



Educator's Guide

The Yom Kippur War: When Israel Almost Fell

In the first part of a two-part series on Israel's Yom Kippur War, we delve into the various elements of this turbulent period in Israeli history. What factors led up to the war? Which countries were involved? How was Israel caught so off-guard? This video unpacks the events surrounding the war and how Israel responded to them.

Video: <https://unpacked.education/video/the-yom-kippur-war-when-israel-almost-fell/>

Further Reading

1. Abraham Rabinovitch, *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter That Transformed the Middle East*
2. Francine Klagsbrun, *Lioness: Golda Meir and the Nation of Israel*
3. Daniel Gordis, *Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn*, Chapter 14
4. <https://unpacked.education/video/golda-meir-iron-lady-of-the-middle-east/>
5. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/yom-kippur-war/>
6. Primary source - Kissinger-Hafez transcript, <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/transcript-secret-talks-egyptian-national-security-hafez-ismail-us-national-security-adviser-henry-kissinger/>



Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. In what year did the Yom Kippur War take place?
 - a. 1948
 - b. 1956
 - c. 1967
 - d. 1973 (correct)
2. What was the Bar-Lev line?
3. Why were the U.S. and Russia so involved in this war?
4. How did Egypt cunningly give Israel a false sense of security leading up to their attack?

Discussion Questions

1. In 1973, Yitzhak Rabin who was then the Israeli ambassador to the United States said: “The Israel I came home to had a self-confident, almost smug aura to it as befits a country far removed from the possibility of a war.” Why was Israel so proud and do you think this self-pride contributed to its failures in the beginning part of the war?
2. What do you make of the Egyptian decision to launch a war against Israel on its holiest day?
3. What do you make of Jordan’s stance - sending troops to Syria to maintain face in the Arab world, while all the while keeping Israel informed of its actions and its reluctance to fight?
4. Lu Yehi by Naomi Shemer has become a symbol of the war. How do the lyrics of this song portray the pervasive atmosphere in Israel?
5. One reason cited for Israel’s decision against a pre-emptive strike like they did in 1967 is due to a fear of backlash from the international community and specifically,



the United States, their primary ally. Do you think Israel's leaders were justified in taking this into account? Give two reasons on each side.

Reflection Questions

1. Golda Meir put on a stoic face even while experiencing internal anxiety and turmoil. Have you been in a situation where you had to mask your fears for the sake of others?
2. What is something you admire about Golda Meir? What is something about her leadership that you are at odds with?
3. Imagine living in Israel in 1973, with the memories of the astonishing victory from 1967 still fresh. What might the people be experiencing during this surprise, bloody war?
4. Consider the Torah (Devarim 8:17) which warns people not to say, "It is my strength and the power of my hands which made me into this person." How did Israeli society not abide by this verse during this time period? Are there moments in your life when your confidence turns to cockiness?