly mistreated and tortured in interrogation, guilty only of seeking freedom or daring to defy the occupation. We speak in their name, and we say, 'Set them free.'...

As we speak, the eyes of thousands of Palestinian refugees and deportees...are haunting us for exile as a cruel fate. Bring them home. They have the right to return. As we speak, the silence of demolished homes echoes through the halls and in our minds.

We must rebuild our homes and our free state. And what do we tell the loved ones of those killed by army bullets? How do we answer the questions and the fear in our children's eyes, for one out of three Palestinian children under occupation has been killed, injured, or detained in the past four years?

How can we explain to our children that they are denied education or schools so often closed by the army...or why their life is in danger for raising a flag in the land where even children are killed or jailed? What requiem can be sung for trees uprooted by army bulldozers? And most of all, who can explain to those whose lands are confiscated and free waters stolen?

Remove the barbed wire, restore the land its life-giving water. The settlements must stop now. Peace cannot be waged while Palestinian land is confiscated...

In the name of the Palestinian people, we wish to directly address the Israeli people, with whom we have had a prolonged exchange of pain. Let us share hope, instead. We are willing to live side by side on the land and the promise of the future.

Sharing, however, requires two partners willing to share as equals...

Our homeland has never ceased to exist in our minds and hearts...

Self-determination... can neither be granted nor withheld at the will of the political self-interests of others. For it is enshrined in all international charters and humanitarian law. We claim this right. We firmly assert it here before you and in the eyes of the rest of the world.

For it is a sacred and inviolable right which we shall relentlessly pursue and exercise with dedication and self-confidence and pride. Let's end...this unnatural condition of occupation, which has already claimed too many lives.

No dream of expansion or glory can justify the taking of a single life. Set us free to reengage as neighbors and as equals on our holy land. To our people in exile and under occupation who have sent us to this appointment, laden with their trust, love and aspirations, we say that the load is heavy and the task is great, but we shall be true.

In the words of our great national poet, Mahmoud Darwish, 'My homeland is not a suitcase and I am no traveler.'

To the exiled and the occupied, we say you shall return and you shall remain and we will prevail, for our cause is just."

- "3 Speeches: The Area is "a Dangerous Battleground". The New York Times. November 1, 1991.

VOCABULARY

languishing - wasting away

interrogation -

questioning deportees - people forced to leave a country

requiem - service to honor the dead

confiscated - taken away

self-determination - right of a people to decide the form of government they will have

enshrined - contained

inviolable - unquestionable reengage - come together again

aspirations - hopes

VI. Assessment

Students will be assessed during their oral presentations on the following criteria:

_____ articulation

_____ length of presentation

_____ demonstration of concepts

_____ persuasive devices

_____ accuracy of facts

Students will be assessed on the written speeches by having them put one line under FACTS and two lines under examples of BIAS or EMOTION (this can be done in small groups prior to the presentations but individual students need to turn in their own speeches after marking them).