TIMELINE

B.C.E.
ca. 1300–931 The Hebrew tribes and the Philistines migrate into Canaan. The Hebrew tribes defeat the Canaanites and, after a struggle, the Philistines. The kingdom of Israel is established with Saul as the first king. King David establishes Jerusalem as the capital and King Solomon builds the first Temple there.
ca. 931 The kingdom splits into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah).
ca. 721 The Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria.
ca. 587/586 The Southern Kingdom falls to Babylon, which destroys the Temple and takes many of the people into exile.
ca. 539 The Babylonian Empire falls to the Persian Empire. Persian emperor Cyrus allows some Jews to return from exile.
ca. 520–515 The temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt as the Second Temple.
ca. 331 Alexander the Great defeats the Persian Empire. Following his death, the land is subject to rule by Egypt and Syria.
ca. 166–160 The Maccabees lead a revolt against the ruling Syrian Hellenists because of restrictions on the practice of Judaism, the desecration of the Temple, and the imposition of Greek religion.
ca. 142 The Hasmonaeans (Maccabees) begin a period of Jewish rule with varying degrees of autonomy at various times depending on relationships with other powers.
ca. 63–61 The Romans conquer Jerusalem.
ca. 20 Herod begins improvements on the Temple in Jerusalem.
ca. 4 Jesus is born. His crucifixion by Rome takes place between 31 and 33 C.E.

C.E.
66–73 The First Jewish Revolt against Rome takes place. Jerusalem and the Second Temple are destroyed in 70.
133–135 The Second Jewish Revolt against Rome occurs. Roman forces crush the rebellion. The emperor Hadrian renames the province Syria Judea as Syria Palaestina and forbids Jews to dwell in Jerusalem.
313 Emperor Constantine recognizes Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Throughout the period of the Roman Empire, Jews are periodically subjected to varying degrees of persecution.
570 The prophet Mohammed is born.
ca. 638 Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula conquer Jerusalem. Caliph Omar provides the Christians of Jerusalem with a covenant guaranteeing their protection and allows Jews to return to Jerusalem.
705 The Dome of the Rock mosque is completed by Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan.
715 The Al-Aqsa Mosque is built by Caliph Walid.
1071 The Seljuk Turks invade and capture Jerusalem.
1096 Participants in the First Crusade massacre Jews as they pass through several European cities. Over the next centuries Jews face persecution to varying degrees in various European countries including restrictive laws, pogroms, and expulsions.
1099 The Crusaders conquer Jerusalem, killing many Jewish and Moslem inhabitants and expelling surviving Jews.
1187 The Muslims, under Saladin, conquer Jerusalem.

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TIMELINE

1291  The Crusaders are evicted from Palestine.
1517  The Ottoman Empire conquers Palestine. Small Jewish communities flourish.
1537–1541  Under Suleiman the Magnificent, walls are built around Jerusalem.
1843  The first writings of modern Zionism appear.
1856  The Ottoman Empire requires people to register land and pay taxes.
1860  The first modern Jewish settlement outside the walls of Jerusalem, Mishkenot Sha’ananim, is built.
1878  The first Zionist settlement, Petah Tikvah, is built.
1897  The First Zionist Congress meets in Basel, Switzerland.
1908  The first Arabic newspaper in Haifa, al-Karmil, popularizes opposition to selling land to Zionists.
1909  The first kibbutz, Degania, is founded. Tel Aviv is founded as a Hebrew-speaking Jewish city. Hashomer, the first Jewish self-defense organization, is founded.
1914  World War I begins. The Ottoman Empire enters the war on the side of Germany.
1916  The Sykes-Picot Agreement divides the Ottoman lands into French and British spheres of influence.
1917  Britain signs the Balfour Declaration supporting the “establishment of the Jewish national home . . . and safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine.”
1918  World War I ends, bringing the defeat of the Ottoman Empire.
1919  The first Palestinian Congress advocates the incorporation of Palestine into greater Syria.
1920  The League of Nations divides the lands of the Ottoman Empire into entities called mandates that are intended to lead to the creation of nation states. Britain accepts the mandate for Palestine. The Haganah is organized for Jewish self-defense.
1933  Hitler rises to power in Germany.
1936–1939  While previous incidents of violence have occurred, the Arab Revolt is the first major outbreak of Arab-Jewish hostilities.
1939–1945  The Holocaust takes place during World War II. Jewish migration into Palestine increases.
1942  Zionist leaders meet to discuss postwar plans with the aim of founding a Jewish commonwealth.
1944  Arab leaders meet to discuss postwar plans for independence and ways to prevent the implementation of Jewish control over Palestine.
1945  The Palestinians receive representation in the newly formed League of Arab States.
1947  The UN General Assembly passes Resolution 181, which would partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states and establish Greater Jerusalem as an international city. The Jewish state would receive 56.47 percent of the land of the Palestine Mandate, the Arab state about 43.53 percent. Numerous skirmishes, road ambushes, riots, and bombings take place organized by both Jews and Palestinians.
1948  Violence escalates. The British mandate ends. Israel declares statehood on May 14. Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia declare war on Israel. The war results in a divided Jerusalem and some 650,000 to 750,000 Palestinian refugees. The UN General Assembly passes Resolution 194 calling for the cessation of hostilities and establishing the Right of Return for refugees who wish to live in peace.
Group 1: A Short History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Read the summary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and create a short presentation that explains the information to your group mates. Use the questions below to guide your presentation.

Ancient history of Israel and Palestine

The ancient Jewish kingdoms of Israel and Judea had been successively conquered and subjugated by several foreign empires, when in 135 CE the Roman Empire defeated the third revolt against its rule and consequently expelled the surviving Jews from Jerusalem and its surroundings, selling many of them into slavery. The Roman province was then renamed "Palestine".

After the Arab conquest of Palestine in the 7th century the remaining inhabitants were mostly assimilated into Arab culture and Muslim religion, though Palestine retained Christian and Jewish minorities, the latter especially living in Jerusalem. Apart from two brief periods in which the Crusaders conquered and ruled Palestine (and expelled the Jews and Muslims from Jerusalem), it was ruled by several Arab empires, and it became part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire in 1516.

The rise of Zionism

In the late 19th century Zionism arose as a nationalist and political movement aimed at restoring the land of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people. Tens of thousands of Jews, mostly from Eastern Europe but also from Yemen, started migrating to Palestine (called Aliyah, "going up"). Zionism saw national independence as the only answer to anti-Semitism and to the centuries of persecution and oppression of Jews in the Diaspora. The first Zionist congress took place in 1897 in Basel under the guidance of Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl, who in his book "The Jewish State" had painted a vision of a state for the Jewish people, in which they would be a light unto the nations. Zionism basically was a secular movement, but it referred to the religious and cultural ties with Jerusalem and ancient Israel, which most Jews had maintained throughout the ages. Most orthodox Jews initially believed that only the Messiah could lead them back to the 'promised land', but ongoing pogroms and the Holocaust made many of them change their minds. Today there are still some anti-Zionist orthodox Jews, like the Satmar and Naturei Karteh groups.

The British Mandate for Palestine

During World War I Great Britain captured part of the Middle East, including Palestine, from the Ottoman Empire. In 1917 the British had promised the Zionists a 'Jewish national home' in the Balfour Declaration, and on this basis they later were assigned a mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations. The mandate of Palestine initially included the area of Transjordan, which was split off in 1922 (see map).

Jewish immigration and land purchases met with increasing resistance from the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, who started several violent insurrections against the Jews and against British rule in the 1920s and 1930s. During the Great Revolt of 1936-1939 the followers of the radical Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini (a Nazi collaborator who later fled the Nurnberg Tribunal) not only killed hundreds of Jews, but an even larger number of Palestinian Arabs from competing groups. The Zionists in Palestine (called the Yishuv) established self-defense organizations like the Haganah and the (more radical) Irgun. The latter carried out reprisal attacks on Arabs from 1936 on. Under Arab pressure the British severely limited Jewish immigration to Palestine, after proposals to divide the area had been rejected by the Palestinian Arabs in 1937. Jewish refugees from countries controlled by Nazi Germany now had no place to flee to, since nearly all other countries refused to let them in. In response Jewish organizations organized illegal immigration (Aliya Beth), the Zionist leadership in 1942 demanded an independent state in Palestine to gain control of immigration (the Biltmore conference), and the Irgun committed assaults on British institutions in Palestine.

1. What happened to many Jews after the Romans stopped a revolt in Jerusalem?
2. What was the province renamed? When did it become part of the Ottoman Empire?
3. What is Zionism? Why was it created?
4. When did Britain capture part of the Middle East? What is Balfour Declaration?
5. How did the Arabs react to Jewish immigration? Why do you think they reacted in this way?
Group 2: A Short History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Read the summary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and create a short presentation that explains the information to your group mates. Use the questions below to guide your presentation.

History of the establishment of the State of Israel

Despite pressure from the USA, Great Britain refused to let in Jewish immigrants - mostly Holocaust survivors - even after World War II, and sent back illegal immigrants who were caught or detained them on Cyprus. Increasing protests against this policy, incompatible demands and violence by both the Arabs and the Zionists made the situation untenable for the British. They returned the mandate to the United Nations (successor to the League of Nations), who hoped to solve the conflict with a partition plan for Palestine, which was accepted by the Jews but rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab countries. The plan proposed a division of the area in seven parts with complicated borders and corridors, and Jerusalem and Bethlehem to be internationalized (see map). The relatively large number of Jews living in Jerusalem would be cut off from the rest of the Jewish state by a large Arab corridor. The Jewish state would have 56% of the territory, with over half comprising of the Negev desert, and the Arabs 43%. There would be an economic union between both states. It soon became clear that the plan could not work due to the mutual antagonism between the two peoples.

After the proposal was adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 1947, the conflict escalated and Palestinian Arabs started attacking Jewish convoys and communities throughout Palestine and blocked Jerusalem, whereupon the Zionists attacked and destroyed several Palestinian villages. The Arab League had openly declared that it aimed to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state by force, and Al Husseini told the British that he wanted to implement the same 'solution to the Jewish problem' as Hitler had carried out in Europe.

A day after the declaration of the state of Israel (May 14, 1948) Arab troops from the neighboring countries invaded the area. At first they made some advances and conquered parts of the territory allotted to the Jews. Initially they had better weaponry and more troops, but that changed after the first cease-fire, which was used by the Zionists to organize and train their newly established army, the Israeli Defense Forces. Due to better organization, intelligence and motivation the Jews ultimately won their War of Independence.

After the armistice agreements in 1949, Israel controlled 78% of the area between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea (see map below), whereas Jordan had conquered the West Bank (until then generally referred to as Judea and Samaria) and East Jerusalem and Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip.

Jerusalem now was divided, with the Old City under Jordanian control and a tiny Jewish enclave (Mount Scopus) in the Jordanian part. In breach of the armistice agreement Jews were not allowed to enter the Old City and go to the Wailing Wall. In 1950 Jordan annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem, a move that was only recognized by Great Britain and Pakistan. A majority of the Palestinian Arabs in the area now under Israeli control had fled or were expelled (estimated by the UN about 711,000) and over 400 of their villages had been destroyed. The Jewish communities in the area under Arab control (i.a. East Jerusalem, Hebron, Gush Etzion) had all been expelled. In the years and decades after the founding of Israel the Jewish minorities in all Arab countries fled or were expelled (approximately 900,000), most of whom went to Israel, the US and France. These Jewish refugees all were relocated in their new home countries. In contrast, the Arab countries refused to permanently house the Palestinian Arab refugees, because they - as well as most of the refugees themselves - maintained that they had the right to return to Israel. About a million Palestinian refugees still live in refugee camps in miserable circumstances. Israel rejected the Palestinian 'right of return' as it would lead to an Arab majority in Israel, and said that the Arab states were responsible for the Palestinian refugees. Many Palestinian groups, including Fatah, have admitted that granting the right of return would mean the end of Israel as a Jewish state. The question of the Palestinian right of return is the first major obstacle for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

What was the partition plan for Palestine after WWII?
1. What organization was in charge of implementing the plan?
2. When was the state of Israel declared? What happened the day after?
3. How did the Arabs and Israelis treat the Palestinian refugees?
4. What is the first major obstacle for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict?
Group 3: A Short History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Read the summary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and create a short presentation that explains the information to your group mates. Use the questions below to guide your presentation.

The Six Day War and Arab rejectionism

The Arab-Israeli conflict persisted as Arab countries refused to accept the existence of Israel and instigated a boycott of Israel, while they continued to threaten with a war of destruction. (There were some talks, but the Arab states all demanded both the return of the refugees and also parts of Israel in return for just non belligerence). They also founded Palestinian resistance groups which carried out terrorist attacks in Israel, like Fatah in Syria in 1959 (under the guidance of Yasser Arafat), and the PLO in Egypt in 1964.

In May of 1967, the conflict escalated as Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran for Israeli shipping, sent home the UN peace keeping force stationed in the Sinai, and issued bellicose statements against Israel. It formed a defense union with Syria, Jordan and Iraq and stationed a large number of troops along the Israeli border. After diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis failed, Israel attacked in June 1967 and conquered the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Desert from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan (see map below). Initially Israel was willing to return most of these territories in exchange for peace, but the Arab countries refused to negotiate peace and repeated their goal of destroying Israel at the Khartoum conference.

The Six Day War brought one million Palestinians under Israeli rule. Israelis were divided over the question what to do with the West Bank, and a new religious-nationalistic movement, Gush Emunim, emerged, that pushed for settling these areas.

After 1967 the focus of the Palestinian resistance shifted to liberating the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a first step to the liberation of entire Palestine. The Arab Palestinians started to manifest themselves as a people and to demand an independent state. East Jerusalem, reunited with West Jerusalem and proclaimed Israel's indivisible capital in 1980, but also claimed by the Palestinians as their capital, became a core issue for both sides in the conflict. The division of Jerusalem with its holy places is the second large obstacle for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

1. What areas did Israel conquer during the Six Day War in 1967?
2. Who is Yasser Arafat?
3. What happened at the Khartoum conference?
4. What happened in regards to a Palestinian identity in 1967?
5. What is the second major obstacle for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict?
Group 4: A Short History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Read the summary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and create a short presentation that explains the information to your group mates. Use the questions below to guide your presentation.

History of the struggle for a Palestinian state and the peace process
In 1974 the PLO was granted observer status in the UN as the representative of the Palestinian Arabs. Beside the UNRWA (set up in 1949 for relief of the Palestinian refugees) several new UN institutions were established to support the Palestinians and their struggle for their own state. In 1975 the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 3379, declaring Zionism to be a form of racism, which caused the UN to lose its last bit of credibility as a neutral mediator in the eyes of Israel, although that resolution was ultimately revoked in 1991. Former UN actions perceived as bias by Israel included the establishment of UNRWA as a separate organization aimed at assisting but not repatriating the Palestinian refugees and the easy acceptance of Egypt's decision to dismiss the UN peacekeeping force from the Sinai. The 'Zionism is racism' resolution gave a strong boost to the settlers' movement and helped bring the rightwing Likud party to power in 1977.

In 1979, under Likud prime minister Menachem Begin, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty after American mediation, for which Israel returned the Sinai Desert to Egypt. Subsequent negotiations regarding autonomy for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank failed because the Palestinians didn't accept Israel's limited autonomy proposal for these areas, and Israel refused to accept the PLO as a negotiation partner. This changed in the early 1990s after the PLO had renounced violence, recognized the legitimacy of Israel, and declared to only strive for a Palestinian state in the 1967 occupied areas. Moreover a major uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories from 1987 on (the first Intifadah) convinced the Israeli government that they could not continue to rule over the Arab population. Partly secret negotiations in Oslo led to an agreement under which in 1994 a Palestinian National Authority was established under the leadership of Arafat and the PLO, to which Israel would gradually transfer land. Elections were held for the presidency of the PNA and the Palestinian Legislative Assembly, from which violent or racist parties were excluded. After a 5 year transition period the most difficult matters would be settled in final status negotiations, such as the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees, the Jewish settlements and the definite borders. Eventually 97% of the Palestinians came under PA control, including all of the Gaza Strip and approximately 40% of the West Bank land.

Since 1967 Israel has been establishing Jewish settlements in these areas, at first mostly small ones in unpopulated areas and under the Likud governments from the late 1970s on all over the area and large settlement blocs. Although the Oslo agreements did not require removal of the settlements, it was clear that they would constitute an obstacle to a definite peace agreement. The rapid growth of the settlements undermined Palestinian confidence in the peace process. The Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, who partially froze settlement construction, was assassinated by a Jewish extremist in 1995.

On the Palestinian side, Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory led to the construction of a terror network by the extremist Hamas and other groups, who from the mid 1990s on were able to carry out an unprecedented number of suicide attacks inside Israel. Under Arafat the PA took limited action against the terror groups and even funded them, and Arafat gave the green light for attacks when that suited his strategy. The continuing violence by Palestinian extremists constitutes the fourth obstacle for peace.

The Oslo peace process got bogged down because both the Palestinians and the Israelis did not stick to agreements they made and the leadership on both sides did little to build confidence and to prepare their own people for the necessary compromises. Large groups on both sides protested against the concessions required by the agreements made. The peace process slowly dragged on towards the negotiations on Camp David in the summer of 2000. After the failure of Camp David a provocative visit to the holy Jerusalem Temple Mount by Likud leader Ariel Sharon sparked the second Intifada, which the Palestinian Authority had been preparing for. Palestinian leaders like Marwan Barghouti later admitted to having planned the second Intifada in the hope that it would press Israel into more concessions. However, the opposite happened, as the Israeli peace camp collapsed under the violence of Palestinian suicide attacks.
In December 2000 US president Bill Clinton presented "bridging proposals" suggesting the parameters for a final compromise, including a Palestinian state on all of the Gaza Strip and about 97% of the West Bank, division of Jerusalem and no right of return to Israel for Palestinian refugees. While Israel in principle accepted this proposal, no clear answer came from the Palestinian side. In last minute negotiations at Taba in January 2001, under European and Egyptian patronage, the sides failed to reach a settlement despite further Israeli concessions. Both sides agreed to a joint communiqué saying they had never been so close to an agreement, but substantive disagreements remained about i.a. the refugee issue.

Shortly after that Sharon's Likud party won the Israeli elections, and in the US democratic president Bill Clinton was replaced by George W. Bush. Following the terrorist attacks from Al Qaida inside America on September 11, 2001, Bush permitted Sharon to strike back hard against the second Intifada. After suicide attacks had killed over a hundred Israelis in March 2002, Israel re-occupied the areas earlier transferred to the Palestinian Authority and set up a series of checkpoints, which severely limited the freedom of movement for the Palestinians. In 2003 Israel started the construction of a very controversial separation barrier along the Green Line and partly on Palestinian land. These measures led to a strong decline of Palestinian suicide attacks in Israel, but also to international condemnations. Especially the dismissal of Palestinian workers in Israel led to increasing poverty in the territories.

Although both parties accepted the 'Road Map to Peace', launched by the Quartet of US, UN, EU and Russia in 2003, no serious peace negotiations have taken place in recent years between Israel and the Palestinians. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon did take unilateral measures such as the disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005, but he demanded an end to Palestinian terrorism before he would engage in negotiations with Arafat's successor Abbas concerning final status issues. Plans for further unilateral withdrawals from the West Bank were put on ice after Hamas won the PA elections in early 2006, thousands of rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, and border attacks took place from both the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon (which Israel had unilaterally withdrawn from in 2000). The latter had spurred the disastrous Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006.

1. What area did Israel return to Egypt after their peace treaty in 1979?
2. How did the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) change in the 1990’s?
3. What is the first Intifada? When did it start?
4. What is the third obstacle to peace? (It is something that the Oslo agreements did not require.)
5. What is the fourth obstacle to peace?
6. When did the second Intifada begin and why?
Obstacles to Peace

The primary cause for the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in the claim of two national movements on the same land, and particularly the Arab refusal to accept Jewish self-determination in a part of that land. Furthermore fundamentalist religious concepts regarding the right of either side to the entire land have played an increasing role, on the Jewish side particularly in the religious settler movement, on the Palestinian side in the Hamas and similar groups. But whereas the settlers received a blow when they failed to prevent the disengagement from the Gaza Strip, Hamas won the Palestinian elections, and after their breakup with Fatah and their take-over of the Gaza Strip, they remain a dominant force capable of blocking any peace agreement.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is further complicated by preconceptions and demonizing of the other by both sides. The Israelis see around them mostly undemocratic Arab states with underdeveloped economies, backward cultural and social standards and an aggressive religion inciting to hatred and terrorism. The Arabs consider the Israelis colonial invaders and conquerors, who are aiming to control the entire Middle East. There is resentment concerning Israeli success and Arab failure, and Israel is viewed as a beachhead for Western interference in the Middle East. In Arab media, schools and mosques anti-Semitic stereotypes are promoted, based on a mixture of anti-Jewish passages in the Quran and European anti-Semitism, including numerous conspiracy theories regarding the power of world Zionism.

Since the Oslo peace process however, a broad consensus has been formed that an independent Palestinian Arab state should be established within the areas occupied in 1967. Polls on both sides show that majorities among Israelis and Palestinians accept a two state solution, but Palestinians almost unanimously stick to right of return of the refugees to Israel, and most Israelis oppose a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

Source: http://www.israel-palestina.info/arab-israeli_conflict.html#Obstacles_to_peace