

## **Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan**

### **Israel and Palestine: The Fight for Peace**

#### **Subject**

Contemporary History

#### **Grade level**

9-12

#### **Duration**

Two class periods

#### **Objectives**

Students will

- research the history of the peace process in the Middle East; and
- write a paper about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

#### **Materials**

- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access
- *Israel and Palestine: The Fight for Peace* video and VCR

#### **Procedures**

1. Set the stage for the lesson by showing students the first two minutes of the video *Israel and Palestine: The Fight for Peace*. Tell students to take particular note of the brief overview of the Oslo peace process, the events leading up to the signing of the Oslo peace agreement, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and the visit to the Temple Mount and the escalation of violence.
2. After watching these segments, go over the events leading up to the current violence in the Middle East. Make sure students understand the following key points:
  - By 1987, there was mounting frustration and anger among the Palestinians, who had been living in the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli occupation for 20 years. The Palestinians have a strong desire for their own state, independent from Israeli control.
  - As violence continued over the next couple of years, newly elected Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin decided that it was time to enter into peace negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, known as the PLO, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat.
  - Rabin authorizes secret negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that took place in Oslo, Norway. The Israelis and the Palestinians negotiated an agreement, which was signed in Washington, D.C., on September 13, 1993. The agreement called for a

withdrawal of Israel from the occupied land and a mutual cease-fire over a period of five years.

- The peace process began to fail when Rabin was assassinated in 1995. His successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, slowed the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, further fueling anger and mistrust between the two sides.
  - In 1999, Netanyahu was defeated in his bid for reelection by Ehud Barak. President Bill Clinton brought Barak and Arafat to Washington in 2000 to try to renew the negotiations, but the attempt failed.
  - Violence has escalated in the region over the past couple years. Ariel Sharon, the current prime minister, has pursued an aggressive policy, in part because Palestinians have deployed suicide bombers. At this point, the two sides are at a stalemate.
3. Discuss the complexity of the situation with students. Point out that the most skilled negotiators have been unable to reach a solution that has led to lasting peace. Then tell students that they will try to develop a strategy that might work.
  4. Divide students into pairs. Present each pair with the following statement and questions:

*In 1993 it looked as though Israel and the Palestinians were on the brink of peace, but now the situation has greatly deteriorated. If you were in charge of the negotiating team, how would you initiate a new round of talks? What would you do to correct the mistakes made in the 1990s?*
  5. Tell students to write a two-page paper describing how they would bring the opposing sides back to the negotiating table, the compromises they would expect from each side, and strategies to prevent making the previous mistakes.
  6. Allow students time in class to work on their papers. Encourage them to conduct additional research. The following Web sites offer helpful information on the history of the peace process in the Middle East.

- <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp448.htm>
- <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L23201361>
- <http://www.rnw.nl/hotspots/html/pal021223.html>
- <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/12/21/mideast/>
- <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/mideast/stories/overview/>
- [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle\\_east/conflict/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/conflict/)
- [http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional\\_issues/Israel&Palestinians/viewConflict.cfm](http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional_issues/Israel&Palestinians/viewConflict.cfm)
- <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/mideast/history/>

7. Have each pair present their papers to the class. Then hold a class discussion about their findings and ideas. Ask students their thoughts about the ongoing

conflict in the Middle East. What compromises do they think each side should make? What do they think other countries should do to help resolve this situation?

### **Evaluation**

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

**3 points:** Students researched the topic carefully and thoroughly; considered the questions carefully and wrote a thoughtful, factually accurate paper; participated actively in class discussions.

**2 points:** Students researched the topic; gave the questions some thought and wrote a competent a mostly factually accurate paper; participated somewhat in class discussions.

**1 point:** Students did not complete their research; wrote a paper characterized by gaps, misunderstandings, and many inaccuracies; did not participate in class discussions.

### **Vocabulary**

#### **Yasser Arafat**

**Definition:** The head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the political organization that represents the Arab people in Palestine

**Context:** Some say that as long as Yasser Arafat is the head of the PLO, it will be extremely difficult for the Palestinians to negotiate a peace agreement with Israel.

#### **Ehud Barak**

**Definition:** The leader of Israel's Labor Party, who defeated Benjamin Netanyahu in 1999

**Context:** Ehud Barak tried to revive the peace process, but his distrust of Arafat was so strong that he was unable to make much progress.

#### **intifada**

**Definition:** The term describes a Palestinian uprising in protest against continued Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

**Context:** An intifada that erupted in 2000 has escalated ever since.

#### **Oslo peace agreement**

**Definition:** A historic peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians reached in Oslo, Norway, on September 13, 1993. It outlined a process whereby the Israelis agreed to withdraw from the West Bank in exchange for an end to violence, and the Palestinians were promised their own state.

**Context:** The Oslo peace agreement was the closest Israel and the Palestinians have ever come to negotiating a long-term plan for peaceful coexistence in the Middle East.

#### **Yitzhak Rabin**

**Definition:** The prime minister of Israel from 1992 until his assassination in 1995

**Context:** Yitzhak Rabin made a serious effort at negotiating for peace in the Middle East, but his assassination cut the process short.

**Ariel Sharon**

**Definition:** The current prime minister of Israel

**Context:** Some people believe that Ariel Sharon set off the current round of violence when he visited the Temple Mount, a holy site for Jews and the Muslims.

**Academic Standards**

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

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Civic Ideals and Practices

**Credit**

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