

HISTORY OF ISRAEL EXPLAINED

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



THE FULL STORY BEHIND OPERATION FINALE

Section 1: Additional resources

- Ofer Aderet, "An Inside Look at Israel's Operation to Capture Nazi Criminal Adolf Eichmann"
<https://www.haaretz.com/1.5213995>
- Dr. Françoise S. Ouzan, "The Eichmann Trial and American Jewry: A Reassessment"
<http://jcpa.org/article/the-eichmann-trial-and-american-jewry-a-reassessment/>
- Yad Vashem website
https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/eichmann/operation_eichmann.asp
- Israel State Archives
<http://www.archives.gov.il/en/chapter/behind-scenes-eichmann-trial/>

Section 2: Discussion Questions

- Israel decided, to the chagrin of some American Jewish leaders, to try Eichmann in Israel despite his crimes having taken place in Europe, before Israel even existed. What do you think of this decision? Explain why it made sense to do it in Israel, and why it might have made sense to do it in Europe.
- In capturing Eichmann abroad and smuggling him into Israel, Israel technically broke international law. Is this justified in light of what Israel accomplished? Can breaking the law be okay under certain circumstances? Consider the [Heinz Dilemma](#) when discussing this question.
- In his testimony, Eichmann claimed he was just doing his job, like everyone else. Evidence proved otherwise and he was executed. But his claim begs the question: should a person be punished for following orders, or only if one planned the results? Does intention matter?

Section 3: Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. Who coined the phrase the “banality of evil” and what does it mean?
2. Why were some countries and individuals upset about Eichmann’s capture?
3. What impact did the Eichmann trial have on Israeli society?
4. In what country did Eichmann reside after the Holocaust?
 - a. Venezuela
 - b. Argentina (correct answer)
 - c. Germany
 - d. Austria
5. Which famous Nazi hunter was instrumental in finding Eichmann?
 - a. Simon Wiesenthal (correct answer)
 - b. David Ben-Gurion
 - c. Efraim Zuroff
 - d. Jacob Blaustein

Section 4: Reflection Questions

- In deciding to try Eichmann in Israel, David Ben-Gurion had a clear educational objective, saying, “Israeli youth should learn the truth of what had happened to the Jews of Europe between 1933 and 1945.” Why do you think this was such an important lesson to Ben-Gurion, who himself did not go through the Holocaust?
- Israelis, and people around the world, were shocked when Israel announced that it had captured Eichmann. What do you think this moment meant to Holocaust survivors around the world? What feelings do you imagine they felt?
- For many Holocaust survivors, the Eichmann trial gave voice to their experiences and opened up the floor for them to recount their personal horror stories. Previously, the Holocaust had been a taboo topic in nascent Israel, which was set on creating a new, invincible Jew. Are there any topics in your life that you feel are “taboo”? What are they and why are they not spoken about?