Arabs and Palestinians in Israeli Textbooks 2022‒23

Israel's State and State-Religious Curricula: Special Report

Eldad J. Pardo, PhD

David M. Byer, Editor

September 2022
Contents

1 Foreword: Professor Eyal Naveh
6 Preface/Acknowledgements
8 Executive Summary/Introduction
18 Peace Education: Tolerance and Coexistence
59 The Palestinian Experience
90 Diversity and Democratic Values
129 Self-Reflection: Violence and Injustice
148 Har Bracha: Perspective from the West Bank
157 Cartography
184 Conclusion
189 Appendix: Recent Developments Affecting Israeli Textbooks
192 IMPACT-se Methodology and International Standards
194 List of Textbooks
Foreword

By Prof. Eyal Naveh

In the many roles I have had over the years in the study and teaching of history, the underlying goal has always been transforming information into knowledge—though the main repository of this has been academia, historical knowledge cannot be confined to that setting alone. History builds a society's sense of collective identity and experience, which is why it is universally a central part of the education we all receive in our formative years. I had always planned to produce history textbooks after completing my advanced studies. Those of us at the forefront of research and with access to historical knowledge have a duty to share it so that there isn't a vast gap in the country's education between those of us in the academy and those of us who have only begun the journey of learning. Most academics are not like this; they have much more to gain from producing academic work for prestigious international journals and publishers. Nevertheless, when the Israeli Ministry of Education announced in the mid-90s that they would no longer write the textbooks themselves, but rather allow outside publishers to submit their own work for state-approval, I decided to go for it.

My first book, co-authored with Eli Barnavi, was called The 20th Century: the Century that Changed the World Order; it quickly gained traction among teachers for having new topics not mandated by the state (such as the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement and feminism). There was little oversight at the beginning of this reform, so the book was quickly approved but eventually the ministry institutionalized a committee of textbook approval in which three persons would be responsible for textbook certification. The committee consisted of a pedagogy expert, a topical expert and an official from the ministry itself to represent the state, all of whom were anonymous to the authors and publishers. When I wrote another book for ninth grade in 1999 it was also approved, this time by the committee, but that was only the beginning of an ongoing saga.

My 1999 book introduced to students what historians had established years before: The story of the few against the many in Israel's War of Independence may have been more mythos than reality, as Israel was able to bring more trained fighters and superior technology to the fight, even if the overall manpower of the other side was greater. By challenging the traditional narrative, I gained attention and praise by many parents and teachers, evident by the headlines it made in The New York Times. But this also drew the ire of others, particularly those on the Israeli right, and thus started a very public debate that lasted for about six months with editorials for and against almost daily. I was called in front of a Knesset committee of education, where I explained how the textbook reflected scholarly new research and was certainly not anti-Israel, but this was little consolation to those who insisted educators avoid my textbook. It was at this

---

1 Eyal Naveh and Eli Barnavi, The 20th Century: The Century that Changed the World Order (Hebrew, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Books, 1994).
point I realized that this was not academia, not the framework of the discipline, but in fact an entirely political arena and the whole story placed my name at the center of the Israeli public discourse on school textbooks, for better or for worse.

Even though the ministry's leadership is political, and therefore oscillates frequently between right and left, I found that the professional process for drafting and approving textbooks remained largely untouched and operated in a fair and consistent way. I ended up writing eight history textbooks over the years where the entire process for submitting, revising, and getting approval typically lasted between one and a half and two years. There is always give and take in this process, and understanding the role textbooks play in building a society's identity is key to writers like me meeting this task, while also encouraging critical thinking. This second part of the equation, encouraging critical thinking about historical events and perspectives, is where one can see profound change in Israeli textbooks since the ministry's reform in the late 1990s. Let us be clear: Writing textbooks is not a neutral act, and I am writing Israeli textbooks from an Israeli point of view. The narrative and perspective I convey are those of my side in a society that is still involved in an active conflict. However, history education is only complete if students are made aware that other narratives and perceptions exist; they do not have to accept them, but they must know that there are alternatives.

Because I was writing Israeli textbooks, I could not just present a Palestinian narrative "as is" and expect approval from the state; I tried to do that with Palestinian colleagues, but will address this later on. What I in fact did, was embed this perspective within the context of the Israeli national narrative. The first step toward this was in a chapter from my 2002 textbook, The War of Independence. I began by examining the different names people attribute to the war. I discussed why some refer to it as the "War of Liberation" [Ha'Shihrur] due to the ending of the British Mandate; others refer to it as the "War of Independence" [Ha'Aatzma'ut] as it signaled the beginning of Israel's birth as a sovereign state; and there are those who call it the "War of Establishment/Sovereignty" [Ha'Qomemiyut], since it emphasizes a sentiment of "the Jewish people who defied historical odds and regained sovereignty of their ancestral homeland." Within this context, I explained that there are also those who refer to the war as the "Nakba"—while for Israelis it was about independence and liberation, for Palestinians it was the greatest catastrophe they have ever experienced.

Thus, I introduced students to the Palestinian experience, reminding them to be aware of these different perspectives while studying the historical events. Nevertheless, I still presented the historical narrative from a resoundingly Israeli perspective, as one should as an Israeli educator writing for Israeli students, but in the historiographical source material I included not only those of the Israel Defense Forces and former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion but also such items as the diary of an Arab mother in Jaffa who was expelled from her home by Israeli forces. Of course, such a presentation needs to be done proportionally; the Israeli account of how the state was founded needed to be counterbalanced with an explanation of "Nakba," including a sub-
section about the origin of the refugee problem, for instance: "throughout the year and a half [of the fighting] seven-hundred thousand people were expelled or fled/made to flee." After some debate and dialogue, the state accepted this and approved the textbook, including these lessons on the Palestinian narrative. From that point on the Textbook Approval Committee was fair and open to this idea where students would not necessarily identify with the Palestinian narrative, but they would be aware of it in the context of their national history.

There have been questions about the right time to do this, both from the standpoint of where the society stands in relation to the conflict and the appropriate age to begin challenging students with countervailing perspectives. Post-conflict societies like Germany and France can allow themselves to teach a multi-perspective, pan-European history; little harm is likely to come from this. In places like Northern Ireland, however, where the society is not fully post-conflict and tensions remain; such divisions dictate that both Unionist and Republican textbooks are used. All this touches on a deep philosophical question about the extent to which national education should teach about the external Other; but for societies currently engaged in conflict or those seeking to move beyond conflict it seems clear that such instruction must be included to some degree. Regarding age, can we begin to challenge students with conflicting narratives as early as ninth grade? Or twelfth grade, where they have a sounder foundation? But even at the age of graduation, would this make their integration into adult society harder or more alienated? There are obviously different opinions about when and how it would be pedagogically and sociologically best to do this, but these discussions are hardly unique to Israel.

There are clear parallels to the challenges I have described in the Israeli context to contemporary discussions about history education around the globe, including in the United States. There we see intense debates over the 1619 Project and Critical Race Theory, where a school of thought has made the critical perspective on history the principal component of the civics education students receive. In many ways, this is simply an attempt to challenge American traditional values—and they do so with the same dogmatic fervor as those who have espoused them—only this time exclusively focused on America's moral failings. It is simply a mistake to assume we can teach history in a vacuum; we always present it from one perspective or another. One of the main goals of teaching history is to create citizens and people who are informed and open-minded. But the success of such an endeavor is often mitigated by the specific community to which they belong.

In this sense, history education contains an inherent tension: On the one hand it exists to present narratives and constructs collective identities; on the other hand, it challenges those narratives and deconstructs such identities. Both are extremely important, but one cannot engage in critical thinking or the critical teaching of history without students having a clear sense of identity with which to begin; as Israeli education progresses we can see an attempt to balance both of these principles in school textbooks.
Just as there should be no problem with British students learning about the harsh realities of colonialism and acts of brutality committed by their ancestors, I believe Israeli students should learn about the awful things Palestinians endured as part of our national history. But at the same time, Israeli students must understand that atrocities were committed against Jews and Israelis as well, and if things had been different in this situation of either/or, we likely would not be around to discuss any of it today. The challenging parts of Israel's history do not nullify the shared identity we create through education—in fact, having awareness of it may make it stronger after learning about the Palestinian perspective. As mentioned before, I took part in a project from 1997 to 2007 to write a shared history textbook with Palestinian counterparts. The experience was incredible and it was genuinely the first time I was able to see my Palestinian peers not through binoculars or the barrel of a gun. But with that said, it was immediately clear we could not find a shared narrative between the sides and so instead we opted to present both narratives "side-by-side," rather than a dialogue between them.2

Each side drafted their own material and was free to express their narratives without modification or persuasion from the other side; our efforts at balance resulted in moderating previously acerbic terminology. For instance, both sides used the term "gangs" to describe Jewish and Arab militias during the period of the British Mandate and we suggested substituting the term "forces" instead. The Israeli cohort suggested this and while it was clear to that this was something we were willing to do on our end, our Palestinian partners did not agree to do the same. This sparked a debate if we should still make this change despite a lack of reciprocity. At the end, we decided that since we were speaking about historical events from a position of relative strength, we were willing to make this moderation anyway just as we would in a separate Israeli textbook.

When it came to the word "terrorism" however, both sides were unwilling to abandon the word as both sides felt they were speaking from a position of victimization. Keep in mind we were writing this book at the height of the Second Intifada, but looking at more recent textbooks such as those featured in this IMPACT-se report, it is notable that the words "terror" and "terrorism" are openly used in relation to Jewish perpetrators as well. On a separate occasion the Palestinian team took a bold step and agreed to include lessons about the Holocaust and the racism of Nazi Germany; however, my Palestinian colleagues ended this welcomed addition with the phrase "and we [the Palestinians] pay the price [for the Holocaust]."

My colleague Elie Podeh developed a thesis that Israeli textbooks can be divided into three distinct generations, with each reflecting the perspective of the time. As Israel developed politically, socially and militarily, textbooks gradually abandoned negative stereotypes and presented the Other neutrally; eventually this led to acknowledging the Other's narrative and

---

engage in critical self-reflection. Such development allowed Israeli education to become significantly more moderated and nuanced over time. With Palestinian education, the emphasis remains firmly on the justness of the Palestinian cause and the continuing national struggle. Given the circumstances I really came to understand why this is the case, but as I told my Palestinian counterparts at the time, we are no longer in the twentieth century and few will support demonization in textbooks regardless of a society's stance on issues. While Palestinian textbooks perhaps are unable to undergo the gradual transformation that reshaped Israeli education, instead they may have to jump straight to the third generation to find full acceptance in the international arena. I think that despite the disagreements, in many ways this is what my Palestinian partners in Side-by-Side tried to do. While the book was ultimately not approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education and I received some criticism, my Palestinian colleagues received threats on their life; in taking this bold step they deserve recognition for their efforts.

It is important to emphasize again that writing textbooks is not a neutral act—it forces one to take positions. One must take a position from the standpoint of one's discipline, keeping in mind that the knowledge of history cannot stay only in the academy. It is often necessary to take a position from a political standpoint as the subject being explored likely deals with power relations in a given society. And finally, it behooves us all to take a position from the standpoint of ethics and what values we wish to impart on the next generation. On this last point there can be no allowances; when students are asked in a textbook to examine racism toward Arabs by la Familia in Jerusalem, I make it clear that this is negative and corrosive to the society we wish to create. This speaks directly to the first aspect of history education in forming collective identity and values; without it we cannot begin to introduce more complicated topics such as the competing narratives in the conflict. Doing this has not been an easy task, but it is one I firmly believe is necessary to both bring us closer to ending the conflict, but also in building better Israeli citizens to continue in our own national project. IMPACT-se has found concrete evidence that the changes to which I contributed in the mid-90s onward have continued and evolved even further. While I still have my concerns about political intervention in education, this research has given me reason for optimism about the content studied by Israeli students and the overall quality of education we are providing for our next generation. This report is both impressive and important, and I intend to use it as a case study for what can be done in terms of reshaping education for societies in conflict.

Tel Aviv University historian Prof. Eyal Naveh is a pioneering author of history textbooks, having led the “historiographical revolution” in Israeli textbooks, especially on Palestinians and the issue of refugees. His foreword provides a first-person testimony into textbook writing in Israel, including a discussion about values, integrity and professionalism.
IMPACT-se's findings add another layer to the ever-growing body of research demonstrating that attitudes toward Arabs and the Palestinians have changed in the last decades—from a survival mentality to peacemaking; from peace as an ideal to peace as hard work.

Given the constant state of conflict, occasionally punctuated by peacemaking, which has impacted the Israeli psyche over the past seventy years, a degree of cognitive dissonance might be expected; yet Israeli textbooks remain undaunted in the desire to teach peace education. The way forward to attain peace is by working internally and at the most fundamental level. Although not explicitly stated, the idea that—*peace begins with me*—proliferates the curricula.

The examined curricula begin in the early years of elementary school with "a little peace between me and you," continues from grade to grade with songs and poems of the anti-war movement and culminates with candid soul searching. A considerable effort is made to encourage students to try and learn—and to the extent they can—*understand* the Palestinian experience, from the creation of Israel in 1948, viewed by Palestinians as a disaster, to the refugee issue, the violence of the First Intifada, and the struggle of Israeli Arabs to gain equality as the largest minority in the nation.

While the report focuses on Arab/Palestinian representation in the curricula, it also delves into what is an optimistic, forward-looking vision of peace contained in the textbooks. Peace processes and regional agreements undertaken with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians—and recently the Abraham Accords, with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan—are studied extensively. And within Israel, while the textbooks are committed to the notion that the country is a Jewish-democratic state, the curricula view its citizenry as part of one *shared* Israeli nation. The current education system reflects the most recent amendments (2000) to Israel's State Education as quoted in a textbook:

1. To educate students to love human beings, their nation and country, to be loyal citizens of the State of Israel, who respect their parents and family, their heritage, cultural identity and language.

11. To recognize the language, culture, history, heritage and unique tradition of the Arab population and other population groups in the State of Israel, and to recognize the equal rights of all Israeli citizens.

More research on the entire Israeli curricula is imminent; but for now, our findings show the efforts being made with this curriculum toward a peaceful future with a historical neighbor appears to be off to a good start.

---

3 (See "Peace Education: Tolerance and Coexistence" p. 20).
This IMPACT-se research of 107 textbooks drew from a corpus of some 3600 textbooks authorized by the Israeli Ministry of Education for the various Israeli curricula. The two researched curricula involved in this years-long project required analyses of thousands of pages of textbooks, measured against UNESCO and other international standards of peace and tolerance. The dedicated efforts of many made it possible.

Dr. Yael Teff-Seker's invaluable contributions and review, not just to this report, but for her trailblazing scholarship on this subject over the last decade merits our profuse thanks. Our thanks as well to Yaala Mazor, Dr. Orly Idan, Yael Guron, Professors Shifrah Sagy, Eli Podeh and Eyal Naveh for their thoughtful analysis and suggestions.

As in all cases we rely upon our stalwart researchers: Daniel Sonnenfeld, Tal Malka, Amos Taron and Liron Cohen; members (past and present) of our incredible IMPACT-se team including: Dina Gitlin-Leigh for her capable editing of our examples list, Itam Shalev for his always insightful analysis, Ariel Brodkey, for facilitating new research and the forum of consulted experts, and Sam Hyde for his proficient proofreading. Our COO Arik Agassi, ever securing books and material, organizing textbook research and reviews and offering incisive commentary throughout was instrumental in navigating the report to its final conclusion. And as always, our appreciation to IMPACT-se's guiding force, CEO Marcus Sheff, for his leadership and vision throughout this process.

Eldad J. Pardo, PhD
Director of Research
Executive Summary//Introduction

This IMPACT-se report offers an insight into major themes relating to Arabs and Palestinians in government-approved, Hebrew-language Israeli school textbooks covering civics, geography, Hebrew studies, history, homeland, society and civics, Israel studies, Jewish thought, and Jewish-Israeli culture.

The research explores how specific lessons, images and exercises portray and shape attitudes toward Palestinians and Arabs from various backgrounds within Israeli society and the greater region. It evaluates the presentation of the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, the peace process, and Arab and Palestinian Other—living either as citizens of Israel, in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and elsewhere.

This analysis looks at 107 textbooks taught at state and state-religious schools approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education for the 2022-23 academic year. These include the entire corpus of the eight state-approved civics textbooks (from which schools could choose), as well as the majority of history textbooks dealing with the periods of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In doing so, this report focuses on six thematic categories: "Peace Education" demonstrates that while the peace process with Palestinians has reached an apparent dead-end, Israeli education leaders prepared generations of young students for peace, tolerance, mutual respect and coexistence; "The Palestinian Experience" includes how textbooks deal with Palestinian identity since the nineteenth century, the Palestinian perspective of “Nakba” or the creation of Israel as a disaster, refugees, challenges faced by Israeli-Arabs and those living in the West Bank and Gaza, discrimination, Jewish nationalism, killings and Arab civil rights movements; "Diversity and Democratic Values" focuses on the effort in the curricula to educate Israeli students for an open, inclusive and welcoming society, with particular attention given to integrating and recognizing the accomplishments of Arab citizens as part of the diversity that exists across Israel's populace; "Self-Reflection, Violence and Injustice" addresses how textbooks illustrate past violence and injustices committed by Israel, private actors and pre-state underground military organizations. The textbooks encourage students to reflect deeply on the lessons drawn and to avoid demonization of the Other through understanding past inequities and violent acts against Palestinians; "Har Bracha: Perspective from the West Bank," involves research on a history textbook from Har Bracha Yeshiva (in Samaria/West Bank) for the state-religious curriculum combining traditional and secular perspectives; "Cartography" provides an overview of maps in the Israeli curricula that generally recognize the Palestine Authority as a legitimate polity.

---

5 See list of all approved textbooks by the Israeli Ministry of education here: https://edu.gov.il/mazhap/pedagogical-secretariat/professions/text-books/Pages/textbooks-mosdot.aspx.
Main Findings

- The curricula are generally vehicles for teaching peace and tolerance; peace begins with individual awareness.
- Textbooks mostly educate students for tangible peace, utilizing secular and religious sources, protest movements, foundational documents and laws, art, and poetry.
- Peace is envisioned within Israeli society and between Israel, Arab countries and Palestinians.
- Much of the researched curricula teach the Palestinian experience and perspective.
- Some books highlight examples of Israel's rich and diversified Arab community: its quality of life, achievements and many challenges as a minority.
- There is an emphasis on challenges and integration of Israeli Arabs. The emergence of a citizenship-based national identity is apparent.
- Students gain an interfaith understanding of Islamic and Christian civilizations.
- A "culture of disagreement" through a variety of viewpoints prepares students for peacemaking with the lesson that peace comes through dialogue, rather than violence.
- The curricula encourage self-reflection on historical traumas and inequities in relation to Palestinians. Historic acts by pre-state Yishuv actors/organizations and individual Israelis, labeled acts of terror in textbooks, are condemned.
- Many maps acknowledge localities of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, mark the Green Line, and point to territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority; however, they are inconsistent regarding the portrayal of the West Bank.

Flipping quickly through the report may lead the unsuspecting reader to believe that Israeli students are immersed, day in, day out, in self-flagellation and repentance over past events. This is not the case. The report, the latest by IMPACT-se covering this area, focuses on attitudes toward Arabs and Palestinians to gauge what students learn, to prepare them for the serious work of peacemaking. Not covered are other parts of the curricula that extensively reflect the unique phenomenon that is Israel. These deserve another research paper.

Nevertheless, the report offers a glimpse into the Israeli optimistic spirit and enormous potential of an integrated Jewish and Arab society, with the participation of all citizens. Although not specifically researched, there are numerous examples of gender equality in both Jewish, Arab (and other minority) environs. Students learn of the tribulations of Arab/Palestinian refugees along with those of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, who after great difficulties, eventually integrated into Israeli society. Similarly, "solving [the dilemma of Palestinian refugees] would be vital for the achievement of peace in the Middle East."

---

The Israeli education system is divided into four different sectors, each with distinct textbooks approved, recommended—and in a handful of cases—drafted by the Ministry of Education (MoE). These sectors represent distinct curricula or "streams": the state (secular) education schools (*mamlachti*); the state-religious education schools (*mamlachti-dati*); the various Haredi schools (ultra-Orthodox); and the Arabic-language schools. This report reviews textbooks used by the state and the state-religious schools, forming 74 percent of Hebrew-language students.IMPACT-se has previously published research on the Haredi curricula (includes various sub-streams) with plans to publish research on Arabic-language textbooks in the near future.

The state and state-religious curricula are committed to peace with the Arabs and Palestinians. State-religious textbooks and schools are diversified and include many views (see section "Har Bracha: Perspective from the West Bank"). However, there is a broad consensus in the study materials of the national-religious community in Israel regarding the land captured during the 1967 Six-Day War. Within this educational curriculum, such areas are part of a "theological process of redemption" and an integral part of the homeland of the "People of Israel."

While secular history is taught, history here is also understood as primarily reflecting acts of God, expressing the vision of the prophets of Israel. The state-religious textbooks, however, agree

---

7 MoE statistics for the academic year 2020–21 show that 77 percent of Israeli students attend Hebrew-language schools (state, state-religious, and ultra-Orthodox curricula), while 23 percent attend the Arabic-language schools (Arab, Druze, Bedouin, and Circassian curricula). Students in the state and state-religious schools form 74 percent of those attending Hebrew-language schools (55 percent and 19 percent, respectively), while ultra-Orthodox schools educate 26 percent of the Hebrew-language students. The total Israeli student body for that year was 2,248,000 (Grades 1–12). "Development of the Education System 5724 (2020–21), Facts and Data," Ministry of Education (Economy and Budgets Administration). https://meyda.education.gov.il/files/MinhalCalcala/uvdot_venetunim_stat_2021.pdf.


10 Roy Weintraub, "History Education in State-Religious Schools during the Past Decade" (Hebrew), *Iyunim: Multidisciplinary Studies in Israeli and Modern Jewish Society* 33 (2020): pp. 187, 219. "Process of redemption" refers to a prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel which includes the phrase "we pray for Israel, the beginning of the growth of our redemption." Redemption means various things in Jewish theology, but includes the idea of salvation from the Messiah and/or return to the land of Jewish ancestors.

that Israel is a democracy—the conflicting views on Judea and Samaria and how to secure peace are all legitimate.

The Israeli curricula have been researched extensively, with many studies focused on the Palestinian Other and the ongoing conflict. Overall, state and state-religious Israeli textbooks have evolved significantly over the past three decades in both areas. Several studies show that current representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in textbooks are far more balanced than in the past, abandoning many stereotypes and including more detail about the Palestinian experience. The studies found that attitudes toward Israeli Arabs have also improved dramatically since the mid-1990s with more images, inclusion in discourse within Israeli society, and awareness and respect for cultural and religious traditions.

It is noteworthy that some scholars contend that some older Israeli textbooks at times do present themes such as self-victimization or "siege mentality, reflecting the reality of a time when Israel faced serious existential challenges." Since then, large-scale Israeli curricula studies, including those previously conducted by IMPACT-se, show that while these themes do persist, their prevalence has decreased since the mid-1980s.

Similar conclusions were reached by Dr. Yael Teff-Seker in her long-standing research on the attitudes of Israeli State Textbooks on the Arab and Palestinian Other. In her contribution to the 2018 volume, *Multiple Alterities: Views of Others in Textbooks of the Middle East*, and later updated in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Israeli textbooks for the state and state-religious sectors were found to have various overarching characteristics.

Arguably the most important finding—that peacemaking and dialogue are the ultimate way to resolve disputes—is applied to scenarios ranging from individual cases of interpersonal disagreements to discussions surrounding the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. Peace, as an ideal, is taught as both a Jewish and a universal aspiration; there is an effort to inculcate the concept of

---


13 Also known as Palestinian Israelis/Arab Israelis or Palestinians/Arabs with Israeli citizenship.

14 Teff-Seker, "Peace and Conflict."


16 Elie Podeh, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History Textbooks, 1948–2000" (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002).


18 Teff-Seker, "Peace and Conflict."
peace from an early age, and textbooks go into great detail, positively describing various negotiations and agreements between Israel and Arab states. Poems and songs, often products of anti-war protest movements, are introduced. In one example, a blood-stained copy of the "Song of Peace"—in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's pocket at the moment of his assassination—is depicted, teaching students that he is a "hero for peace." Other textbook examples quote open letters by intellectuals and army officers campaigning against what they describe as occupation and Israeli settlement.

Hope for peace in Jerusalem and recognition of its holiness for all religions—for Arabs and Jews—is widespread in the curriculum. A few books refer to Palestinian political aspirations in the city and inform students that Palestinians also wish to make it their capital, one of which asks students to recite an ancient prayer for the peace of Jerusalem immediately after explaining the attachment of Palestinians to the city. Specific examples of Israeli-Arab cooperation are lauded as are frequent lessons about peacemaking with Egypt, Jordan, and the Oslo Accords in textbooks for history, civics, Jewish culture, and other subjects. Students are shown the advantageous outcomes of peacemaking, for instance in the domain of resource and economic cooperation. The Abraham Accords have already been introduced to the curricula, but full elaboration awaits new textbook publications. Our findings demonstrate that the Israeli textbooks educate students about a tangible peace, rather than bolster a conflictive ethos.¹⁹

Contemporary Israeli textbooks offer students the opportunity to reflect on multiple perspectives of contentious political and historical issues. Lessons typically advance factual elements of an issue, followed by descriptions of the relevant disagreements; each perspective challenges students to discuss the issue by referring to various options and dilemmas promoted by either side. This approach reduces the likelihood of distorting or misunderstanding motives of certain parties in a dispute.

Israeli state and state-religious textbooks do not shrink from self-reflection or self-criticism regarding past and present Israeli policies. Discussions of violence against Palestinian civilians committed either by the state, individuals or groups—sometimes characterized as terror—are condemned in both the historical and modern context. There are detailed incidents of these acts from before and after the establishment of the State of Israel. These include murders committed at Deir Yassin and Kafr Qasim. Students learn that the killing of forty-nine Israeli-Arab villagers in Kafr Qasim by Israeli Border Police in 1956 led to major reforms, allowing soldiers and police to refuse unlawful orders. Textbooks explore the events of "Land Day" in 1976, along with the Sabra and Shatila massacres perpetrated by the Lebanese Falange during the Israeli invasion of

Lebanon in 1982. There are also discussions around the violence of the First Intifada, and the mass murder conducted by Baruch Goldstein at the Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994.

Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians is condemned in both the historical and modern context and, when appropriate, labelled as terrorism. These include indiscriminate retaliatory actions both against Arabs living in Mandatory Palestine and against the British Mandatory forces. Textbooks relate the criticism at the time, made by leaders of the Jewish Yishuv (pre-state Jewish community) of acts of what they called "retaliatory terrorism" committed by the underground military and paramilitary forces: Lehi, Etzel and Haganah. Students also learn that Meir Kahane's Kach Movement was declared a terror organization, and outlawed.

A version of the Palestinian perspective, together with the Israeli account of independence and nation-building, prompts students to contemplate hardships of Palestinian refugees from 1948, as well as the possible day-to-day difficulties experienced by modern-day Palestinians. Many texts include viewpoints of Palestinian or Arab states, aiding students to see these Others as opposing political movements, rather than hostile and hateful enemies.

Newly added content to the curricula offers a more balanced understanding of the Palestinian ethos and is partly based on the findings of the 1990s "new historians," and ensuing academic and public discourse.²⁰ It also reflects the implementation of the MoE policies on peace education beginning with the mid-1970s, through the 1990s.²¹ Significant as well are the amendments to the Law of Education that took place in 2000.²² All this remains part of a larger Israeli educational worldview, albeit one that includes by now much self-reflection, balance and nuance.²³ The curricula offer a multitude of examples expressing Palestinian and Arab points of view, and a focus on those elements, if embraced by students, might ultimately lead to a fruitful dialogue.

The collective and individual Arab/Palestinian Other as presented in the Israeli curricula, appear to signify a step toward reconciliation. As elucidated previously, textbooks for state and state-religious curricula from the past two decades have expanded material in this regard. The Israeli education system highlights the population of Israel as an impressive collection of individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. From elementary school on, textbooks include stories and descriptions of all types of Israeli citizens, including Arabs, Druze and Bedouins—emphatically positive—and displaying images of Arab-Jewish friendships, communities and

²² These are discussed in the curricula and presented in this report.
²³ It is worth noting that a team of Israeli and Palestinian historians authored as a book presenting both Israeli and Palestinian narratives: Side-by-Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine." The team was unable to formulate a dialogue-based history and the resultant textbook remains outside the researched Israeli curricula. Sami Adwan, Dan Bar-On, Eyal Naveh and Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, eds. Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine (New York: The New Press, 2012).
interactions. Israeli Arab professionals are celebrated for their integral roles throughout society as doctors, dentists, lawyers, politicians, scientists, researchers and judges. As students understand more about Arab culture and society, they prepare field projects for nearby Arab localities.

Amid such optimism there are discussions of the many challenges endured by the minority Arab population. There is a consensus in the textbooks that most Israeli Arabs retain a Palestinian identity. The textbooks lean on the authority of Theodore Herzl in *Visionary of the Jewish State*, as well as Israel's Declaration of Independence and Law of Education in advocating for Israeli-Arab rights. Another theme is that the Arab-Israeli conflict likely continues to exacerbate the polarization between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Students are confronted with an Israeli-Arab position in relation to the difficulties of being a minority in a Jewish state, how this has manifested historically and how it can pose a challenge to equality. The legal dimensions of this issue, relating to civil rights and equality, are discussed extensively.

Muslim and Christian tenets, holy texts and rituals are studied. Textbooks show and praise the contributions of Islamic civilization in domains such as math, sciences, and philosophy. Religious tolerance and coexistence are praised in general and specifically in cities such as Haifa and Jerusalem. Students learn that the holiest Islamic site in Jerusalem is the al-Haram al-Sharif (The Sacred Compound), situated on the top of the Temple Mount. They learn to appreciate the theological and artistic significance of the compound, and particularly the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. One textbook contends that while tensions arise between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, the city's residents, for the most part, live peacefully side-by-side. Education against bigotry (often defined as racism) is a priority, using case-studies ranging from bigoted slurs hurled by soccer fans to extremist political movements (such as Meir Kahane's Kach Movement), which is considered a threat to democracy.

Students are exposed to problematic historical events: the Kafr Qasim massacre; the unjust treatment of villagers from Iqrit and Bir'am—who received a promise to return to their villages—later reneged upon; land disputes of the government with some of the Bedouin population; past military rule over Israel's Arab population in the early years of the state, and specific cases of discrimination and bigotry associated with it. Appropriate lessons and conclusions are attached to the study of such cases, so that students may easily recognize problematic and troubling events.

An important addition to the Israeli curriculum over past decades has been the growing interest in the Palestinian experience and narrative. This extends to descriptions of nineteenth-century

---


Arab populations and life; development of the conflict and emergence of Palestinian identity; an emphasis on their experience; use of their nomenclature (Nakba, or Catastrophe), including exposure to first-person Palestinian accounts describing their becoming refugees; challenges facing the Palestinians of the West Bank; and the Intifadas, or uprisings. The Palestinian experience is described to students in numerous ways. While learning the history of Zionism they simultaneously explore the development of Palestinian nationalism. The textbooks do not sidestep recounting Palestinian suffering, and deliver a robust narration of the peace process. There are anecdotes of Palestinians saving Israeli lives or being saved by them. Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish is featured in a high school civics textbook. And students read stories of joint Israeli-Palestinian projects, including those focused on coexistence and equal rights, and about peace workshops. Prominent Palestinian figures, including Israeli citizens, are featured or quoted.

The curricula include many examples of Palestinian individual Others, offering a platform to both ordinary people and prominent figures such as writers, historians, civil servants and others. These individuals are mostly Israeli Arabs (for instance Hossam Haick, Adel Manna, Abd el-Aziz el-Zoubi, Salman Natour, among others), but also Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens (including: Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Darwish, Raja Shehade or stories about Arabs in Palestine under Ottoman or British rule, or of an elderly Palestinian man who collapses at an Israeli military checkpoint in the West Bank while on the way to a hospital but not allowed passage until his documents are verified).

Generally, Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs, along with the cities in which they live, are featured in a large number of maps covering Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank [Judea/Samaria] and Gaza. A great many maps mark the Green Line, acknowledge Palestinian presence, and point to territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority in map legends and accompanying text. While the localities of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs (including integrated cities and other relevant information) are well represented in all textbooks with maps throughout the curricula, the portrayal of the PA's territory includes inconsistencies. At times, these areas are labeled as "Disputed Territory," and especially when referring to Israel's territory, "Disputed Borders." Most maps depict Areas A and B, representing various degrees of Palestinian control (as per Oslo Accords); others only show Area A; and some show no spatial differentiation between Israeli and Palestinian territories. Area C (mostly controlled by Israel) is usually left unmarked on the maps but explained in accompanying texts.

Of note is a textbook given a separate section in the report which offers a distinct perspective on the use of the word "Palestinian." Offered by the yeshiva-based Har Bracha Institute, the book reportedly seeks to offset what is perceived as the "post-Zionist" left-wing trend in Israeli education. For this research, IMPACT-se found no parallel for this in examined textbooks,
particularly in relation to MoE guidelines for history curricula and international standards. Har Bracha's textbook, *Return to Zion*, typically refers to the term "Palestinians" with parentheses. In a footnote, the textbook authors discourage students to use the term Palestinian, which they argue is "anti-Jewish" and rooted in anti-Jewish history and sentiment. Nevertheless, the textbook includes sufficient information on the importance of relating to the Arab Other, including how equality is a basic principle of Israel's founding, which includes: full religious equality; unique education systems; the banning of employment-based discrimination; and official recognition of Arabic as a state language. In some places, the textbook exceeds Ministry of Education requirements in presenting information about 1948, including the use of the term "Nakba" and the Palestinian narrative of the Nakba, and the peace process. It also includes maps that are much more detailed, recognizing Palestinian areas of control and self-government in a way that other books in the researched curricula do not.

While open debate and free speech are encouraged, the idea of living in what the textbooks define as a "culture of disagreement" suggests that the Jewish national movement will be able to make dramatic decisions peacefully in the future as it did in the past. Multiple lessons on Rabin's assassination offer the observation that the "price of peace" should be obtained through dialogue rather than violence. In such an environment, dissent is encouraged. Textbooks accommodate a variety of viewpoints, including quotes from open letters by intellectuals and army officers campaigning against what they view as an occupation.

**Research Goals**

The research examines mainstream Israeli curricula to discover how the educational system prepares students for peace with Palestinians. The research includes peace with Arab countries and attitudes toward Israeli Arabs as a diversified population as well as toward the Arab Islamic and Christian cultures.

---

26 This is one of seven history books approved for the state religious sector by the MoE dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict from which teachers may choose. Since the Israeli system lets each school choose its own history books, there are no data on the numbers of state-religious schools deciding to use this volume.

27 "Culture of Disagreement": Approaching a disagreement by way of dialogue and discussion where a space is created with room for every opinion, even those which may be completely opposite." See Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 7, *Trails of Culture*, Yachin Espein, Anat Besser and Iris Saban, CET (Permit: 3331), 2017, p. 241.

28 To illustrate this point, note that both sides, the Jewish Yishuv and the Arabs of Palestine, were unhappy with the partition plans of 1937 and 1948. The Yishuv accepted while the Arabs rejected the plans partly because at that time, they lacked a "culture of disagreement," [debate] allowing for peaceful decision-making on controversial issues. See articles by Mustafa Kabha and Nazir Majali in 60 Years to the November 29th 1947 Resolution. The Partition Resolution and the Controversy Around it: Sources and Reflections (Hebrew), ed. Ruth Gavison (Jerusalem: Metzila Center, April 2009), pp. 60–75, http://www.metzilah.org.il/webfiles/fck/file/novemberfinal.pdf.
This study analyzes 107 textbooks for Israeli state and state-religious schools. These include the entire corpus of state-approved civics textbooks, as well as the vast majority of modern history textbooks.\textsuperscript{29}

Peace Education: Tolerance and Coexistence

The authors of the Israeli textbooks seem committed to prepare students for a future of peace, tolerance, and coexistence—at home, with the Palestinians, and in the region. In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Education made peace education a central theme across its curricula. Since then, the Israeli educational system is committed to the notion of peace as its central goal.

Peace Education

Peace education focuses on relationships between groups and strives to change attitudes, reduce prejudices and stereotypes, increase tolerance and change perceptions of both the self and the Other. Education should strive to attain a level of legitimization of the other side's perspective, its collective narrative, its experiences, fears and dreams while reinforcing a sense of collective identity. Some curricula teach that actual conflict resolution (e.g., reaching a peace agreement) is dependent largely on political and economic powers; as such they may attempt to promote societal improvement in terms of mutual understanding, tolerance and reduction of violence between groups. This is true especially in cases of protracted or intractable conflicts, where conflicts are severe and complex and sometimes perceived as irresolvable. In such cases, peace education can encourage motivation and openness to the idea of peace, as well as contribute to peace sustainability. The Israeli curricula go a long way to accomplish just that: by centering on peace and collaboration as the way to solve regional problems.

Israeli textbooks place a strong emphasis on compromise and reconciliation in lessons for younger students. A good example is in a poem taught to first-grade students called "Let's make

---

a Little Peace," which lays the groundwork for approaching much broader and more challenging topics such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. The poem describes two parties resolving a dispute in a way that benefits each side individually and specifically calls for each to make concessions and avoid triggering emotional responses from the other side.

Let's Make a Little Peace / Leah Naor

Let's make a little peace
I with you and you with me.
Let's make a little peace
A truly little peace.
Not world peace.
Look! I make a little peace, with myself.
I won't get angry
If I can.
I especially won't upset anyone.
I'll give up and you'll give up.
A little bit or more.
Let's make a little peace,
We won't yell, we won't fight
We'll simply sit together, talk or listen.
Maybe it's not that big a peace,
It's small and ordinary.
But every peace needs to start somewhere.

1. In the first stanza the poem says: "Let's make a little peace, I with you and you with me."
   In the second stanza the poem explains how to make a little peace. Read and explain.

2. In the third stanza it says: "We'll simply sit together and talk or listen."
   How can this help make peace? Explain.
The child in the song says: "If I can, I won't get angry." Why, in your opinion, did he say, "if I can?"

Hebrew Studies, Grade 1, Magic and Friends: Songs and Stories for the Entire Year, Nira Levin, Haya Yitzhaky, Maya Dvir and Anat Dalal, Center for Educational Technology (CET) (Permit: 2853), 2019, pp. 42–43.

A second-grade Hebrew studies textbook has a poem teaching the various meanings of the word *shalom*, which can be defined as peace but also serves as a greeting or while leaving: "peace be upon you." This poem demonstrates the ideals of peace instilled in students during the early stages of their education. Its theme is uncompromising: "Always peace, not battle, not fire."

**Peace [Shalom] / Tamar Adar**

'Peace' is a blessing,
'Peace' is a prayer,
'Peace' is a word you will hear
At any time, every day every hour.
'Peace' is what you say when you meet children and adults:
Peace to you, and how are you,
We were so delighted to see you!
'Peace' is said when you depart,
From male and female friends,
And if you wish, you also add:
See you again!
But peace, real peace
Is a wish, is a dream.
We all ask for peace.
Always peace, not battle, not fire
Therefore, we all aspire:
Let there be peace upon Israel!


A third-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook offers ideals of peace with visual illustrations; students are asked to create their own poster to promote peace and respect between people, using messages such as "Peace among us" and an image of the olive branch as a symbol for peace. A civics textbook for grades 7–9 repeats this theme, showing a white dove holding an olive branch and a caption identifying it as a universal symbol of peace. The Biblical origin of this image with its deep tie to Jewish traditions is explained.

---

36 Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 3, Gates to What is Between One and a Friend, Y. Elitzur, M. Dubinsky, N. Maor and S. Hershkovitz-Sharshevski (Permit: 2756), p. 166.
37 Civics, Grades 7–9, Civics in the State of Israel, D. Shahar, Kinneret (Permit: 3149), 2010, p. 46.
Friends Create

Here is an example of a poster that aims to promote peace and dignity between people. The poster includes:

- An olive branch—a symbol of peace.
- "Peace Among Us"—the purpose of creating the poster.
- "For the next generations"—The reason why it is important to have peace among us.

Create a poster that encourages peace and respect between peoples. You can create the poster from a drawing, from a symbol and from words.
1) According to the Bible, the olive is a symbol of majesty, beauty, freshness, peace, and fertility. The olive branch is also accepted as a symbol of peace, because of the role it played in the story of the Flood; the dove carried it in its beak to indicate the end of the Flood.

Civics, Grades 7–9, Civics in the State of Israel, David Shahar, Kinneret (Permit: 3149) 2010, p. 46.

Fifth-graders study "White Dove is Old Already," a poem using a white dove as a metaphor for Israel's long yearning for peace. The 1980 poem, by leading anti-war activist Yehonatan Geffen, protests the slow pace of Israeli peace efforts. The dove of peace is no longer young, he pleads, let's make peace already. This is reinforced by a question that follows the poem and clearly
asserts, "The State of Israel aspires for peace"; students are asked to find the meaning of peace in the state emblem.

**The White Dove is Old Already** / Yehonatan Geffen

The white dove is old already  
She has been standing there for years  
You know  
The white dove is old already  
Other birds her age already have grandchildren  
The white dove is old already  
Let her come down from the flags and find herself  
A dovecote in the garden  
The white dove is old already  
It's time for her too to have a little fledgling  
A son of a dove  
The white dove is old already  
Too many wars stand in line for her  
The white dove is old already  
The olive branch is drying out in her beak  
The white dove is old already  
As each day goes by, she becomes less and less white
And more pale  
The white dove is old already  
Tell her that the waters have abated  
And she is free.

Discussion and Writing Exercise

1. A. Why was the dove chosen to be a symbol for peace?  
   B. Read the book of Genesis, chapter 8, verse 11. Where in the poem is there a link to the story of Noah's Ark?

2. There is a connection between the poem’s form and its content. Whenever the poet wants us to pay attention to a certain notion, he would sometimes alter the number of lines in the stanza or its rhyming.  
   A. Look at the poem as if it were a picture. Identify which stanza is different than the others.  
   B. In your opinion, what is the poem's most important stanza?

3. In what way is the rhyming in that stanza different from the rhyming in all the other stanzas?

4. The third stanza is shorter than the rest of the stanzas. What was the poet’s intention in doing so?

5. What line keeps on repeating itself in the poem? What is the repetition's purpose?

6. A. What is the narrator's wish for "the dove from the flags?"  
   B. What condition needs to be fulfilled for the dove to "come down from the flags?"

7. The State of Israel aspires for peace, but its symbol does not feature a dove. What represents the aspiration for peace in in Israel's state emblem?

Flag and Emblem of the State of Israel


From the teachings of Medieval Jewish sage Maimonides students learn that it is [ethically] forbidden for one not to reconcile a conflict and that a person should always forgive another wholeheartedly. "The Other," a song by contemporary Israeli rock artist Barry Sakharov features the notion that there is no such thing as enemy. ("The enemy is a friend you've abandoned.") By interacting with different people, students can learn about the world around them and themselves.
With the authority of Maimonides and Sakharov, the Jewish and Israeli elements of this program merge into one universal message of reconciliation and friendship.

It is forbidden for one to be cruel and not reconcile, rather, one should be quick to forgive and slow to anger. And when the offender asks one to forgive, one should forgive willingly and wholly, even if the offender caused him great sorrow, one should not seek revenge or bear a grudge.

Maimonides, The Laws of Repentance, Ch. 2, Halakha 14.38

The Other39
Lyrics and Melody: Barry Sakharov
Let the mouth speak
That the tongue will release,
Toward the face of the 'Other'
Whom you did not know.
The train will whistle
It's time to go up
On the carriage of spirits
That you forgot.
So don't be afraid
And don't look away
Because you’re not alone in the world.
With your face toward the 'Other,'
It's yourself you will discover,
With your face toward the 'Other.'
The barrier will be broken
The words will bridge
The enemy is a friend
That you have neglected.

Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 9, Relationship Topics: Treatment of the Other, Author Team, MoE, Loni Kohen (Permit: 3333), 2017, pp. 11–12.

38 The text mistaken lists this as Halakha 14 instead of Halakha 10. For another translation see: https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/911891/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-Two.htm.
Ideals of peace are introduced to students in a variety of ways. A lesson for sixth-grade literature, prompts students to read and analyze the classic 1969 song by Yaakov Rotblit and Yair Rosenblum, "A Song for Peace" [Shir LaShalom]. Three decades later, it became associated with the spirit of the Oslo Accords. The lyrics attempt to deconstruct martyrdom and heroism, depicting the gruesomeness and pointlessness of death in a war that could have been averted and ultimately focus on the overriding centrality of life and peace in Judaism. The guiding questions of this lesson and the historical associations of the song provide a useful bridge for students to connect the values and ideals of peace, specifically to the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

*A Song for Peace / Yakov Rotblit*

Let the sun rise 
and give the morning light, 
the purest prayer 
will not bring us back.

---

He whose candle was snuffed out
and was buried in the dust,
a bitter cry won’t wake him,
won’t bring him back.
Nobody will return us
from the dead dark pit.
Here, neither the joy of victory
nor songs of praise
will help.
So, sing only for peace,
don’t whisper a prayer,
it’s better to sing a song for peace
with a giant shout!
Let the sun penetrate
through the flowers,
don’t look backward,
leave those who have departed.
Lift your eyes with hope
not through the rifle sights
sing a song for love
and not for wars.
Don’t say the day will come,
bring the day,
because it is not a dream.
And within all the city's squares,
cheer for peace.
And sing, sing a song for peace,
don’t whisper a prayer,
it’s better to sing a song for peace
with a giant shout!

1. A. Who are the poetic speakers of the song? Explain and quote.
   B. It is not explicitly written to whom the speakers address their words. Hypothesize and justify your answer.
2. The expression "whose candle was snuffed out" is a poetic borrowing; explain the meaning of this loan.
3. A. What do the speakers wish? List points.
   B. Why can their wishes be seen as a will of sorts?
4. What does the sun symbolize in the song?
   Choose one of the questions of 5 or 6 and answer.
5. Some believe that this is a protest song. How could they justify this contention.
6. The song can be divided into two parts.
   A. What is the subject of the first three stanzas?
   B. What is the subject of the remaining stanzas?

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 took place only minutes after "a Song of Peace" was sung at a large pro-peace rally in the center of Tel Aviv; the image of blood-stained lyrics, found later in his coat pocket, became a powerful visual symbol for Israelis, illustrating the price and challenges to making peace.

Rabin's death and its associated symbolism also appears in a history textbook for grades 11–12 where students see the blood-stained lyrics of "A Song for Peace" carried by the late Prime Minister Rabin at the time of his assassination.

Because of the increasing demonstrations of the right-wing, the supporters of the peace policy decided to arrange a support rally for the government in the Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv, on November 4, 1995. The rally's title was "Yes for Peace, No to Violence." Masses arrived at the square to support the government's policy. In his speech at the rally, [Prime Minister Yitzhak] Rabin said: "We don't forget for a moment—whether they support our actions or oppose it—we are all brothers, we are all Jews, and we share the same destiny." The rally ended with the singing of "A Song for Peace," with Rabin's participation. A few minutes later, on his way to his car, Rabin was murdered by Yigal Amir—a Jewish right-wing man.

**Caption:** A page with the gory lyrics of Yakov Rotblit's—"A Song for Peace" was found in Yitzhak Rabin's jacket pocket after he had been shot to death on November 4, 1995.

**History, Grades 11–12, Time Travels: Building a Country in the Middle East, Kezia Avieli-Tabibyan, CET (Permit: 4218), 2009,** p. 207.
While Israel is a society with tremendous diversity of opinion, school textbooks universally convey the goal of peace between Israel and its neighboring countries as well as the Palestinians. Many textbooks have in the past portrayed Israel's participation in past wars as a "necessary evil," or a circumstance compelled by the actions of neighboring Arab states. In this respect, history textbooks have changed dramatically over the past several decades; there are now explanations of motivating factors for Arab participation in the conflict, such as rational geopolitical considerations. All textbooks reject violent forms of conflict management as a desirable or viable long-term solution.

Nevertheless, while detailing previous attempts at negotiation and resolution, students learn that the current relationship of Israel with Palestinians is complicated. Some lessons focus primarily on the desired outcome of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; others describe potential conditions for a peace process.

As with all controversial topics in Israeli textbooks, students are taught that there is more than one point of view in relation to peacemaking and they are encouraged to think critically. While the peace processes, negotiations and agreements occupy a primary focus, various textbooks place different emphases on the subject, particularly regarding the more controversial issues within the Oslo Accords.

Both peace as a goal and peacemaking as a practice are portrayed positively in both the wider Arab-Israeli and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Starting with the third grade, textbooks for history, civics and Jewish-Israeli culture for the state and state-religious curricula contain numerous images and lessons about peace negotiations and agreements. In a ninth-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook, students learn about Israeli and Arab commitment to peace; and that wars are an unacceptable choice. The following text includes an excerpt from the Israeli Declaration of Independence, affirming the equal citizenship of the Arab inhabitants of Israel and appealing to them to preserve peace and aid in state-building. The passage also describes the intention to reach out to neighboring countries, conveying Israel's commitment and desire to establish relationships and advance the Middle Eastern region. Students are exhorted to adhere to these fundamental principles.
Since its establishment, Israel has strived in numerous ways to live in peace with its neighbors and with all the countries in the world. Already in the Declaration of Independence there are important statements, toward the end of the document, which we should learn from and carry out today, as well:

We appeal—in the very midst of the bloody onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab people of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the building of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the independent Hebrew people in its land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

A Jewish Culture textbook prompts sixth-grade students to think about why peace is such a central vision in the Declaration of Independence and consider to what extent is modern-day Israel close to fulfilling this vision. Students are invited to discuss the paragraph in the Declaration of Independence in which the Israeli people give "an offer of peace and good neighborliness" to neighboring states.
We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the independent Hebrew people in its land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

From the Declaration of Independence

1. What is the vision of the authors of the Declaration for relations between the State of Israel's and its neighbors? Write the words that describe the part of the State of Israel and the words that describe the request from its neighbors.

2. Go back to page 91 and read part 4 of the Declaration of Independence again. Explain why the authors of the Declaration of Independence addressed extensively the subject of peace.

3. In your opinion, is the State of Israel today close to this vision or far from it? Explain. Provide references supporting your opinion from items in the newspapers, from what you see around you or other similar sources.

The following textbook reinforces the no-war message in a speech by the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Signing the Peace Treaty with Egypt illustrates the inevitability of peace since there is no such thing as an "eternal enemy." A quote from the Qur'an, especially notable in a Jewish-Israeli culture textbook, challenges Christians and Jews to engage in peaceful dialogue, not violence. The text envisages peace that includes dialogue and debate based on mutual respect. It also implicitly confronts the view that Islam cannot accept Jewish independence in the region, leading to the certainty of jihad wars. Learning about the visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, a devout Muslim, to the Knesset in Jerusalem, realistically demonstrates to students the feasibility of attaining peace. This optimistic message is crowned by a picture displaying the big smiles and triple handshake of the American, Israeli and Egyptian leaders during the peace accords signing ceremony at the White House.

Over the years, peace agreements were signed between Israel and a few neighboring Arab countries. The first peace agreement took place with the largest and strongest Arab country, Egypt. In his welcome speech in Jerusalem to Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt, Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister at the time, said:

We have learned from history, Mr. President, that war is avoidable. It is peace that is inevitable. Many nations have waged war against one another, and sometimes they have made use of the foolish term "eternal enemy." There are no eternal enemies. After all wars comes the inevitable—peace.

(Menachem Begin's speech at the Knesset, November 20, 1977)
Indeed, the Qur'an also opposes unnecessary wars: 'Whenever they kindle a fire for war Allah puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land; and Allah does not love the mischief-makers' (Qur'an, surah 5, verse 64). According to the Qur'an, Muhammed also emphasized the struggle for the religious truth with the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians): "And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our Allah and your Allah is One, and to Him do we submit.'" (surah 29, verse 46)


A Jewish culture textbook prompts sixth-grade students to think about why peace is such a central vision in the Declaration of Independence and consider to what extent is modern-day Israel close to fulfilling this vision. Students are invited to discuss the paragraph in the Declaration of Independence in which Israel extends "an offer of peace and good neighborliness" to neighboring states.

Teaching about specific peace treaties goes beyond learning history. These momentous events serve as evidence and concrete examples to the main theme of the curricula, namely peacemaking. The text in the following sixth-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook treats the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty as a case study that carries lessons for the art of peacemaking. One lesson to be drawn is the perseverance and determination needed for overcoming the many obstacles on the way to reconciliation. Another is that peace is a process that requires readiness for talking, compromising, and rebuilding. It also tells students that **peace is an ongoing process** and a state of mind, rather than a mere moment in history.

**Peacemaking**

![Image of the signing of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty]

Usually, the peace process is fraught with hardships, but if you persist in searching for peace—it is possible so succeed.
Peace is a process, and if we want to solve problems between us and our neighbors, as well as in the classroom, society and family, we must be willing to discuss, give up and rebuild. Peace is a mindset and behavior, and not a one-time peace agreement.

Read the summary of Menachem Begin’s speech, at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, together with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, in the capital of Norway Oslo, on December 10, 1978.

The peace agreement between Israel and Egypt is a recurring motif in social science textbooks, often used as a positive case study for how Israel can pursue its ideals and values of peace despite historical enmity. A lesson on "the vision of peace," explains how "vision" became reality; further methods to expand peace are discussed. The Israeli curricula teach students that Israel mostly exists without war but that is different from peace; yet the focus is on replicating the Egyptian and Jordanian progress with all its neighbors and the remaining Arab world. An excerpt from Menachem Begin’s speech in the Knesset on the occasion of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, highlights a peace that was meant to be lasting, for future generations. Begin called for "full peace" with the "great Arab nation in its countries and its lands" and the "Jewish nation" in the "Land of Israel."
From Vision to Reality

With the announcement of the establishment of the State of Israel, fighting that had already begun, now expanded into a war with the armies of the surrounding Arab countries, now united against the young nation. Over the years there have been many wars, but most of the time the status quo (the existing situation) was maintained, so there was no war, but no peace either. The leaders of the State of Israel aspired and tried to bring peace at various times, but only a few were successful. Today we enjoy peace with Egypt and Jordan.

The signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979 was an immense achievement. The two leaders who succeeded in changing direction from the path of war to the path of peace were the President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat and the Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin. For this they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Read Menachem Begin's words before signing the peace agreement with Egypt:

Therefore, allow me today to determine what the meaning of peace is, according to our understanding. We seek peace, a full peace, true peace, with true reconciliation between the Jewish nation and the Arab nation. Not to dwell on the memories of the past. Wars happened. Much blood was spilled. Many wonderful members of the young generation fell; from both sides. We, all our days, shall remember our heroes who sacrificed their lives in order that the day may arrive, and this day shall arrive. And we honor the courage or our rival and honor to all members of the younger generation of the Arab nation who also fell. Not to wallow in memories even if they are hard on all of us. To overcome, to care about our future, our nations, our children, our joint future. To see that we shall live in this region all together for generations to come. The great Arab nation in its countries and its lands and the Jewish nation in its land, the Land of Israel.

From Menachem Begin's speech in the Knesset, 10 Kislev 5738 (November 20, 1977)

Visual representations of this peace agreement are also prevalent in textbooks for history and civics, specifically showing positive interactions between prominent Israeli leaders, such as: Israeli Prime Minister Begin, former Prime Minister Golda Meir, Opposition Party leader Shimon Peres, and Egyptian President Sadat.

The following history book cover has a collage of various images including the peace processes with Jordan and Egypt, a portrait of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who vocally opposed peace with Israel during his tenure prior to Sadat, and David Ben-Gurion the founding father of the State of Israel.

Textbooks discuss Israel's rapprochement and peace accords with Jordan in depth across multiple grades and subjects and is often depicted with images and lessons relating to the Egyptian peace agreement or the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians. The curricula also confront the issue of territorial and added concessions made by Israel in the pursuit of peace. This includes the transfer of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, but also concerns relating to territorial boundaries in other areas captured by Israel in the 1967 war. This question is raised repeatedly, especially in discussions of the peace accords with Jordan, parallels with the Oslo Accords and the Madrid peace conference.
A chapter from a Grade 11–12 history textbook teaches students about Israel's relations with the Arab world from the progression of the peace process at the Madrid Conference, to the Oslo Accords; the formation of the Palestinian Authority; the peace treaty with Jordan; and eventually the recognition of Israel by several Arab countries.

Later, under the pressure of the US administration, the Israeli government entered into negotiations with Arab countries and with the Palestinian leadership in the Madrid Conference. Following these failed negotiations, and after the Labor party had returned to power, direct negotiations with the Palestinians began, which led to the signing of the Oslo Accords and the formation of the Palestinian Authority, led by Yasser Arafat. Following the Accords, a peace treaty with Jordan was signed, and Israel was recognized by some of the Arab countries and started to have relations with them.


In a chapter from another history textbook about the Madrid Conference, Israeli students learn, prior to the conference, the Palestinian Liberation Organization changed its militant strategy to a more peaceful one, as it adopted an approach that rejected terror, and was willing to recognize Israel's right to exist.
Only one year after the outbreak of the Intifada, the United States decided to start an official dialogue with the PLO. The decision was made following a series of informal contacts, which resulted in Arafat accepting certain conditions. One of them was that the PLO accepted United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 (adopted following the Six-Day War) and 338 (adopted following the Yom Kippur War), which revolved around the principle of land for peace. The PLO rejected using terror and expressed its willingness to recognize Israel's right to exist alongside a Palestinian state between Jordan and the sea, after realizing that it would not be able to end Israel's rule in the territories [West Bank and Gaza] by means of force.


Note that at the time (1988) Yasser Arafat agreed to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, an issue later becoming a major bone of contention. ("We accept two states, the Palestine state and the Jewish State of Israel"). 41 The textbooks typically do not refer to this issue, perhaps because, more than thirty years later, the refusal to recognize Israel's existence remains a major obstacle for peace. 42

While discussing concessions made during the peace process, history textbooks also examine at length how the peace treaty with Jordan led to active cooperation between the two states in the areas of economy, security, water distribution and (halting) terrorism. Students learn how the agreement also facilitated the creation of new connections between Israel and Arab countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, and Morocco. The positivity of the peace treaty is further emphasized with an optimistic photo from the signing ceremony (below). The question is raised whether the relaxed atmosphere in this image suggests more closeness between Israel and Jordan, compared with what one sees in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords.

---


42 Early signs of change in the Palestinian rejection of Israel as the Jewish homeland surprisingly seems to have emerged from an Islamist party in Israel. Sam Sokol and Jack Khoury, "Islamist Lawmaker Draws Fire for Acknowledging Israel as 'Jewish State,'" Haaretz, December 22, 2021, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/islamist-lawmaker-draws-fire-for-acknowledging-israel-as-jewish-state-1.10486921.
Following months of talks between Israel and Jordan, which quickly turned into overt conversations, the parties signed the Washington Declaration July 25, 1994, which served as the basis for the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, signed October 26, 1994. Israel agreed to relinquish part of the Arava Valley and provide water from the Jordan River to the Kingdom of Jordan, two subjects that were in dispute between the countries. According to the agreement, the decisions were: to mutually recognize the other country's right to exist in peace and with full sovereignty over its territory; to have economic cooperation between the states; to establish full diplomatic relations; to cooperate in stopping terror; to agree on a just distribution of water; and to a shared willingness to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian refugees.

Since the signing of the treaty, embassies were opened in Amman and Tel Aviv, many Israelis travel to Jordan, and there is full security and economic cooperation between the countries. The peace treaty with Jordan, and the agreements signed with Egypt and the Palestinians, created a new reality regarding Israel's relations with the Arab world. As a result of these agreements, Israel also formed connections with other Arab countries: the Persian Gulf Emirates, Tunisia and Morocco.

Israel's first 30 years of were marked by wars over its existence as it was surrounded by enemy countries. Over the next two decades Israel became, in the eyes of its neighbors, an existing fact they had to grapple with. Nevertheless, the rise of radical Islam, in the Middle East and the world at large, continues to pose a permanent threat to the stability of the region and the safety of its inhabitants.

[Photo text:] A warm handshake between King Hussein of Jordan and Foreign Affairs Minister Shimon Peres, moments before signing the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. Other people in the photo: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Queen Noor of Jordan.
Question:
Why does this photo express a more relaxed and optimistic attitude, compared to the photo of the Oslo Agreement signing?

History, Grades 11–12, Nationalism: Building a State in the Middle East, Eliezer Dumka, Hanna Orbach and Tsafrir Goldberg, Zalman Shazar Center (Permit: 4215), 2009, p. 209.

The following textbook points to a combination of factors as conducive to the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. These were of the Oslo Accords, Jordanian earlier decision to disengage from the West Bank and the ongoing Israeli-Jordanian contacts over the years.

D. The Peace Agreement between Israel and Jordan (October 1994)
The Oslo agreement paved the way for commercial relations with some of the Arab countries, and a peace agreement with Jordan.

On October 26, 1994, King Hussein and Yitzhak Rabin signed the peace agreement between the two countries at a festive ceremony held in the Arava Valley. United States President Bill Clinton attended the ceremony. Throughout the years, King Hussein maintained a special connection with the State of Israel, unlike that of the other Arab leaders. His decision to disconnect Jordan from the West Bank during the Intifada, and the agreements achieved between Israel and the Palestinians, aided considerably the peace negotiations between the two countries. The peace agreement with Jordan included small border adjustments in the Arava, and the transfer of water to Jordan from the Sea of Galilee.

History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East, Eyal Naveh, Nava Vered, and David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009. p. 273.
Peace with Jordan: The Benefits of Peace

The tangible benefits of the peace agreement with Jordan are also contained in a high school Israel studies textbook, this time from the perspective of environmental and resource sustainability. A lesson discusses water shortage and past conflicts in the region and the need for peaceful cooperation with Israel’s neighbors to address such a pressing issue:

Water in the Era of Peace

Water, the most crucial resource for life, has always been an important subject in the conflict between Israel and its neighbors. Water location influenced the determination of the Israeli borders. Water was the reason for wars and it is an important component in the agreements.

Water in the Peace Treaty with Jordan

Determining the Borderline

In the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994, the border between Israel and Jordan was set along the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers. . . .

Water Distribution between Jordan and Israel

The treaty with Jordan was the first agreement between an Arab state and Israel that handling the issue of water. The agreement includes a provision that focuses on the water distribution between the countries from the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers in the Arava area: . . .


A fourth-grade society and civics textbook teaches about the benefits of peace, in the context of the Israel-Jordan treaty; a military outpost is repurposed for scenic bird-watching rather than guarding from one's enemy. In this way young students are made aware of the peace agreement's value as a positive and beneficial development.
My Favorite Place: Ein Yahav (and in fact, all the Aravah) is situated on the border between Israel and Jordan. Jabal Hufira—a hill next to Ein Yahav, on which once stood a military outpost from which our soldiers would look out toward Jordan. All that was in the period before Israel and Jordan had signed a peace agreement. In 1994 (more than 20 years ago) a peace agreement was signed between Israel and Jordan, and the outpost is no longer needed. Today, there is a vantage point there from where one can see the landscape of the entire area. The vantage point is above a road called "Peace Road" in honor of the peace agreement.

Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 4, Young Israelis: Yiftach from Ein Yahav, Shira Goodman, Ofira Gal and Iris Shiloni, CET (Permit: 2747), 2017, p. 11.

Israeli textbooks feature speeches and remarks by Arab leaders, including those of Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. An eleventh-grade history textbook quotes King Hussein's emotional speech at the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty, calling that moment a "new dawn of peace."

From Hussein's Speech during the Signing ceremony of the Peace Treaty:
We must remember this day as long as we live on this earth and for the next generations: Jordanians, Israelis, Arabs, Palestinians—all of them are children of Abraham. . . . we must remember this day as a new dawn of peace, as a day of
mutual respect to all, of tolerance and a shared path for all generations . . . we will always remember and honor with love those that fell along the years on either side, and I believe that they would want us to spill no more blood and cause no more suffering. . . .

This will not be just a piece of paper signed by those who should sign it. This will be true and real, because we have opened our hearts and souls to each other. We have discovered human faces behind everything that has happened between us. We have suffered too much during the years.


The following example of a third-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook highlights Israel's peace with Jordan and the processes that led to it. In a chapter discussing fighting and conflict resolution, the process of mediation is explained to students as an alternative means for dispute resolution and a valuable tool in the technical practice of peacemaking which is understood by students as "building bridges." The passage below details Israel's use of a third party in its peace negotiations with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians, while featuring an image of Prime Minister Rabin and Jordanian King Hussein shaking hands:

The process by which someone external to the conflict helps both sides reconcile is called **mediation** [literally "bridging"] because the third party helps build a bridge between the fighting parties. Mediation is used not only between different persons but also between countries at war. Many times, the third party—representatives of a different country, for example—help the sides reconcile. Israel has also been helped by other countries acting as mediators in its conflicts with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians.

The Oslo Accords are the primary means to study peace and peacemaking within the Israeli curricula. Textbooks also present arguments within Israeli society over the West Bank and Gaza starting immediately after the 1967 Six-Day War. A history textbook for high school students shows passages of high-ranking Israeli officers fervently arguing against the building of settlements in the territories captured during the war:

Another view maintained that the State of Israel would have a challenging time controlling such a large Arab community for a long time. **Control over another people** might cause Israel to lose its cultural and national characteristics. Those who subscribed to this viewpoint argued that from the position of power secured in the Six-Day War, Israel should seek a peace agreement with the Arab countries.


A history textbook for high school students shows passages from the "Officers' Letter," sent in March 1978 to Prime Minister Menachem Begin calling on him to "choose the path of peace." The 348 signatories published the letter in the media, after which the **Peace Now** movement was formed.
We are writing to you with deep anxiety. A government that prefers the existence of the State of Israel within the borders of the Whole Land of Israel ['Greater Israel'] living in peace and good neighborliness will bring gloomy thoughts to our minds. A government that prefers settlements beyond the Green Line over ending the historical conflict and imposing a normal relationship in our area will raise questions regarding the justice of our path.

**History, Grades 11–12, Time Travels: Building a Country in the Middle East, Kezia Avieli-Tabibyan, CET (Permit: 4218), 2009, p. 250.**

**Culture of Disagreement**

In lessons teaching about the Oslo process, there are recurring motifs in describing the lead up to the negotiations, the personalities of those involved, and the rationale for various positions and outcomes of the agreements. In this context, a recurring theme is former Prime Minister Rabin's central role in the Oslo process and his transition from a military figure to a peacemaker. This is exemplified in a lesson for seventh-grade Jewish-Israeli culture, where the passage condemns the assassination of Rabin and says that this directly opposed the culture of tolerance and acceptance of opposing opinions that Rabin had created. Rabin's assassination is often tied to discussions of the peace process.

A lesson from Rabin's assassination offers students insight into the benefit of solving issues within Israeli society through a "Culture of Disagreement" through dialogue and discussion rather than resorting to violence. Democratic procedures in making fateful decisions have been quintessential to the political culture since the rebirth of the Jewish National Movement. A Torah reading textbook explains that sacrifices for peace may indeed be unpopular, such as Rabin's decision to "relinquish Israeli control over many areas in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, concessions that caused great debates in the Israeli public." Reinforcing this tenet through schoolroom instruction leaves open the possibility of more ground-breaking diplomatic agreements in the future.

---

43 Many compromise decisions with the Arabs were adopted democratically. To name a few: the "first partition" in 1922, and other compromises such as the 1937 Peel Commission Plan; 1947 Partition Plan; 1949 Armistice Agreements and withdrawal from Sinai; 1956 second withdrawal from Sinai; 1979 Peace Treaty and third withdrawal from Sinai; 1993 Oslo Accords; 1994 Peace Treaty with Jordan; 1995 Oslo II Agreements; unilateral pull-outs of 2000 and 2005; and 2020 Abraham Accords.

From a Military Man to a Peacemaker

One of the central milestones Yitzhak Rabin’s life is the transformation from being a fighter and a military man to a statesman who signed peace agreements.

Culture of Disagreement

The murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin happened in a time when there was a big and stormy debate between the citizens of the country about the peace agreements with the Palestinians. The murder, and the incitement prior to it, is contrary to approaching a disagreement by way of dialogue and discussion. In this kind of disagreement, a space is created that has room for every opinion, even opinions that are completely opposite.


Rabin's aspirations for peace with the Palestinian people and neighboring Arab nations are expressed in a grade 7–9 civics textbook. Students are taught about the Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 between Israel and the PLO and the historic handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat. Rabin then signed peace with Jordan, and subsequently was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
The elections of 1992 led to the second term of Rabin as Prime Minister. In this period, which lasted three years, Rabin aspired to sign peace treaties with the Palestinians and other Arab countries. In 1993, under the supervision of the United States, Rabin, on behalf of Israel, signed an agreement with Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO (the largest Palestinian Organization).

The handshake between Rabin and Arafat demonstrated to the Jews, the Arabs, and the entire world that the historic rivalry between the Palestinians and Israel was about to come to an end; 'No more tears and blood. No more casualties from both sides,' stated Rabin at the time.

The agreement that was signed culminated a series of secret negotiations with the PLO. The Norwegians hosted the talks and it ended with the signing of the "Oslo Accords." According to this agreement, Israel was to recognize the PLO, withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, start withdrawing from the West Bank, and negotiate a final-status settlement. The PLO was obliged to keep peace with Israel, stop any terror activities against Israel, and abolish the paragraphs in the Palestinian National Covenant that called for the annihilation of Israel.

In 1994, Rabin was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to achieve peace with the Palestinians. In the same year, Rabin signed the peace treaty with Jordan.

Similarly, a history textbook for grades 11–12 quotes Rabin's speech from the Oslo Accords signing ceremony expressing his desire to live in peaceful coexistence with the Palestinian

Civics, Grades 7–9, Civics in the State of Israel, David Shahar, Kinneret-Zmora ( Permit: 3149), 2010, p. 82.
people. In his remarks at the signing, Rabin hoped that the Accords would usher in the first steps toward creating peace in the region.

Yitzhak Rabin’s Speech in the Oslo Accords Signing Ceremony, September 13, 1993

"We came today from Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the people of Israel. . . . We came to put an end to hatred, so that our children and grandchildren will no longer experience the painful price of wars, terrorism and violence. . . . We are destined to live together on the same land, in the same country.

We, the soldiers who have returned from battles stained with blood . . . we who have seen our relatives and friends killed before our eyes . . . we who have fought against you, the Palestinians—we say to you today, in a loud and a clear voice: enough of blood and tears. Enough! We have no desire for revenge. We harbor no hatred toward you. We, like you, are people who want to build a home, to plant a tree, to love, to live side-by-side with you in dignity, in empathy, as human beings, as free men. We are today giving peace a chance and saying again to you: No more! . . ."
In another history textbook for grades 11–12, a passage discusses the practical steps Israel and the Palestinians took to establish a permanent agreement to ultimately resolve the conflict. These commitments include the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist and abandonment of terrorism; Israel for its part would gradually withdraw from certain territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and hand them over to the newly formed Palestinian Authority. A caption to the photo of the ceremony hints to certain uneasiness and an accompanying question prompts the students to investigate details encouraging hands-on peace education.

E. The Oslo Accords

On September 13, 1993, a ceremony was held on the lawn of the White House to sign the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, attended by US President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and Chairman of the PLO Yasser Arafat. Following the signing, a historical handshake between Arafat and Rabin took place. The official ceremony was preceded by a secret agreement between the parties in August 1993.

According to the agreement, the PLO committed itself to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist with peace and security . . . to abandon the way of terror . . . and to adopt United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for a permanent agreement. Simultaneously, Israel pledged to recognize the PLO as the Palestinian people's rightful and legitimate representative.
The first stage of the agreement included withdrawal of the Israeli military administration from the Palestinian settlements in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and the formation of a Palestinian Authority. All authority in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip regarding education, culture, health, welfare, taxation, and tourism would be transferred to the Palestinian Authority, and a robust Palestinian police would be established. After that, elections for the Palestinian Authority's council would take place.

In 1994, more agreements were signed, which included transferring certain territories (in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip) to either full or partial Palestinian control.

The signing ceremony of the Oslo Accords ('Declaration of Principles') on the White House lawns, September 1993:

With the participation of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, PLO leader Yasser Arafat and US President Bill Clinton. Clinton prevented Arafat from kissing him and Rabin, a practice he was used to.


While the Israeli desire for peace may be universal, textbooks for Jewish-Israeli culture start with third-graders, and teach students not only about efforts by Rabin and Peres to make peace with Arafat, but also about different viewpoints regarding the agreements within Israeli society. Here the lesson also describes the international recognition and awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to all three leaders.

During his [Rabin's] tenure as prime minister, a peace agreement was signed with Jordan, as were the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO (the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Yasser Arafat). For this, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
As prime minister, Rabin acted to advance the peace process between the State of Israel the Palestinians, and Arab states that surround it. In Israel, opinions differed regarding the peace process he was advancing:

"I support Yitzhak Rabin! He believes that it's important to negotiate for peace with the Arabs that surround our state, and also, to be prepared to relinquish areas of the Land of Israel."

"And I believe that it's impossible to achieve peace with the Arabs, and that we should avoid giving up land. I oppose Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's way!"

"And I am really unsure whether the peace process and the price we will have to pay will be good for us or not."

Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 3, Gates to What is Between One and a Friend, Yiska Elitzur, Maya Dubinsky, Naama Maor, and Shlomit Hershkovitz-Sharshevski, Heled (Permit: 2756), 2017, p. 159.

Yet another third-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook discusses the assassination of Rabin and the importance of tolerance and respectful debate and disagreement. Students gain a balanced understanding about the controversial nature of the Oslo Accords within Israeli society; how the assassination of Rabin by a radical opponent of the Accords was an act of extremism and violence; and that no public debate should ever resort to such violence.
On Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day

Yitzhak Rabin’s memorial day is held on the 12th of Heshvan.

Yitzhak Rabin was murdered while serving as prime minister of Israel. He was murdered by a Jewish-Israeli citizen who opposed his views. Prime Minister Rabin had signed agreements titled "The Oslo Accords" to try and bring about peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Oslo Accords were a matter of controversy within Israeli society.

On the one hand, the supporters of the accords believed that these agreements would achieve peace. On the other hand, opposition to the accords claimed that they were dangerous, and that they would lead to war, and not to peace. Both sides demonstrated throughout the country and exchanged many insults. The opposition to the agreements attacked Yitzhak Rabin in particular.

In this violent atmosphere, on Heshvan 12, 5756 (November 4, 1995), an extremist called Yigal Amir shot the Prime Minister and murdered him. Because of the severity of his action, the Knesset decided that every year, on the date of the murder of Yitzhak Rabin, a national memorial day will be held, to be marked throughout the country.

The nuances and controversies surrounding peace negotiations are also present in civics textbooks for high school students, where one lesson offers a balanced explanation of what they
title "hawkish" and "dovish" positions on the conflict. The excerpt explains the central arguments of the hawkish position, which prioritizes security, while also discussing the moral position of the opposing dovish view. In the description of a dovish position, students learn that some Israelis view the situation in the West Bank as an "immoral occupation" and that they wish to achieve a two-state solution. This exposure to both sides of the debate allows students to better understand the various positions and construct more informed opinions.

The Defense and Foreign Affairs Spectrum: The source of the ideological disagreement in this matter, between "doves" (left) and 'hawks' (right), goes back to the period of Yishuv [the Jewish settlement in Mandatory Palestine]. Usually, those that belong to the hawkish camp support the whole Land of Israel ('Greater Israel'), and oppose territorial compromise in Judea and Samaria, east Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, while some agree to minor concessions. Their opposition emanates from a position that these areas are the cradle of the Jewish people, a belief that control of these areas is of existential importance to Israel, with support for proactive defense policy, as an approach that views military capabilities as the most effective mechanism for Israel's national security.

According to the hawkish view, territorial concessions do not foster peace but rather incentivize aggression. Members of the dovish camp tend to, or agree to, significant territorial concessions, to the extent of withdrawing to the borders of 1967, with minor border adjustments. In their opinion, a territorial compromise is essential to achieving peace with the Palestinians and with the Arab states that support them, a peace agreement that will improve Israel's status security-wise, politically and economically. People of the dovish camp claim that Israel's control of Judea and Samaria, and the Palestinians who live there, constitutes an immoral occupation. Further, they claim that the only way to demographically secure a Jewish and democratic state is by separating from these lands and creating two states for two nations that will live peacefully side-by-side. Throughout the years and until today, the debate over defense and foreign affairs is still the central one in Israel.

As seen in these lessons and many other examples, textbooks in various subjects follow a similar pattern when discussing peacemaking and peace with Palestinians. First, they present the vision of peace expressed in the Oslo Accords by Rabin and Arafat in a positive light where the ethos changes from combatants in a conflict to leaders taking difficult but necessary steps for their respective people. Next, the books outline the general terms and contours of the peace agreements, which set up the status quo central to subsequent negotiations. Finally, they describe the divergent perspectives within Israeli society without prejudice or preference, while simultaneously denouncing the kind of political violence that culminated in the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. From this, one can conclude that textbooks for the state and state-religious curricula both promote peace with the Palestinians as an ideal as well as the overall process of peacemaking.

Typically, the peace process has mostly focused on Rabin as a leader of peace. The example below shows former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signing the Wye River agreement with Jordan's King Hussein and the PLO leader Yasser Arafat, in the presence of American President Bill Clinton.

![ Signing "Wye River Memorandum"](image)

From right to left: Benjamin Netanyahu, Bill Clinton, King Hussein, Yasser Arafat

**History, Grades 11–12, Time Travels: Building a Country in the Middle East, Kezia Avieli-Tabibyan (Permit: 4218), 2009, p. 209.**

In 2020, a new textbook, *The Israeli Region: Landscape, Climate, and Environment*, was approved for ninth-grade geography by the MoE. This introduced new material reflecting the shifting geopolitical landscape of the Middle East region. Of note are several lessons that explore Israel's increased integration in the region, following the changing nature of Israel's relations within the Arab world; there are ongoing discussions of the many cultural, economic, political and security collaborations between Israel and those now friendly Arab states. Within social media, some citizens of Iraq, a country currently considered an enemy state, contact Israelis and
have conversations with them on a range of topics. Despite lingering hostility by some Arab neighbors, the text concludes that the normalization process has created many opportunities for Israel, almost unthinkable in the near past.

While Israel remains relatively isolated within the sphere of the countries surrounding it, relations with Middle Eastern countries in the more distant circle are gradually tightening. These countries include Morocco and the Arab states of the Gulf.

Something Is Changing in the Middle East

An interesting phenomenon occurring over the past few years is Iraqi and Moroccan citizens who show a longing and nostalgia for Jewish culture, which had previously influenced the culture in their countries for hundreds of years. Many Iraqis (Sunnis and Shi’ites) are contacting Israelis in social media and are conversing with them about culture, politics and religion.

The attitude toward Israel and Israelis is changing for the better in Morocco as well. Jews who left Morocco are considered part of the Moroccan Diaspora, and since 2011, Jewish heritage is officially recognized in Morocco’s constitution. This is manifested, among other ways, in the preservation of Jewish heritage sites in the country, such as synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, schools of Talmud Torah, and burial places of righteous Jewish figures.
Morocco's affection toward Jews has also opened doors to Israelis: about 45,000 Israelis visit Morocco every year. In addition, more Moroccans have been visiting Israel: currently around 3,500 a year. This contrasts with Iraq, for example, which is still closed to Israelis and is defined under Israeli law as an enemy state. Also, Israeli diplomats occasionally visit Morocco openly. Besides tourism, Israel and Morocco have relations in the fields of sports and culture—plastic arts, music, and cinema.

As previously mentioned, this trend is joined by the Arab Gulf states, which were closed to the Israeli public up until a few years ago. The Gulf States have no historical connection with a Jewish community from the area (excluding a small Jewish community in Bahrain). They are promoting relations with Israel for two reasons:

**First**, these states, like Israel, consider Iran a hostile regional factor, so they join Israel in the diplomatic struggle against Iran's nuclear weapons program. This joint struggle exists alongside other security and political challenges shared by Israel and other regional countries.

**The second reason** is linked to the rising status of the Gulf States in the region and the modernization process they are undergoing. Since 2011, the Gulf States have been in the forefront of regional politics while integrating with the international community at an accelerated speed. They often host international events, including diplomatic and economic conferences, cultural meetings, sporting competitions, etc. Many Israeli delegations arrive in the region and participate in international conventions and tournaments. In addition, Israel and the Gulf States have been collaborating in business, security and diplomacy. Saudi Arabia and Oman are trying to promote negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Qatar is frequently in contact with Israel due to its involvement in the Gaza Strip, whether by mediating between both sides or by transferring supplies and money to the Gaza Strip. Regarding security, for the past few years Israel and the UAE have been holding joint air force exercises, along with the USA, Greece, and Cyprus. Moreover, the UAE uniquely hosted Israel in international events organized on its territory allowing Israeli delegations to present their nation's symbols. These many collaborations brought an increased interest in Israel with extensive media coverage. Social networks, on both sides, have followed these developing relations as well, mostly in a positive manner.

The attitude toward Israel in the Gulf States and Morocco is improving, inspiring hope for many more collaboration in the future and for greater integration of Israel in the region. It should be noted that these are countries are located in a circle [area] that is distant from Israel, while Israel's priority is to establish its stability in the circle closer to it, which is still hostile toward it. Israel continues to be greatly isolated, but also succeeds in opening doors that thus far have been locked.

---

Another lesson on Israel's place in the Middle East specifically mentions the Abraham Accords signed between Israel and the UAE in 2020; students learn that this helps change the way Israel
is perceived by its neighbors, making future collaboration with these countries and others more likely in the future.

In 2020 the United Arab Emirates announced its intention to sign an agreement for official relations with Israel. The agreement represents the climax of a process in which Israel is becoming closer to Arab countries with which it does not have relations. Certain countries in the Middle East have begun to expand their openness toward Israel, accepting official delegations and collaborating with it in international events. This phenomenon marks a change in Israel's place in the region and in the way it is perceived by its neighbors.

A final example is displayed by a geography textbook. A lesson on Israel's borders and relations with Arab countries highlights a joint program where Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority work together to protect the environment through the use of barn owls and falcons in agriculture.
The Palestinian Experience

The collective narrative of the Other encapsulates past and present experiences as well as fears and dreams about the future. Teaching this in a conflict setting is a principal component of peace education. Gavriel Salomon posited that learning about the Other may facilitate coexistence. In his study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Elie Podeh found that past Israeli textbooks tended to ignore or misrepresent the Arab point of view of the conflict, whereas post-1985 textbooks have been making visible attempts to understand it. This process continued into the first decade of the twenty-first century. Yohanan Manor attributed this change to a consistent, multiyear government policy of introducing educational content which includes "knowing and respecting Islam and the Arabs," "admitting the legitimacy of the opposing national movement," and "presenting the conflict in a more balanced way."

Israeli history textbooks strive to offer students a meaningful Palestinian perspective of the conflict. Such efforts are at best representations of Palestinian views and emotions and are often found in the context of the 1948 War; references to the Palestinian experience in other periods such as challenges faced by Arabs of the British Mandate, life in refugee camps, clashes with Israeli forces during conflagrations, or other difficulties faced in the West Bank—while less common—are also taught.

The curriculum emphasizes the importance of acknowledging Palestinian identity. Most Israeli textbooks use the term "Palestinian" when addressing the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; a few textbooks also apply the term to the Arabs of Mandatory Palestine. One civics textbook, extends Palestinian identity to Arab citizens of Israel. The book asserts that the majority of Israeli Arabs maintain some form of Palestinian identity.

---

46 Podeh, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict."
47 Adwan, "Victims."
49 For example, Civics, Grades 10–12, *Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish Democratic State* ( Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 404.
50 For example, History, Grades 11–12, *Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations: Building a State in the Middle East*, Eyal Naveh, Naomi Vered and David Shahar (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 142.
The National Identity of Israeli Citizens

National identity is the component which determines one's belonging and sense of belonging to a nation, ethically and culturally.

In Israel, three main national identities are distinguished: the Jewish identity, the Arab identity and the Palestinian identity. Other identities which differentiate ethno-cultural groups are the Druze, Bedouin, Circassian, and Aramean identities.

A notable exception is found in a history textbook published by Har Bracha Institute that refers to the term "Palestinians" with parentheses; authors consider this term (as opposed to the term: "Arabs") to be politically charged and "anti-Jewish."52

Israeli textbooks routinely acknowledge the existence of a majority Arab community in what came to be the State of Israel. Historical accounts accurately describe the Arab population of the geographical area of Palestine—typically referred to by its traditional Hebrew name, "Eretz Yisra'el" [the Land of Israel]—as significantly larger than that of the Jewish population at that time. This is especially true of texts teaching the history of early Zionism, when the Jewish community in Palestine was far smaller than in later years, as seen in the example below. One textbook even asks students to deconstruct the sentiment expressed by certain Zionist thinkers, that Palestine/Eretz Yisra'el was "a land without a people" before Zionism.53 The Israeli textbooks thus rarely teach about the history of Zionism and the movement to establish a Jewish state in the land, without mentioning the Arab population.

On Territory
Scholars view Jewish nationalism as a unique case of a nation living in a diaspora. When Jewish nationalism arose, the Jews were scattered in various countries and had no common territory of their own. At the time when the Jewish national movement began to develop in the 1880s, Eretz Yisra'el was not uninhabited. About 400,000 Arabs and 25,000 Jews called it home.


As early as third grade, one textbook chooses to describe Jaffa as "an Arab port city"—an accurate depiction of the environs during Jewish immigration [aliyah] to pre-1948 Palestine—rather than the mixed Jewish/Arab city of present-day Israel. Another third-grade textbook affirms that Arabs comprised the majority of Ottoman Palestine's inhabitants and provides historical details about their lifestyle.

---

Groups of Jewish olim [Diaspora Jewish immigrants] started arriving in the country about 150 years ago. At the time, the Ottomans (whose center of rule was in Turkey) ruled Eretz Yisra'el, and after them, the British controlled it.

The majority of the country's inhabitants were Arabs. They mostly lived in villages and partook in agriculture. Some lived in cities and were merchants and artisans.


Students learn the history of Zionism while simultaneously learning about the development of Palestinian nationalism. In one example there is a discussion of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which called for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and was vehemently rejected by many Arabs of Palestine. It is significant that not all sides received it positively. As Zionism edged closer to the goal of establishing a Jewish state, Palestinian identity solidified in response, with the aim of thwarting that goal.

The textbook refers to Palestinians with the term *Falastinim*, a direct loan from the Arabic *Filäšṭīniyyūn*.55

---

55 *Falastinim* (فلسطينים) has become a common spelling in recent decades. The alternative form, *Palesta’im* (פלשתינאים), was formerly more common, as perhaps influenced by the official Hebrew name during the British Mandate [*פלשתינה* (א''י פלשתינה)]. Jews during the British Mandate also referred to themselves as *Palesta’im* or *Eretzisra’elim* (Palestinians or Eretzisraelis).
From the beginning, the realization of Zionism met with resistance from the Palestinians, the Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el. After being separated from Syria following the partition of the mandates between France and Britain, their unique national identity began to develop in Eretz Yisra'el (Filastin [Palestine]). Using political and violent means, they demanded that the British Mandate's commitment to the Balfour Declaration be revoked. The more successful Zionism became, the more Palestinian nationalism, which resisted it, grew strong.

Attempts at dialogue made by Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion and academicians in search of a formula for coexistence based on a Jewish state failed, and violence became the defining aspect of Jewish and Arab relations in the country.

The Palestinian "Nakba" [Catastrophe] and the 1948 exodus of Arabs from the territory of the State of Israel, is discussed in lessons about Israel's War of Independence, also known as the 1948 War. Education about the negative consequences of the 1948 War for Palestinian Arabs begins at an early age, before students are even exposed to the actual term "Nakba." Multiple textbooks within the Israeli curriculum acknowledge or allude to Nakba, by name in multiple textbooks, including in books for the third and fourth grades. Descriptions often mention the role that deliberate expulsions by Israeli forces played in the displacement of Palestinian Arabs. In a textbook for the fourth grade, students are encouraged to consider whether Arabs were as pleased as Jews were with the results of Israel's War of Independence and why that might be the case. They are then treated to an informational passage which reminds them that in war, "both sides get hurt," and that during the independence war "many Arab inhabitants fled from their towns for various reasons," including those who "were forced from their homes and towns during the battles." This account appears to be an attempt to introduce very young Israeli students to the notion that Arab citizens of Israel have a dissimilar experience of major events in the history of the nation.
Outcome of the War of Independence

Topics for Thought and Discussion

1. What do you know about the results of the War of Independence?
2. Was everyone who lived in the country—Jews and Arabs—content? Why?

The End of the War and its Aftermath

As you well remember, the Arabs who lived in the country did not agree to have the country divided into two states—a Jewish independent state and an Arab independent state within Eretz Yisra'el. So, they declared war...

In war, harsh and sad things happen. Some win, some lose, but both sides get hurt. People were killed in the battles. There were Arabs who were killed and Jews who were killed. Jewish settlements were abandoned; and Arab settlements were abandoned. During the war, many Arab inhabitants fled from their towns for several reasons. Some fled due to fear of war because they were afraid that the Jews will hurt them. Some fled because they heeded the call of Arab leaders to temporarily stay away from their homes, because they were promised that soon, after the war, once the Jews were defeated, they would return home. There were inhabitants who were expelled from their homes and their towns during the battles. The Arabs who left the country became refugees in the Arab states they arrived at. They were housed in refugee camps there, and that is where some of them live to this day. The Arab inhabitants who stayed in the country became citizens of the State of Israel.

too, the fact that some Palestinian Arabs fled willingly, and some were expelled by force, is acknowledged. The picture is both true and incomplete.56

56 The actors who may have been instrumental in that displacement are not named, nor are their motivations explained. Some cities became integrated because of internal Arab immigration (Nof HaGalil) or consolidation of two towns (Ma'alot-Tarshiha). Some of the cities were already integrated before 1948; Arabs solely populated others. The text also ignores cities which are no longer mixed (Tiberias, Safed) because the Arab population left, in addition to Arab cities which forced out Jewish communities (such as Gaza). Other cities integrated after populations returned (Hebron and Jerusalem's old city and Silwan/Kfar Ha'Shiloah). Many of the olim were themselves refugees from Arab countries. There are also 'mixed Arab' cities such as Nazareth that include descendants of internally displaced Arab Palestinians. Other displaced Palestinians in such integrated cities are refugees who fled their communities because of conflicts among local clans and groups.
In the State of Israel there are several cities where both Jews and Arabs live. During the War of Independence, in 1948, Arab residents left the cities in which they lived (some were expelled; others fled) because the fighting drew near. They came to live as refugees in neighboring countries (Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt). Some stayed in their city. Those cities are mixed cities, where Jews and Arabs both live, for example: Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramla, Jerusalem, Jaffa. Since the establishment of the State of Israel when many olim came from all over the world, the Jews have constituted the majority [in these towns] and the Arabs are the minority. . . .

In textbooks for higher grades, the Palestinian view of Nakba is dealt with at great length. One history textbook dedicates a page to teaching the Arab side of the 1948 War, particularly the circumstances in which a considerable number of Palestinian Arabs became refugees. The description given is factual in terms of the chronology of events, names of places and figures involved. A historic photo of Palestinian refugees carrying their belongings and an explanation of "Nakba" offers students the opportunity to appreciate the Arab sense of the war as a disaster or catastrophe. Students are also encouraged to research additional names for the war and reflect on the implications of those names.

Other pages in the same textbook expand on the Jewish role in expelling Palestinian Arabs on the eve of various Arab army invasions, including the statement that "expulsions [of Arab communities] were a rather common phenomenon."57 Another page briefly describes the killing of dozens of civilians in the village of Deir Yasin, west of Jerusalem, shortly before the invasion.58

This particular textbook goes a long way in acknowledging the Palestinian-Arab concept of Nakba and portraying it objectively by sharing the lived experience of Arab refugees during and after the war, the destruction of hundreds of Arab communities and disappearance of Arab identity in large parts of present-day Israel, and the collective sense

---

57 History, Grade 11–12, Time Travels: Building a Country in the Middle East, Kezia Aviel-Tabibyan (Permit: 4218), 2009, p. 119.
58 Ibid., p. 102: "At the peak of Operation Nakhshon, on April 9, 1948, an event took place which left its mark on the conflict between the two peoples. Deir Yasin, a village west of Jerusalem, home to about 600 inhabitants, and controlling the road to Jerusalem, was attacked by Irgun and Lehi [paramilitary] members. They took over the village and killed many residents. The number of casualties is not certain, but various sources estimate it to be between 100 and 254 people. The attack was met with great shock among the Arabs, and increased the panicked flight of many of them from the areas conquered by Jews." For more on how the curriculum deals with moral issues in such cases, see the section: "Self-Reflection: Violence and Injustice."
of loss of home and land.

**Arab Residents Leaving the Galilee, October 30, 1948**

As a result of the war, roughly one half of the Arabs who had lived within the borders of Mandatory Palestine, 650 thousand Arabs, became *refugees*. The issue of the refugees is an expression of the human price of any war.

The Arab exodus from Eretz Israel started shortly after the November 29 [1947, UN General Assembly] Resolution [the partition plan 181]. At first, wealthy families left the mixed [Arab-Jewish] cities. This fact demoralized the remaining residents, and more of them began leaving the towns. Military achievements by Jewish forces, as in Plan Dalet and Operation Nachshon, increased the influx of Arabs out of towns and villages, due to fear for their lives. Arabs also left areas the IDF [sic-Jewish forces] had not reached. In places where Jews and Arabs had good relations, an explicit order was given not to expel the Arab residents. This was the case in the village of Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem, in Fureidis near Zichron Ya’akov as well as in Haifa and Acre. The expulsion of the
residents of Lydda and Ramla, however, was approved by government officials. As the IDF’s war accomplishments increased, the Arabs began to flee in panic. A contributing factor to this was the Arab leadership, who had had no clear policy on the matter, and had not given the Arab populace any clear instructions as to what they should do.

Due to the military defeat and refugee issues, Arabs refer to the 1948 War, which the Jews call the War of Independence, as Al-Nakba, meaning the "Catastrophe" in Arabic.

4. The war that took place in Eretz Israel from the end of 1947 to the beginning of 1949 is called by many names, which express different points of view regarding that war: "the War of Independence," the "War of 5708,"59 the "War of Liberation," the "War of Uprightness,"60 "Al-Nakbah," the "1948 War."

A. Choose three names and explain the meaning of each name. You may use a dictionary.
B. What are the different points of view which led to the creation of each of those names?

Similarly, another textbook acknowledges the Palestinian concept of Nakba while maintaining a neutral and objective tone. This textbook, however, does more to convey the significance of the Nakba for Palestinians. It describes the Nakba as more than a mere military defeat for Arabs: "Palestinians, Arabs of Eretz Yisra’el, refer to the [1948] War as the Nakba [disaster] since it brought calamity on Palestinian society and made most of its members refugees."61

An attempt to show the Palestinian viewpoint is part of a discussion of the Battle of Deir Yassin, described as a "massacre" and a "stain on the struggle of the Hebrew Yishuv for survival and independence." At the same time, it created a "... negative and terrifying image of the Jewish conqueror in the eyes of the country's Arabs" due to the "killing of dozens of defenseless Arabs."62 The topic of Deir Yassin is also broached in a 1992 reference work, Zion in Zionism: Zionist Policy and the Question of Jerusalem, 1937–1949, also approved by the MoE. This 1992 book takes a noticeably apologetic tone toward what took place in Deir Yassin, asserting that "it appears that, at that place, there was no killing for killing’s sake. There was, perhaps a loss of wits ..."63 Note that there is a long and contentious historiographical debate about the Deir Yassin massacre.64

---

59 Hebrew: "Tashah" [(the Hebrew year pien)

60 Hebrew "Qomemiyyut" [(uprightness, independence, sovereignty, revival-

61 History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History, p. 103.


64 The scope of the Deir Yassin event, the reasons it occurred, and the motivations of various groups within the two sides of the conflict to publicize it during the war are explored in recent research. Eliezer Tauber, The Massacre That Never Was: The Myth of Deir Yassin and the Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem (London: ASMEA Toby, 2021).
Seen below is the opening page to a section on the Nakba where two perspectives are given: For Palestinians, the war entailed loss of home, land, and the hope for statehood; to Israelis the Arab exodus made independence possible. The section includes excerpts from historians Yoav Gelber and Benny Morris on the Nakba, assessing the main causes of the Palestinian-Arab mass displacement during the war. Critically, students are asked to summarize the Palestinian and Israeli viewpoints and explain why each side perceives themselves to be "right." Students gain personal insight from a first-person account by Palestinian refugee Raja Shehadeh, describing his family's flight from the embattled city of Jaffa. Another textbook asks Israeli students to describe the suffering of Palestinian refugees, as seen in a historic photo. The same textbook lists six historical causes of the Palestinian Arabs' displacement in 1948, one of which was deliberate deportations by Israeli forces.

**Arab Refugees in the War of Independence**

---

65 History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History, pp. 143–44.
66 Ibid., p. 144. “Why are the stances of the State of Israel and the Palestinians, regarding the cause of Palestinians' exodus from the territory of the State of Israel, so irreconcilable? How is each side 'right' in their depiction of what happened?”
67 (145)
68 History, Grades 11–12, Nationalism–Building a State in the Middle East, E. Dumka, C. Orbach and T. Goldberg (Permit: 4215), 2009, p. 107. "Question: How does the photograph emphasize the hardships of the Palestinian refugees' situation?"
H. The Palestinians' Nakba (Disaster)—Exodus, Flight and Expulsion of Palestinians from the Country during the War of Independence.

The exodus of the Eretz Yisra'el Arabs out of the country during the War of Independence was one of the most central, important, and consequential phenomena which accompanied that war from the start. According to estimates, about 700 thousand Arab Palestinian inhabitants left, fled, were expelled, and became refugees in Arab countries (Palestinian estimates are higher).

From Israel's perspective, this phenomenon made it easier to establish Jewish rule and helped solve many problems (such as security, land shortage and housing). It also established the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

At the same time, masses of Palestinians lost their home, their land, and the Palestinian state they could have received based on the UN resolution. 150,000 Palestinians remained within the borders of the State of Israel at the war's end.

F. In many places the IDF expelled the Palestinians. Even if this was not a declared policy and some tried to challenge it, it was carried out in the field.

Another civics textbook draws attention to a specific event within the Nakba, while simultaneously tying it to the present-day experience Israeli Arabs. The textbook recounts the case of Iqrit and Bir'im, two Maronite Arab villages in the Galilee, whose residents were ordered to leave their homes by Israeli forces in 1948, with the guarantee that they would be allowed to return at the end of the war, a guarantee which Israeli authorities later repudiated. The textbook is clear about the fact that the Israeli state has betrayed the trust of those villagers and that their legitimate claims—to be allowed to return to their lands and homes, as promised—were never addressed.

The textbook juxtaposes this historical account with a discussion of the much more recent 2011 Begin-Prawer Plan, a controversial Israeli government program to resettle Bedouin Arabs in the country's southern region, met with intense criticism and opposition from Arab and Jewish circles.-The textbook quotes Israeli Arab Knesset member Ahmad Tibi, who compared the plan to the Nakba, asking his (Jewish-Israeli) listeners what they would have done if they were told to leave their homes. The textbook asks students to summarize MK Tibi's arguments in their own words.
"A Law of Dispossession Which Expels People from Their Own Lands."

This [Bedouin resettlement] law is a mark of shame on the forehead of each and every one of you who supports it. It is a law of dispossession, one which expels people from their own lands and homes, for the second and third time since the Nakba of 1948. What do you think a reasonable person, who is being evicted from his own home, needs to do to defend himself? Rise up and protest!’ MK Ahmad Tibi, while discussing the bill in the Knesset plenum. After his speech, MK Tibi poured water on the proposed bill and tore it. (Yehonatan Lis and Yanir Yagna, 'Arab MKs tear 'Prawer Law' bill and leave plenum,'Haaretz, June 24, 2013)

**Explain how the speaker explains his opposition to the Prawer-Begin Plan.**

**Iqrit and Bir‘im**The Maronite Christian inhabitants of the villages of Iqrit and Bir‘im, near the Lebanese border, did not fight against IDF forces in the War of Independence. During the war they were evicted from the villages, having been promised to be allowed back to their homes once the battles were over. But this promise was never fulfilled. As early as 1951, the Supreme Court ruled that the villagers must be allowed back, and yet, despite further litigations and repeated promises—including one by Prime Minister Menachem Begin—the villagers were never allowed to return.

On the topic of the Nakba, the Israeli MoE approved an academic work titled *Independence Versus Nakba* by historian Yoav Gelber, which recounts in painstaking detail the events of the Palestinian Nakba and Israel's formation and includes the scholarly debate around some of the standing issues. The book reports on the Palestinian viewpoints, narratives, and experiences of
specific incidents, such as the shooting of civilians in the village of Safsaf in the Galilee,\textsuperscript{69} and looting in Tantura south of Haifa,\textsuperscript{70} as well as issues related to broader processes and trends. However, Gelber also cautions against a wholesale adoption of the Palestinian version of history, which he dismissively describes as:

\ldots based on selective reading and misinterpretation of Israeli research and sources, superficial use of British and American sources, declarative documents by or for the UN, a little bit of journalism, a lot of memoirs, and since the 1970s mostly on folklore.\textsuperscript{71}

### Palestinian Refugees

![Palestinian Refugees](image)

#### Question:

How does this photograph highlight the difficulties experienced by Palestinian refugees?


#### Refugees

A seventh-grade geography lesson on the global issue of refugees discusses those Arab and Jewish groups which became refugees due to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The textbook summarizes difficulties encountered by Arab or Palestinian refugees, many of them still living in refugee camps and impoverished neighborhoods. Similarly, the ordeal of Jewish refugees from Arab countries is described along with a discussion of the difficult integration into Israel, but avoids issues relating to compensation and legal rights.


\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., pp. 237–41.

\textsuperscript{71} (14).
A street at Balata Refugee Camp, near the city of Nablus / Jewish refugees from Kurdistan who left for Baghdad (Iraq) after the establishment of Israel, and from there they made Aliya to Israel in a special operation, "Operation Ezra and Nehemiah."
Refugees from the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict, and the wars between Israel and the Arabs, created two movements of refugees—both Arab and Jewish.

Arab Refugees

Most Arab refugees left Israel during the War of Independence (1947–1949) and Six-Day War (1967). Those hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees dispersed across countries all over the world, chiefly to the Middle East. They are known as 'Palestinian refugees' and their exact number is the subject of controversy.

Some of the Arab refugees settled down and integrated in the places they reached. Some returned to their homes with the State of Israel's permission. Many of them live in refugee camps and impoverished neighborhoods to this day—whether because Arab states refused to accept them as equal citizens or because they themselves refrained from integrating into the countries in which they arrived. In the refugee camps, the population grew rapidly; living conditions are very difficult—unemployment is high, housing is crowded and ramshackle, and standards of healthcare, education and sanitation are poor.

The issue of Arab refugees is a complicated political problem as well as a painful human problem. It is one of the most complex and difficult issues of the long Arab-Israeli conflict. As part of peace talks between Israel and her neighbors, this issue is often brought up at the negotiation table, and there is no doubt that solving it would be vital for the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

Jewish Refugees

The departure of the French and British from the Middle East, and the rise of Arab nationalism, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the wars between with Arab states, worsened the situation of Jews living in Islamic countries: These events aroused hostility toward the Jews and in some, especially Iraq, Syria and Egypt, there was severe harassment; laws were even enacted that denied their citizenship and property and left many of them without sources of livelihood.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews left their places of residence destitute, most of them in the first years after the establishment of the State of Israel. In many cases, they left in secret ways risking their lives, as some Arab countries banned them from leaving.

The vast majority of Jewish refugees made Aliya [immigrated] to Israel, but there were refugees who immigrated to other countries. Those who immigrated to Israel did so out of a sense that they were coming to their homeland—and the State of Israel; one of its main goals was the absorption of immigrants, and invested much effort in the absorption of these olim. After a difficult period of adjustment, they became integrated into the life of the nation.

Geography, Grade 7, Man and Environment in the Global World, Iris Shiloni and Ofira Gal (Permit: 3235), 2013, p. 158.
A debated, but fundamental Israeli law is the 1950 Law of Return, which allows any person of Jewish descent to claim Israeli citizenship. The textbook asserts that this law is unfair to both non-Israelis of Palestinian descent, who are not entitled to this right despite having originated in the same territory, as well as the Arab community within Israel, who are singled out as non-beneficiaries of immigration through this law. To demonstrate this point, the textbook quotes an opinion piece by Israeli-Arab parliament member Ahmad Tibi, who explains why, from his perspective as a Palestinian and a member of the Arab community in Israel, the Law of Return, is discriminatory and unjust.

Is the Law of Return one Affirmative or Discriminatory?

[Representative Translation:]

Some see the Law of Return as a **discriminatory law**. They use the following arguments, among others, to support their case:

1. The Law of Return harms the principle of equality, as it gives preference to Jews and their families over non-Jews. Furthermore, it allows Jews who have never lived in Israel to enter the country, while preventing that right from Palestinian Arabs, who have lived on this territory until 70 years ago.

2. The law may affront the dignity of Israel's Arab citizens, as the state signals to them that they belong to a group in whose growth the state is not interested in encouraging through external migration.

'The Law of Return is Problematic in my Eyes'

Member of Knesset Ahmad Tibi: 'The Law of Return is problematic in my eyes. It is inhumane that my aunt, who used to live in Tayibe and was deported from here to Kuwait, could not come here even for a visit. My aunt died two years ago, but every Arab
A civics textbook that teaches Israel's 1952 Citizenship Law reflects on the Palestinian criticism of that founding legislation. This law determined the conditions of eligibility for Israeli citizenship but was called discriminatory by many of the country's Arab inhabitants, granting automatic citizenship to those Jews who wished to settle in Israel, while denying the same right to Palestinian refugees (often referred to as "Eretz Yisra'el Arabs") who wished to return to their old homes in Israel's territory.


In a chapter from a high school history textbook, students see images of bodies from the 1956 Fedayeen attack at Ma'ale Aqrabim; the perpetrators are referred to as "murderers." At the end of this chapter, students read a eulogy delivered by then IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan at the funeral of a terrorism victim. Dayan rationalizes the motivations of the Palestinian perpetrators: of the dispossession of their homes and their ongoing plight as refugees. Students then finish the chapter with questions on Dayan's speech, such as "What underlies the tragedy of the relations between the State of Israel and Palestinian Arabs, according to Dayan's eulogy?"

The textbook's choice to represent this perspective of the Other and their motivation (the Nakba, poverty), against the backdrop of what are demonstrably heinous acts is noteworthy. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is therefore a tragedy, rather than a good versus evil struggle.

The Murder of Roi Rotberg and Dayan's Eulogy

On April 29, 1956, the security supervisor of Nahal Oz Kibbutz, Roi Rotberg, was murdered in an ambush while setting out to chase away herders from the Gaza Strip who had invaded the kibbutz lands. It was at Roi Rotberg’s grave that Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan delivered an emotional speech in eulogy:
'Let us not make accusations on this day against the murderers. What are we to argue against their fierce hatred of us? For eight years they have been sitting in refugee camps in Gaza, and before their eyes we are making the land and villages where they and their forefathers had lived, our own.

It is not of the Arabs of Gaza that we demand [revenge] for Roi's blood, but of ourselves. Why have we refused to look at our destiny with clear sight, seeing the cruelty of our generation's mission for what it is? . . . Beyond the gates [of Gaza] hundreds of thousands of eyes and hands are huddled together, praying for our weakness to come, so that they may tear us to pieces—have we forgotten this? . . . That is our life's choice: either be prepared and armed, strong and unbending, or let the sword fall from our fist—and have our lives cut down.'


**Questions**

1. What underlies the tragedy of the relations between the State of Israel and Palestinian Arabs, according to Dayan's eulogy?

2. How does Dayan explain the State of Israel's fate to live by its sword? Does he see an alternative?

*History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East*, Eyal Naveh, Naomi Vered, David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 206.

Israeli students receive a frank assessment of the military administration (over the Galilee, parts of central Israel, and the Negev) lasting for eighteen years after the War of Independence; after this time, it outgrew its initial purpose. (See "Self-Reflection: Violence and Injustice" on the Kafr Qasim massacre and related topics).

The military administration was initially intended to monitor the movements and activity of the Arab population in Israel, which was considered hostile to the state. However, it quickly grew from an organization with security objectives into an administrative organ which advanced the government's broader policy regarding the Arab population in Israel. Among other things, it helped achieve a Jewish hold on lands throughout the country, while preventing Arab takeover of uninhabited land. What made the military...
administration unique was its special authority, which granted it the ability to limit the freedom of movement of Arabs, carry out administrative detentions, and supervise the appointment of public officials in the Arab sector. The military administration-controlled territories defined as "closed zones" and security areas, where 75% of Israel's Arab inhabitants lived.


Palestinian writer and activist, Mahmoud Darwish, widely considered to be the Palestinian national poet, refers to the military administration through two works featured in a high school civics textbook. A Palestinian artist's painting of a refugee accompanies one of the quoted works, underscoring his strong association with Palestinian nationalism. Darwish's inclusion in the textbook attracted national attention.72 One poem, "Me and Him," taken from Darwish's 2002 collection, *State of Siege*, offers a simple, yet profound message of coexistence in the midst of conflict.

![Poem](image)

**Me or Him**

'Me or him—

Thus the war starts.

But it ends with an embarrassing encounter:

Me and him.'

Mahmoud Darwish (A State of Siege, from the Arabic, Muhammad Hamza Ghnayim, 2003).

Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008), Palestinian poet, born in the western Galilee, who won many accolades for his literary works and is considered the Palestinian national poet.

The other poem, "She Saved Me from Hatred," is from Darwish's interview with Israeli journalist Joseph Algazy (*Defeatist Diary*, 1969). Here, Algazy recounts Darwish's memory of his Jewish schoolteacher Shoshana, whose positive example left a deep impression, offsetting his previously

negative experiences with Jewish people. The passage describes the government-mandated curriculum taught to Arab students in Israel as "poison." Darwish lauds his schoolteacher's enthusiastic and vivacious teaching of Hebrew literature as a "loyal service for her people," in contrast to the Israeli military occupation and governor (of the Galilee in this case), which he disparages for "instilling hatred."

Refugee, 2010. by Ahmad Kanaan, courtesy of the artist.

'I started attending a new high school in Kufr Yasif [in the Galilee], where I met a totally different Jewish personality. It was Teacher Shoshana. I will never get tired of speaking about her. She was not a teacher. She was a mother. She saved me from hatred. She was, to me, a symbol of a good Jew in loyal service to her people.

'Shoshana taught me to read the Bible as a literary text. She taught me to read [Israel's national poet] Bialik, not enthusiastically for his political affiliation, but for his poetic passion. She did not try to instill in us the poison of the formal curriculum, which aimed at alienating us from our heritage.

Shoshana released me from the hatred instilled in me by the military governor. . . . Shoshana, an example of Jewish conscience, demolished, perhaps unwittingly, the barriers set up by that military governor."

Civics, Grade 10–12, Being a Citizen in Israel in a Jewish and Democratic State. Varda Ashkenazi, Bilha Alferson, Tamir Dubi and Dana Shtarkman, MoE Loni Kohen (Permit: 4453), 2016, pp. 464, 466.

The authors of one history textbook for grades 11–12 consider Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, as living under an occupation. One chapter, discussing the transition of Israeli society from a "melting pot" to multiculturalism, cites the work of Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling (1939–2007), who identified six major subgroups in Israeli society: secular
 Ashkenazi; traditional Mizrahi; national-religious; ultra-orthodox; Russian olim; and Arabs).\(^{73}\)

Besides these six identifiable groups textbook authors maintain that since Palestinians are not part of Israeli society, they are subjected to Israeli "military occupation," and limits on civil rights. On the same page, students view a collage of the major subsections of Israeli society, one portraying Bedouins in traditional garb sitting in a tent and drinking coffee.

On top of such groups [as identified by Kimmerling, 1996], one may add sectors such as the olim from Ethiopia; Bedouins, who constitute a unique sector within Arab society; and economic migrants [called 'foreign laborers'] from countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, some of whom live in Israel illegally.

In addition, one must not forget that since 1967 Israel has been controlling more than three million Palestinian Arabs, without civil rights and subject to military occupation.

\(^{73}\) History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East, Eyal Naveh, Naomi Vered, David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 303.
In a civics textbook, ninth-grade students connect the situation of Palestinians living under military rule, to the teaching of compassion and sympathy within Jewish tradition and religious instruction. A story is told of a sick and elderly disabled Palestinian man on the way to a hospital, who collapses at a military checkpoint in the West Bank but is not allowed passage until his documents are verified.\footnote{Civics, Grade 9, \textit{Democratic Values and Judaism}, Hartman Institute (Permit: 9404), 2009, p. 11.}

A Jewish thought textbook includes a picture of an Israeli soldier helping an elderly Palestinian man abuts a paragraph explaining Jewish-religious laws established to maintain peace.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

\textbf{To Maintain the Way of Peace}

The "ordinances to maintain peace" are religious laws that our sages have established in order to enable the existence of peace between people.

The religious ordinances were designated to prevent quarrels and disputes that could be caused by jealousy, matters of honor, or financial disputes. In general, the ordinances related to proper relations in society.


Such examples are compared with a story from the ancient Jewish text: \textit{Kohelet Rabbah}.\footnote{Kohelet Rabbah 11:1. Set in Roman-occupied Judea, where a shipwrecked Roman pleaded with a group of Jewish pilgrims for help, only to be rebuffed and jeered, but then accepted and cared for by Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua}

Students, learn that humanity transcends national identity and grievances.
A Little Differently

It happened at the checkpoint; a long line of Palestinians had been there for hours, waiting to get their passes. Suddenly, a van stopped in front of the checkpoint, letting out an old and crippled Palestinian with crutches. Beside him was his daughter, who had tears in her eyes. The two of them approached the checkpoint, and the daughter asked to transfer her father to an Israeli hospital, where he receives medical treatment. The daughter added that her old father’s medical condition requires him to immediately go to the hospital. After the soldiers performed a strict search on the two of them, the commanding officer said that he needed more documents and passes and he will need to contact his superiors to get their approval. While they were waiting for the commanding officers’ approval, all of a sudden, the old man had a seizure and fell on the ground.

Think about the following:

1. What would the [ancient Jewish] pilgrims have done if they had been at the checkpoint? What values would have guided them?
2. What would Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammai have done? What values would have guided him? What do you think should be done? Explain your answer?
3. What do you think should be done? Explain your answer.

_Civics, Grade 9, Democratic Values and Judaism_, Hartman Institute ( Permit: 9404), 2009, p. 11.
The following example teaches students about the inherent conflict between maintaining security measures in the West Bank and the negative affects they can have on the lives of Palestinian residents and their civil rights. Palestinians have the right to petition the Supreme Court. One ruling stands out against the planned route of the West Bank security fence is highlighted in the example below:

Supreme Court case 2056/04—Village Council of Beit Surik v. State of Israel: This petition, filed by the residents of a Palestinian village, argued that the Separation Fence [i.e., the West Bank security barrier] which the government had intended to build by Highway 443 from Jerusalem to Modi’in would limit their ability to reach their fields beyond the planned route (they would be able to access them via special gates, after a security check). The government claimed that the barrier’s route is essential to stop terror attacks on Highway 443.

The Supreme Court accepted the petition, and ruled that the proposed route was illegal, and that the IDF must place the fence in a different route. In the verdict, the Supreme Court stated that while there would be added security in the route determined by the government, 'democracy fights terror with one hand tied behind its back, due to its commitment to human rights—and therein lays its greatness.' In this case, the judges ruled a certain risk must be taken to avoid violating the property rights of the owners of lands near the fence.


The following examples encourage students to learn about challenges faced by the Israeli-Arab minority. A high school civics textbook features an organization named Adalah, the Legal Center
for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, which employs litigation to advance social goals.\textsuperscript{76} Note that the textbook adds "Palestinian" to the title. Students are tasked with visiting the group's website and writing about their findings.

\textbf{'Adalah'—The Center for Palestinian-Arab Minority Rights in Israel}

Adalah (Arabic: justice) was established in 1996, and works for socioeconomic equality for the Arab population in Israel, among other things. Most of the organization's activities are in the legal field—submitting appeals to the High Court of Justice and promoting legislation on many socioeconomic issues relating to this population. This includes submitting petitions over discrimination against the country's Arab citizens about the resources that the state allocates to them in the field of education, dealing with unemployment, and so on.

1. On the Adalah website, find petitions submitted by the organization in the socioeconomic field and choose one petition. What is the subject of the petition? Explain two main arguments raised in the petition.

2. Choose an organization dealing with the socioeconomic issue that is of interest to you. Describe the organization's goals and activities. Provide details on which of the organization's activities have succeeded in bringing about change in government policy. You can make use of websites such as the Shatil website (which has a list of organizations involved in different fields).


A civics textbook offers additional examples that may differ from preexisting views, especially relating to the sense of alienation Arab citizens may experience in Israel. In one chapter a Israeli

\textsuperscript{76} As noted above, the official name, Adalah, The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (https://www.adalah.org/en), does not include "Palestinian." Nevertheless, in many publications, the center opts for using "Palestinian" instead of Arab or Arab-Palestinian. See "Palestinian Citizens of Israel: A Primer," https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Primer\%20Palestinian\%20Citizens\%20of\%20Israel\%20Adalah\%20June\%202019.pdf.
Arab historian, Adel Manna, laments that Israel's establishment came "at the expense of the Palestinians"; he asks, "[how can I] recognize the legitimacy of an entity which denies my being, or which, to begin with, does not wish to grant me full equality?" Students analyze and attempt to explain Manna's views.

A quote from late Israeli-Arab statesman, Abd el-Aziz el-Zoubi, demonstrates the unique position of a citizen, torn between Israel and the Palestinians who fight it.

"My qualms as an Israeli Arab stem from the fact that my own people are at war with my state." (Abd el-Aziz el-Zoubi 1926–1974, a former MK and deputy health minister, on behalf of Mapam and the Alignment [of Mapam and the Labor Party]).

Civics, Grades 10–12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish-Democratic State (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 91.

The curricula acknowledge as legitimate, Israeli Arab hesitation to sing the Israeli national anthem. It offers political scientist Shlomo Avineri's view that he understands the trouble an Israeli Arab has in identifying with lines such as "The Jewish soul yearns" and "An eye gazes toward Zion." Yet he supports leaving the anthem in its current form.77

A separate chapter explores the relationship of Palestinians with Israeli institutions. An Arab member of the Israeli Knesset explains the refusal of most Israeli Arabs to volunteer in Israel's National Civil Service, by proclaiming that they comprise a "national minority [which has the

77 Civics, Grades 10–12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish Democratic State (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 48.
right] to preserve [their] identity," and that such programs constitute "an attempt to Israelify our youth." 

**Opinions about the Nation's Jewish Character**

"Arabs in Israel Have Yet to be Afforded Equality"

'People sometimes feign innocence and ask, why indeed can't the Arabs identify with the Jewish State. Zionism and the founding of the state were at the expense of the Palestinians. This isn't just history . . . we're in the midst of a conflict that is yet to end. A Palestinian state has not yet been established, and Arabs still do not enjoy equality in Israel.

'I do not accept the possibility that the state can be both Jewish and Zionist, and egalitarian, while including the Arabs within it . . . What do they want from me? To recognize the legitimacy of an entity which denies my being, or which, to begin with, does not wish to grant me full equality? If you would offer me a partnership within a state that belongs to everyone, in which everyone would be equal and that won't act in service of the majority against the minority, in exchange for my legitimacy for such a state—I agree to that. I want that.

'With regards to the Jewish character and its importance, I have said that I am willing to accept a very narrow interpretation of a Jewish state, if, on the other hand, those who are interested in the [state's] Jewish character would grant me equality. I would even be willing to have an agreement on the Law of Return [of Jews to Israel], and resolve the [Palestinian] refugee problem, but only if those are the only two spheres of discrimination between Arab and Jewish citizens.'
(Dr. Adel Manna quoted in *Who Owns the Land*, Uzi Ben Ziman, ed. [Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2006], pp. 188, 249.)

★ Present and explain the stance of the writer with regards to recognizing the Jewish nature of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Base your answer on the text.

★ Present the demands of the writer from the state in order to minimize the divide. Base your answer on the text.

★ Is the writer of the passage talking about a struggle of recognition or a struggle of distribution? (For the meanings of the concepts, see this chapter, p. 471).


A third high school civics textbook conveys the overall experience of Israeli Arabs through the words of Israeli jurist and civil rights activist Ruth Gavison (1945–2020). In her essay, Gavison avers that Israel's nature as a Jewish state exacts "a price . . . of its Arab citizens." Students are asked to consider their country's national identity, as well as how Arabs in Israel view it.

In some regards, the mirror image of the advantages enjoyed by Jews in a Jewish state is the price it demands of its Arab citizens. In the place where a Jewish state exists, Arabs are deprived of the possibility to control their public-cultural sphere. The state's language
and symbols are foreign to them. They comprise a minority in a state that has a strong connection to the ambitions and aspirations of a different nation. . . . Their personal and cultural safety depends on the good will and efficiency of a government that is considered by them to be a foreign one—and all these are forced on them while they continue to live on their land. The state is running an enterprise in which they are not full partners. . . .

The feeling of discrimination felt by Israeli Arabs has sound ground to stand on. There is still discrimination against the Arabs who remained. And yet, the disparity between the status of Arabs and Jews in Israel is not greater or more severe than the differences between majorities and minorities in other places. . . . Instances in which the authorities have hurt Israeli Arabs are very few. Despite the entrenched discrimination, and despite the policies that blatantly prefer Jewish interests to Arab interests, it appears that most Arabs that live in Israel are opposed to being included, along with their land and homes, in a Palestinian state, whenever it is established beside Israel. . . .


Palestinian aspirations for an independent state are also referenced in the textbook.79 As we have seen in recent examples, the bond Israeli Arabs have with other Palestinians reflects on their position as the largest minority in Israel.

---

79 Civics, Grades 10–12, Israel—A Jewish and Democratic State, David Shahar (Permit: 4341), 2012, p. 54.
Diversity and Democratic Values

For decades, the content of state and state-religious curricula was criticized for promoting stereotypical views of the nation's Arab populations.80 The mid-1970s—and even more so—the 1980s and 1990s signified a turning point after which the delegitimization of minority populations all but disappeared from Israeli schoolbooks; Jewish students were encouraged to embody values of coexistence and peace, by meeting with Israeli Arabs and to think of ways to respectfully cooperate with them as peers.81

Such developments have been part of Israel's overall efforts to educate students about tolerance, diversity and democratic values, especially regarding their conduct toward Israeli-Arab peers. Classes on diversity emphasize Israel's rich social fabric with its multiple ethnicities and their significance to the nation's future development; democracy studies teach about values of inclusion, anti-bigotry as well as the most important civic ideals of unity that Israelis should follow in their everyday life as citizens. The following laments that Arab-Jewish encounters are still limited in scope.

The fears and anxieties, as is their nature, confine each community in a state of blindness and prejudice toward the Other, and these make mutual understanding difficult. The social separation that characterizes the relations between the two groups limits the encounters that could have alleviated the fears significantly.


Many textbooks offer lessons about the challenges facing the Israeli Arab minority, as well as methods teaching respect and tolerance toward them. Personal stories and complexities arising from their national identity as both Palestinians and Israelis are depicted—both present and historical. The following poster teaches students to treat Israeli Arabs with respect, and to cause them no harm; it conveys democratic values through shared activities between Jews and Arabs. Injustices such as inequality should be changed or solved by social or institutional entities in areas of employment and education. Note that the poster avoids the expression Arab Israelis and opts, instead, for Arab citizens or Arab citizens of Israel in consideration of those among the Arab citizenry who reject the idea of being called "Israelis." Conversely, this poster also avoids minimalistic terms of affiliation with Israel such as Palestinian citizens of Israel, Arab Palestinians who are citizens of Israel and such identity markers.


Important Things to Know About... The Arab Citizens of Israel

[Excerpts:]

Most of the country's citizens are Jews, and Arab citizens are a minority. It is not easy being a minority anywhere: not in the classroom, not in the neighborhood and not in the country. That is precisely why you should always treat people who belong to minority groups with respect. And not do them any harm.

Have you heard of Jewish/Arab collaborations? Can you make suggestions?

Israel is a democratic state, and in a democratic state all citizens have equal rights. Therefore, according to Israeli law, Arab citizens have all the rights that Jewish citizens have. For example, Arab citizens in Israel have the right to vote in the Knesset and to be elected to the Knesset, to be appointed judges and to work in government ministries.
There are cases where Arab citizens are treated unequally. For example—refusing to employ people just because they are Arabs. Such behavior is discriminatory and violates one of the important principles of democracy, the right to equality.

Another value in a democracy is tolerance and respect for people from diverse groups. In Israel, joint actions by Jews and Arabs are conducted so that each group can get to know the other. For example: in the city of Ramla, students from Arab schools and students from Jewish schools meet and study English together.


The following excerpt deals with fears about Arabs among the Jewish majority; it encourages students to overcome such concerns and understand that the success of Israeli Arabs at home is of critical interest for all Israelis. The implicit message is that of a shared destiny.

The Arabs, once a majority, have become a minority and many lands have been appropriated by the state; they are torn between their statuses as citizens and their national identity as Palestinians, with whom the state is at war. They deal with inequality and difficult socioeconomic problems. The Jews, despite being a majority, live in fear and suspicion toward the Arab minority and do not act as a self-confident majority that must stand up for the rights of the minority. . . . The Arab citizens are performing distinct roles in different fields, including health, technology, education, design, and construction.
Improving social equality in Israel and promoting the Arabs financially and socially are a second to none interest of all the state's citizens, Jews, and Arabs.

_Civics, Grades 7–9, Values and Citizens_, Naftali Rothenberg, Van Leer (Permit: 3193), 2014, p. 343.

The following attempts to explain the Palestinian national identity of Israeli Arabs from the perspective of balancing competing loyalties:

**National identity** is characterized by an emphasis on the Arab and Palestinian elements of their identity and sense of belonging. The Arab element relates to the Israeli Arab's sense of belonging to the Arab nation, based on a shared history, religion, and language. The Palestinian element is related to a sense of attachment of Israeli Arabs to the Palestinian people, emanating from identification with a common historic destiny, attachment to a territory (Palestine), and shared traditions.

The Palestinian identity has weakened in the first two decades after the establishment of the State of Israel and was enhanced after the Six-Day War of 1967 with the resumption of ties between the Israeli Arabs and the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian national identity is expressed in solidarity with the national aspirations of Palestinians in the territories and in supporting the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.


A high school civics textbook introduces Palestinian refugees as one of the seminal issues weighing on Jewish/Arab relations within Israel. Another textbook quotes several intellectuals. Below is an overview of the Israeli-Palestinian predicament by late Walid Sadik (Haj Yahia), Knesset Member and Deputy Minister of Agriculture:

---

82 Civics, Grades 10–12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish Democratic State (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 465.
I fear that the problem of Israeli Arabs will erupt in full force once the peace process is completed. As an Israeli Arab citizen, I can testify that during the decades two key issues have troubled us as citizens. The first is the issue of peace with our Palestinian brothers and the acknowledgment of their right to exist, as we have the same cultural and national identity as them. The second is the issue of equality with the rest of the state's citizens, the Jews, in the aspiration to fully integrate with the social, economic, and political agenda of the state.


An area in which Israeli curricula have been particularly strong, in the context of promoting tolerance, is cultural and religious studies. This is something that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recognized as well, having reported that approximately 80 percent of Israeli students learn about cultures other than their own—a figure above the OECD average. Textbooks in all grades encourage a positive stance toward Israel's Muslim populations by teaching about the rich scientific contributions of Islamic culture to the development of the world. Similarities between Islam and Judaism are stressed and much emphasis is given to the importance of Jerusalem as a holy city to both Jews and Arabs.

The following passage is a presentation of aspects of Islamic science, mainly focusing on mathematics and astronomy. Students learn that algebra and the use of zero originated from a dialogue with Indian culture, while geometry owes much to Islamic-Greek interactions. There is a discussion of some of the discoveries of Al-Khwarizmi.

---

Students learn how the development of medicine also benefited from Islamic and Greek cultural exchanges and that Muslims established the first hospitals.

**Sciences Evolve in the Islamic Civilization**

In parallel with philosophy, the study of **mathematics and astronomy** (the study of celestial bodies and the universe) flourished as well during this period. The Arabs were influenced by Greek geometry, and in particular by Euclid's Elements, and by Indian arithmetic (the study of numbers). The first Indian arithmetic book arrived in Baghdad during the second half of the 8th century. In the 9th century, the Arabs adopted the **Indian numerals**, those in use today, and under their influence these numbers spread in Christian Europe.

The adoption of the ancient Indian numeral method brought about a global revolution in the field of arithmetic, because unlike earlier methods, it had a special sign for zero. The Arabs called the number zero by the name **Sifr**, which means – empty. Thanks to the number zero, the decimal method was created, a method that enhanced the development of mathematics and science in general.

The term **algebra** which we use to this day to denote one of the major fields in mathematics, is derived from the Arabic term Al-Jabr. In Baghdad there was a scientific institution, Dar al-Hikma, where scientists and translators worked on philosophy and natural sciences. The first great mathematician to write in Arabic, **Abdullah Muhammad of Musa al-Khwarazmi** (died in 850), who studied at this institution, authored the first Arabic algebra composition, which dealt with solving equations and the fundamental problems of algebra. Through this book, algebra reached the Christian West. At the same time, Al-Khwarizmi edited the
**astronomical tables** determining the position of stars in the sky relative to different points. The tables helped find different locations on land, and later also at sea. The Muslim preoccupation with astronomy stemmed primarily from the need to establish the exact direction of Mecca during prayer for the knowing the beginning of Ramadan fasting. Therefore, already at the command of the Caliph al-Mansur, an Indian book of astronomy was first translated in Baghdad. The Arabs were influenced by Indian, Sassanid and Greek astronomies.

The Arabs learned the science of **medicine** from the Greeks. They developed this science and brought it to the level of systematic science. Arab medicine has tried to discover the roots of the diseases and the ways to treat them. The Arabs were the first to recognize that diseases spread by infection and were even the first to recognize diseases such as smallpox and measles. In addition, they have made extensive and comprehensive use of medicinal herbs. They were the first to set up hospitals. The first hospital in Baghdad was established in the days of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid.

*History, Grades 10–11, Travels in Time—Cities and Communities*, David Sorotzkin and Haviva Pedaya (Permit: 4177), 2008, p. 84.

The following passage instructs students about what it means to be a Muslim. The book explains several basic terms within Islam and their significance, such as Qur’an, Ramadan, Mosque, Muezzin, and Friday prayer. It also points out similarities between Islam and Judaism.

A Muslim is a person whose religion is Islam. The word Islam means devotion in Arabic, and it means devoting oneself to God. The Muslims, like the Jews, believe in one God
that created the world and leads it. They call him Allah. According to Islam, people should obey Allah—his wishes and his rules.

The holy book for Muslims is the Qur'an. The word of the Qur'an comes from the word to read. Muslims believe that written in the Qur'an are Allah's words to the Prophet Muhammad. They believe that the Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet. According to their belief, our Father Abraham, Moses and other figures from the Jewish religion (who lived before the Prophet Muhammad), were also prophets.

Holy books, fourth-grade students learn, are a fixture in many religions, not just Judaism. Islam, Christianity and Indian religions have their holy books, too.

**Holy Books in Other Religions**

Just as the Torah is sacred in the Jewish tradition, different religions have sacred books by which the tradition is passed from one generation to another. In Islam, the sacred book is the Qur'an, which conveys the prophecies Prophet Muhammad received from God according to Islamic tradition.

In Christianity, the Holy Book is the New Testament, and it is called because Christians believe that the Hebrew Bible is an old covenant, and that Christians have been given a new covenant. [sic]

In the religions of India there are several sacred books, among them the Vedas. The Hindus have numerous gods, and their scriptures describe the relationship between gods and humans.
The curricula seem eager to teach about the holiness of Jerusalem for Muslims. Learning about their attachment to the city emphasizes the idea that students consider Others when speaking about Jerusalem.

Jerusalem in Islam

The Muslim World ascribes great significance to Jerusalem too, and it is considered the third in holiness after the cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. The holiest site for Islam in Jerusalem is situated on the top of the Temple Mount, within the walls of the Old City and is called al-Haram al-Sharif (The Sacred Compound). It is a compound that includes mosques, educational institutions, and Muslim religious buildings, the most important of which are the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Jerusalem is Holy to All Religions

Jerusalem is a much-diversified city. Living in the city are people belonging to various religions: Jews, Muslims and Christians. There are holy places in the city that pertain to members of the all the religions. Sometimes, tensions or conflict arises between the diverse groups in Jerusalem, but most of the time, all of Jerusalem's residents live peacefully side-by-side and try to respect each other. Today, Jerusalem symbolizes hope for peace between the followers of different religions. . . .The ancient hope that peace will reign in Jerusalem still fills the hearts of the people and the city’s streets.
Hope for peace in Jerusalem and recognition of its holiness for all religions—for Arabs and Jews—is widespread in the curriculum. Examples of text and pictures of Arab Muslims, Christians, and Druze praying in Jerusalem and elsewhere are common. A few books refer to Palestinian political aspirations in the city. One third-grade textbook, which describes Jerusalem’s religious and political importance, also informs students that Palestinians also wish to make it their capital. A Jewish-Israeli culture textbook teaches that Jerusalem is holy for the three heavenly religions, the holiest city for the Jews and the capital of Israel. "Throughout history, the city has been ruled by Jews, Muslims and also Christians." While Jerusalem is Israel’s capital, the Palestinians also see it as their capital: "Today it is the capital of Israel, but the Palestinians also wish to have it as their capital. Will peace finally reign in Jerusalem? Let us recite our ancient prayer for the peace of Jerusalem—Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces (Psalms 122:7)."
The Vision of Peace and Coexistence is Central to the Jewish Faith.
The Future in the Song "Tomorrow" and the Prophecies of the Prophet Isaiah

Some ideas in the song "Tomorrow" and some pictures described in it are probably influenced by the words of the prophet Isaiah about his people Israel and the world, many, many years ago. Isaiah expressed his hope for peace and his belief in the friendship and brotherhood that would prevail in the future between humans, and even animals.

Here are some verses from a good prophecy for the future, taken from Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 6–7. You can see that in this prophecy, or in this vision for the future, the prophet uses future tense.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

[Israeli post stamps depicting these verses]

10. To what extent are the words of the poet Naomi Shemer in the song "Tomorrow." "A lion will lead a herd of sheep," reminiscent of the prophet Isaiah in the quoted verses?

11. Here is a verse from another prophecy of Isaiah, known as the "Vision of The End Times" chapter 2, verse 4. Which lines in Naomi Shemer's song are closest in their idea and picture to a verse from Isaiah's prophecy?

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore.


Students in grades 4–12 become increasingly familiar with the ethnic makeup of the State of Israel; textbooks highlight inner-group diversity between individuals belonging to the same community such as Druze and Bedouins. Lifestyle choices, spanning conservative, liberal, religious and secular are discussed. Students experience this through a fourth-grade civics book's treatment of a Bedouin community; it portrays three students from the city of Rahat, with one of them wearing traditional dress while the others are dressed casually in Western-style clothing:
Another civics textbook teaches students about the first Bedouin female doctor, Dr. Rania Okbi, who shares how more resources need to be given to Arab schools. The text expresses her gratitude for programs designed to help women and minorities, especially Bedouins, find success in the medical field.

Dr. Rania Okbi, the First Bedouin Physician

Dr. Rania Okbi is the first Bedouin doctor in the Negev. Dr. Okbi graduated from Ben-Gurion University in the Negev. Dr. Okbi grew up as one of six children in a single-parent family in Be'er Sheva. As a high school student, she took part in the 'Medicine Buds in the Negev’ project, started by Ben-Gurion University to help Bedouin students. Primarily intended for girls, the project aimed at increasing their chances of being admitted to study medicine at the university. . . .
'Without this project I would not have been accepted,' says Dr. Okbi. 'The project helped to connect me to medical studies already when I was in 10th grade. In my opinion, we should invest more efforts and encourage the youth already during the elementary school period. We should invest resources in the Arab schools in the country because the level of education there is exceedingly low. If we intend to direct students to study law and medicine, it would be better start at age zero.'


Students see newspaper articles which report on the continued treatment of Palestinian patients from Gaza, even while rockets are being fired at Israel from the territory, showing the importance of compassion and the value of all human life. This should also reflect on Jewish-Palestinian relations within Israel.

Palestinian Patients from Gaza Come for Treatment in Israel

While missile fire continues to target southern and central communities, Palestinian patients continue to arrive for medical treatment at Rambam Hospital. 'This is an unusual (not-ordinary) reality throughout the world and certainly in the Middle East.'

Although Hamas is firing on southern communities and Gush Dan, Rambam Hospital in Haifa continues to provide medical care to more than 20 Palestinians, including eight Gazan children. . . .

'We will not change our values because of the reality of the moment,' says [Professor Rafael Beyar, Rambam Hospital Director]. 'We will continue to be humane (human, caring) and care for Palestinians who need our help. I want the entire world to know that.'


Textbooks from grade 4 on also emphasize the diversity of Arab communities in Israel. A seventh-grade book describes Iksal, an Israeli-Arab village, as one of many examples,\(^87\) while an Israeli studies book from grade 10 contains lessons on the history of the Druze, Arab and

Bedouin communities in the country during the nineteenth century,\textsuperscript{88} showing students that today's integrated society is a result of hundreds of years of historical developments. Classroom exercises in homeland, society and civics for grade 4 prompt students to think of various ways to facilitate coexistence.

\textbf{What Can You Do to Make the Life in a Mixed City More Pleasant for Everyone?}

When people of different background live together in the same town, they must be considerate to each other. If they want, they can also meet to get to know one another. When you know each other, it is easier to be considerate and live together.

Maybe you have ideas on how to make better for everyone in a mixed city.

\textbf{Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 4, Young Israelis—Agam from Tel Aviv-Jaffa,}

The themes of cooperation and coexistence between neighboring communities are compounded frequently throughout the textbooks. Following is a textbook excerpt discussing the 1929 Hebron Massacre of the city's old Jewish community leading to its destruction. The text details the Arab individuals who protected Jewish families and includes a list of the names of these Arab individuals and the number of people they saved, "signed by Hebron's chief rabbis."

An advertisement with the names of Arabs who protected Jewish families in Hebron during the events of 1929.

The fate of the Jewish community in Hebron embodies the severity of the 1929 events more than anything. Even before the violence, they were warned that acts of violence might occur and were offered [an opportunity] to evacuate the city. The Jews of Hebron, however, insisted that they had lived in the city for generations, and that good neighborly relations prevailed between them and their Arab neighbors. They also requested not to have "Haganah" personnel sent to them so as not to create tension in the relationship between them and their neighbors.

Despite all this, the Arabs were severely violent against the Jews of Hebron and harmed them: They murdered their Jewish neighbors, looted their property, set fire to houses and desecrated Torah scrolls and prayer books. Several Arab families protected their Jewish neighbors, hid them, and saved their lives. With the exception of one officer, British policemen, did not intervene. Sixty-six members of the Jewish community were murdered; dozens of them were injured. The survivors left the city and moved to Jerusalem. Thus, the Jewish community in Hebron ceased to exist.

The list was signed by two rabbis of the Jewish community in Hebron at that time, Rabbi Meir Franco and Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Slonim.
[The list includes the names of the rescuers and the number of survivors from each Jewish family, saved by that person]


In a section about mixed cities in Israel in a geography class, there is a photo of symbols of the three monotheistic religions and a description about the 'Holiday of the Three Holidays' in which residents of Haifa celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, and Ramadan together, teaching students about positive examples of multiculturalism:

![Image of symbols of the three monotheistic religions]


In history books, Jewish-Israeli students learn about Theodore Herzl's original vision for Israel: as a country in which all citizens are equal. Herzl, "the spiritual father of the Jewish State," according to the Declaration of Independence, is often quoted in Israeli discourse when doubts arise as to which path the country should choose. In this textbook as well, Herzl's "spiritual authority" with Jews is invoked to impart the notion that Israeli Arabs are inherently equal partners in the State of Israel.

---

In his *Jewish State* he described in broad brush the nature of the state to be established. In his second book, *Altneuland* (The Ancient-New Country)—a novel taking place in a future Eretz Yisra'el—he painted the character of that state. According to Herzl, the state will be a liberal democracy having European culture and language. He also referenced the fact that the Land of Israel has a large Arab population. The Arabs, he believed, would welcome the Jewish settlers happily because of their contribution to the development of the land and the quality of life.


Israel's state and state-religious curricula have made significant strides in teaching students the benefits of cooperation between diverse populations within Israeli society. Textbook subjects such as "Jewish-Israeli culture," "Jewish thought," and "homeland, society and civics" provide students with real-life examples highlighting a multitude of initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians from diverse walks of life. A seventh-grade Jewish-Israeli culture textbook shows a picture of a Jewish and an Israeli-Arab girl working together on an agricultural project in school. In the same textbook, students learn about a community project undertaken in the Musrara neighborhood of Jerusalem. An image from the lesson shows Haredi Jews, secular Jews and Palestinian Arabs working together on a joint "documentary embroidery" tissue reflecting the neighborhood's makeup and story.

---

90 Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 7, *Trails of Culture*, Y. Epstein, A. Baser and I. Saban (Permit: 3331), 2017, p. 34.
Israeli textbooks teach students about the individual Other and need to break down the boundaries of "friend/enemy" distinctions while underlining similarities with which students can forge bonds. In the following examples, an Israeli Arab girl, Sundus, talks about her family and her village in the Hula Valley.
A Meeting With:
The Family of Sundus

Sundus from the Town of Tuba

My name is Sundus Heib and I live in the Arab town of Tuba in the Hula Valley. All the houses near us belong to members of our extended family. My grandparents and all my uncles and aunts and cousins are our neighbors. In Arabic the extended family is called a hamula (clan), and the name of our clan is Heib. It's never boring here. Nearly every week one of the cousins in the family has a birthday, and we celebrate together and have fun. When my mother and father go out or work outside our village, we always have someone to stay with.

Opposite my grandparent’s house there is a yard, and this is our hamula’s meeting place in the summer. When the children meet, there is a lot of noise from the games and fights, but if the adults also come to the yard, we play quietly so as not to disturb them.

A. What is a ‘clan’?

B. Sundus loves that her extended family lives close to each other. Why?


Israeli textbooks highlight Arab family life, and the differences and similarities between various communities in Israel. The following examples depict the life of an Arab child, Yazan, from the

---

91 Although this textbook is no longer approved by Israel’s Ministry of Education for the 2022–23 school year, as of the writing of this report, the volume was still a part of the Israeli Ministry of Education’s approved textbooks. It was therefore decided to keep the example in the report.
village of Tamra, his family, friends, everyday family life, their culture and religion. Their story is given as a first-person narrative. Yazan's father is an engineer and his mother is studying for her master's degree. Note that Yazan's family originates in the Hijaz, now in Saudi Arabia, conveying that all Israeli citizens are both natives and immigrants, all should and can be successful and share their homeland's prosperity and beauty as a large, rich, and diversified community. The activities—swimming, guitar-playing, scouts, robotics—all fly against negative perceptions and self-perceptions (Israeli Arabs often make fun of their perceived lack of swimming skills).

Yazan from Tamra

Me: Yazan Hijazi, 11 years old.

The meaning of my name: My name is taken from the word 'balance,' the right person in the trial. Yazan was a hero king in the Arabian Peninsula, where the Arab people lived.

Our family name is Hijazi, which is—from the Hijaz region of Saudi Arabia, an important region in the history of the Arabs. The last name of many people in Tamra is Hijazi because in Arab localities, extended families usually live together.

Homeland, Society, and Civics, Grade 4, Young Israelis—Yazan from Tamra, Shira Goodman, Ofira Gal, and Iris Shiloni, CET (Permit: 2747), 2017, pp. 6–11.
Me Too: A Young Israeli
I am Inbal Nasser el-Din from Daliyat al-Karmel on Mount Carmel. I am a Druze. The Druze too have a sanduq [marriage chest] and this is my grandma's sanduq. She was married more than 40 years ago and in this sanduq she keeps many items she prepared for the wedding like tablecloths, napkins, coverings, handkerchiefs and maps.

Fourth-grade students learn about children from all the different communities and religions in Israel. In the example below, students learn of an Israeli Arab boy called Yazan. He wants to be a scientist when he grows up so he goes to meet a famous Israeli Arab scientist who works in the leading scientific research center in Israel. The interview provided in the textbook is conducted by Iris Shiloni, one of the textbook’s authors.

Morning: Time for Work

I'm a Scientist

Yazan dreams of becoming a scientist, so we went to meet Professor Hossam Haick, one of the leading scientists in the world. He lives and works in Israel. Hossam heads a team of scientists at the Technion in Haifa who are developing an electronic device that can determine if a person is ill.

Students learn about an Israeli Arab girl from Haifa named Lour and her family who have lived in the same house for multiple generations. They read of their extended family in the nearby Arab City of Shefa-Amr and the safety they feel while visiting. That they can "walk around alone without an adult," ostensibly reinforces students' perceptions of the family as nonthreatening and similar to their own.

Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 2, Young Israelis—Homeland, Society and Citizenship, Writers Team, CET (Permit: 2868), 2020, pp. 70–72.
Christian Israeli Arabs are personalized in this textbook for the fourth grade. The passage illustrates a picture of the city of Nazareth and a photo of the Talhami family from Isfiya posing with a Christmas tree. Students are asked what it means to be a Christian and the text explains about Sunday as a holy day, Christmas, and the New Testament. Examples taken from the New Testament teach about not acting violently in response to violence.

Arab Christians in Israel

Most of the Arab citizens who live in Israel belong to the Islamic religion, but a small proportion of them belong to the Christian religion. The Christian religion was founded in the Land of Israel 2,000 years ago. The founder of religion was called Jesus, and he lived in Nazareth. Hence the religion’s name in Hebrew—Christianity [Natzrut]. Christianity is the world’s largest religion.
I am Liana, and I am a Christian Arab from the community of Isfiya. I attend fourth grade in a Christian school in Haifa, and this is my family.

What does it mean to be a Christian? For example: to go to church on Sunday—our holy day, and celebrate Christmas—the day Jesus was born. During Christmas, you place a Christmas tree in the house, decorate it with sparkling-colored decorations (as in the picture) and give gifts to family and friends.

At school we have religious lessons, in which we also learn about tolerance and acceptance of the Other. We have learned that in our holy book, called the New Testament [sic], it is written that if someone slaps us, we should 'turn the other cheek.' Meaning, when someone hurts you, do not hurt [them] back.

What is your opinion?

Nazareth—the largest Arab city in Israel—serves as a center for northern Arabs. Muslim Arabs and Christian Arabs live in Nazareth. Nazareth is a very ancient city; it has the Church of the Annunciation, which is one of the holiest places for Christians. Many tourists from all over the world come to visit it.

In one textbook chapter, "Between Israel and Other Peoples and the Attitude toward Non-Jewish People," students learn of coexistence between Jews and Palestinians in East Jerusalem. A picture of a Palestinian and Jewish girl hugging each other is illustrated to describe positive relations between Arab and Jewish youth in Jerusalem.
Bedouin Life

A civics book for fourth grade includes a big picture of Rahat, Israel's largest Bedouin town, and acquaints students with their neighbor Bedouin Others; there is a brief explanation about Bedouins and their life in Israel.

Badia is Desert

Images from the Life of Bedouins in the Negev

The word Badawi (or: Bedouin) stems from the Arab word Badia, which means desert. The Bedouins are Muslim-Arab tribes. In the past the Bedouins wandered in the desert from one place to another. Today, most of the Bedouins are no longer nomads.
Most Bedouins in Israel live in the Negev. They live in urban settlements such as Rahat, Ar’ara, Segev-Shalom, and in villages that you can see while driving through the roads in the Negev.


A series of photos in a fourth-grade civics book accompanies positive explanations about Bedouin life, teaching students about their unique desert culture with a special focus on modernization. Students learn that some Bedouin women live traditional lifestyles while others attend university pursue professional careers.

Some Bedouin women lead a traditional lifestyle. They wear traditional clothes and do housework. There are Bedouin women who lead a modern lifestyle, who study in the university and work outside the house in different occupations. Bedouin society is becoming increasingly modern, but tradition remains important. For example: In schools and community centers there are Debka classes—a traditional dance that involves stomping your legs to the rhythm. The dance is usually performed in weddings.

Jaffa's Arab Community

Students learn that prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948, most Jaffa's residents were Arab; today it is an integrated city. By studying the history of the city, students at the same time learn about the Arab community in Israel.

Homeland, Society, and Civics, Grade 4, Young Israelis—Agam from Tel Aviv, Shira Goodman, Ofira Gal and Iris Shiloni, CET (Permit: 2747), 2017, p. 16.

Visiting Arab Families as a Bar Mitzva Assignment

A passage about the Jewish tradition of having a Bar-Mitzvah talks about a list of thirteen tasks a boy at the age of thirteen received from his parents, which signals his maturity and responsibility. One of the tasks mentioned is meeting with an Israeli Arab family.
And I had something very special: Bar-Mitzvah assignments. My father was born in a kibbutz, and there, there was a custom: When children reach the age of thirteen they receive 13 assignments they must complete. It shows that they are mature and can take responsibility. My parents made me a list of 13 assignments, for example: Helping Grandpa working in the field; to meet with an Israeli Arab family; to write a personal diary for an entire year. By now I have completed 5 assignments, and this year I hope to complete the rest.

Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 2, Living Together in Israel, Shira Goodman, Zvia Fein and Ofira Gal, CET (Permit: 2281), 2006, p. 61.\(^92\)

An artwork entitled "Habibti: A State for All its Citizens," conveys a cross-section of Israeli society with portraits of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students are asked to consider why the artist chose this (Arab) name.\(^93\)

\(^92\) Although this textbook is no longer approved by Israel's Ministry of Education for the 2022–23 school year, as of the writing of this report, the volume was still a part of the Israeli Ministry of Education’s approved textbooks. It was therefore decided to keep the example in the report.

\(^93\) "Habibti" [darling] is addressed to a female, in Arabic and spoken Hebrew.
Imagine a big wall covered with many portraits next to each other. This is how it is shown in the museum. And now . . . look at the people depicted in the painting and think: Why did the artist give this piece the name 'Habibti, A State for All its Citizens'?


A sixth-grade Jewish culture textbook gives an account of Israeli and Palestinian children trying to find common ground while at a summer camp. Students learn about the importance of listening to different opinions and how to build friendships and respect for others. They are asked to consider why such encounters are important and how they might contribute to peace. Note that the comments by Tamar the Israeli girl and Adham the Palestinian boy include messaging that strongly held beliefs are not simply dismissed and personal friendship may not be sufficient for reconciliation. The prompts following the excerpts are challenging yet further demonstrate the importance of such encounters.
Note that Adham is "Adham, Palestine," implicitly recognizing an existing independent Palestinian state.

At camp I learned to listen to people, even if I did not agree with what they were saying. I learned to understand other opinions and be open-minded.

**Shai, Israel**

'Seeds of Peace' gave me hope that one day we can live in peace—a just peace based on the principles of respect and basic human rights and values for every Israeli and Palestinian.

**Adham, Palestine**

In the camp I actually became a friend of Arab girls. We ate together, attended the same classes, I felt like we were really similar. But in dialogue groups everything becomes different. [Some Arab participants] said really hard things about our country, about the army. A good friend of mine who lives in Jenin said our soldiers were monsters. I told her she's talking about my brothers, and they're just like me. Not monsters! I also explained that we are afraid of them and of terrorists. Then, outside of the dialogue session, we went back to being friends. It's hard to explain.

**Tamar, Israel**

What do you think about the idea of a meeting of children from Israel together with a meeting of Palestinian, Egyptian, and Jordanian children—what are the benefits and importance of such a meeting? What are the difficulties and problems that can be in it?

A chapter dealing with the right to education explains the goals of Israeli state education, as listed in the "State Education Law."

(2) To instill the principles found within the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel and the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and develop a sense of respect toward human rights, basic freedoms, democratic values, obedience to the law, the culture and views of Others, and to educate and make efforts to work toward peace and tolerance in the relations between human beings and nations;

(11) To become acquainted with the language, culture, history, heritage and unique tradition of the Arab population and other communities within the State of Israel, and to recognize the equal rights of all Israeli citizens.

This topic is found in another textbook with the text of an amendment made to Israel's State Education Law in 2000. Professor Amnon Rubinstein—a liberal public figure, legal scholar, and Minister of Education (1994–96) explains the significance of this Knesset-passed amendment. The textbook quotes him as saying that education is "now equally aimed at members of all cultures in the country. For the first time, schools are legally obligated to teach Arab history, and about the identity and culture of the Israeli [-Arab] community." According to Rubinstein, "the shared wording for Jews and Arabs" makes this law extremely important.94

---

94 Civics, Grades 10–12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish Democratic State (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 112.
The Cultural-Educational Aspect: in 2000, amendments regarding the goals of education were added to the State Education Law. Among them:

1. To educate students to love human beings, their nation and country, to be loyal citizens of the State of Israel, who respect their parents and family, their heritage, cultural identity and language.

11. To recognize the language, culture, history, heritage and unique tradition of the Arab population and other population groups in the State of Israel, and to recognize the equal rights of all Israeli citizens.

These articles led to the introduction of official school programs minorities' schools. For example: "Heritage of Islam," "Druze Heritage," and "Heritage of the Christianity."


Students learn about the well-known Qaadan v. Katzir Supreme Court ruling against the allocation of state land for solely Jewish settlements, characterized as forbidden discrimination. A statute provides that settlements may be built for a specific minority group if they help to preserve their unique cultural identity, an allowance not permitted or considered necessary for the majority culture.

B. In the Qaadan Supreme Court Ruling (2000), the Supreme Court ruled that allocating state land for Jewish settlements is a forbidden form of discrimination. The appeal was filed by Adel and Iman Qaadan, an Arab couple from Baqa al-Gharbiyye, who wanted to build a house in the settlement Katzir. Their request to live in the settlement had been
denied, and the legal debate focused on the question of whether the State of Israel is allowed to allocate land to a locality intended only for Jews.

In its ruling, the court changed the 'Burqan rule,' and determined that the State of Israel, as a state committed to equality toward all its citizens, is no longer allowed to establish settlements for Jews alone.

Judge Aharon Barak [President of the Supreme Court of Israel] wrote in his ruling:

[Representative Translation:]

There is no contradiction between the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and complete equality among all its citizens. Quite the contrary: equality of rights for all human beings in Israel, whatever their religion or nationality may be, is drawn from the values of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

The Supreme Court states that minority groups such as the Ultra-Orthodox and the Bedouins, have a right to build a settlement intended only for the members of their community, to help them preserve their unique culture in the presence of the dominant majority group, while the majority does not require cultural protection. . . .


Students incorporate the inclusive principles of Israel's Declaration of Independence as part of their essential worldviews. Thus, students learn about the "complete equality of social and political rights to all [of Israel's] inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex." Similarly, "freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture" are instilled.
Group Rights in Israel

The State of Israel, as we have learned, is an ethno-cultural nation-state, identified with the Jewish nation and defined as a Jewish and democratic state. The public sphere in Israel is heavily influenced by the characteristics of the Jewish nation, but minority groups live in the country. . . .

The Declaration of Independence promised that the State of Israel will be open for Jewish Aliyah [immigration] and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the holy places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Civics, Grades 10–12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish-Democratic State, Varda Ashkenazi, Bilha Alfrerson, Tamir Dubi and Dana Shtarkman, MoE Loni Kohen (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 211.

The textbooks firmly admonish all form of racism and bigotry. In the following passage, Jewish and world authorities are mobilized to explain the gravity of such behavior. A passage discusses the racist chants that: "La Familia" fans of Beitar Jerusalem football club shouted at Arab players such as "Death to the Arabs." Students are asked to consider what spiritual leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., second-century Rabbi Akiva ("Chief of the Sages"), and second-century BCE Simeon ben Shetach (President of the Sanhedrin) would have said about the incident.
Beitar Jerusalem Fans Taught Children Bigoted Songs

[Representative Translation:]
Imagine that the event described in the article, the directors of the Beitar [Jerusalem Football Club] team decided to summon a press conference in which Rabbi Akiva, Martin Luther King and Rabbi Simeon ben Shetach would also make a speech.

As journalists, you have been invited to cover the event.
- Compose a short article describing your impressions from the press conference.
- Give the article a title.


A civil education textbook features a long discussion on racism, against the background of a famous discrimination case in which a teacher at the Israeli-Arab Jaffa Ajyal school exposed racist practices at the Superland amusement park in Rishon LeZion. Under the heading of "No to Racism in the Name of Judaism," the textbook offers much information and invites students to visit the websites of many religious and secular civil rights organizations confronting bigotry. The lesson includes the quotation by former Minister of Education Rabbi Shai Piron and the wise
words of Israeli Druze author Salman Natour (1949‒2016), who was a prominent Palestinian activist.

Nurture the Human, Not the Racist

I heard many and varied theories about racism... everyone was adamant that every human has a little racist inside them, as if racism is a natural phenomenon, which cannot be overcome. And I wondered whether the opposite is true: maybe within every annoying racist resides a little human being? Maybe our job is to find that human being within the racist and nurture him?

Civics, Grades 10‒12, Being Citizens in Israel in a Jewish-Democratic State (Permit: 4453), 2016, p. 481.

The curricula teach that tensions between Arabs and Jews in Israel may have been exacerbated by the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. This conflict unleashed tensions between Jews and Arabs within the State of Israel as well as tensions between left-wing and right-wing leaning citizens.
The Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, threaten the very existence of the state and have led to bloody struggles, both in the wars between Israel and its neighbors and in the conflicts between the Palestinians and Israel. It is likely these struggles exacerbated the polarization between Jews and Arabs in Israel and threw a strain on right-wing and left-wing elements in the country. It seems one of the most decisive political questions dictating the Israeli agenda is the question of the future of the territories. There are those who argue that continued control of even some of these territories demographically endangers Israel's future as a Jewish state and calls into question the democratic nature of the state. Others assert that continued control of the territories does not endanger the Jewish majority in Israel. Many hold that the possibility of reaching an agreement on the civilian status of Palestinians [in the West Bank and Gaza] has been denied due to obstacles created among the Palestinian leadership and among Arab leaders.

Self-Reflection: Violence and Injustice

The dilemma of how to prevent and react to violence occupies much space in the Israeli curricula. Many textbooks go to great lengths to teach about past acts of violence and injustice committed by Israelis. The discussion includes moving accounts about bereaved parents on both sides of the conflict who meet with one another while trying to educate the rest of society on the price of war.

Textbooks deal with the legacy of pre-state Jewish underground organizations and characterize excesses with terms like "horrific event," "barbaric nature" and a "stain on Israel's struggle for independence," to describe unlawful attacks by Israel's security forces and allies (e.g., Falange Lebanese Christian militias); they denounce attacks on Palestinian civilians by Jewish extremists. These lessons appear primarily, but not exclusively, in history textbooks for higher grades. This is especially noteworthy considering that students engage most often in this self-reflective criticism just before they are drafted into mandatory military or national service. Every Israeli student learns the lesson of the 1956 Kafr Qasim massacre: that following orders does not justify committing war crimes. The incident stained the IDF’s purity of arms which led to reforms allowing soldiers and police to refuse clearly unlawful orders . . . every commander and soldier must know that their weapon is designated for fighting the enemy and not for killing civilian populations uninvolved in fighting." Students learn about "blatantly illegal orders" of such a clear criminal nature that a "black flag is hoisted over it."96

96 Jewish Thought, Grades 10–12, Democratic Values and Judaism, Yochai Eden, Hartman Institute (Permit: 9305), 2011, p. 66.
The following passage talks about the founder of The Parents Circle—Families Forum. By showing students how families who mourned their children on both sides of the conflict can forgive and meet together, students learn about compassion and forgiveness, and how mutual understanding, combined with talking and listening to each other, is the best way of ending the conflict and creating a lasting peace: "... acts of revenge won't solve anything."

Therefore, he decided to establish a forum for bereaved parents, Israeli and Palestinian, who lost their loved ones in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Members of the forum meet with each other and act in many other ways to promote peace between the nations. Also, they meet with leaders of both sides and present their concept to school students—so the new generation will not have a desire for revenge.

Members of the forum believe that acts of revenge will not wake up the dead and will not solve anything, but on the other hand, if we keep meeting and talking, maybe the future will look different. . . .

Jewish-Israeli Culture, Grade 4, Between Man and Friend in the Weekly Torah Reading, Ayelet Yevnin and Yael Gershuni, Tali Education Foundation (Permit: 2508), 2013, p. 31.

---

97 The Parents Circle—Family Forum (PCFF) is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization claiming to have a membership of over 600 families, all of whom have lost an immediate family member to the ongoing conflict. See also Jotam Confino, "United in Grief: The Jewish and Palestinian Parents Who Are Pleading for Peace," The Jewish Chronicle, May 5, 2022, https://www.thejc.com/news/world/united-in-grief-the-jewish-and-palestinian-parents-who-are-pleading-for-peace-2iP8gL1GVQUUtWdq1hngsi
Violence in Retrospect: Historical Cases

Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians is condemned in both the historical and modern context and, when appropriate, labeled as terrorism. Since before the establishment of Israel and throughout its early history, terror attacks were a key characteristic of the fight between Jews and Arabs throughout the British Mandate. In a passage from 1938 titled "How to Respond to Arab Terrorism?" students learn about David Ben-Gurion's outright rejection and condemnation of retaliatory terrorism and "acts of revenge against innocent Arabs." In the text, David Ben-Gurion denounced indiscriminate violence as a way of fighting back against Arab terrorism and explicitly said that responding to terror with terror is murder. He argued that tolerating such violence contradicts basic Jewish values, and that if terror toward Arabs is tolerated, it will eventually escalate into acts of terror against Jews.

How to Respond to Arab Terrorism?

David Ben-Gurion (head of the Jewish Agency, from a lecture in August 1938)

Jewish terrorism will not frighten the [Arab] gangs and their leaders. . . . It is naïve to assume that the Arabs will be scared by acts of revenge, and lay down their arms. . . . Will we kill blameless Arabs, whomever we find? . . . What will that give us? It is obvious that by doing so we will not increase the Aliyah [Jewish immigration]. . . . We forget that it would be easy for the [British] government to stop the terrorism. It could do so without an army and without bloodshed: simply by stopping the Jewish Aliyah. . . . No government is foolish enough to bring into the country people who are spreading fear. . . . The terrorism within us will bring about a dangerous and destructive schism in our camp. There are Jews who have not forgotten "thou shalt not kill." . . . If an Arab who kills a Jew on "patriotic" grounds is a murderer—so a Jew who kills an innocent Arab for "patriotic" reasons is a murderer. . . . A murderer is a murderer—whether he is a Jew or an Arab. . . .
We know, at least, that we can hold our heads high in the face of the world and continue our enterprise with a clear conscience. . . . And let us not forget one other thing: an act of terrorism has another unavoidable result—it starts outside and ends inside. . . . From Jewish terrorism against Arabs, it is but a short step to Jewish terrorism against Jews.

The word "restraint" [havlagah] is not appropriate to the line we have taken, and with which we must proceed. . . . We take part in rooting out the murderers, we attack the gangs and we pursue them. But we rule out acts of revenge against innocent Arabs . . .

A recently approved textbook offers a similar, longer lesson in more depth. Students read that in response to Arab acts of violence against Jewish residents in the 1930s, the Jewish leadership adopted a policy of restraint to avoid retaliation or indiscriminate terrorism. The textbook highlights the moral and political benefits of this policy.

How Did the Yishuv Deal with Arab Acts of Violence?
The Yishuv's leadership wanted to set a policy in response to Arab acts of violence. It had to deal with a complex dilemma:

- Should they continue defending the settlements and the Jewish neighborhoods and only harm the Arabs who attack them?
- Should they retaliate against the Arabs' attacks with counter-attacks, in which innocent citizens might also be harmed?
- How will Britain respond to indiscriminate violence caused by Jews?

After deliberation, the Yishuv's leadership decided to adopt a policy of havlagah, [restraint]: to protect settlements that are attacked, to fight aggressors, and to avoid acts of blind terrorism—indiscriminate terrorism.

The Yishuv's leadership explained why a policy of restraint must be adopted, and a policy of blind terrorism must be avoided:
a. **A moral consideration**—acts of blind terrorism might harm innocent people and therefore, must be avoided.

b. **A political consideration**—a policy of restraint will strengthen the Yishuv's relationship with Britain and ensure that Britain will not stop the Aliyah and settlement. A policy of restraint will present the Yishuv as a responsible body that is interested in protecting peace and order.

*About the Policy of Restraint, in the Words of David Ben-Gurion, August 18, 1936:*

The systematic use of retaliatory terrorism will place us, in the eyes of the British government, in the same rank with the Arabs, even though we are being attacked. They will not let us legally acquire weapons, and they will also take our weapons from us. The intensification of terrorism from both sides—Arabs and Jews—will result in ending the Aliyah.

We must not act the same way the Arabs act. The Arabs fight England because they want to remove it from the land that they believe is theirs. We do not want to remove England, we want to bring it closer, to attract it, so it can help us return to the land. The Arabs do not need the English; rather the opposite, they want to get rid of them. We need Britain, and we want it to stay in the Land of Israel and help us.


1. Why, in David Ben-Gurion's opinion, restraint must be adopted, and retaliatory terrorism avoided?
2. What is your opinion toward this position? Think of the option it opens, and the risk it holds.

---

A separate history textbook includes a table with descriptions of the various Jewish underground military organizations that preceded the IDF during British Mandate.

The table displays various activities and tactics of the organizations, as well as their motivations and objectives. Etzel (Irgun) followed the Biblical policy: "an eye for an eye" and committed retaliatory "terrorist acts" against both the British and Arabs. Similarly, the textbook conveys that Lehi ("Stern Gang") believed in "radical terrorism" aimed primarily at British troops and other personnel. The Haganah in this table prioritized "restraint" and "avoiding terrorism aimed at the Arab civilian population."

The table describes how the Haganah gradually moved from a policy of extreme passivity: guarding within localities ("behind the fence"), to a more aggressive stance allowing patrols, reconnaissance, and surprise attacks after 1929 ("beyond the fence"). Only during the final phase (1936–39) did the Haganah move to attacking Arab paramilitary groups while still adhering to the policy of not harming innocents.
Three Underground Movements in the Jewish Yishuv

Haganah advocated "restraint" in the Arab Revolt (1936–39)—refraining from terrorism, against the Arab civilian population. However, it moved to the offensive against the Arab [paramilitary] gangs.

Became the Army of the "State in Process (of being created)"

Etzel subscribed to "attack"—a policy of eye for an eye. To respond with terror against the Arab's acts of terror.

Because of the terror acts performed by underground members, they were chased by both the British and the Yishuv leadership.

Lehi subscribed to radical terrorism toward the British, which they considered the main enemy of the Yishuv.

Lehi people were chased by the Yishuv and more so by the British. They captured Avraham Yair Stern, Lehi’s leader, and killed him.

A more recent textbook allows students to directly reflect and answer questions about Etzel's activities and the argument of the Yishuv leadership that "these acts go against Judaism and Zionism's foundations of morality" and would lead the Jews to "disaster." Follow-up questions are both intended to evaluate for knowledge retention and to allow students an opportunity to share their own impressions and views.

The Haganah organization made sure to act according to the policy of restraint that was set by the Yishuv's leadership. However, this policy was not supported by the entire Yishuv. In 1937, a group of members broke away from the Haganah and established the National Military Organization, Etzel. Etzel was associated with the Revisionist Party and did not consider itself subject to the Yishuv's political leadership.

Etzel argued that a policy of defense and restraint will not lead to victory, but that whoever wants to win must attack. Etzel called upon adopting a method of blood for blood and argued that this would ensure the Yishuv's safety. Members of Etzel executed operations in which they also harmed innocent people who were not involved in attacks against Jews. In July 1938, Etzel executed two operations in the vegetable market of the
Lower City in Haifa: They laid explosives in the market, and the explosion resulted in the death and injury of many Arabs.

The Jewish National Council's Response to Etzel's Actions:

Harming innocent Arabs will not serve as revenge for the murder of Jews. . . . The Jewish National Council’s assembly, along with representatives of the Chief Rabbinate, the municipalities, the communities, the local councils, and agricultural settlements, expresses its aversion (rejection, opposition) of these criminal acts. These acts go against Judaism and Zionism's foundations of morality, induce hate between the peoples of the land, and can result in a disaster for the Yishuv and the land.

Note:

1. How does [the text] label Etzel's acts of retaliatory terrorism?
2. What are the reasons for opposing Etzel's acts of retaliatory terrorism?
3. What is your opinion of the Jewish National Council's response?


In a passage teaching about past terrorist attacks committed in mixed cities, both by Jews against Arabs and Arabs against Jews, another textbook teaches that in the 1948 war, all three Jewish underground movements committed acts of retaliatory terror against Arabs such as bombing of Arab markets, homes and a hotel in retaliation for Arab terrorist actions. This passage attributes acts of terror and brutality against Palestinians to all three of the underground organizations, by referencing specific acts of violence rather than general characterizations.

The three underground movements responded with counter acts of terror: Throwing bombs in the Arab markets of Jerusalem (in Jaffa gate and Nablus gate) by members of Eztel, blowing up homes during raids of Haganah members in Haifa's Lower City, blowing up the old ‘Saraya' building in Jaffa's clock square by members of Lehi and the blowing up of the Semiramis Hotel in the [Jerusalem’s] Katamon neighborhood by members of the Haganah.

In a more explicit condemnation of these tactics and the ideologies that motivated them, a lesson in one history textbook contends that the ideology of Lehi was "close to European fascism."98 Students learn that Lehi espoused an extreme nationalist ideology "that saw force and violence as the way to achieve national goals." Its leader, Avraham Stern, is described to believe in "terrorism" as a "legitimate warfare" to gain control "over the entire Land of Israel" [in this context: from the Nile to the Euphrates]. Students learn that Lehi’s modus operandi and worldview were in opposition to the spirit of the Jewish community in pre-state Israel, as a way of further repudiating the organization. This information is conveyed early in a lesson describing the initiation of Jewish military resistance to the British presence in Palestine.

Military Struggle
The military struggle against England was launched by a group of Etzel dissidents in 1940—Etzel b’Yisra’el (Etzel [National Military Organization] Israel), later called Lehi [Lohamei Herut Israel, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel]. This group rejected cooperation with England during the war, and its ideology was close to European fascism.

Its ideological foundations were rooted in the extreme right of the revisionist party that was resolute on war with Britain and supported a nationalism that saw force and violence as the way to achieve national goals. The organization was headed by Avraham Stern ('Yair,' by his underground name). Stern required his group to be totally committed to

---

the national ideal that included 'dominion' over the "entire Land of Israel (from the Nile to the Euphrates). Avraham Stern and his friends believed personal terrorism to be legitimate warfare, and this was their way to achieve their national objectives. This underground movement waged a battle that was in opposition to the spirit of the Yishuv [the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine].

History, Grades 11‒12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East, Eyal Naveh, Nava Vered and David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 57.

In the first two decades after Israel's founding, the country faced a series of guerrilla warfare-style attacks on civilian targets in Israel, carried out by Palestinian militants, with support from Egyptian and Jordanian forces, and referred to as Fedayeen. As the unconventional terror attacks were nearly impossible to prevent, Israeli leadership settled on a policy known as the "Reprisal Doctrine," which postulated that the best response consisted of striking back with disproportionate force at targets from which a Fedayeen attack emanated, including those of both of military and civilian nature. Many Israeli textbooks deal with these events as a formative part of the nation's history, in which the Fedayeen attacks inflicted a collective trauma on the Israeli population; while the textbooks emphasize this trauma, they also confront the brutality of the reprisals.

A history textbook thoroughly discusses the Qibya reprisal operation. It describes the killing of sixty civilians during the operation as "murder." (Another history textbook, for the state-religious curriculum, places the number of villagers dead at seventy). The textbook's presentation is frank and harsh; it describes Israel's initial attempts to dodge responsibility, but also the subsequent assumption of responsibility and the ensuing policy change.

---

The Reprisal Operation in the Village of Qibya

The reprisal operation in the village of Qibya raised difficult questions as to the morality of the combat methods used by the units that took a part in them. During the night of October 12, 1953, a squad of terrorists infiltrated [into Israel] from Jordan and threw a hand grenade into the Kanias family home in Yahud. The explosion killed a mother and her two little children. The terrorists' traces led to the area of the village Rantis, back then in Jordan's territory, about 5 km north of Qibya. The attack shocked Israeli citizens, as this was the first terrorist attack carried out in the center of the country, and also because the victims of the attack were a [Jewish] woman and her infant children who were murdered in their sleep. At the same day, it was decided to execute a reprisal operation in response to the attack.

The village of Qibya was selected as the target for the operation. The order given to the soldiers in the field was: 'The objective: to assault the village of Qibya, to temporarily take control of it, and to cause maximum damage in property and in lives, with the aim of making the residents running off from their homes . . . to invade the villages of Shuqba and Ni'lin by destroying several houses and killing residents and soldiers in the village.'

About 130 IDF soldiers participated in the operation carrying about 700 kg of explosives with them. Ariel Sharon commanded the force. In the village of Qibya, the soldiers passed from house to house, threw grenades, and shot through windows and doors. Afterwards, they blew up about 45 houses. About 60 civilians were murdered in their sleep. Israel claimed that the soldiers did not know that residents were hiding inside the houses, and they thought the bombed houses were empty.

Harsh criticism was directed at the State of Israel throughout the world, both for attacking civilians and for breaching the Armistice Accords. The State of Israel tried to deny responsibility for the incident. David Ben-Gurion stated that during the night of the operation 'all IDF units were at their bases.' As a result of the operation and of the criticism that followed it, lessons were learned, and since then the reprisal operations were aimed against military targets in Jordan and Egypt.

Moshe Sharett, Israel's Foreign Affairs Minister, related in his diary to the Qibya operation. He wrote in October 1953:

'I should emphasize that when I objected to a response at that point, it never occurred to me that such bloodshed would take place. I was thinking it would be a response in the likes of the former method, now turned to routine—and this is what I objected to. If I had any concern that there would be this much killing, I would have raised hell. The IDF debated as to how the attack on Qibya will be publicized, and asked how we are supposed to explain it. During the IDF's consultation with our people, (Shmuel) Bendor suggested to Gross [a narrative] that the army had no role in the operation, and that it was actually border area residents who were enraged by the latest murders and were thirsty for revenge. They rose up as one and slaughtered their neighbors—this is an absurd version that ridicules us, because it is clear to all. . . . that the IDF did have a role. The army itself avoided this trick and concluded that they should not hide the IDF's role. . . .' (M. Sharett, personal diary, Tel Aviv 1978.)

Newspaper front page headline of the murder in Yahud:

'Mother and her Children Murdered'

Questions:

1. Based on the order given to execute the operation and the soldiers' testimonies given after the fact, was there any intention to kill innocent people? Explain.
2. How were Sharett's reservations regarding the Qibya operation expressed?
3. What considerations guided him as foreign minister as regards publishing information on the event.

History, Grades 11–12, Nationalism: Building a State in the Middle East, Eliezer Dumka, Hanna Orbach and Tsafrir Goldberg (Permit: 4215), 2009, p. 162.

High school students gain insight into what the textbook describes as the 1956 indiscriminate killing of Arab civilians by Israeli security forces in the central Israel town of Kafr Qasim, featured in their civics textbook as a major milestone of that period. The text refers to it as "a
massacre-and "a shocking incident" causing lingering resentment and point to the tragedy as the "crux of the problems."\(^\text{101}\)

Another textbook refers to the Kafr Qasim massacre as a "horrific event" and that during this incident "many were slaughtered without any deliberate provocation." students must explain why Israeli forces opened fire at Arabs, despite not posing any danger or having any harmful intent.\(^\text{102}\)

---


\(^{102}\) History, Grades 11–12, *Knowing History*, p. 213.
Considering the violent character of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with many thousands of Arab and Jewish lives lost since Israel's establishment, some may argue that the aforementioned incidents are insignificant. However, these incidents left deep bitterness and they serve as an indication of the depth of the problems facing majority-minority relations in Israel. The shocking events of Kafr Qasim remain prominent; an event in which many were slaughtered without any provocation and the people responsible for the massacre were not properly punished, despite the unforgettable wording of the verdict.

Another milestone event took place during the 1976 protests in the Arab community against land expropriations by the Israeli government in the Galilee region. As part of a wider introduction to minorities in Israel and their mistreatment by authorities, a textbook teaches that these protests escalated into violence and were likewise violently suppressed by Israeli security forces, leading to the death of six protesters. Those protests are commemorated yearly by Arabs in Israel as "Land Day."

Another significant bloody event took place about 20 years after [the Kafr Qasim massacre], on March 30, 1976, a day which thereafter has been commemorated as "Land Day." During protests held after the expropriation of lands in the Karmi'el area, roads were blocked, and stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown.

The response by the IDF and police led to the killing of six protesters. Some consider "Land Day" a turning point that signaled a comprehensive protest by the Arabs of Israel, and their growing ties to the Palestinians on the other side of the Green Line [i.e., in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip].

The example below portrays the 1982 massacre of Palestinian refugees by the Phalange (Kataeb) Christian Party militias in the Lebanese refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila as gruesome and horrifying. "The Sabra and Shatila massacre shocked the public in Israel, as well as public opinion and politicians around the world. Although the Christian Phalange militias carried out the massacre, the civilian population was under Israel's responsibility as it was the occupying force."
On the evening of September 16, Phalanges [militias] entered the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and murdered hundreds of Palestinians in cold blood: women, children, old and young. The IDF troops watching the camps suspected that an atrocity was being committed, and the commanders repeatedly demanded that the Phalange commanders root out PLO fighters only, but it was only on Saturday that the Minister of Defense and the IDF instructed the Phalanges to leave the camps and the IDF withdrew from Beirut.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre shocked the public in Israel, as well as public opinion and politicians around the world. Although the Christian Phalange militias carried out the massacre, the civilian population was under Israel’s responsibility as it was the occupying force.

In Tel Aviv, a mass demonstration convened in City Hall Square (later called Rabin Square), the largest ever seen in Israel up to that point. Many people demanded a state commission of inquiry to investigate the events, and after intense pressure, Menachem Begin approved its establishment. The Kahan Commission (named after Judge Yitzhak Kahan) found that it was the Phalanges who perpetrated the massacre, but assigned indirect responsibility for the action on Israel and recommended that the Minister of Defense be removed from his position.

**History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East**, Eyal Naveh, Naomi Vered and David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 266.
The First Intifada (1987–91) has become a symbol of resistance for the Palestinians. Israeli textbooks do not hide the facts that Israeli security forces resorted to "beatings, collective punishment, deportation and numerous killings" against Palestinian insurgents. Educationally, the significance of this text is that it treats both societies on equal footing. The Intifada affected both Israeli and Palestinian societies and worked to change the "policy of power, both among Israelis and among Palestinians."

[Excerpts:]

The [First] Intifada started spontaneously but certain factors triggered it: personal and social desperation caused by poverty, a sense of deprivation and humiliation caused by Israelis. . . . The IDF was surprised and had trouble dealing with the intensity of the uprising, as the Intifada was a new kind of war. The soldiers were not trained for war against women and children who threw rocks at them, as well as against a civilian population. . . . To avoid shooting and killing, the IDF initially used the tactic of beating. The soldiers were given special batons in which they beat the insurgent Palestinians. But beatings, collective punishment, deportation and numerous killings did not stop the Intifada.

As time went on, the PLO and Islamist organizations took over the Intifada, changing its ways of fighting to a violent military struggle and directing it toward their goals. . . .

The Intifada affected Israeli and Palestinian society in various respects, but it has created a significant driving force that has worked to change the policy of power, both among Israelis and Palestinians.

History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East, Eyal Naveh, Nava Vered and David Shahar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009, p. 268.
The 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs Massacre of twenty-nine Palestinian worshippers committed by Jewish physician Baruch Goldstein is featured.

**The Cave of Patriarchs—A Place of Worship for Jews and Muslims**

After the Six-Day War, procedures were made that would enable prayer for Muslims and Jews in the Cave of Patriarchs. The large hall, Yitzhak Hall, remained a mosque, and in the two other rooms temporary synagogues were erected. . . . Both sides were not happy with the new arrangements. The Muslims protested against the mere entry of Jews to pray in the building, and the Jews, who received limited rights, began a public struggle to achieve equal status to that of the Muslims.

Inter-religious tension reached its peak on Purim 5754 (1994). Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish doctor from Kiryat Arba, went into the Cave of Patriarchs and shot at worshipers in the mosque. Twenty-nine Muslims were killed and dozens were wounded and Goldstein was killed by Muslim worshipers. The [highest-level] state commission of inquiry into the incident recommended new procedures to create complete separation.
between the Jewish and the Muslim worshipers, to prevent [further] friction between them. . . .


Another history book calls the attack “terrorism.” As with the assassination of Rabin, the Oslo Accords are cited as events that precipitated the massacre and used to demonstrate the consequences of political extremism.

In Israel, many objected to the [Oslo] agreement and the public debate was heated. . . . The political extremism reached its peak when a settler named Baruch Goldstein, in opposition to the Oslo Accords, committed an act of terrorism in the Cave of the Patriarchs by shooting 29 Palestinian worshipers to death (February 1994).

In learning how Israeli democracy protects itself and the state's Jewish character, students discover that Meir Kahane's Kach movement was banned from running in the Israeli elections. They read that the group was outlawed and defined as a terror organization. A quote from Israel's Supreme Court ruling in 1988 compares Kach's goals and actions against Palestinians with the worst kind of racism and persecution suffered by the Jewish people.
The Court's Position Regarding Disqualification of Lists Seeking to Run in the Knesset Elections

Systematic Incitement on a National-Ethnic Basis

The goals and actions of the appellant are clearly racist: systematic incitement on a national-ethnic basis, causing hostility and strife and deepens an abyss among the people], calling for a violent denial of rights, for systematic and intentional humiliation of delimited parts of the population, ethno-nationally categorized, and for their degradation in a manner terrifyingly similar to the worst instances of such policies experienced by the Jewish nation—all of these are enough, in light of the large amount of information supplied, to base the conclusion regarding incitement to racism.'

*Meir Kahane

The Jewish Defense League (JDL) was founded in the USA to protect Jews from antisemitism. After immigrating to Israel, [Kahane] founded the Kach movement—a radical right-wing movement that called for the expulsion of Arabs from the country ('transfer'). He was elected as MK in 1984; in 1988 his party was banned. He was murdered in New York in 1990. The Kach movement was declared a terror organization and outlawed.

Har Bracha: Perspective from the West Bank

A comparatively new history textbook from the Har Bracha Institute in Samaria (West Bank) is noteworthy as the first volume approved by the MoE from a religious seminary. The textbook, *The Return to Zion*, drew much attention because it promoted the goal of confronting what it perceives as the trend of "post-Zionism" in Israeli education. With the exception of sometimes using the word "Palestinian" in parentheses, the textbook is in line with the MoE guidelines for the history curricula and international standards as well as adhering to academic standards of scholarship. Here is an excerpt from their website:

Post-Zionist trends are seeping and taking over the state and state-religious education system in Israel. The subject of historic studies—particularly modern history, Zionism, the Holocaust and the establishment of the state—have become the favorite target for onslaught by Israel's non-Zionist organizations. Pacifist, universalist and post-Zionist tendencies are being expressed in textbooks composed by them and made to trickle into students' minds during history class.

To stop this dangerous deluge, and to save the young generation of the State of Israel from brainwashing and disinformation, the Institute has taken the initiative to produce a series of history textbooks for state- and state-religious schools. There is a great need for textbooks which would be prepared at the highest quality, both in terms of research and content, as well as visuals and design, and which would conform to the most recent trends of Bagrut [matriculation] exams, as laid out by the Ministry of Education's subject committee. . . .

Three sequential history textbooks from Har Bracha Institute have been published and approved for use in the state-religious curriculum between 2014 and 2016; IMPACT-se researched the last one in the series dealing with Zionism, the establishment of Israel and Palestinians. As the first history textbook published by a religious seminary for the Israeli curricula, the program displays

---

103 Har Bracha Institute, "The History Project (Hebrew)," https://en.yhb.org.il/the-history-project/
academic rigor and processes modern trends in historiography, with an extensive study of women's roles and a strong religious perspective.\footnote{Weintraub, "History Education," pp. 187–219.}

**Brutality and Suffering**

To fulfill the MoE's requirement to teach the subject of refugees,\footnote{"Annual Organization of History Studies, Summer 2017 (Eshnav),” MoE, Pedagogical Secretariat Cluster of Social and Humanistic Studies, History Teaching Supervisory, pp. 25–26, http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/Mazkirut_Pedagogit/Historya/eshnav281tahaz.pdf.} *The Return to Zion* conveys accurate information about the number of refugees post-war including the forced expulsion of some refugees by Israeli forces. Moreover, students are encouraged to think critically about military actions, such as those of the Lehi, Etzel and Haganah underground military and paramilitary groups, in the years leading up to 1948. The book explains how the Lehi "organization also harmed the civilian population of the Arabs of the Land of Israel"\footnote{Ibid., p. 215.} and how "Irgun members killed seven Arabs in retaliation for killing Jews, and in the summer killed about eighty-four Arabs by planting bombs in Arab markets in Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa."\footnote{History, Grades 11–12, *The Return to Zion: Aliyah, Settlement and Independence*, Dvora Giladi and Tehila Hertz, Har Bracha ( Permit: 4432), 2016, p. 253.} They learn of the Haganah's Plan Dalet, which the text describes as a strategy to allow "for the expulsion of Arabs and the takeover of Arab settlements."\footnote{108 (292).}

An exercise allows students to confront issues of morality versus military strategy. This aligns with practices in other Israeli textbooks to contemplate potential moral failings of the Israeli side while understanding the historical background.

---

1. In what way does Plan Dalet represent a transition from a defensive strategy to an offensive strategy? Demonstrate with examples.
2. Some claim that the directives of Plan Dalet, which allow for the expulsion of Arabs and the taking over of Arab settlements which were meant to be in the Arab state, are immoral, and some claim that those directives were necessary for combat. Try to give reasons for each of the claims, while basing your answer on the background of Plan Dalet's preparation.

The Return to Zion offers students an opportunity to learn the concept and background of the Palestinian Nakba narrative, along with other required topics relating to the establishment of Israel. The textbook exceeds state requirements by dedicating almost an entire page to the Deir Yassin massacre, conveying the lasting impact of the event on both Israelis and Palestinians.

Immediately after capturing the village, rumors began to spread of an intentional massacre and brutality toward residents. The fighters who conquered the village denied this and argued that the fighting was fierce, and it was difficult to separate between the civil population and the fighters during the battle inside the village. Thus, for instance, fighters were forced to blow up houses in the village during the fighting; non-combatants were hiding inside these houses. The Deir Yassin incident elicited widespread shock and condemnation within the Jewish Yishuv, and it continues to provoke raging controversy.

---

on the question of what exactly happened there and if the conduct of the Jewish forces was ethical.

In any case, the rumors of the 'massacre' carried out by the Jewish forces even though that [intentional massacre] was not the case, led to immense fear from Jews, and [contributed] to the mass flight of Arab residents from their homes in many places where the Jews [Israeli military forces] approached.

The refugees lost their homes, and in most cases their livelihoods. Even with the end of combat they did not return to their homes. Many Arab villages were destroyed and on the wreckage new Israeli communities were established such as in Beisan. . . . Throughout the war there were many casualties and fatalities among the Arabs of the Land of Israel. There are not exact figures on the numbers of those killed; the estimates range from 3,000 to 13,000 fatalities. At the end of the war, it became clear that the demographic situation in the country had changed. For the first time, Jews became the majority population, and the Arabs, a minority in the Jewish State.


**An Arab State Called Syria**

A crucial difference between *The Return to Zion* and other textbooks, relates to the discussion and terminology surrounding Palestinian identity. The Har Bracha authors again exceed the MoE's requirements, and in this case of all other textbooks, by providing an in-depth analysis of the different facets of Palestinian and Arab identities, extending to religious, tribal and regional aspects.

In conclusion, we learned that the common identity of all the Arabs of the Land of Israel during the Ottoman period was essentially Muslim. In addition, they had local identity related to powerful urban families. National consciousness was almost non-existent among them [the Palestinians], but among those few with whom it did exist, it manifested in the desire to establish and be included in an Arab state called Syria. Therefore, there were no buds [groundwork prepared] for a local (particular) national perception among the Arabs of the Land of Israel before the First World War.

While a shift in national focus from "Southern Syria" to Palestine occurred post-1920, local Palestinian precursors to national self-consciousness had existed alongside other identities before WWI.\textsuperscript{110} Although the transformation from pre-modern Palestinian identity to modern nationalism was not inevitable before 1920, it "was a community of some consequence, difficult to categorize exactly, but highly relevant to the way Palestinian nationalism was created."\textsuperscript{111}

The textbook recognizes aspects of the Palestinian experience, but it often uses the term: "Palestinian" in parentheses, openly discouraging students from using the term "Palestinian" on historical-Biblical grounds and opting to identify Arabs in Israel as "Arabs of the Land of Israel, Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, Arabs of Israel or Israeli Arabs." The overall explanation of history and information relating to the Arab Other shows respect and understanding, which in some areas exceeds the MoE's requirements for presenting information about 1948, including the use and explanation of the term "Nakba," and the peace process. In some instances the word Palestinian is used freely when quoting documents or when mentioning the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the context of the Oslo Accords. In a chapter, "Attitudes of Israel toward the Arab world," students learn about the different uses of the term "Palestinian," including a geographic definition. However, such use of "Palestinian"—considered "anti-Jewish"—in parentheses, may delegitimize Palestinians, and in this regard, fails to offer the standard of respect to Palestinian Others as a people.

[Many who use the term "Palestinians" for Israeli Arabs)] mean to say that there is an Arab nationality which is different than the rest of Arab nationalities in its culture and heritage, and [that this nation] is the rightful owner of the Land of Israel-Palestine and not the people of Israel. . . . Therefore, there are circles in Israeli society that try . . . to avoid using the term 'Palestinian.'


The authors insert a footnote to this lesson with the following statement:


This is also our position [to avoid using the term 'Palestinian']. This is an anti-Jewish term born of sin. The Romans called Israel 'Palestine,' in order to undermine the connection of the people of Israel to their land. The Arabs of the Mandatory Land of Israel, many of whom immigrated to Israel after the people of Israel began to return to their land, adopted this name, to harm the Jewish people who established the State of Israel in its homeland. In our opinion, just as the State of Israel refuses to call the Arab citizens of the state by this name, so must all believers in the Bible and the right of the Jewish people to the Promised Land refrain from using this name for the Arabs of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and refugees in the Arab countries. Admittedly, because of accepted discourse, we had to add this name in parentheses wherever the Arabs of the Mandatory Land of Israel and their descendants outside the State of Israel are mentioned. 112

While the authors appear to discourage students to use the term "Palestinian," the textbook teaches in detail and with relevant documentation about the emergence of particular local modern Arab national identity in Mandatory Palestine, its later development, and various terminologies used to describe this national movement up to the present day. 113 The textbook cites leaders such as the Kingdom of Jordan and Sheikh Hashem of Umm al-Fahm who admit that "the main element of identity for [these Arabs] is the Muslim-Arab or pan-Arab national religion" and not the "Palestinian identity" per se.

Students learn of the importance of relating to the Arab Other throughout the textbook, including how equality is a basic principle of Israel’s founding: with full religious equality, unique education systems, the banning of discrimination in employment, and official recognition of Arabic as a state language. 114 Other ways in which The Return to Zion fosters understanding of the Arab Other, including Israeli Arabs, is by relating to the ongoing aftermath of the 1948 war, such that some Palestinian "refugees live in overcrowded and poor conditions in refugee camps" and "have not been rehabilitated or given status." 115 Another lesson from the same chapter discusses how at its founding, Israel viewed the Arab minority within its borders as a potential security threat and knowingly infringed upon their individual rights. Israel's imposition of military rule on the Arab population divided Israeli society and ultimately was brought to an end.

---

112 History, Grades 11–12, The Return to Zion, p. 438.
113 Ibid., pp. 120–21, 126, 142–43, 230, 237, 439.
114 (416).
115 (441).
in 1966. This was soon followed by an improvement in the standard of living, education, and employment of Arabs in Israel, as well as the conferral of full citizenship—all of which is conveyed to students in a positive light.116

**Peace with the Palestinians is Central**

In addition to acknowledging these events, *The Return to Zion* is one of many Israeli textbooks teaching peace as an ideal and generally positive about the peace process: "From the moment of its establishment, the State of Israel aspired to peace."117 The key message of the Oslo Accords of 1993, with the photograph of Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shaking hands, is summarized: "Following the negotiations, the PLO recognized the State of Israel, and in response, Israel recognized the PLO."118 Following a more detailed explanation of the Accords, the section adds a lengthy discussion on the controversy within the Israeli public, with talking points from supporters and opponents of the agreement, in a manner that also aligns with other textbooks. This discussion of peace talks leads to an exercise and questions from both sides of the conflict, emphasizing critical thinking toward finding a peaceful resolution.

4. As you have learned in this book, the Arab-Jewish conflict over the Land of Israel has lasted for over a century, despite various attempts to settle it.

A. In your opinion, what were the factors that prevented the settlement of the conflict? In your answer, refer to factors from the Arab side, the Jewish side, and international factors; give reasons for your answer.

B. In your opinion, in the light of past experiences, how can this conflict be resolved or at least the violence involved reduced? Give reasons for your answer.


---

116 (413).
117 (457).
118 (453).
Overall, Har Bracha's discussions on war and peace meet international standards. Beyond avoidance of the term "Palestinian" on religious grounds, in most cases findings show the textbook presents the Palestinian experience and fosters understanding of the Other. Students gain multiple perspectives on disputed geographical claims and names such as "Judea and Samaria" or the "West Bank" or "Occupied Territories" and how such names reflect the opinion of those who use them, and their view on Israel's control over these territories. Noteworthy is that the Har Bracha program explains the administration and division of control over the West Bank territory as determined by the Oslo Accords. This is done factually, and at great depth, while adhering to international standards of peace and tolerance. Students see a map of the divided area: "Territory of Judea and Samaria according to the Oslo Accords," and a map legend with explanations for Areas A, B and C The map shows the Green Line, Jewish settlements, and Palestinian self-government in parts of the West Bank, named "Arab Settlements under the Control of the Palestinian Authority." (This map is also discussed in the next section).

Legend

**Area A:** Military and civilian control by the Palestinian Authority
**Area B:** Civilian control of the Palestinian Authority. Military control by Israel
**Area C:** Israeli civilian and military control
**Blue Dot:** Israeli settlement
**Red Dot:** Arab settlement within the Palestinian Authority

The Green Line ---


---

119 (440–41).
120 (454).
Israelis Not Allowed

A section entitled "The Dispute over the [Oslo] Agreement," describes diverse Israeli opinions both supporting and condemning the Oslo Accords. The sign portrays the textbook's view on Oslo which includes a warning to Israelis not to enter the Palestinian Authority-controlled Area A. The stark reality displayed by such images bordering Area A throughout the West Bank are further reminders of the need to teach peace at the curricular level. From another perspective, Israeli Arab Others are able to visit, do business, invest, study and work in the PA, perhaps representing the beginning of the ultimate removal of such barriers between respective Others.  

This road leads to Area A, which is under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Entry of Israelis into Area A is prohibited, endangers your life, and constitutes a criminal offense.


The Har Bracha textbook mirrors many of the themes and messages found in mainstream Israeli textbooks and, in some cases, goes further in adhering to international standards. Exploration of Palestinian national identity and history in *Return to Zion* exceeds other history textbooks in depth and detail; at the same time the text advocates against the use of the term "Palestinian," considered anti-Jewish. Maps in the Har Bracha textbook are much more detailed and recognize Palestinian existence and autonomy in the West Bank in more depth than most other books. The textbook provides a wealth of information and a spectrum of contrasting views allowing Israeli students to reach their own conclusions.

---


Cartography

This report reviewed most maps included in textbooks used in Israeli schools and discovered that, generally, the maps were accurate representations of the region. Many maps mark the Armistice Demarcation Line (Green line), acknowledge Palestinian presence, recognize the peace process and point to territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority in map legends and accompanying text. A substantial number of maps feature Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs—along with their cities—within the Palestinian Authority (West Bank [Judea/Samaria]), Gaza and Israel.

While Palestinians are well represented in many textbooks with maps throughout the curricula, the portrayal of the PA's territory includes various inconsistencies. Many maps depict Areas A and B, representing various degrees of Palestinian control (as designated in the Oslo Accords); others only show Area A; and some show no spatial differentiation between Israeli and Palestinian territories by not marking the Armistice Demarcation Line (Green line) and PA-designated territory. Area C (mostly controlled by Israel) is usually left unmarked on the maps but explained in accompanying texts. At times, these areas are often labeled as "Disputed Territory," and especially when referring to Israel's territory, "Disputed Borders," as evident in the official Atlas for geography studies that labels the Gaza Strip and the West Bank [Judea/Samaria] territories as "an international border under dispute."

Geography, Grades 7–12, New University Atlas—Physical, Political, Economic Historic, M. Brawer, G. Biger, Yavne (Permit: 4416).
Maps Showing Palestinian Boundaries

A high school geography textbook map illustrates the Green Line and recognizes the Palestinian territory in the West Bank. Overall, the maps show a clear demarcation with a security barrier (separation fence) in the West Bank. Palestinian cities are labeled in yellow and appear in the map’s legend. The accompanying text discusses momentous events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, acknowledges Palestinian self-government and includes descriptions of past and current peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

11. The Route of the Security Barrier

A grade 6 geography textbook, *Exploring a Country*, recognizes that some territories are under the civil and/or security authority of Israel while some are under the partial or full authority of the PA. The Green Line (except for the Gaza Strip) and area C are not marked. Still, the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority are clearly detailed. The textbook later explains that the "future of these territories is a source of big disagreement between different groups inside and outside of Israel." 

"Political borders are usually set with the consent of the countries that are on both sides of the border. This is an agreed upon political border. Israel has agreed upon borders with two of its neighbors: Egypt and Jordan. "...sometimes countries do not agree on where the borderline passes between them, and then it is a border under dispute. In this case, there is fear that a conflict will break out between the countries."

The Borders of the State of Israel

*Geography, Grade 6, Exploring a Country*, Ofira Gal, Iris Shiloni, Billy Savir, Michal Schwartz and Daphna Yizrael, CET (Permit: 2660), 2015, p. 10.

124 Ibid., p. 157.
A map in a civics textbook shows Israeli Arab villages and cities, as well as Palestinian cities, acknowledging the presence of Palestinian populations in the country. Additionally, the map shows the borders of the 1949 armistice agreement, thus the delimiting lines mark the West Bank and Gaza as separate territories. However, the Palestinian Authority is not mentioned, and there is no reference to A or B territories.

A high school geography textbook map highlights percentages of the Arab population living in Israel. It shows the Green Line, Palestinian cities, and Israeli Arab cities. The map legend marks Area A as "Area of the Palestinian Authority." The accompanying text elaborates on the Palestinian predicament following the establishment of Israel in 1948: It explains that their residences were destroyed during the war; they were forced to become refugees and resettled in other areas such as surrounding Arab states or in the West Bank and Gaza (see "The Palestinian Experience" for other representations in Israeli textbooks). Students discover that the Arab population in Israel asserts rights upon which they are entitled and may choose a path of civil struggle for equality and integration within the economic and social trends of Israel.


The following map, published by the Har Bracha Institute, provides a detailed picture of the Oslo areas including full recognition of the Palestinian Authority and the Green Line. The marking of Palestinian localities is comparatively large. The Oslo territory is clearly marked in a distinct color from that of Israel beyond the Green Line.

Legend

**Area A:** Military and civilian control by the Palestinian Authority  
**Area B:** Civilian control of the Palestinian Authority. Military control by Israel  
**Area C:** Israeli civilian and military control  
**Blue Dot:** Israeli settlement  
**Red Dot:** Arab settlement within the Palestinian Authority

Another high school geography textbook map includes Israel's national priority areas and acknowledges the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian cities such as Hebron and Nablus and Israeli-Arab cities such as Nazareth and Tayibe; it also names Area A and the Gaza Strip as an "Area of the Palestinian Authority" and marks the West Bank and Gaza with distinct colors. This map conveys the reality that beyond the Green Line only Jewish settlements in the area receive this "national priority."

"The Map of the Jewish Settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 1967–1997." One high school history textbook includes a map which describes both Jewish and Arab localities in the region, and includes questions that present the argument that these Jewish settlements may be an obstacle to peace.

**Map of the Jewish Settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 1967–1997**

**Questions:**

1. What are the characteristics of the Jewish Settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

2. How does the Jewish Settlement express the 'Gush Emunim' [literal: Bloc of the Faithful—early Jewish settlers] worldview of the 'Whole Land of Israel' [Greater Israel]?

3. Those who oppose building settlements argue that they create an obstacle for peace. How does the map express this claim?

**History, Grades 11–12, Nationalism: Building a State in the Middle East, Eliezer Dumka, Hanna Orbach and Tsafrir Goldberg, Zalman Shazar Center (Permit: 4215), 2009. p. 193.**
A map from a school atlas describes the Gaza Strip and the West Bank territories as "an international border under dispute." The Palestinian cities of Nablus, Hebron and Gaza are written on the map.

The following map clearly shows the Green Line, designated as "1948 Armistice Line," (1949–1967 Armistice Line) and Palestinian settlements, such as al-Dhahiriya and Yatta and as-Samu. Bedouin villages in the Negev, including the "Bedouin Diaspora," are unrecognized settlements found on both sides of the Armistice Line. It also includes Jewish-Israeli towns located beyond that line.
The following page from a homeland, society and civics textbook shows two maps in a chapter about communities in Israel. A special map (enlarged) illustrates and acknowledges Palestinian self-government areas (A/B), clearly designating them under Palestinian Authority responsibility. The map names Palestinian cities such as Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron.

Areas under the Responsibility of the Palestinian Authority

- **Territory A**: Palestinian Authority's responsibility for the internal security, public order and civilian affairs.
- **Territory B**: Palestinian Authority's responsibility for Palestinian public order and civil affairs; Israel responsible for the security of Israelis.

_Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 4, Living Together in Israel: Homeland, Society and Civics for Tel Aviv-Jaffa Children_, Ofra Gal and Zvia Fein, CET, 2008, p. 7.\(^{125}\)

\(^{125}\) Despite lacking a permit number, this book is in fact approved by Tel Aviv Municipality, in accordance with the MoE’s state and state-religious education program. (see also note 129)
A map of major metropolitan areas in Israel in a seventh-grade geography textbook labels "A" territories and the Palestinian Authority. Marked as well are Palestinian-inhabited cities such as Gaza, Hebron, Qalqilya and Tayibe. There is no indication of the 1949–67 Armistice Line in the West Bank.

A map of Israel and the surrounding countries shown in a high school geography textbook appropriately labels the West Bank, Hebron, and Gaza. This map is used to teach students about urban regions, agricultural lands and water reservoirs.

In a civics textbook for grades 7–9, a cartoon clearly displays a map of Israel with the 1949 Armistice Line around the West Bank. The cartoon invites students to see their country by wearing different glasses (secular, religious, Jewish, Other). The message seems to be that whatever one's opinion about Israel's national character, all should share the understanding that there is a clear difference between the Palestinian Territories and Israel proper.

**Civics, Grades 7–9, Civics in the State of Israel,** David Shahar, Kinneret-Zmora (Permit: 3149), 2010, p. 41.

**Historical Maps**
History textbooks offer maps acknowledging both Jews and Arabs within the region during a particular time. For example, a map in another history textbook depicts Jewish communities up to 1914.
The map legend acknowledges Arabs and mentions mixed cities of Jews and Arabs such as Hebron, Safed (Zefat), Haifa, Tiberias, Jaffa and Jerusalem (but not Gaza).

**Map of the Settlement Enterprise until 1914**

---

A ninth-grade history textbook displays the 1922 borders of the British Mandate for Palestine, west of the River Jordan. The Emirate of Transjordan is shown to be a distinct country, even though it was controlled by Jerusalem and was heavily subsidized by Mandatory Palestine taxpayers. The map uses the Hebrew name given to the country by the British—*PALESTINA (E.Y.)* (*פלשתינה (א''י)*).

The map includes present-day Palestinian cities such as Nablus, Jericho, Bethlehem, Gaza City, Rafah, and Hebron; there is an explanation of the borders set by Britain.

---

In the following high school history map, Israeli students gain some understanding of pre-1967 Israel's boundaries. The map focuses on immigration "development towns" and shows the 1949–67 Demarcation line. Israeli-ruled territory is yellow while the Golan Heights, Gaza Strip and West Bank remain white, suggesting that they were part of Egypt and Jordan.

History, Grades 11–12, Knowing History—Nationalism in Israel and Nations—Building a State in the Middle East, Eyal Naveh, Nava Vered and David Shachar, Reches (Permit: 4200), 2009. p. 285.
A map of the Israeli National Trail (Shvil Yisra'el) in a Jewish-Israeli culture textbook has no reference to Palestinian cities or the Green Line. This is a rare case of the Gaza Strip, or any neighboring country also not marked. The trail itself meticulously avoids the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. Trekking and walking in trails "with no slogan or flag" symbolize a common denominator among all the people of Israel as well as visitors from abroad. In sync with the planners of the famous trail, the book’s authors opted to keep it out of politics.

---


128 Quoted from Naomi Shemer’s "Hoppa Hei" 1959. 
https://zemer.nli.org.il/song/Bait_Lazemer003709924.
A map centering on the Mediterranean Sea displays the many nations belonging to Asia, Africa and Europe; Israel is thus shown within its natural environment among Arab and Islamic countries. However, in this map, intended for fifth-graders, the Palestinian Authority is missing. The Green Line is clear, but only in relation to the Gaza Strip. While the PA probably could have been included in a map that depicts many other large and small polities, it is worth noting that the textbook (p. 70) features a map that includes the Palestinian Authority. The same author also features large maps of the PA in four other textbooks.\(^{129}\)

![Map 1: The Mediterranean is Surrounded by Three Continents](image)

**Map 1: The Mediterranean is Surrounded by Three Continents**


Representation of the "Other" in Maps

Many maps throughout the textbooks mention both Jewish-majority and Arab-majority cities. One such fifth-grade geography textbook map displays Israeli-Arab cities such as Umm al-Fahm and Nazareth; Jewish-majority cities such as Afula; and integrated cities such as Akko. An accompanying passage teaches students how to measure the distance between Tiberias and Safed (Zefat). The PA and the Green Line along the West Bank are missing but Israeli-Arab cities of Nazareth and Umn al-Fahm are depicted. Note that Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are also not on this map.

A high school Israel studies textbook map shows residences for non-Jewish populations in the north of Israel. It includes Israeli-Arab cities and localities such as Umm al-Fahm, Kaukab and Deir Al-Assad. The legend specifies various Israeli-Arab subgroups that live within these cities, including Druze, Circassians, Muslims and Alawites. The PA and the Green Line with the West Bank are missing from this 1996 map.

The Non-Jewish Population in Northern Israel (1996 Data)

Settlements by Religion
- Muslims
- Druze
- Christians
- Circassian (majority)
- Alawites

Settlements by People
- Up to 2,000
- 2,000–19,999
- 20,000 or more

Inconsistencies

There are inconsistencies in some Israeli textbook maps. While some maps label Palestinian territories, others show the Green Line but do not distinguish between Areas A, B and C; some include names of Palestinian cities, while others show no distinction between Israeli and Palestinian areas.

A map of Israel in a fourth-grade civics textbook shows Palestinian cities such as Jenin, Nablus, Hebron, and Gaza as well as neighboring Arab countries; but has no reference to the Palestinian Authority, A/B/C territories, or the demarcation of the West Bank. Interestingly, the Gaza Strip is portrayed. The map is an exercise in which students are expected to find their locations and answer some questions about their home environment.

A fifth-grade geography textbook map depicts the largest population centers in Israel. It includes Israeli-Arab cities such as Umm al-Fahm and Tayibe and identifies Area A in the West Bank and the Gaza strip as: "Area of the Palestinian Authority," marking it with a different color to illustrate Palestinian self-government. The PA areas appear to be smaller than in other maps. There is no mention of the Green Line or names of Palestinian cities in the West Bank or Gaza. This map was introduced in 1999 and includes such outdated data such as the inclusion of Gush Katif, which was evacuated in 2005.

Geography, Grade 5, World Discovering Maps, Zvia Fein with Ayala Mizrachi, CET (Permit: 8011), 1999, p. 79.
A map in the same geography textbook presents countries of the Middle East with their capital cities but does not acknowledge or mention any Palestinian self-government or presence. The textbook is more than 20 years old and includes maps of the Palestinian Authority on other pages.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Geography, Grade 5, World Discovering Maps, Zvia Fein with Ayala Mizrachi, CET (Permit: 8011), 1999, p. 74.
The following is a map of the Eastern Mediterranean with the Green Line around the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In some instances, maps used in Israeli textbooks will include the Green Line and illustrations of Palestinian territories but will not explicitly mention Palestinian self-government or label these areas as Palestinian territory. In other cases, the textbooks just ignore the Palestinian issue altogether. Two examples, taken from a fifth-grade geography textbook focusing on the Mediterranean Basin display a 1949 Armistice Line showing the West Bank and Gaza, but no mention of the PA (above) with the other map (below portraying Egypt) omitting both the Green Line and the PA.

Geography, Grade 5, Around the Mediterranean Sea, Arnon Sofer and Billy Savir, CET (Permit: 2040), 2005, p. 7.
The Israeli curricula are well-positioned to teach about peace with the Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, and the Arab world. For the most part, maps supply relevant information about the region's status. Much confusion, however, remains about the West Bank (Judea and Samaria). Unlike the West Bank, Israeli textbook maps mark Gaza as a territory not part of Israel. Textbook maps recognize the Palestinian Authority but do not accurately and consistently show the relationship of the West Bank with Israel.

Some textbooks were published in 1999 and many maps are somewhat outdated and occasionally, factually incorrect. It is often the case that maps in one textbook include the PA, while others do not for unapparent reasons. Similarly, the same author may in certain cases choose to include the PA, and in others to avoid it. Israeli textbooks should create a map system that is uniform, updated, and consistent throughout, especially when addressing borders with Palestinian and disputed territories.
Conclusion

Despite continuing violence directed against Israelis and a peace process that has not progressed, Israeli education persisted in its commitment to peace education. This process began decades ago by preparing young Israeli Jews for a life of peace with Israeli Arabs, Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries.

Textbooks convey the importance of understanding oneself and the Other as an integral feature of peace and tolerance. Students are invited to reflect upon wrongs of the past violence and injustice inflicted on Palestinians by Israelis before and after the creation of the State of Israel. There are increased efforts to understand Palestinian perspectives and historical traumas such as the Nakba or Catastrophe of 1948 and the ensuing refugee condition. While learning the history of Zionism they simultaneously explore the development of Palestinian nationalism; students are invited to meditate on the difficulties faced by Palestinian refugees, as well as current travail experienced by Palestinians.

Three overarching characteristics were apparent. One is that peacemaking and dialogue, as both a Jewish and a universal aspiration, is taught as the ultimate way to resolve disputes. Textbooks place a tremendous emphasis on peace as an ideal, and peacemaking as a practice. Peace is described as the pinnacle of what can be expected in relations with the Arabs in general, and with the Palestinians in particular. It is promoted through poems, stories, images, historical descriptions, comparisons to biblical events and expressions, language and grammar exercises, and, of course, quotes by famous individuals. Israel and the Palestinians will ultimately coexist peacefully alongside other states and peoples in the region. Students are prompted to discuss real-life examples demonstrating the multiple benefits of coexistence and cooperation.

The second characteristic is the way curricula present multiple perspectives on contentious political and historical issues to allow students to engage in critical thinking and reduce the likelihood of misattributing motives to certain parties in a dispute. Israeli students are expected to listen to views that challenge their own. Self-reflection and self-criticism regarding Israeli policies are common. Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians is condemned in both the historical and modern context and, when appropriate, labeled as terrorism.

Israeli students are challenged to confront previously unknown or negative aspects of organizations that form a part of the national consciousness as instrumental in the creation of the Israeli state. Both moral and pragmatic arguments are given in the case against indiscriminate violence. The report has many examples, perhaps most importantly, the 1956 Kafr Qasim massacre of forty-nine innocent villagers. Every Israeli student is expected to know the significance of a "blatantly illegal order"—that soldiers must not follow commands that violate military code even when issued by superiors. This discourse is important on its own and also because it contributes to understanding the Palestinian perspective. Mainly it helps to stem
demonization of the Other by showing that violence and injustice occurred on both sides. Explanations are offered for the reasoning behind Palestinian rejection of the Jewish National Movement and State of Israel.

The third characteristic of current Israeli curricula is the attention to both the representation of the collective and the individual Arab/Palestinian Other. Textbooks beginning in elementary school include stories and general descriptions of all types of Israeli citizens, including Muslim and Christian Arabs, Druze and Bedouins. All are described in an impartial and unprejudiced manner; images of Arab-Jewish friendships, communities and interactions are highlighted.

Historical and contemporary measures which negatively affect Palestinians both within and beyond the country's borders, are generally covered. These include Israel's citizenship laws, the military administration of Arab populations (dismantled in 1966), the nation's Jewish character and its national civil conscription system. On such occasions, the textbooks feature Israeli Arabs who reject these measures; students are assigned to present arguments that display their understanding of these viewpoints.

Students learn the important statutes of the educational law, which demands: "a sense of respect toward human rights; basic freedoms; democratic values; obedience to the law, culture and views of Others; and the need to strive for peace and tolerance in relationships between human beings and nations." All Israeli students should become "acquainted with the language, culture, history, heritage, and unique tradition of the Arab population and other communities within the State of Israel, and to recognize the equal rights of all Israeli citizens." 131

A final characteristic is the "Culture of Disagreement" within Israeli society, explained as a lesson from Rabin's assassination but also from the inner conflict within the Yishuv of the late 1930s. This principle reinforces democratic procedures in making fateful decisions and securing peace agreements.

A history textbook published by Har Bracha Institute, a yeshiva offering the state-religious curriculum in the West Bank, merits its own section in the report. The institute's website promotes a goal of confronting what it perceives as a "dangerous deluge" of "pacifist, universalist and post-Zionist [left-wing] tendencies" in history textbooks to save young Israelis from "brainwashing and disinformation." 132 A footnote reference in the textbook, asserts on historical-Biblical grounds that the use of the word "Palestinian" is "anti-Jewish," and refers to all Palestinians—mostly in parentheses—as Arabs. Our research found no parallel to this

132 Yeshiva Har Bracha, Curriculum for Schools—History(Hebrew) https://shop.yhb.org.il/אודות/
perspective in examined textbooks, particularly in relation to MoE guidelines for history curricula and international standards (see heading "International Standards"). Nevertheless, students at Har Bracha learn the importance of relating to the Arab Other throughout the textbook, including how equality is a basic principle of Israel's founding which includes: full religious equality; unique education systems; the banning of discrimination in employment; and official recognition of Arabic as a state language. The textbook teaches in detail and with relevant documentation about the emergence of a local modern Arab national identity in Mandatory Palestine, its later development, and various terminologies used to describe this national movement up to the present day. Additionally, maps in the Har Bracha book are much more detailed and recognize Palestinian areas of control and self-government in the West Bank in ways that many other books in the researched curricula do not. A wealth of information leaves students enough room to form their own opinions.

The Israeli curricula are most successful when educating its young generation that Israel is a country of all citizens sharing one happy and optimistic destiny. In addition to teaching about the Jewish-Israeli identity of the state, much focus is given to all other identities: that the various Arab cultures and religions are beautiful, rich, and diversified; non-Jews can be happy and successful too. Attitudes toward the Palestinian experience, past injustices, and Israel's commitment to peace in the region—mainly with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians—are also emphasized. With the Abraham Accords—already featured in new textbooks—such regional commitment to peace can only be expected to grow.

Cartography plays a significant role in the Israeli curricula. It is often the case that maps in one textbook include PA-controlled areas, while others do not for unapparent reasons; the same author may in some cases choose to include the PA while in others may exclude it. Many maps mark the Green Line, acknowledge Palestinian presence, recognize the peace process and point to territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority in map legends and accompanying text. At times, these areas are often labeled as "Disputed Territory," and especially when referring to Israel's territory, "Disputed Borders" as evident in the official Atlas for geography studies that labels the Gaza Strip and the West Bank [Judea/Samaria] territories as "an international border under dispute." While Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs along with the cities in which they live, are featured and well represented in in a very large number of maps covering Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank [Judea/Samaria] and Gaza throughout the curricula, they are inconsistent in their portrayal of the West Bank and the Armistice Demarcation Line (Green line). Most maps depict Areas A and B, representing various degrees of Palestinian control (as designated in the Oslo Accords); others only show Area A; and some show no spatial differentiation between Israeli and Palestinian territories. Area C is usually left unmarked on the maps but explained in accompanying texts. There is more clarity on the boundaries of the Gaza Strip (whose regime is ignored). Some maps are outdated and occasionally, factually incorrect.
Our findings show that momentous effort was invested to include the Palestinian experience and many historical episodes that formerly had been excluded from the Israeli curricula. All this, however, remains part of a larger Israeli educational worldview, albeit one that includes by now much self-reflection, balance and nuance. The curricula offer a multitude of examples expressing Palestinian and Arab points of view, and focus on those elements, if embraced by students, may ultimately lead to a fruitful dialogue.

Some textbooks address future aspirations and national claims of Palestinians. These are mostly described in a factual and impartial manner but are afforded less space and attention. One third-grade textbook, which describes Jerusalem's religious and political importance, also informs students that Palestinians also wish to make it their capital. Other textbooks note that Palestinians wish to have their own Palestinian independent state and see all refugees returned to their ancestral homes.

And despite three decades of inertia with respect to the external peace process, there is a strong emphasis throughout the curricula that Israel as a nation is expected to and capable of guaranteeing equality, prosperity, and respect, affording opportunities for all members of its population, including the diverse Israeli-Arab community. The textbooks depict that community as talented, benevolent, and successful.

**International Standards**

While this report focuses on the evolution of attitudes toward Arabs and Palestinians, there are other dimensions of the curricula worth noting. IMPACT-se applies its established methodology to analyze all government-approved textbooks based on UNESCO and UN declarations, and internationally-recognized recommendations, protocols, and guides on education for peace and tolerance (see "Methodology" section).

SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION, based on hard work, quality education and peace, both at home and with regional Arabs and Palestinians are main pillars of Israeli education. Apart from being mandated by Israeli education law, the curricula meet international standards by promoting RESPECT, tolerance and understanding toward the "Other," his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.

INDIVIDUAL OTHERs are featured throughout the curricula—whether leaders from the Arab world, Israeli Arab or Palestinian politicians, artists, scholars, scientists, poets, novelists, girls and boys. All are given a voice with many examples of Jews and Arabs playing and

---

133 It is worth noting that a team of Israeli and Palestinian historians authored a book presenting both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives of history: *Side-by-Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine.* The team was unable to formulate a dialogue-based history and the resultant textbook remains outside the researched Israeli curricula. Sami Adwan, Dan Bar-On, Eyal Naveh and Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, eds. *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine* (New York: The New Press, 2012).
commiserating with one another. There are personal anecdotes of Muslims and Christians, Bedouins and Druze. Arabs and Palestinians receive little attention beyond Israel's borders, except for a general interest in Arab and Islamic culture and history. Yet, prominent Palestinian figures such as Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Darwish featured along with images of Palestinians enduring military checkpoints or in refugee camps.

There is NO HATE toward Arabs or Palestinians and NO INCITEMENT within the curricula, which go to great lengths to teach important concepts of PEACEMAKING to Israeli students—including messaging about conflict resolution and the promotion of peace. In that context, much UNBIASED INFORMATION is provided. Despite using textbooks and maps that are often not updated, they are generally balanced and unprejudiced and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples. Israeli school textbooks would benefit from more maps covering the entire complexity of the Oslo process—area A, B, and C, the Green Line, Gaza and the PA, Jewish and Arab settlements, main checkpoints and the security barrier. Israeli textbooks should create a map system that is uniform, updated, and consistent throughout, especially when addressing borders with Palestinian and disputed territories.

The description of Israeli Arabs, while generally excellent in terms of sharing and presenting past traumas and current disadvantages, could also include more about the benefits available to minorities living in Israel.

As for GENDER IDENTITY and REPRESENTATION, while this topic was not specifically researched, many of the images and representations strongly indicate that the Israeli curricula foster equality, mutual respect, and provide equal representation between individuals regardless of their gender identity. The textbooks entirely refrain from language, content, and imagery that depict limiting and/or exclusionary gender roles. The topic of SEXUAL ORIENTATION was also not specifically researched for this project, but our researchers did not find any language, content, and imagery that promulgate violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Aside from a few caveats, the Israeli curricula appear fully committed to peace and tolerance regarding Arabs and Palestinians. The transformation of the Israeli curricula that began more than three decades ago meets international standards to understand and empathize with the other side of the conflict. The textbooks encourage thinking, open debate, and insist on democratic procedures in making the necessary and momentous decisions for peace, always respecting the nation's culture of disagreement. The vision of prospering and living together with Arabs and Palestinians is deeply entrenched.
Appendix: Recent Developments Affecting Israeli Textbooks

There have been several developments likely affecting the Israeli education system since the publication of our last IMPACT-se-commissioned research on this topic in 2020.134 A 2021 report by the Israeli State Comptroller evaluated an MoE initiative: "Education for Coexistence and the Prevention of Racism."135 The comptroller's report defines racism as "any hatred of a stranger for being a stranger, against the background of racial or ethnic origin."136 Combating hatred of Israeli "Arabs, ultra-Orthodox, and Ethiopian [Jews] receives special attention."137

The project required updating educational content and curricula, as well as developing mechanisms for reporting and preventing racism within educational communities. The comptroller's report examined the extent to which the initiative was implemented throughout the education system and found that certain objectives such as not sufficiently arranging and conducting meetings between students of different social groups were behind schedule. It also noted both positive and negative trends about changes in curricula. For instance, the ministry did not follow earlier 2016 recommendations to implement the teaching of new material in its civics module for grades 1‒8; new material from the Haredi curricula was entirely left out.138 The 2016 report had already noted that lower-grade lessons, under a slightly different title in a social studies unit, still placed emphasis on tolerance, democracy and a shared society. The report also noted the introduction of a new civics textbook for higher grades in the state and state-religious curricula; subsections in the new book include: "Arabs, Druze and Circassians in Israeli Society"; "Tolerance, Pluralism, and Consociationalism"; and "The Challenge of a Shared Israeli Society."

While the 2021 comptroller's report did note progress, such as the inclusion of new content in civics textbooks on minorities as well as diversity in Israeli society, it also asserted the ministry had not made a significant number of other changes since the previous evaluation. And despite the overall criticism regarding the lack of sufficient new civics content, the report applauded other important curricular developments including those in history textbooks. A new eighth-grade study unit on preventing racism with historical perspectives was introduced during the 2019–20 school year. With the inclusion of new Druze and Circassian content in textbooks

134 Teff-Seker, "Peace and Conflict."
137 (1110).
138 "State Comptroller: Special Audit Report, Education for Living Together and Preventing Racism," 2016,  

188
within the Arab-Language curriculum, the state and state-religious curricula also incorporated these lessons—which focused on accepting the Other and living in harmony—into new textbooks. New learning material to introduce and explore different religious identities in Israel, different national identities, and Haredi society was also introduced into textbooks; these changes, according to the comptroller's report, were most prominently found in the state-religious textbooks. Perhaps most interesting is that the Arabic-language curriculum appears to be in the final stages of drafting a new set of history textbooks for all grades.\footnote{Comptroller, Education, p. 1148.}

One of the most interesting aspects of the 2021 comptroller's report is its inclusion of a 2018 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development evaluation, measuring, among other things, how the learning program instills familiarity and affinity toward the Other. Israeli school principals reported significantly less activities than their OECD counterparts in two key categories: the study of international conflicts; and the history of multiple cultures and groups outside Israel. However, teaching "the history of different cultures living in Israel," scored higher (87 percent) than the OECD average (85 percent).\footnote{Ibid., p. 1108.} Aside from this, the evaluation found that 78 percent of Israeli students are instructed to value inter-cultural diversity; 89 percent learn an additional language; and 80 percent learn about cultures other than their own.\footnote{Ibid.} In surveys with students, Israeli students scored lower than the OECD average in understanding the other points of view, but higher in their ability to engage and interact with the Other.\footnote{\(1118\).}

There are two other noteworthy items for consideration regarding the trajectory of Israeli school textbooks—both political in nature. One is in relation to Israel's domestic politics. In 2021, a new parliamentary coalition formed a unity government encompassing a broad spectrum of parties. Shortly thereafter, Member of the Knesset of the New Hope Party, Dr. Yifat Shasha-Bitton, was appointed to serve as the Minister of Education.\footnote{"The 36th Government of Israel, June 14, 2021," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/State/Government/Pages/The-36th-government-of-Israel-14-June-2021.aspx.} Her background and expertise in education have led many to believe she will take a more hands-on approach regarding some of the specific issues addressed in this report.\footnote{Shasha-Bitton's doctoral dissertation explored the influence of education on how Palestinian and Israeli youth understand the concept of peace. Before entering politics, she served as the deputy president of a teacher-training college and the deputy mayor and head of education for Kiryat Shmona. Gil Gertel, "Shasha-Bitton's PhD Dissertation: There are Palestinians, and they have a Narrative (Hebrew)," Mekomit, June 17, 2021, https://www.mekomit.co.il/הדוקטורט-של-שאשא-ביטון/.
professional process for drafting and approving textbooks remained largely untouched and operated in a fair and consistent way.\footnote{145}

For the first time, students with a special interest in the nation’s history received an analytical question about the "Nakba" on their Israeli matriculation exam. This question was part of a special history program begun in 2017‒18, now operating in fifty-five schools.\footnote{146} The matriculation exams for this program, taken with open books, included two texts for comparison and analysis: one, a 1948 Jaffa newspaper in Arabic calling Palestinian families: "traitors" for abandoning their homes; the other, a text by an Israeli commander on spreading rumors during the War of Independence, inducing Arab populations to flee from the Upper Galilee and the Hula Valley.\footnote{147} Similarly, questions in the 2021 matriculation exams for general history incorporated the forced displacement of Arabs and destruction of their villages by Israeli forces, following the invasion by Arab armies.\footnote{148} Listing other causes for the Nakba are also part of the two researched Israeli curricula. Recent state-religious history matriculation exams also required familiarity with forced displacement issues before the invasion as well as other circumstances adversely affecting refugees.\footnote{149}

Parallel research conducted in 2021 showed that Israeli students crave for such multi-dimensional source-based historiographies. The same research demonstrates that textbooks can influence attitudes—students show a willingness to trust Palestinians, once exposed to positive information about them.\footnote{150}

Additionally, the recent Abraham Accords between Israel, the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco are referenced within the Israeli curricula, fairly assuring that this geopolitical shift will have a profound influence on new textbook content regarding the centrality of peace and ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. Further analysis should determine how much.

\footnote{145} See "Foreword" (advance copy was submitted prior to final editing of the report).


\footnote{148} Ibid.


IMPACT-se Methodology and International Standards

**IMPACT-se** applies methodological standards which are based on UNESCO and UN declarations, and international recommendations and documents on education for peace and tolerance (see notes). Our methodology is designed to consider every detail within the textbooks; it does not paraphrase, rely on interpretations, or attempt to illustrate preconceived notions.

The following is an updated, condensed version of the IMPACT-se UNESCO-derived standards for peace and tolerance in school education:

1. **RESPECT**: The curriculum should promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the "Other," his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.\(^{151}\)

2. **INDIVIDUAL OTHER**: The curriculum should foster personal attachment toward the "Other" as an individual, his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated.\(^{152}\)

3. **NO HATE**: The curriculum should be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples.\(^{153}\)

4. **NO INCITEMENT**: The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that disseminate ideas or theories which justify or promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred toward other national, ethnic, racial or religious groups.\(^{154}\)

5. **PEACEMAKING**: The curriculum should develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace.\(^{155}\)

---

151 As defined in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance Proclaimed and signed by Member States of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Articles 1, 4.2. See also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples (1965), Principles I, III. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

152 The goal of education for peace is the development of universally recognized values in an individual, regardless of different socio-cultural contexts. See Ibid., Article 6. See also, on exchanges between youth, the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principles IV, V.


155 Based on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 9; and on the
6. **UNBIASED INFORMATION:** Educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides, maps, illustrations, aids) should be up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.\(^{156}\)

7. **GENDER IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION:** The curriculum should foster equality, mutual respect, and should aim for equal representation between individuals regardless of their gender identity. It should also refrain from language, content, and imagery that depict limiting and/or exclusionary gender roles.\(^{157}\)

8. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that promulgate violence or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.\(^{158}\)

9. **SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION:** The curriculum should educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations. It should encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.\(^{159}\)

---

\(^{156}\) Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Article V.14.

\(^{157}\) The preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, notes the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination against Women and emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to gender.

\(^{158}\) Based on Resolutions 32/2 (adopted June 30, 2016) and 17/19 (adopted July 14, 2011) of the UN Human Rights Council, and numerous UN General Assembly resolutions expressing concern and condemnation of laws and practices around the world which target individuals based on their gender identity and/or sexual orientation for discrimination, violence, and even extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions—all of which contradict the most basic principles of the UN and have no place in education.

\(^{159}\) Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Articles III.6, and IV.7. On the imperative for developing "systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance," see the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 4.2. On education for international cooperation, see also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principle II.
List of Textbooks

The following Israeli curricula textbooks were analyzed for the research in this study. The titles both here and referenced in the text have been translated into English to aid the reader. IMPACT-se typically researches all available textbooks used in a curriculum. If new textbooks or previously unavailable books become available after a report's publication, every effort will be made to update reports to include any relevant material. We welcome any comments related to the acquisition of any omitted materials (http://www.impact-se.org/about-us/contact-us/).

1. Civics, Grade 8–9, Values and Citizens, N. Rotenberg (Permit: 3193), 2014.
2. Civics, Grade 9, Democratic Values and Judaism, Hartman Institute (Permit: 9404), 2009.
15. Geography, Grade 8, Earth—Surroundings and People, A. Shiloni, M. Segev, B. Savir, CET (Permit: 3175), 2011.


62. History, Grades 11–12, Building a Jewish and democratic state in the Middle East, Y. Mashul (Permit: 4393), 2014.
64. Homeland, Society and Civics, Grade 4, *Young Israelis—Na'ama from Dgania*, S. Goodman, CET (Permit: 2747), 2017.


