



## Educator's Guide

# Israel's Disengagement from Gaza

The summer of 2005 was a highly charged time in Israel – emotionally, politically and religiously. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made the decision to unilaterally disengage from Gaza, thus removing some 8,800 Israelis from their homes and communities that they had known for 30+ years and giving the segment of land to the Palestinians. The internal disagreement in Israel raged, as those for the move donned blue and those against donned orange. Ultimately, there was no civil war despite the heated tensions, and soldiers removed Jews from their homes amidst mutual tears and emotion. This video explores the setting and carrying out of the Gaza disengagement, as well as the implications that it has left to this day.

[Link to Video](#)

## Further Reading

1. Daniel Gordis, *Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn*, chapter 17
2. Noah M. Levine, [Understanding the Gaza Disengagement](#)
3. Rabbi Rabbi Yosef Elnekaveh, [To the youth of Gaza: It wasn't always like this](#)
4. William Booth and Ruth Eglash, ["A Decade Later, Many Israelis See Gaza Pullout as a Big Mistake"](#)
5. Primary source - [George Bush \(II\) and Ariel Sharon Letters](#)

## Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. In what year did Israel withdraw from Gaza?
  - a. 1995
  - b. 2000
  - c. 2005 (correct)



- d. 2015
- 2. Who was the prime minister of Israel at the time of the disengagement?
  - a. Ariel Sharon (correct)
  - b. Yitzhak Rabin
  - c. Ehud Barak
  - d. Ehud Olmert
- 3. What terror group took charge of the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal?
  - a. Fatah
  - b. Hamas (correct)
  - c. Hezbollah
  - d. ISIS
- 4. Why do Israelis often remember the disengagement with pain?
- 5. What is the name of the group of Jewish settlements that were situated in Southern Gaza?
  - a. Gush Katif (correct)
  - b. Gush Dan
  - c. Gush Etzion
  - d. Gush Emunim

## Discussion Questions

- 1. Given what you know about Israel's past 15 years since the Gaza disengagement, do you think the decision to withdraw from this area was good or bad? Explain.
- 2. Israelis who opposed the disengagement used the slogan "*Yehudi lo migaresh Yehudi*" "A Jew does not expel a Jew." What do you think they meant by this? Thinking about the history of [Jews being expelled from lands](#), why might some view this slogan as effective and others may view it as offensive?
- 3. Ariel Sharon ran on the platform promising not to leave Gaza, and then he did not have a referendum on the decision to disengage from Gaza. Do you view this decision as undemocratic as many Israelis did or do you see it differently, perhaps as the responsibility of a leader to make tough decisions?



## Learning Activities

1. For many, the disengagement from Gaza evoked the [Altalena battle](#) in June, 1948 and the [evacuation of Yamit](#) in 1982. Show these three UNPACKED videos to your students and then discuss what are the similarities and differences in each of these episodes?
2. Assign the following topic to be debated amongst your students: “The disengagement from Gaza was the right strategic move for Israel.” Split up your students into two groups, one on each side of the argument to [research](#) and present their side of the debate. They can use the following questions to help guide their thinking:
  - What was the original rationale behind the Disengagement Plan?
  - What were the benefits of disengaging Gaza?
  - What were issues that arose by disengaging from Gaza?
  - How has disengaging Gaza affected Israel’s security situation and the peace process?
3. Give your students our [Kahoot](#) on Israel’s Disengagement from Gaza!

## Reflection Questions

1. In [this](#) Ynet article on how Palestinian life in Gush Katif 10 years after the disengagement, it says: “On the ruins of the settlement, where 60 Israeli families lived prior to the disengagement, the Palestinians have built an amusement park, complete with a Ferris wheel, small roller coaster, carousel and various other rides in a myriad of colors – a lone island in a sea of sand dunes and fields, and all surrounded by a gray concrete wall and piles of rubbish and scrap.”  
Do you feel happy for the Palestinians, sad for the Jews who used to live there, or do you hold both feelings at once?
2. Israeli soldiers were tasked with forcibly removing those Israeli citizens who did not leave their homes in Gush Katif. What do you think this experience was like for Israeli soldiers to forcibly remove other Israelis and Jews?
3. The Israeli government feared that soldiers would refuse orders and not remove Israeli citizens from Gush Katif. Most soldiers did obey, though. Why do you think



most soldiers did obey these difficult orders? And for those who did not, were they justified in doing so? What would you have done?

4. Look at [this picture](#) of a Jewish community in a town near the beach in Gush Katif. There were full-fledged houses and infrastructure left behind. How would you react if your government demanded that your community must evacuate its homes and start anew elsewhere?
5. Widely perceived as the “quintessential hawk,” Ariel Sharon made the decision to leave Gaza where there were 8,800 Jewish Israelis living among over one million Palestinians. Similarly, Begin, who was also known as a hawk made the decision to evacuate Yamit and return the Sinai to Egypt. What about these leaders allowed them to make these difficult decisions?