

Unit: The Ayalon Institute

In this unit, students will become pioneers at the cusp of the birth of the State of Israel. They will build skills in decision making, consensus building, teamwork, and communication. They will learn about Aliyah Bet, the Haganah, resistance during British rule, and about how citizens contributed to the formation of the State of Israel.

Goals:

Students will develop a personal connection with the formation of the state of Israel.

Students will improve communication, teamwork, and decision making skills.

Students will utilize critical thinking to understand historical events.

Background information:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machon_Ayalon
- http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/ayalon.html
- <http://www.haaretz.com/news/remembrance-and-independence-2013/how-a-fake-kibbutz-was-built-to-hide-a-bullet-factory.premium-1.515584>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQNw5MA3DII>

Week 1 - Creating Characters

The year is 1944 and you are a teenager living in Eastern Europe. Things are scary and dangerous for you and your family. The Nazi party is in control and there is antisemitism everywhere and. You have had to disguise your Jewish identity and go into hiding to avoid being sent to a concentration camp. You know it is time to leave, but where do you go?

Some people are moving to America, but it is very difficult and expensive. Others are moving to the land of Israel, which is called Mandatory Palestine. It is controlled by the British government. They have limited immigration with quotas, which means only a certain number of people from any country could make Aliyah. But the situation is dire, so many Jews have decided to move to Mandatory Palestine illegally.

Decide:

Where are you from?

Why do you choose to move to Mandatory Palestine?

Once in the land of Israel, you decide to take on a new name. Many people are choosing Hebrew names from the Torah. Others choose names to honor Zionist heroes. Choose a new name for yourself and explain why you chose it. Your character's name can not be the same as your real name, and no two people in the class can have the same name.

Choose a name.

Create a picture and introduction card. Draw a picture of yourself, a teenager in 1945 who has just moved to the land of Israel. On an index card, write an introduction of yourself. Include your new name, where you are from, and why you moved to Mandatory Palestine.

Create your ID.

Week 2-3 - Your Mission

This group of teenagers has been gathered to be part of an extraordinary mission. You will be part of a team of people who will build and operate a bullet factory that will supply the Haganah with ammunition in the upcoming war of Independence. First, you need to decide if you will take on this mission. Write a list of reasons to accept this mission and a list of reasons to turn down this mission.

Create the list as a class.

Sample reasons to accept - be part of important event in Israel's history, help support the formation of the state of Israel

Sample reasons to decline - dangerous, difficult to succeed

Now you need to vote to decide if you will accept this mission. Have each member of the class write their vote on a piece of paper. The teacher will read the votes outloud to see if you have decided to accept this mission.

Vote.

Assuming students have chosen to accept the mission: Read this letter from Yosef Avidar, a senior Haganah commander.

“Dear Halutzim. Thank you for accepting this important mission. You will be moving to a beautiful green hilltop north of Tel Aviv, minutes from the Mediterranean Sea. There you will be responsible for building a bullet factory. Your cover story will be the formation of a new kibbutz. You must determine how to build a bullet factory that is not noticed. The machines used to make the bullets are very loud, and you need to mask that sound. If anyone finds out that this is a bullet factory, we will all be in grave danger. Good luck!”

As a group, decide how you will build a bullet factory that will not be noticed by anyone. How will you mask the the sound of the machinery?

Ask students to brainstorm solutions in pairs. Their solutions must meet the following criteria.

- The location must look like a kibbutz.
- The location must have room for a bullet factory that is not detectable.
- The location must include a solution to mask the sound of the machinery.

After students brainstorm, have them come together to present and discuss ideas.

If it is not suggested by students, plant the seed of the idea that the factory could be underground and that a laundry room could mask the sound.

Once you have determined the plan, create a frieze that shows the Kibbutz as well as the bullet factory. Make sure that the frieze shows where you will live and eat.

Create a list of scenery that should be in the frieze.

Divide students into groups to create scenery.

Create a list of buildings that should be in the frieze.

Divide students into groups to create buildings.

Create frieze.

Come up with a name for your kibbutz.

Decide what jobs you each will do on the kibbutz or in the factory.

Congratulations, you have successfully built a hidden bullet factory. You've done it so successfully that people think it's a real kibbutz. They want to move in! You must decide if you are going to tell the newcomers what is going on behind their backs. Write a list of reasons to tell them and reasons not to tell them.

Come to a consensus as a class about this decision.

Writing assignment: If you have chosen to tell the new members, write a letter explaining what the new members need to know.

If you have not chosen to tell the new members, write a list of code words you will use to discuss the factory as well as a plan for keeping it secret.

Week 4: Problems arise

Divide the class into 3 groups. Give each group a dilemma. They will need to come up with a solution to the dilemma and present it to the class. The class will need to vote to accept their solution or not.

1. You need to bring in a lot of copper to make the bullets. How do you explain this purchase to the British officers? What can you do to win them over?
2. Your solution to mask the noise is working well, but you don't generate enough material (laundry) as a kibbutz to keep the machines going. How will you get enough material (laundry) to mask the noise?
3. People are getting suspicious. They are noticing that factory workers are pale, not tan like all the other people living and working on the kibbutz. How will you solve this problem?

Presentations must include:

- Explanation of the problem
- 2-3 Possible solutions to the problem
- The solution your group chose
- An explanation of why your group chose that solution

Present solutions and vote.

Week 5-6: The Ayalon Institute

Students will research the Ayalon Institute. Students will determine how this was similar to and different from their kibbutz.

Read this article and watch the video:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/how-a-fake-kibbutz-was-built-to-hide-a-bullet-factory.premium-1.515584>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQNw5MA3DII>

Students will compare and contrast the Ayalon Institute with their kibbutz. Students will research and explain how the institute solved the problems discussed in week 4.

Students will write a letter to the Israeli Historical Society explaining why the Ayalon Institute should or should not be a National Historical Site.

“To be added as a National Historical Site, you must prove that the landmark is significant to Israeli history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and/or culture. We will accept sites

(a) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

(b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

(c) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history.”

In your letter, use evidence to prove that the Ayalon Institute qualifies for this recognition.

End of Unit Celebration: Celebrate the recognition of the Ayalon Institute as a historical site with a party!