

UNIT FOUR - The Modern Middle East and the Creation of the State of Israel (19th and 20th Centuries)



Lesson Plan 8 Activities: "Peel Commission Hearing" - Role-Playing Debate

Arab Higher Committee Representative Background:

You represent the Arab Higher Committee, the main political body opposing Jewish immigration and land purchases in Palestine.

Key Arguments:

- Palestine is historically and culturally Arab land.
- The Jewish immigration wave threatens Arab livelihoods and landownership.
- Reject the partition plan; demand an independent Arab state with no Jewish sovereignty.

Guiding Questions:

- Why should Palestine remain a single Arab state?
- What concerns do you have about Jewish immigration?
- What alternative solutions do you propose?

Zionist Leader (Jewish Agency Representative) Background:

You are a leader in the Jewish Agency, advocating for Jewish self-determination in Palestine, especially after rising violence and persecution in Europe.

Key Arguments:

- The Peel Commission's partition plan is a step toward securing a Jewish homeland.
- Jewish immigration is a necessity due to growing persecution in Europe.
- Jews have historical and religious ties to the land and are developing it economically.

Guiding Questions:

- Why is a Jewish state necessary?
- How have Jews contributed to the development of Palestine?
- What compromises are you willing to make?

British Official from the Peel Commission Background:

You are a member of the Peel Commission, trying to mediate between Arab and Jewish demands while ensuring British interests.

Key Arguments:

- The partition is a realistic solution to the escalating conflict.
- The British government cannot maintain peace indefinitely.
- Economic and security stability in the region is a priority.

Guiding Questions:

- Why does Britain propose partition instead of full independence for either side?
- What are the key challenges to implementing partition?
- How do you justify British control over the region?

British Government Representative Background:

You are a British official who prioritizes maintaining stability in the Middle East and balancing relations with both Arabs and Jews.

Key Arguments:

- Britain must avoid angering the Arab world due to economic and geopolitical concerns.
- Continued Jewish immigration might destabilize the region.
- A long-term British presence may be necessary to prevent further conflict.

Guiding Questions:

- How do British interests shape decisions about Palestine?
- What are the risks of supporting Jewish immigration?
- Why is Arab cooperation important for British colonial rule?

Jewish Resident of Palestine Background:

You are a Jewish resident who has witnessed violence against Jews, including the Hebron Massacre. You seek security and a Jewish homeland.

Key Arguments:

- Jews need protection from violence and a guaranteed homeland.
- Despite attacks, Jews continue to build and develop the land.
- Partition offers the best hope for peace and security.

Guiding Questions:

- How has violence affected your perspective on partition?
- What role should the British play in protecting Jews?
- How can Jews and Arabs coexist under the partition plan?

Arab Resident of Palestine Background:

You are an Arab farmer in Palestine who fears losing land and rights due to increasing Jewish settlement and British policies.

Key Arguments:

- Jewish land purchases have displaced Arab farmers.
- The partition plan unfairly gives land to Jewish settlers.
- Britain should uphold Arab independence and sovereignty.

Guiding Questions:

- How has Jewish settlement affected Arab farmers?
- Why do you oppose the partition plan?
- What alternative do you propose for Arab-Jewish relations?