

# The opinions of maps

## Learning outcomes

- ◇ Students will develop map-reading literacy – they will develop an awareness of how particular perspectives are represented by maps through identifying the uses of content, language and symbols
- ◇ Students will develop a greater understanding of the issues at stake in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

### Lesson in brief

Students will look at a range of maps of Israel-Palestine representing different perspectives and identify the main themes and messages of each map.

### National curriculum

1.2c, 2.1a, 2.1c, 2.1d

**Materials:** Copies of maps, worksheet, powerpoint of maps

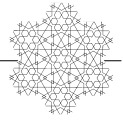
## Lesson Plan

### Starter

- ◇ Ensure students understand the basic facts—for this exercise they will need to know that Israel was established in 1948 on the majority of historic Palestine through war, that in 1967 the occupation started, what settlements and the wall/barrier are.
- ◇ Ask students what they think maps are for? What do they show? Do mapmakers make choices? for example about what to include and what to exclude and what language and colours to use?
- ◇ Suggest to students certain areas they might look out for before you give them the maps:
  - ◇ Language choice – what words are used
  - ◇ Language choice – are names in Hebrew or Arabic
  - ◇ What cities are included or excluded
  - ◇ What additional information is conveyed in the map
  - ◇ The title of the map
- ◇ Apart from three maps on the wall, the maps are in pairs. Students will get a better sense of the decisions made in the making of each map by considering them in pairs.

### Main activity

- ◇ Split the students into small groups or pairs. Give each group or pair a few maps to go through and a worksheet. The maps are in colour and are clearer in this way, so ideally each group of students would have access to a computer. After 30 minutes or so, ask each group to present to the class on each set of maps so that they are all covered.



### Plenary

- ◆ Is it simplistic to label the maps as reflecting an Israeli or Palestinian perspective? Where do the maps produced by the UN and the Israeli human rights organisation fit into this?  
(The UN is not meant to take sides but is guided by issues such as human rights and international law. The Israeli human rights organisation might argue that their map is pro-Israeli in a way because they think Israel would be a better country if Palestinian human rights were not violated.)
- ◆ Would it be possible to have a map that did not reflect any perspective but just facts and truth? Or do maps always partly reflect a perspective and the concerns of their makers?

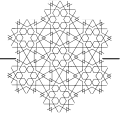
### Homework

- ◆ Draw your own map of the land of Israel-Palestine as you think it should be and justify in writing the decisions that you make

You could give students an outline of Israel-Palestine to use and this can be easily found online. It may be better to leave the exercise open and to tell students that it does not matter if the shape of their map is not entirely accurate.

OR

- ◆ Draw a map of the school as you think it should be and justify in writing the decisions that you make



***Map number:***

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?**

**How do you know?**

**Message map is communicating:**

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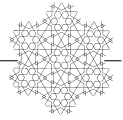
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**Message map is communicating:**



### Map 1

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – use of the term ‘The Jewish National Home’ reflects the belief that the land belongs rightfully to the Jewish people.
- ◆ Eretz Israel means the land of Israel in Hebrew

**Message map is communicating:** The land in its entirety should belong to the Jewish people, including what later became Jordan, not just the part that became Israel.

**Source:** *Jewish Agency for Israel* – see [here](#) for map

From the mission section: “Some 2.5 million young people are losing their connection to Judaism as they gradually distance themselves from their communities, their heritage and our people. Around the world, this connection literally hangs in the balance. And if they are at risk, so is the Jewish future. ... At the *Jewish Agency*, we remain committed to putting Israel into the lives of the Jewish world's young people and to bringing Israel into worldwide Jewish communities...”

### Map 2

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

The pie charts show the relative sizes of the Jewish and Palestinian populations just before the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, highlighting the extent to which the Jews were a minority at that time.

**Message map is communicating:** Before Israel was established it was Palestinians who were in the majority, and so establishing a Jewish state there was catastrophic for the population.

**Source:** *Institute for Palestine Studies* – see [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: “The Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) is the only institute in the world exclusively devoted to documentation, research, analysis, and publication on Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is an academic organization dedicated to protecting the integrity of the historical record. The Institute is completely independent: by statute, it cannot be affiliated with any government or political organization... It is led by a Board of Trustees composed of scholars, businessmen, and public figures from across the Arab world, and by a volunteer Executive Committee elected by the Board.”

### Map 3

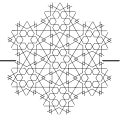
**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ The title of the map reflects an understanding of the events of 1948 as Arab invasion.
- ◆ Language – use of the word ‘Arab’ to describe both the all invading forces (as a homogenous group) and the ‘Arab’ Palestinian cities marked inside the territories implies that the Jewish-Israelis were attacked from both inside and out by a unified ‘Arab’ force.
- ◆ Language – ‘isolated Jewish settlement’ adds to the sense of Jewish vulnerability in relation to the Arabs
- ◆ Colour – the use of blue for Jewish Israel and white for both the Arab Palestinian parts of the land and the surrounding Arab states further homogenises the Arab communities attacking Israel.
- ◆ Acre and Haifa are marked as Jewish cities, but if we look at the population distribution from the previous map, we see that in 1946, the majority of the inhabitants were Palestinian.

**Message map is communicating:** The newly formed state of Israel was attacked from all sides by Arab countries.

**Source:** *Jewish Agency for Israel* – See [here](#) for map—See map 1 for info on organisation



### Map 4

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ The physical marking on the map of all the Palestinian villages 'depopulated...and razed...' has far more impact on the viewer than a set of statistical figures.
- ◆ The map shows that Israel's borders as agreed in the Armistice agreement when fighting ended meant that Israel extended far beyond the state delineated in the UN Partition Plan which split the area into two states, one Jewish and one Palestinian.

**Message map is communicating:** Rather than being an Arab invasion, Israel was established through the illegal and violent seizure of large areas of land promised to the Palestinians by the UN. In the process tens of villages were depopulated, and this violence reoccurred in the Six Day war of 1967

**Source:** *Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)* – see [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: "PASSIA is an Arab non-profit institution located in Jerusalem/AI-Quds with a financially and legally independent status. It is not affiliated with any government, political party or organization. PASSIA seeks to present the Palestinian Question in its national, Arab and international contexts through academic research, dialogue and publication...PASSIA strives to develop and clarify its own and others' understanding of international relations as they affect the Palestinian struggle for justice and peace"

### Map 5

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

Language – '...Jews who sought refuge...' implies the Jewish people who moved to Israel between 1948 and 1972 from Arab countries did so through necessity as a result of negative experiences in their home countries.

**Message map is communicating:** The Palestinians were not the only ones who became refugees during the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jewish people also suffered as a result of being forced out of their homes from neighbouring Arab states.

**Source:** *Jewish Virtual Library* – see [here](#) for map

From the about us section: The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise [which hosts the *Jewish Virtual Library*] is a non-partisan organization to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship by emphasizing the fundamentals of the alliance — the values our nations share...To facilitate the formation of partnerships between Israelis and Americans...To explore issues of common historical interest to the peoples and governments of the United States and Israel."

### Map 6

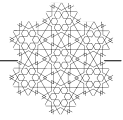
**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – references to the Jewish people as 'immigrants' and the Palestinians as 'refugees' suggests that the people who came did not do so out of necessity, and the Palestinians were made refugees as a result.
- ◆ Colour – the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the same colour as the surrounding Arab states, emphasising the 'alien' status of the Israeli immigrants.
- ◆ The map shows that the majority of the Jews moving to the newly formed Israeli state were from Europe, which also emphasizes their outsider status.

**Message map is communicating:** Jewish immigration to Israel-Palestine resulted in large numbers of Palestinians being forced to become refugees.

**Source:** *Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)* – see [here](#) for map—see map 4 for info on organisation



### Map 7

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – unlike PASSIA’s map on the same theme (map 8) there is no explicit reference to occupation or violence.
- ◆ Colours – the two slightly different shades of blue contrasted with the yellow for the surrounding states suggest the new land conquered by Israel was a simple extension of their original territories.
- ◆ Names – the West Bank is labelled as Judea and Samaria, which are the Hebrew Biblical names of the area. The use of these names suggests that they rightfully belong to Israel. Many Israelis do refer to the West Bank, whilst fundamentalist settlers and others refuse to do so.

**Message map is communicating:** The Six Day War resulted in a legitimate expansion of Israel’s borders.

**Source:** *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs* – see [here](#) for map

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulates, implements and presents Israel's foreign policy, and promotes its economic, cultural, and scientific relations. The Ministry’s website features information on Israel’s foreign relations, facts about Israel, its history and government, anti-Semitism, international development, and more.”

### Map 8

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – use of the words ‘conquered’ and ‘occupied’ suggest Israeli presence in the land is illegitimate.
- ◆ Unlike the previous map, PASSIA marks some of the main cities in the conquered Sinai area, emphasising that the area occupied was part of Egypt, and not simply land waiting to be taken up by Israel.

**Message the map is communicating:** Israeli presence in the land should be understood as occupation and conquering.

**Source:** *Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)* – see [here](#) for map—see map 4 for info on organisation

### Map 9

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

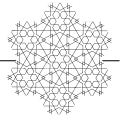
**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – the labelling of Palestinian towns and Jewish settlements using the same word ‘communities’ suggests they have equal right to be there, even though the settlements are illegal under international law.
- ◆ The inclusion on the map of 22 ‘former Israeli communities’ suggests the flexibility of the Israelis in giving up this land to the Palestinians.
- ◆ The positioning of the map (zoomed in on Gaza) emphasises the area of land already under Palestinian control (out of context of the rest of the country).

**Message the map is communicating:** Israel is making positive steps towards the peace process by sacrificing areas of their own land for the Palestinians for the sake of peace.

**Source:** *Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre (BICOM)* – see [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: “BICOM, the Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre, is an independent organisation devoted to creating a more supportive environment for Israel in the UK.”



### Map 10

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ The positioning of the map (zoomed out not just focused on Gaza) puts the actions of the Israelis in the Gaza strip into the wider context of the conflict, lessening the positive impact of the action.
- ◆ The title suggests that the dismantling of settlements in Gaza needs to be understood in relation to the settlement project as a whole
- ◆ Language – the “--” around the word ‘disengagement’ suggests scepticism at the Israelis apparent compromise, and the use of the word ‘occupied’.
- ◆ The bold red lettering highlighting the ‘room being made for Israeli settlers’ in the West Bank transforms the Israelis act of reconciliation into a cover-up for a more serious injustice.

**Message map is communicating:** The Israelis dismantled settlements in Gaza, not because they want peace, but to cover up and enable further settlement expansion in the West Bank.

**Source:** Map produced by the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department (see information with Map 15) and was found on *The Electronic Intifada (EI)* website – see [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: “The Electronic Intifada (EI) is a not-for-profit, independent publication committed to comprehensive public education on the question of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict...Although EI addresses the prevailing pro-Israeli slant in US media coverage by offering information from a Palestinian perspective, our views on the conflict are based firmly on universal principles of international law and human rights conventions.”

### Map 11

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – ‘security fence’ is a typically pro-Israeli way of describing the West Bank barrier
- ◆ The numbers of red and blue markings on the map (far fewer blue than red) highlight the decrease in Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israel since the ‘security fence’ was built.
- ◆ The locations of the red markings highlight the extent to which the ‘security fence’ has eliminated terrorist attacks in the north of Israel.
- ◆ The West Bank and no Palestinian towns in it are marked.

**Message map is communicating:** The reason the ‘security fence’ is being built is to combat terrorism against Israel, and it is an effective way of doing so.

**Source:** *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs* – see [here](#) for map—see map 7 for info on organisation

### Map 12

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

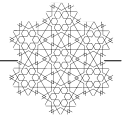
**How do you know?**

- ◆ Inclusion of the Green Line (1949 Armistice Lines established after the 1948 war) highlights the fact that most of Israel’s barrier is built inside the West Bank.
- ◆ The marking of Palestinian villages on the “Israeli” side of the barrier emphasises this point, as does the information provided about how the Palestinian communities caught on the “Israeli” side will be affected.

**Message map is communicating:** Rather than being a simple anti-terrorism measure, the barrier constitutes an Israeli ploy to steal more land from the Palestinians.

**Source:** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA-oPt) – See [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: The OCHA office “was established in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza caused by military incursions and closures – mobility restrictions imposed on the Palestinian civilians, local and international service providers. OCHA-oPt aims to improve the humanitarian situation by enhancing coordination between agencies to ensure effective distribution of humanitarian assistance.”



### Map 13

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Inclusion of the Green Line next to the line of the barrier highlights Israel's failure to stick to agreed borders.
- ◆ Inclusion of settlements suggests that the route of the wall has not been determined by security concerns, but by accommodating the illegal settlements.
- ◆ The map shows how the route of the wall almost entirely surrounds a Palestinian town, Qalqiliya, so that there is only one way through which to enter or leave the town.
- ◆ Inclusion of water sources on the map highlights another key issue in connection with this border – the Israelis have been accused of building the wall to annex off key water supplies.

**Message map is communicating:** The route of the barrier is being determined more by the settlements than by other concerns such as security or the well-being and human rights of Palestinians

**Source:** *B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories* – See [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: B'Tselem "endeavors to document and educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel. As an Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem acts primarily to change Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and ensure that its government, which rules the Occupied Territories, protects the human rights of residents there and complies with its obligations under international law."

### Map 14

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ The arrows show the shortest distance between the various Israeli towns and the border with the West Bank and Gaza Strip, suggesting the vulnerability of many Israeli citizens.
- ◆ Distances between Palestinian towns and the border with Israel are not shown – the 'problem' is one-sided.
- ◆ Language – the labelling of Palestinian towns and Jewish settlements using the same word 'communities' suggests they have equal right to be there, even though the settlements are illegal under international law.

**Message map is communicating:** Israelis in several Israeli towns are vulnerable to attacks from Palestinians.

**Source:** *Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM)* – see [here](#) for map—see map 9 for info on organisation

### Map 15

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

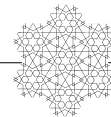
- ◆ Language – the term 'Historic Palestine' suggests the land was historically Palestinians and that Palestinians have their roots there.
- ◆ The series of maps highlights the gradual decrease in the amount of land available for the Palestinians caused by the state of Israel.

**Message map is communicating:** The Israelis are gradually taking over the land rightfully owned by the Palestinians until Palestine will cease to exist completely. The idea of a two-state solution whereby two states, Israel and Palestine (established on the West Bank and Gaza Strip) is being destroyed.

**Source:** *PLO Negotiations Affairs Department* – see [here](#) for map

From the About Us section: The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department (NAD) "aims to explain and increase support for the Palestinian positions on permanent status issues and interim initiatives, to mobilize local and international civil society organizations to undertake advocacy on behalf of those positions, and to overcome misperceptions held by the Israeli public concerning Palestinian goals and intentions towards Israel."





### **Map 16**

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Israeli

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Colour – the use of pale blue for the whole of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom (including the present-day Israeli state), contrasted with yellow for the surrounding area suggests continuation between the two – the Israelis now only have a small part of their Promised Land.

**Message map is communicating:** History shows that the Israelis should have the right to control the whole of the geographical area of not just of Israel-Palestine, but also beyond.

**Source:** *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs* – see [here](#) for map—see map 7 for info on organisation

### **Map 17**

**Does the map reflect an Israeli or Palestinian perspective?** Palestinian

**How do you know?**

- ◆ Language – use of the word ‘towns’ for Palestinians and ‘settlements’ for Jewish people suggests that in the years preceding the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, there were long-established Palestinian towns, whilst the Jewish inhabitants had recently settled in the country.

**Message map is communicating:** History shows that the Palestinians are native to the land, whilst the Jewish population moved there.

**Source:** *Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)* – see [here](#) for map—see map 4 for info on organisation