Making a Difference in the Midst of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

TIME ALLOTMENT: Two 45-minute class periods

OVERVIEW
Students explore the Palestinian-Israeli conflict using segments from the PBS program: Wide Angle: Heart of Jenin. In the Introductory Activity, students learn about the history and complexity of the conflict. In the Learning Activities, students learn about a Palestinian father who donated his son’s organs to six children, including an Orthodox Jewish girl, and reflect upon choices that organ donors make. Students also explore why conflict persists in the region. In the Culminating Activity, students explore grassroots efforts to promote peace and write essays about the role individuals/organizations can play in promoting peace in the region, citing examples from history.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
• Describe the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, citing at least three major events that have impacted the conflict.
• Explain the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from different perspectives.
• List ways that individuals or organizations have made a positive impact in the region.
• Describe one individual or organization and the actions it is taking to promote communication and/or peace in the region.

Learning Standards

New York State Standards:

Standard 2: World History
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.
• Key Idea SS2.1: The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives.
Commencement

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.1A:** Students define culture and civilization, explaining how they developed and changed over time. Investigate the various components of cultures and civilizations including social customs, norms, values, and traditions; political systems; economic systems; religions and spiritual beliefs; and socialization or educational practices.

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.1C:** Students analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives.

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.1D:** Students understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras.

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.1E:** Students analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history.

**Key Idea SS2.2:** Establishing timeframes, exploring different periodizations, examining themes across time and within cultures, and focusing on important turning points in world history help organize the study of world cultures and civilizations.

Commencement

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.2C:** Students analyze evidence critically and demonstrate an understanding of how circumstances of time and place influence perspective.

**Key Idea SS2.3:** Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Commencement

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.3A:** Students analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities.

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.3B:** Students explain the dynamics of cultural change and how interactions between and among cultures has affected various cultural groups throughout the world.

- **Performance Indicator SS2.C.3C:** Students examine the social/cultural, political, economic, and religious norms and values of Western and other world cultures.

**National Standards:**
Standards available online at: [http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/thinking5-12_toc.html](http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/thinking5-12_toc.html)
Historical Thinking Standards for Grades 5-12

**Standard 1: Chronological Thinking:** The student thinks chronologically. Therefore, the student is able to:

- Establish temporal order in constructing their [students'] own historical narratives: working forward from some beginning through its
development, to some end or outcome; working backward from some issue, problem, or event to explain its origins and its development over time.

E. **Interpret data presented in timelines** by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred

**Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation:** The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.

B. Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.

C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.

**Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making**

The student engages in historical issues-analysis and decision-making: Therefore, the student is able to

A. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

B. Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances and current factors contributing to contemporary problems and alternative courses of action.

E. Formulate a position or course of action on an issue by identifying the nature of the problem, analyzing the underlying factors contributing to the problem, and choosing a plausible solution from a choice of carefully evaluated options.

F. Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.

**National Standards in World History for Grades 5-12**

http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/world-standards5-12.html

- **World History/ Era 9/ Standard 1C:** The student understands how African, Asian, and Caribbean peoples achieved independence from European colonial rule. Therefore the student is able to explain how international conditions affected the creation of Israel and analyze why persistent conflict developed between Israel and both Arab Palestinians and neighboring states. [Interrogate historical data]
• **World History/Era 9/Standard 2D:** The student understands major sources of tension and conflict in the contemporary world and efforts that have been made to address them. Therefore the student is able to assess the progress that has been made since the 1970s in resolving conflict between Israel and neighboring states. [Analyze multiple causation]

**Media Resources**

*Wide Angle: Heart of Jenin*, selected segments
- The Gifts of Life
- In Search of Peace
- The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

**Websites**

• **Crisis Guide: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**
  This comprehensive Council on Foreign Relations resource about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict features an interactive timeline, maps, audio narrations and videos with information about the conflict.

• **ProCon.org/Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**
  This website features a variety of information, including statistics, maps, timelines and pro and con statements related to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The following resources could be helpful in this lesson:
  - **What are the solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?**
    - 1-minute overview
    - 5-minute overview/ Top 10 Pros and Cons
      These fact sheets outline arguments on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
  - **Glossary**
    This glossary provides definitions of “Intifada,” “Jihad,” “Zionism” and other terms related to the conflict.

• **Wide Angle: Suicide Bombers website**
  This website for *Wide Angle: Suicide Bombers*, a PBS program that explores the minds of Palestinian Suicide Bombers, includes a variety of information and links to information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The following pages could be helpful in this lesson:
  - **Timeline: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**
This timeline outlines important dates in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **Resources**
  

  This page provides links to a variety of resources about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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*For use in the Culminating Activity:*

The following are websites of organizations that have taken steps to promote understanding and peace between Israelis and Palestinians. (See the Culminating Activity for details about each organization.):

- **Parents Circle - Families Forum:** [http://www.theparentscircle.com/](http://www.theparentscircle.com/)
- **Seeds of Peace:** [http://www.seedsofpeace.org/](http://www.seedsofpeace.org/)
- **A Slim Peace:** [http://www.slimpeace.org/Home.html](http://www.slimpeace.org/Home.html)
- **Jewish-Arab Center for Peace:** [http://www.givathaviva.org.il/english/](http://www.givathaviva.org.il/english/)

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**Materials**

For the class:

- Computers with internet access
- Computer, projection screen and speakers (for class viewing of online/downloaded video segments)
- A timeline with the years 1914, 1949, 1973, 1993 and the present. (See Prep for Teachers section for details.)

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**Before the Lesson**

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will need to:

Preview all of the video segments and websites used in the lesson.

Download the video clips used in the lesson to your classroom computer(s) or prepare to watch them using your classroom’s Internet connection.

Bookmark all websites that you plan to use in the lesson on each computer in your classroom. Using a social bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us or diigo (or an online bookmarking utility such as portaportal) will allow you to organize all the links in a central location.
Create a blank timeline that looks like the timeline below. [Note: Create this timeline on a large sheet of paper or on a board. Students will be placing important dates from the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the timeline during the lesson.]

1914 1949 1973 1993 Present

The Lesson

Introductory Activity

1. Let students know that today’s lesson is going to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ask students to share what they know about the conflict in the region. Write down what the students say for the class to see.

   Note: In the next activity, students will work in pairs or small groups to explore the history of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, using one or both of the following timelines:
   - Timeline: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
     [Link](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/suicide-bombers/timeline-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/intro/2766/)
   - “Chapter 1: Timeline” and “Chapter 3: Diplomatic Efforts” in Crisis Guide: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
     [Link](http://www.cfr.org/publication/13850/crisis_guide.html)

2. Assign each group to one of the following five time periods, making certain that at least one group is assigned to each time period:
   - 1914 and earlier
   - 1914-1949
   - 1949-1973
   - 1973-1993
   - 1993- present

3. Ask each group to explore the time period and select at least three major events to share with the class.

4. While students are working in their groups, post a blank timeline in the classroom. (See Prep for Teachers section for details.)

5. After students have had time to gather information about their assigned time, ask them to provide a brief summary of that time period and describe at least three major events with the group. Include their findings in the timeline.
6. Discuss the different sides of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, using the following fact sheets as resources to provide insight into the different issues surrounding the conflict:

Optional activity to replace Step 6 above:

2. Assign students one of the 10 topics (“two-state solution,” “significance of Jerusalem to Jews and Muslims,” “Refugee Populations,” etc.) and ask them to review and summarize the pro & con statements for each topic.

3. After students have had time to review their topics, ask them to discuss their findings with the group.

Learning Activity 1

1. Explain that today the class will be watching video segments from Heart of Jenin, a television program from the PBS series Wide Angle. Provide the following information: This episode highlights the story of Ahmed Khatib, a Palestinian boy who was killed by the Israeli army when soldiers thought the toy gun he was playing with was a Kalashnikov (an assault rifle). Ahmed lived with his family in the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank, a refugee camp which was established in 1953. Upon Ahmed’s death, his father, Ismael, had to make a difficult decision about what to do with his son’s remains. There were many Israeli children who were seriously ill and needed organs in order to survive. The children who needed the organs were Palestinian, Druze, Bedouin and Jewish. Explain that Druze and Bedouin people are Arabic-speaking populations residing in the region.

2. Ask students if they would want to donate their organs when they die and whether they would care who the recipients were. Ask students if there would be some organs they would not want to donate. (Why? Why not?)

3. Before showing the video, ask students what decision they think the father, a Palestinian man living in the West Bank, might have made and discuss their thoughts. (Do they think the father might put restrictions on who could receive the organs? Do they think there might be organs he might not want to donate?)
4. Play *The Gifts of Life*. After showing the video clip, ask students to discuss the decisions that Ismael Khatib made about donating his son’s organs. (*He decided to donate any organs that children would need to whichever children needed them.*) Some additional questions to ask: Why do you think Ismael was concerned about the heart? What do you think he should have done with his son’s body? Do you think Ismael made the right decision?

5. Discuss the Orthodox Jewish man’s response to the question about whether it mattered whether the donor was Jewish or Arab. (*He said that he would prefer if the donor was Jewish.*) If you needed an organ to save your life, would it matter to you who the donor was? (What if it was someone who had been mean to you? A racist? A convicted criminal?)

6. Explain that about two years after Ahmed’s death, his father, Ismael Khatib, met the Orthodox Jewish man, Yaakov Levinson, in Levinson’s home and Levinson apologized for saying that he preferred that the donor be Jewish. He expressed his gratitude to Ismael and his family for donating their son’s organ to Levinson’s daughter. Explain that the next video segment provides more information about Ismael Khatib and Yaakov Levinson. Ask students to look for similarities and differences between these two men as they watch the clip.

7. Play *In Search of Peace*. After showing the segment, ask students to list similarities between Ismael Khatib and Yaakov Levinson. (*Possible answers: Both grew up in the region. Both are married and had six children. Both would like to see peace.*) Discuss differences between the two men. (*Khatib is Palestinian and Levinson is an Orthodox Jewish Israeli. Levinson is a cook and Khatib runs a children’s center and has run a clothing store, been a car mechanic and has fought against the Israelis.*)

**Learning Activity 2**

1. Ask students to brainstorm reasons why they think conflict persists in the region. Explain that now you will be showing another video segment from the PBS program: *Wide Angle: Heart of Jenin*, featuring an interview conducted by Aaron Brown, host of *Wide Angle* with Gordon Lichfield, deputy editor of economist.com. Ask students to observe what they say are reasons why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persists.

2. Play *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. After showing the segment, ask students to provide details, based on the excerpt they just saw, about why conflict persists in the region. (*Both sides keep trying the same things, which produce the same results.*)
Each side has limited human contact with the other. Politicians tend to be motivated by short-term goals and by actions which will help keep them in power.

3. Discuss this comment by Gordon Lichfield, featured at the end of the clip:
   “More and more, the only Israeli a young Palestinian is likely to know is an Israeli in uniform, and the only Palestinian that an Israeli is likely to know is a Palestinian that he has seen on television blowing himself up, so that common ground of humanity starts to get lost.”

Culminating Activity

1. Remind students that in the previous segment Gordon Lichfield, although not very optimistic about peace in the region, points to grassroots efforts, such as the Bereaved Families Forum, which are making a positive impact. [Note: See details in #2 below about this organization, now called “Parents Circle- Families Forum.”]

2. Divide students into pairs or small groups. Ask each group to conduct research to find examples of one individual or organization that is helping foster peace and understanding in the Middle East. Ask students to compile the following facts:
   - A description of the individual or organization.
   - The action(s) the individual/organization has taken to foster peace and understanding.
   - The motivation for the action(s).
   - Results and/or impact (if known).

Here are some examples that students could explore:

- **Parents Circle- Families Forum:** [http://www.theparentscircle.com/](http://www.theparentscircle.com/)
  The Families Forum is a group of Palestinian and Israeli families whom have lost immediate family members due to violence in the region. Founded in 1995, the organization aims to help Palestinians and Israelis reconsider their views toward the conflict and the other side and to promote peace in the region.

- **Seeds of Peace:** [http://www.seedsofpeace.org/](http://www.seedsofpeace.org/)
  Seeds of Peace, founded in 1993, aims to provide young leaders from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation and coexistence.

- **A Slim Peace:** [http://www.slimpeace.org/Home.html](http://www.slimpeace.org/Home.html)
  Slim Peace Groups, which began as a documentary, is designed to help women of all ethnic and religious backgrounds in the Middle East pursue weight loss and healthy lifestyles together.
• **Jewish-Arab Center for Peace:** [http://www.givathaviva.org.il/english/](http://www.givathaviva.org.il/english/)

The Jewish-Arab Center for Peace, established in 1963, aims to foster better relations and understanding between Arabs and Jews. Its “Face to Face” program is designed to create better understanding and create basis for dialogue between Jewish and Arab high-school students.

4. Ask students to share their findings with the class. Each group should describe the individual or organization they researched, the actions the individual/organization has taken to foster peace and understanding, the motivation for those actions and the results of those actions.

5. Ask students to write an essay about the role that individuals and/or organizations can play in helping to promote peace and understanding in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Ask students to cite examples from history to support their arguments.

6. Lead a discussion with students about what they have learned about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the roles that individuals and organizations can play in fostering communication, respect and understanding between the diverse groups in the region.

**Key Words:** Jenin; West Bank; Israel; Israeli; Palestinian; conflict; peace; organ donation

**Lesson Plan Annotation:** Using segments from the PBS program: **Wide Angle: Heart of Jenin**, this high school lesson explores the history and complexity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and examines the roles individuals and organizations can play in promoting understanding and peace.