



Educator's Guide

Entebbe: Who Gets the Credit?

Operation Thunderbolt, later renamed Operation Yonatan after the mission's daring leader, Yoni Netanyahu, has taken on a mythical status in Israel's public memory. Israel sent special forces to Uganda to save Jewish people who were aboard a hijacked Air France flight. The mission was a great success, though it leaves us with several questions: Who were the heroes of this story? What was the role of the political leaders, and that of the military leaders? How does collective memory remember this event?

Watch this video and use these prompts to deepen students' understanding of an event they thought they knew:

<https://unpacked.education/video/operation-thunderbolt-who-gets-the-credit/>

Further Reading

1. Yehuda Avner, *The Prime Ministers*, chapter 23
2. Uri Dromi, "How Entebbe changed Israel"
<https://www.thejc.com/comment/analysis/how-entebbe-changed-israel-1.59887>
3. Saul David, "Israel's Raid on Entebbe Was Almost a Disaster"
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/11701064/Israels-raid-on-Entebbe-was-almost-a-disaster.html>
4. <https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/206799/10-things-you-probably-never-knew-about-israels-rescue-at-entebbe>

Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. What was Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's approach to dealing with the terrorists?



2. What was Defense Minister Shimon Peres's approach to dealing with the terrorists?
3. What is the Netanyahu family's version of events?
4. What is Muki Betser's version of events?

Discussion Questions

1. Operation Thunderbolt is a classic example of being a historical event, which is interpreted and recorded with various narratives. Do you think history can and should be understood as the pursuit of the objective truth? Is there such a thing as "the objective truth" when studying history? Why do different groups of people remember events differently?
2. Why do you think Yoni Netanyahu has become an Israeli icon while Muki Betser is much less known?
3. Defense Minister Shimon Peres said at the time: "If we give in to the hijackers' demand... everyone will understand us, but no one will respect us. If, on the other hand, we conduct a military operation to free hostages, it is possible that no one will understand us, but everyone will respect us." From your perspective, is it more important for the world to understand Israel or for the world to respect Israel?

Reflection Questions

1. In this [video](#), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opens up about losing his brother, Yoni. How do you think this event shaped him as a person and as an Israeli leader? Have you experienced an event that changed you as a person?
2. Imagine viewing this episode with an Israeli peer of yours who is around your age. How do you think you and the Israeli might internalize this story in a similar way and how might you internalize it in a different way?



- 3.** Who do you admire or identify with more: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin or Defense Minister Shimon Peres? Explain.
- 4.** This [song](#), Eretz Tzvi, was written about the mission and has become an Israeli classic. Listen to it and read the lyrics in English. What does it make you feel?