



## Educator's Guide

# Weird Ways Israel Won its War of Independence

This video focuses on two critical pieces of Israel's War of Independence: the Davidka cannon and the Burma road. Each one highlights Israel's scrappiness at a time when they seriously lacked resources. Today, Israelis have a strong and powerful military, but this was not always the case. Creativity, resourcefulness and teamwork allowed Israel, the David amongst the pan-Arab Goliath of the Middle East, to emerge victorious and become a sovereign state. This video examines parts of Israel's beginnings that students may not know much about. Together with the educator guide, students will explore questions about what it means to be an underdog and whether or not Israel today should be viewed as a David, a Goliath or perhaps, neither.

Link to video:

<https://unpacked.education/video/weird-ways-israel-won-its-war-of-independence/>

## Further Reading

1. Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*
2. Center for Israel Education,  
<https://israeled.org/yitzhak-rabin-leads-relief-convoy-jerusalem/>
3. Ami Isseroff, *The Burma Road--Israel*  
[http://zionism-israel.com/dic/Burma\\_Road.htm](http://zionism-israel.com/dic/Burma_Road.htm)

## Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. How was the Burma Road built, and what purpose did it serve?
2. What was the Davidka, and what was its primary asset?



- 3.** According to legend, what did the Jews drop from air force planes in lieu of bombs?
  - a.** Rocks
  - b.** Water balloons
  - c.** Soda bottles (correct answer)
  - d.** Bullets
- 4.** From which country did Israel obtain its old, poorly conditioned planes?
  - a.** Czechoslovakia (correct answer)
  - b.** United States
  - c.** United Kingdom
  - d.** France
- 5.** Who was the first general in the Israeli army?
  - a.** Moshe Dayan
  - b.** Mickey Marcus (correct answer)
  - c.** David Ben-Gurion
  - d.** Kirk Douglas

## Discussion Questions

- 1.** In Israel's early years, what it lacked in resources it made up for in creativity. Generally speaking, what yields greater results: resourcefulness and ingenuity, or sheer resources (money, manpower, etc.)?
- 2.** Sometimes it is unclear who is the David and who is the Goliath. Watch this [Ted Talk](#) by Malcolm Gladwell, where he shifts how we all think about the concept and the story. Do you think there is a connection to the old story of David and the modern Jewish people?
- 3.** Why did the Israelis name their weapon "Davidka"? What does that say about their own self-image?

## Reflection Questions

- 1.** Of the stories described in this video, do you connect more to the story of the Davidka or the story of the Burma road, and why?



- 2.** Israel is frequently [ranked](#) as one of the most powerful countries in the world. Yet when it was fighting for its independence, it resorted to all sorts of tactics described in the video. People tend to root for the underdog, but should they do that, or is that something more suited for sports? Do you think that support for Israel should be contingent upon its being a classic underdog, an entity that's easy to root for because it's expected to lose?
- 3.** On the one hand, some view Israel as the Goliath in the battle against the Palestinians, where the Palestinians represent David. Yet if one zooms out, Israel is still the David in a region of many hostile Arab countries. Read this [article](#) and think about whether or not you view Israelis as the David or Goliath. Better yet, if Israel is the "Goliath" in your view, does your attachment to the state and its people waiver?