

Gaza: The Two Perspectives

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Suggested Grade: 9

Class length: 1 hour 40 minutes

Standards Addressed:

STANDARD 4: The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places.

STANDARD 6: How Culture and Experience Influence People's Perceptions of Places and Regions.

STANDARD 10: The Characteristics, Distribution and Complexity of Earth's Cultural Mosaics.

STANDARD 13: How the Forces of Cooperation and Conflict Among People Influence the Division and Control of Earth's Surface.

STANDARD 18: How to Apply Geography to Interpret the Present and Plan for the Future.

Overview:

In this lesson, students will develop a better understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Students will look at the different perspectives in news articles and work in small groups to examine these views. They will identify problems and possible solutions to the refugee problem.

Inquiry Questions:

What are the most immediate problems in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and how can they be dealt with?

Materials:

Teacher handout notes; anticipation/prediction guide; map of Israel and the occupied territories; internet access; poster board; relevant news articles; "Problems and Solutions" worksheet; blank map of Israel; atlases

Procedure:

1. Open the class by asking students to identify sources of conflict in the Middle East. Answers will vary but should include cultural, religious differences, land, oil, politics, self-rule, and water.
2. Distribute anticipation/prediction guide. Students will read each statement and make a prediction. Discuss their predictions with a partner. Teacher should walk around, listening to students' responses and making sure they are on task.
3. Distribute notes. Ask students to read the notes and correct their prediction guide. Students should be able to justify where they found the answers in their notes. (examples: paragraph, page, and sentence)
4. Guide discussion on the notes. Make sure students have a clear idea of the location of Gaza, Golan Heights, and the West Bank. Ask students to calculate the population density for New York City, Tokyo, and the Gaza Strip. Ask the question: What are the differences between crowding in a refugee camp and crowding in a large, modern city? What problems might high population density cause in a refugee camp?
5. Distribute a blank map of Israel with questions. Have students fill in and answer the questions using their atlases.
6. Have students get into groups to identify and chart:

- a. the most immediate problem in a refugee camp
- b. potential problems
- c. Plan of Action based on priorities for solving short-term and long-term problems
7. Have them hang their charts up around the room and explain them to the class.
8. Distribute an outlined map to each group, with boundaries of the camp and a small body of water. They are to use this as their site map in creating a better and more efficient camp. Give them a set of guidelines for the placement of the different facilities.
9. Ask students to define perspective, point of view, and bias. Discuss these words with the students.
10. As a class, read and discuss news articles "Israel declares War on Terror," Dec. 3, 2001; "Arafat may find new predicament harder to survive," Dec. 4, 2001; "Labor party mull quitting Israeli Government as Military strikes increase," Dec. 5, 2001; and "China Wary on Mideast, Criticizing Both Palestinians and Israelis," Dec. 5, 2001. Students are to focus on the following questions:
 - What were the causes of the latest outbreak of violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians?
 - What do Israeli officials say was the reason for shelling in Gaza and the West Bank on Monday, Dec. 3, 2001?
 - How have world leaders responded to this latest election of violence in the Middle East? Explain.
 - How will these events impact the state of the peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis?
 - How might the events detailed in the article "Arafat may find new predicament harder to survive" affect the PLO leader's survival? Explain.
 - Does the clash between Israelis and Palestinians constitute war?
 - What do you think would happen if the peace talks broke down altogether?
11. Have the students read the other articles individually and use the following guide questions to analyze and compare different perspectives:
 - What evidence of bias do you notice in the coverage of the events?
 - Who is interviewed and/or quoted in the articles?
 - What sources of information are relied upon or referred to?
 - What similarities and differences do you notice in the facts presented by different news sources?
 - Are statistics used to present information in a fair and balanced way?
12. Have students use the Media Center to research two different perspectives: The Palestinians and Israelis. Distribute the questions they will be researching. This activity will help students recognize that there are two sides to every issue, before committing to an opinion.
13. Finally distribute a Case Study "The Palestinians" to students. Divide the class into their groups. Assign each person in the group a subsection in the case study. Have them write in the appropriate who, what, when, why, or how questions for the assigned subsections. Then focus on the following questions:
 - What do you think are the greatest obstacles to achieving peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians?
 - What solutions would you propose to these obstacles?
 - You are appointed to negotiate the final peace treaty between the Israelis and the Palestinians. List five factors to be taken into consideration when designing a peace treaty that addresses the demands of both groups.

Extension:

- Read interviews with adult and child refugees and write a story about their experience.

- Have students use information from all activities to create a timeline showing the instability of Gaza and the Palestinians from 1000 BC to present. What has caused these changes? What conflicts have occurred due to the fighting for this land?
- Profile one of the following leaders: Ariel Sharon, Edud Barak, Shimon Peres, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Kofi Annan, Binyamin Netanyahu, Yassir Arafat, and Yitzhak Rabin.
- Research water and peace in the Middle East and discuss ways to resolve the water problem. Create a plan you think will work.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will be evaluated on participation in class and small groups, rubric, check list, observation summary test, and completeness of their site map.

Closure:

1. What do you think the Palestinian and Israeli leaders can do to neutralize the violence in the area?
2. Do you think leaders around the world should intervene in the conflict? If so, how?

Sources:

Encyclopedia of the Orient, National Geographic Magazine, The Nando Times, The Washington Post, The New York Times, USA Today, The New York Times Learning Network, Prentice Hall World Geography, Essential of World Regional Geography, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>, Frank Schaffer Publication, <http://www.refugeecamp.com>