

THE MANDATE PERIOD

In this lesson, students will examine official statements and proposals that are all concerned with how the geographic territory of Palestine would be divided after World War I and who should control the resulting areas.

Essential Questions

- How are national boundaries or borders established?
- Is there a way to create national boundaries that are fair to everyone in the region?

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Understand the way the British administered the Palestine Mandate.
- Consider key proposals that were developed to divide the geographic territory of Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs.
- Derive information from political maps depicting different options for dividing the geographic region of Palestine.
- Situate a modern conflict in its historical, cultural, and geographical context.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases used in a text.
- Determine the central ideas or information from a primary text.

Materials Needed

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

- Video: *A Place to Belong*, available online
- Adobe Spark: *The Mandate Period: Primary Sources, Key Words, and Maps*, available online

PRIMARY SOURCES

All of these sources are available as pdfs or online in an interactive digital format.

- DOCUMENT 1: The British Mandate for Palestine (1922) and Map
- DOCUMENT 2: The Peel Commission (1937)
- DOCUMENT 3: The White Paper (1939)
- DOCUMENT 4: The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (1947) and Maps

HANDOUTS

- Mandate Source Analysis Chart
- Exit Slip

Lesson Plan

1. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Who Draws the Map? Project a map of the United States and ask students to think about how all of the boundary lines separating states from each other and separating the US from Mexico and Canada were created.

- What had to happen for the US to first get the land and then to divide it up?
- Was there conflict involved in creating these lines or borders?
- How can boundaries between countries bring about conflict? (Think about the different nation-building wars that the US fought—with either foreign countries or with indigenous populations).
- Are US boundaries still controversial today? In what ways? (Immigration is a good place to start...)

2. INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 3

Watch the film, *A Place to Belong*, available online; if you didn't do Lesson 1 or 2, watch the films, *Land Matters* and *Broken Promises*, also online or go over the talking points in previous lessons. If you are unable to watch the video, begin with these **talking points**:

- In contrast to promises made by the British during the war, after WWI, the League of Nations allocated non-Turkish Ottoman lands to Britain and France as Mandates (as seen in **DOCUMENT 1: The British Mandate for Palestine**). Turkish Ottoman lands became the Republic of Turkey in 1923.
- Britain received the Mandate for Palestine, which reiterated the Balfour Declaration with its provision for the establishment of a Jewish national home and for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all of the mandate's inhabitants.
- The British Mandate for Palestine was intended to be temporary; both Jews and Arabs had been promised sovereign states by the British.
- During the British Mandate period, Zionist Jews continued to immigrate, develop the land, and build institutions to support a growing population. Many Jews immigrated to escape the increasing persecution in Europe in the period leading up to the Holocaust.
- During the same period, the Arab population nearly doubled from natural increase and immigration from neighboring Arab countries.
- Throughout the Mandate period, there was violent opposition among the Arab community to British rule and the idea of a Jewish state. As a way to deal with the unrest and create a more lasting solution, the British sent a commission to study the situation. Headed by Lord Peel, the commission recommended dividing the Palestine Mandate into an Arab and a Jewish state (as seen in **DOCUMENT 2: The Peel Commission**). This recommendation was rejected.
- Arab resistance to Jewish immigration grew, causing the British to sharply limit Jewish immigration (as seen in **DOCUMENT 3: The White Paper**).
- By the end of World War II, the resources of the British Empire were depleted and issue of the future of the Palestine Mandate was handed over to the newly formed United Nations. After conducting a study of its own, the United Nations recommended and approved a partition of the region into an Arab and a Jewish state (as seen in **DOCUMENT 4: The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine**).

3. PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

Students should form groups of four that they will be able to work independently, in pairs, and then in quads to synthesize and evaluate four primary source documents. Distribute **DOCUMENTS 1-4** so that each group gets a full set. Each student should read the introduction to the text to get a sense of authorship, audience, setting, time, and type of document. Then, each student will read the assigned primary source document, using **Mandate Source Analysis Chart** to record pertinent details. Students will then present their findings to their small groups so that by the time the exercise is over, each student will have been able to complete the entire handout. Students can also work in pairs and each pair can analyze one document and share findings with the class.

4. CONCLUSION

Have the students answer the questions on the **Exit Slip**—either orally as part of a class discussion or individually in written form.

DOCUMENT 1: The British Mandate for Palestine (1922)

In contrast to promises made by the British during the war, after WWI the League of Nations formally divided the region of Greater Syria (the area which approximately covers today's countries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel) between the British and the French. The French were assigned administrative responsibility for the territory which today includes Syria and Lebanon. The British were assigned the territory to the south which included what are today Israel and Jordan. The British further subdivided the territory assigned to them into two parts, limiting the area designated for a Jewish national homeland to the west of the Jordan River. The area east of the Jordan River, Transjordan, was given to Abdullah bin Hussein (the future King of Jordan) to become an Arab state. See accompanying maps.

EXCERPT

The Council of the League of Nations

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers [British Empire, French Republic, Italy and Japan] have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a **Mandatory** selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine, which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire [Ottoman Empire], within such boundaries as may be fixed by them; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917 [the Balfour Declaration], by the Government of His Britannic Majesty [the British Government], and adopted by the said Powers, in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country; and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for **reconstituting** their national home in that country; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have selected His Britannic Majesty as the Mandatory for Palestine; and...

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions:

Article 1. The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration.

Art. 2. The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country [region] under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home...and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, **irrespective** of race and religion.

Art. 3. The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local **autonomy**.

Art. 4. An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine [in this case the British Government].... The Zionist organization...shall be recognised as such agency.

Art. 6. The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are **not prejudiced**, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall

encourage...*close settlement* by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.

Source: The Palestine Mandate. The Avalon Project at Yale Law School. Web.

KEYWORDS

autonomy: self-government

close settlement: filled with inhabitants

irrespective: regardless of

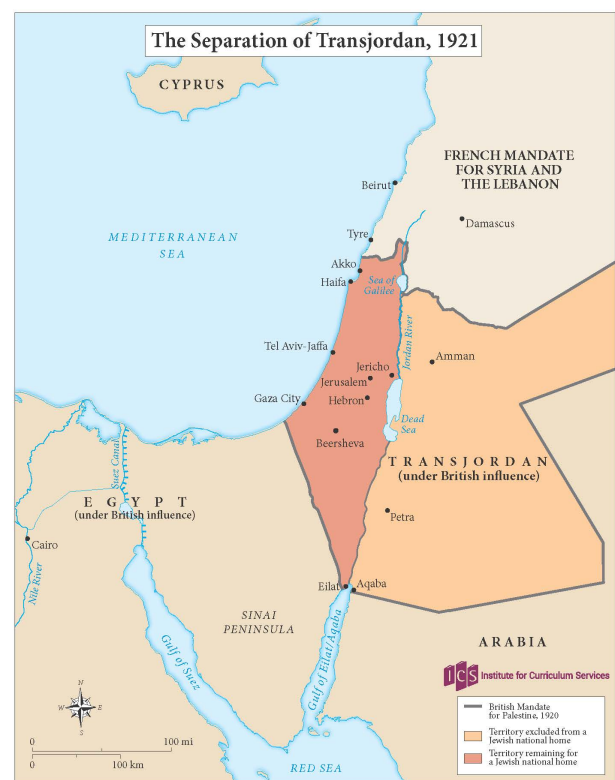
League of Nations: the international organization formed after World War I to settle disputes between nations; later replaced by the United Nations

Mandatory: country assigned by the League of Nations to administer or govern a region or territory

not prejudiced: not harmed or lessened

reconstituting: rebuilding

whereas: given the fact that, since



DOCUMENT 2: The Peel Commission (1937)

In response to the Arab Revolt in 1936 the British Government sent a delegation led by Lord Earl Peel to assess the situation and to propose a solution. Lord Peel and his colleagues recorded their findings in a 400-plus page document called "The Report of the Palestine Royal Commission" (also known as the Peel Commission). Below are excerpts from this report which described the conditions in the region at the time and outlined a plan for dividing the territory of the Palestine Mandate between the Jews and Arabs. See map below. Ultimately, the plan was never implemented.

EXCERPT

Chapter XX. The Force of Circumstances

1. Before submitting the proposals...we will briefly restate the problem of Palestine.
2. Under the stress of the World War [WW I] the British Government made promises to Arabs and Jews in order to obtain their support. On the strength of those promises both parties formed certain expectations.
3. The application to Palestine of the Mandate System...implied the belief that...the Arabs and the Jews respectively would prove to be *mutually compatible*.... That belief has not been *justified*, and we see no hope of its being justified in the future....
5. An *irrepressible* conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country [region]. About 1,000,000 Arabs are in *strife*, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews. There is no common ground between them.
7. This conflict has grown steadily more bitter. It has been marked by a series of five Arab outbreaks, culminating in the rebellion last year....
9. Meanwhile the whole situation is darkened by uncertainty as to the future. The conflict, indeed, is as much about the future as about the present. Every intelligent Arab and Jew is forced to ask the question "Who in the end will govern Palestine?"
19. *Manifestly* the problem cannot be solved by giving either the Arabs or the Jews all they want. The answer to the question "Which of them in the end will govern Palestine?" must surely be "Neither"... But while neither race [people] can justly rule all of Palestine, we see no reason why...each race [people] should not rule part of it.
20. *Partition* seems to offer at least a chance of ultimate peace. We can see none in any other plan.

Chapter XXII. A Plan of Partition.

5. Two sovereign independent States would be established—the one an Arab State...the other a Jewish State....
10. and 11. [A new Mandate should be created to protect the Holy Places, such as Jerusalem] ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world...

36. If Partition is to be effective...there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population.

39. In the area allocated [in this plan] to the Jewish State there are now about 225,000 Arabs. In the area allotted to the Arab State there are only some 1,250 Jews.... The existence of these minorities clearly constitutes the most serious *hindrance* to the smooth and successful operation of the Partition [plan]...It is the far greater number of

Arabs who constitute the major problem; and, while some of them could be re-settled on the land vacated by the Jews, far more land would be required for the re-settlement of all of them....

49. Steps should be taken to prohibit the purchase of land by Jews within the Arab Area or by Arabs with the Jewish Area.... No Jewish immigration into the Arab Area should be permitted.

Source: Palestine Royal Commission ("Peel Commission") - UK Report/Non-UN Document (1 July 1937). United Nations. Web.



KEYWORDS

hindrance: barrier, obstacle

irrepressible: uncontrollable, unmanageable

justified: proven to be the case

manifestly: clearly, obviously

mutually compatible: benefit each other

partition: division, separation

strife: conflict, fighting

DOCUMENT 3: The White Paper (1939)

*In 1939, the British government took a new position with regard to the future of the Palestine Mandate, marking a reversal from previous plans, all of which had included the creation a national home for the Jewish people. This **White Paper** suggests that previous statements regarding British support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine had been misinterpreted and that the British were ultimately interested in the establishment of just one state for both Jews and Arabs. In addition, the White Paper calls for strict limits on Jewish immigration into the Mandate just as conditions for European Jews were rapidly deteriorating under the Nazis and many Jews were seeking refuge outside of Europe. Even though it was never formally approved by the British government, it was the working policy in the Mandate between 1939-1945.*

EXCERPT

I. The Constitution

4. *It has been urged* that the expression "a national home for the Jewish people" [as stated in the Balfour Declaration and in the Palestine Mandate] offered a prospect that Palestine might in due course become a Jewish State or Commonwealth.... But...His Majesty's Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country....

His Majesty's Government therefore now declare *unequivocally* that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State. They would indeed regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate, as well as to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past.

8. His Majesty's Government...desire to see established ultimately an independent Palestine State. It should be a State in which the two peoples in Palestine, Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the essential interests of each are secured.

II. Immigration

12. Although...the large number of Jewish immigrants who have been admitted so far have been absorbed economically, the fear of the Arabs that this influx will continue indefinitely until the Jewish population is in a position to dominate them has produced consequences which are extremely grave for Jews and Arabs alike and for the prosperity of Palestine.

14. His Majesty's Government are [also] conscious of the present unhappy plight of large numbers of Jews who seek a refuge from certain European countries, and they believe Palestine can and should make a further contribution to the solution of this pressing world problem. In all these circumstances, they believe that they will be acting consistently with their Mandatory obligations to both Arabs and Jewish...by adopting the following proposals regarding immigration:

(1) Jewish immigration during the next five years will be at a rate which...will bring the Jewish population up to approximately one-third of the total population of the country....

a. For each of the next five years a quota of 10,000 Jewish immigrants will be allowed....

b. In addition, as a contribution towards the solution of the Jewish refugee problem, 25,000 refugees will be admitted...[with] special consideration being given to refugee children and dependents.

(3) After a period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to *acquiesce* in it.

(4) His Majesty's Government are determined to check illegal immigration, and further preventive measures are being adopted.

Source: British White Paper of 1939. The Avalon Project at Yale Law School. Web.

KEYWORDS

acquiesce: agree, approve

ambiguity: vague, uncertain

it has been urged: it has been maintained or claimed

unequivocally: plainly, clearly

white paper: report issued by a government which outlines its position on a particular issue along with a solution

DOCUMENT 4: United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (1947)

At the end of World War II, the League of Nations (which was formed in the wake of World War I) ceased to exist. In its place, the United Nations (comprised of 50 nations at the outset) was created. In 1947, at the request of the British Government, the UN appointed a special committee of 11 nations to study the situation in the Palestine Mandate and to make recommendations to the UN General Assembly. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly, by a 33 to 13 vote, adopted the plan as UN Resolution 181. The Jews accepted the partition plan even though it was less than they believed they had been promised. The Arabs rejected the partition plan and the creation of a Jewish homeland in any part of the area. See accompanying map.

EXCERPT

1. The basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, partition will provide the most realistic and practicable settlement, and is the most likely to afford a workable basis for meeting in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties.
2. It is a fact that both of these peoples have their historic roots in Palestine, and that both make vital contributions to the economic and cultural life of the country. The partition solution takes these considerations fully into account.
3. The basic conflict in Palestine is a clash of two intense nationalisms. Regardless of the historic origins of the conflict, the rights and wrongs of the promises and counter promises and the international intervention incident to the Mandate, there are now in Palestine some 650,000 Jews and some 1,200,000 Arabs who are...separated by political interests which render difficult full and effective political cooperation....
4. Only by means of partition can these conflicting national aspirations find substantial expression and qualify both peoples to take their places as independent nations in the international community and in the United Nations.
9. It is recognized that partition has been strongly opposed by Arabs, but it is felt that that opposition would be lessened by a solution which definitively fixes the extent of territory to be allotted to the Jews with its implicit limitation on immigration. The fact that the solution carries the sanction of the United Nations involves a finality which should allay Arab fears of further expansion of the Jewish State.
10. In view of the limited area and resources of Palestine, it is essential that...the economic unity of the country should be preserved....
11. Such economic unity requires the creation of an economic association by means of a treaty between the two States. The essential objectives of this association would be a common customs system, a common currency and the maintenance of a country-wide system of transport and communications.

Recommendations: Partition and independence

Palestine within its present borders, following a transitional period of two years from 1 September 1947, shall be constituted into an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem, the boundaries of which are respectively described...below.

Source: A/364 of 3 September 1947. United Nations. Web.



Mandate Era Source Analysis Chart

STUDENT NAME(S): _____

Primary Source	What does this document propose to do with regard to the geographic area and/or populations of Palestine?	Why was this document made? In other words, what circumstances—either in the region or in Europe—brought it about? Provide evidence from the text.
The British Mandate for Palestine (1922)		
The Peel Commission (1937)		
The White Paper (1939)		
United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (1947)		

Exit Slip

1. What kinds of proposals regarding Jerusalem were made by the Peel Commission (1937) and the United Nations Special Committee (1947)? Why is Jerusalem treated differently than the areas surrounding it?
2. What kind of unrest and violence broke out in the Palestine Mandate between 1922-1947? What were some of the causes for this unrest? How did the British respond?
3. Why did the British limit Jewish immigration into the Palestine Mandate, starting in 1939? Why were the Jews so upset about this?
4. Are there ways in which the proposal for the partition of Palestine made by the United Nations Special Committee (1947) was similar to the way this area was divided by the British in the Mandate (1922), or what they recommended in the Peel Commission (1937) or White Paper (1939)? How was the United Nations proposal different?
5. *Reflection question:* What makes the process of determining national boundaries and creating maps so difficult?