



Educator's Guide

Israel the Startup Nation

Though just over 70 years old, Israel is known world-wide as the “Start-up Nation.” Notwithstanding Israel’s challenges, and perhaps because of it, Israel has become a massive leader in the hi-tech industry. It has more start-up companies per capita than any other country. How did Israel become a world leader in this arena, just years after facing economic crisis? What factors contribute to Israel’s technological success? What are some of its most impressive achievements?

Use this video and prompts to foster discussion and a sense of pride in the Jewish Nation: <https://unpacked.education/video/israel-the-startup-nation/>

Further Reading

1. <https://blog.startupnationcentral.org/>
2. Richard Behar, “Inside Israel's Secret Startup Machine”
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardbehar/2016/05/11/inside-israels-secret-startup-machine/#3b15ad8e1a51>
3. Dwyer Gunn, “How Did Israel Become ‘Start-Up Nation’?”
<http://freakonomics.com/2009/12/04/how-did-israel-become-start-up-nation/>
4. Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Origins of Israel's Tech Miracle”
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2009/11/the-origins-of-israels-tech-miracle/29570/>

Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. About how many startup companies exist in Israel?
 - a. 1,000



- b. 3,000
 - c. 5,000
 - d. 6,000 (correct)
- 2.** What led engineer Simcha Blass to invent drip irrigation?
- 3.** Name an Israeli company that sold for over a billion dollars.
- 4.** What are three possible factors that led to Israel's becoming "Start-up Nation"?
- 5.** In what decade did there begin mass immigration from the former USSR to Israel, including many engineers and scientists?
- a. 1960's
 - b. 1970's
 - c. 1980's (correct)
 - d. 1990's

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Of the several factors that likely contributed to Israel's becoming the "Start-up Nation," which one do you think is most influential? Explain.
- 2.** The saying goes that "necessity is the mother of invention." How has this come into play in the Israeli innovation scene?
- 3.** Until recently, the Israeli model has been to create an amazing start up and then sell it to one of the giants at a huge profit. But now, many startups are choosing to continue their growth, in the hopes of becoming giants themselves. How might this change the industry?

Reflection Questions

- 1.** What does it mean to you that Israel is a world leader in technology and innovation?



- 2.** On the one hand, people around the world rely on Israeli technology in many areas (think: Waze), while on the other hand, Israel faces intense backlash in the international arena (think: BDS). How do you reconcile these two realities?
- 3.** In the 21st century, technological innovation seems to be the holy grail of achievement. Why do you think this is? In what other ways can a country, or an individual, shine today?