

Walk in My Shoes

Summary

Through this learning activity, students:

- Examine how history, culture, and geography influence a person's perception of a particular place
- Construct a historical knowledge base of conflicts in the Middle East by immersing themselves in the role of individuals who live there
- Research and analyze how historical, geographic, and cultural factors influence the views of various groups of people found in the Middle East
- Apply what they have learned concerning the Middle East and technology, and create a multimedia presentation for the class

Time Frame

6 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Materials

Software

Multimedia-authoring (e.g., HyperStudio, Digital Chisel, Inspiration, PowerPoint), Time Traveler (Orange Cherry New Media), video-production, presentation, mapping

Hardware

Video camcorder, laserdisc player, VCR, scanner, digital camera

Books

Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945 by Bernard Wasserstein

Israel by Mary Jane Cahill

The Palestine Conflict by Neal Bernard

Israel by Library of Nations

Background for Teachers

Assuming the role of a Palestinian, Jew, or Briton, students explore how their assigned group felt about Israel during the time of the formation of the Israeli state. Students research the viewpoints of the Palestinians, the Jews, and the Britons, synthesize the information, and then create a multimedia diary from the group's point of view. A fourth group investigates feelings of people today about the conflict in the Middle East. This group creates a multimedia diary representing all three points of view. Presentations are delivered to the whole class and followed up with discussion and debate.

Instructional Procedures

Preparation

Begin the lesson sequence with a background study of Middle Eastern physical and political geography. Students should become familiar with culture, current events, and the history of the region.

Organize books, software, and Internet resources for the project into easily accessible station areas.

Identify local resources and people who might be interviewed for the project.

Note: This learning activity can be adapted to examine conflicts in American history (e.g., slavery in America). To help make Web searches more efficient, provide a reference list of suggested Web sites

(see Tools and Resources). Procedure

Divide the class into four small groups. Groups should each have access to the Internet and multimedia computer stations. Students share the responsibility of researching, analyzing, and presenting their information. Assign specific roles to individuals within the groups to ensure consistency and accuracy of the information gathered and products developed. Groups 1-3 are assigned either the role of Palestinians, Jews, or Britons during the time of the formation of the Israeli state. Group 4 is asked to investigate feelings about the conflict in the Middle East (past and present) held by people from many cultures living in the U.S. today.

Each group bases its investigation on a similar set of research questions. (See the following examples.) Group 4 investigates the perspectives of all three groups -Palestinians, Jews, and Britons- today.

What impressions and opinions did Palestinians, Jews, and Britons have about the geographic area occupied by Israel?

What role does religion play in the conflict?

What was each group's attitude toward Israel? (See Tools and Resources for relevant search topics.)

What justification did each group have for attitudes and actions it took?

Other issues that may be linked to the investigation:

Could Israel have been located somewhere else?

How are the Israeli and Arab economies linked?

Did the Arabs use the land differently than Jews? If so, how?

Schedule community resource people representing the various groups to share their perspective on the above questions. For alternative points of view, develop e-mail pals with experts both within and outside the area.

Students meet as a group to determine major areas for research, then assign individuals to specific topics. Divide the group into thirds. Send one group to each resource station: books/magazines, CD-ROMs, and the Internet. Students should record information in a journal to help them understand how their assigned group of people felt about Israel. Students collect text, graphics, pictures, maps, charts, and related items to support the multimedia diary entries. As in the initial research, students in Groups 1-3 assume the role of the researched people who were alive during the time period. Students write down three to five diary entries that accurately describe events of the time period and the perceived attitudes of people toward those events. Students, in essence, "walk a mile in that person's shoes." As a group they (a) collaborate and analyze notes, (b) write a rough draft summarizing the diary entries, and (c) storyboard a presentation that represents the best synthesis of the information and resources gathered. Students in Group 4 continue researching and organizing current perceptions and biases. Have individual groups select a leader to coordinate activities, then assign specific roles to group members for the creation of a multimedia diary using the rough draft of the diary entries, the storyboard, and the supportive media. After completion of the assignment, students present their diaries to their peers and discuss with the class why each group felt the way they did about the formation of the State of Israel.

One member of each group joins a panel and debates issues about the formation of the Israeli state. Discuss perceptions of Who was right? and Why? Use Group 4 in the debate as the connection to current times.

As an alternative, explore a current event in the Middle East. Students take the perspectives of the various groups involved.

Extensions

Every year this activity produces unique results. With the rapidly changing circumstances in the

Middle East, there is always new information. The Web has made very helpful current information available for analysis.

Assessment Plan

Individual journals can be checked at specific intervals during phases one and two to evaluate student progress. Develop a rubric for Groups 1-3 to evaluate the multimedia diary and presentation. Students can participate in the development of that rubric. A separate rubric can be developed for Group 4, specific to the video production and presentation of their information. Point values for individual journals can be incorporated within the rubric. Some of the categories within the rubric might include:

- Story design and knowledge integration related to the research questions
- Clarity and creativity of movie set design, characterization, and movie production
- Presentation of final product
- Ability to address the inquiry questions
- Understanding of place from the points of view of various types of people
- Synthesis of information into diary format
- Ability to provide both geopolitical and cultural reasons for the Middle East conflict
- Evaluation and processing of geographic data

Other assessment tools might include pre- and post-evaluation of student awareness and knowledge, self-evaluation of group dynamics, and contribution to the finished product

Bibliography

The Utah Education Network received permission from ISTE (The International Society for Technology in Education) to share this lesson.

Written by: Steve Cowdrey and Christine Archer-Davison, Cherry Creek Schools, Colorado Joyce S. Friske, Jenks Public Schools, Oklahoma

Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)