



Educator's Guide

Gaza: How Did We Get Here?

Since October 7, 2023, Gaza has been at the heart of a brutal war between Israel and Hamas. But this tiny 25-mile strip's troubled history started long before the current hostilities. After Israel captured Gaza during the 1967 Six-Day War, its fate took a turbulent turn, eventually falling under Hamas' control. Now governed by Hamas, Gaza has witnessed immense suffering and resilience in the face of decades of conflict.

Who will control Gaza next? It's uncertain. But understanding the deep, historical roots of this conflict is crucial to solving it.

[Link to video](#)

Essential Questions/Big Ideas:

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| 1. How does history inform our understanding of current events? | 1. Current events do not exist in a vacuum. |
| 2. What factors contribute to the challenging conditions faced by both Gazans and Israelis today? | 2. Multiple factors, including economic hardship, security concerns, and religious beliefs, contribute to the current conflict between Hamas and Israel. |

Review Questions

1. The Egyptian president Anwar Sadat made peace with Israel in 1979 in exchange for:
 - a. the West Bank
 - b. Gaza
 - c. Sinai



- d. East Jerusalem
- 2.** Which group or groups of people were offered citizenship in Israel after 1967, but largely declined?
 - a. residents of East Jerusalem
 - b. Gazans who had been living there prior to 1948
 - c. Jordanians who had family in the West Bank
 - d. both A and B are correct**
- 3.** Immediately prior to the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, approximately _____ Jews lived in the Gaza strip.
 - a. 80
 - b. 800
 - c. 8,000**
 - d. 80,000
- 4.** The Gaza strip was conquered by Israel during which war:
 - a. War of Independence (1948)
 - b. Six Day War (1967)**
 - c. Yom Kippur War (1973)
 - d. Lebanon War (1982)
- 5.** True or false: Before 1967, Gaza was technically a part of Egypt
 - a. True
 - b. False**
- 6.** Israel tried to encourage Gazans to live elsewhere, including the West Bank and _____:
 - a. Syria
 - b. Lebanon
 - c. Jordan**
 - d. Saudi Arabia



- 7.** Between 1967 and 1987, Jews and Gazans went freely between Israel and Gaza to:
 - a. work
 - b. visit relatives
 - c. shop
 - d. all of the above**

- 8.** In 1993, the official relationship between Israelis and Palestinians changed when:
 - a. a right wing government took over Israel
 - b. the PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel's right to exist**
 - c. the United States bribed both parties with financial security
 - d. the Jordanian king was assassinated

Discussion Questions

- 1. Cheering for the underdog:** The events of October 7 and the ongoing war in Gaza are the most recent developments in the increasingly complex relationship between Israel and Hamas. In Israel's early years, it was considered by many to be the underdog within the larger context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the last few decades, the conflict has been reframed by many as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and many have portrayed Israelis as the aggressors and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank as the underdog. Late Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban said "when I was first here we had the advantages of the underdog, now we have the disadvantages of the overdog."
 - a.** What are the advantages of being the underdog?
 - b.** What are the disadvantages of being the overdog?
 - c.** Do you view Israel as the underdog or the overdog when it comes to the current war in Gaza?
 - d.** Should the underdog always be supported? Why or why not?

- 2. A Jewish presence in Gaza:** In 2005, Ariel Sharon unilaterally decided to disengage from Gaza, removing 8,000 Jews who were living in the Strip. Since 1967, the topic of a Jewish presence in Gaza has been a source of conflict



among Israelis. Many felt that it wasn't fair to risk soldiers' lives in order to protect a small number of Israelis living in a volatile environment. Others felt that it was essential to maintain an Israeli presence in Gaza for many reasons, among them Israel's security.

Prior to October 7, 2023 where did you stand on this conflict? Have the events of October 7 altered your viewpoint in either direction? Why or why not?

There is a small but vocal minority of Israelis that advocate for [renewing a Jewish presence in the Gaza strip](#). What do you think would be the outcomes of such a move? Would you support it?

- 3. A complicated relationship:** In a 2007 election, Hamas won control over the Gaza Strip. Under Hamas' rule, life for the average Gazan became increasingly more challenging. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about life in the Gaza Strip.

How do you think these conditions impacted the relationship between the citizens of Gaza and its leadership? How might they impact the relationship between Gazans and Israel?

What changes do you think need to take place within Gaza in order for it to become a viable place to live in a post-October 7 world?

Learning Activities

- 1. [Lesson plan](#)**
- 2. Debate:** Assign the following question to be debated amongst your students: "Should Israelis, Palestinians, or a third party have control over Gaza after the war?"

Split up your students into three groups, or let them choose which group they would like to represent in the debate. They can use the following questions to help guide their thinking:



- a. What is each party's historical connection to Gaza? What role should this play in the decision?
 - b. What were some issues that arose when Gaza was under Israeli control? What are some issues that arose when Gaza was under Palestinian control?
 - c. What are the hopes and expectations for post-war Gaza? Which group would be most likely to achieve these?
- 3. Social media:** Rhetoric regarding Gaza and Israel on social media is filled with symbols and slogans expressing emotionally charged positions that often lack factual information. Design a fact sheet, reel, or other social media post that can educate viewers about the history of Gaza and the role that this history plays in the current conflict.
- 4. Who is Hamas?** Hamas took over control of Gaza in a 2007 election. Listen to the [Hamas, explained](#) podcast to learn more about Hamas. After hearing the podcast, have students write down 2-3 questions that were raised as a result of their learning. Students can discuss their questions in small groups.
- 5. Disengagement from Gaza:** In 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon gave over control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority and mandated the disbanding of all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. The decision was met with controversy over whether or not it was the right strategic move for Israel. Watch the following [video](#) and engage your students in a debate or discussion based on the following prompts:
 - a. What was the original rationale behind the Disengagement Plan?
 - b. What were the benefits of disengaging from Gaza?
 - c. What were some of the issues that arose by disengaging from Gaza?
 - d. How do the events of October 7 and the ongoing war in Gaza shape your opinion about the effectiveness of the disengagement vis-a-vis its original rationale?



6. Give your students our [Kahoot](#) on the history of Gaza!

Reflection Questions

1. **Dialogue:** Imagine that you have the opportunity to speak to someone your age who lives in Gaza. What questions would you want to ask? What would you like this person to know about you? What would you hope to accomplish through this dialogue?
2. **Emotional response:** The media, and especially social media, is filled with all kinds of images and stories about the situation in Gaza. These reports raise valid, intense, and often conflicting emotions in us such as fear, sadness, anger, and helplessness.
 - a. What are some of the emotions the Israel-Hamas war brings up for you? Are some emotions felt more deeply than others?
 - b. What are actions that help you feel grounded and nurture your mental health during this difficult time (ex: talk to a friend or mentor, take action by attending rallies or writing letters, journaling...)?
3. **Repeating history:** “Those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it” What is the meaning of this cliché in general? How might it apply to the situation in Gaza? In what ways has learning about the history of Gaza influenced your understanding of current events?

Further Learning

Unpacked Resources

- [Hamas, explained](#) (podcast)
- [What is life like in Gaza](#) (video)
- [Why Israel must destroy Hamas](#) (video)
- [Israel's disengagement from Gaza](#) (video)



- [Hamas's control over Gaza](#) (video)

Gaza

Daniel Gordis, Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn, chapter 17

Hamas

- [Jewish Virtual Library](#) (article)
- Center for Israel Education - [Hamas Charter](#) (article)

Israel's Disengagement from Gaza

[My Jewish Learning](#) (article)