



Educator's Guide

The War for Control of The Suez Canal

This video is about Israel's least-known war: the 1956 Sinai Campaign. The video goes through the tactics, negotiations and military actions that Israel put in place, with the secret help of the British and French. It explains Israel's "second war of independence" as some have called it and introduces military and political leaders Moshe Dayan and Ariel Sharon. Using this video and educator resources, students will learn about Israel-Egypt relations, pan-Arabism, and Israel in the international arena.

Video: <https://unpacked.education/video/the-war-for-control-of-the-suez-canal/>

Further Reading

1. Daniel Gordis, A Concise History of a Nation Reborn, Chapter 10
2. Yotam Berger, "How Israel Gave Up the Idea of Annexing Sinai and Gaza"
<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-how-israel-gave-up-the-idea-of-annexing-sinai-and-gaza-1.5468782>
3. Matt Plen, "The Sinai Campaign: Israel's First Military Offensive"
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-sinai-campaign/>
4. <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/history/pages/the%20sinai%20campaign%20-%201956.aspx>

Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. What were the most important outcomes of the Sinai Campaign?
2. What role did Britain, France and the U.S. play in these events?
3. In what year did the Sinai Campaign take place?
 - a. 1948



- b. 1950
 - c. 1956 (correct answer)
 - d. 1967
- 4.** Which future Israeli prime minister was a key player in the Sinai Campaign?
- a. Ariel Sharon (correct answer)
 - b. Yitzhak Rabin
 - c. Menachem Begin
 - d. Benjamin Netanyahu
- 5.** Who was the Egyptian leader who advocated for Pan-Arabism at the time?
- a. Gamal Abdel Nasser (correct answer)
 - b. Anwar Sadat
 - c. Hosni Mubarak
 - d. King Pharaoh

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Why do you think this is Israel's least-known war?
- 2.** David Ben-Gurion, Shimon Peres and Moshe Dayan had to decide whether or not to agree to a secret plan devised by the French and British. What factors do you think they considered when making this decision?
- 3.** David Ben-Gurion made the decision not to annex the Sinai Peninsula, though he probably could have. U.S. President Eisenhower, for one, was not supportive of the idea to annex the land. The U.S., France and Britain did not want to risk their relationship with the Arab world by encouraging Israel's conquest and ultimately, Ben-Gurion conceded? Why do you think he made this decision?

Reflection Questions

- 1.** What new insight did you gain about decision making or leadership from the Sinai Campaign, which either you did not consider beforehand or the film made you think more about after viewing it?



2. Egyptian President Nasser once brazenly and cynically said:

“No person, not even the most simple one, takes seriously the lie of the 6 million Jews that were murdered.”

What do you think it meant to the many Holocaust survivors whose families were murdered in the Holocaust when the Israeli army defeated Nasser?

3. Why do you think the movement of Pan-Arabism caught hold with such vigor across the Arab world in the 1950's? If you were living in an Arabic country at the time, do you think you would join the movement?