



Educator's Guide

The Yom Kippur War: How Israel Turned the Tide

In the second part of a two-part series on Israel's Yom Kippur War, we contemplate the leadership during and repercussions of this difficult war. Who was to blame for Israel's ill-preparedness? Was there a victor by the end of the war? What long-term effects did this war have on Israel and the Middle East? This video covers it all.

Use this video and prompts to dive deeper into this dark time in Israeli history:

<https://unpacked.education/video/the-yom-kippur-war-how-israel-turned-the-tide/>

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://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-yom-kippur-war>
5. <https://unpacked.education/video/israel-egypt-war-peace/>
6. Primary source - Agranat Commission
<https://israeled.org/resources/documents/agranat-yom-kippur-war/>

Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. Israel was primarily at war with which two countries?
 - a. Egypt and Jordan



- b.** Egypt and Syria (correct)
 - c.** Lebanon and Syria
 - d.** Jordan and Lebanon
- 2.** What was Anwar Sadat's goal in starting a war with Israel?
- 3.** What was Golda Meir's approach before, during and after the war?
- 4.** What role did the U.S. and Russia play in this war?

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Golda Meir, Israel's prime minister at the time, thought to strike pre-emptively but heeded her advisors who disagreed. During the war, she was a picture of stoicism and fortitude, and afterwards was absolved from blame by a government inquiry, known as the [Agranat Commission](#). What do you make of Golda's role in this bloody war? Is she to be faulted or lauded?
- 2.** Why did Israel not take the warning signs seriously? Why did it assume the Arab countries wouldn't strike?
- 3.** Why is history so often taught through wars? Do you identify with this approach or think there are better ways to teach history?
- 4.** See this clip on the [OPEC oil embargo](#). How was oil used as a tool of war? Who was hurt by this policy and who was not hurt? What does this tell us about the importance of oil production?
- 5.** [UN resolution 338](#) stipulates that Israel should withdraw from territories won in war and that they are entitled to secure borders. Students should read this resolution independently and answer the following three guided questions: Should Israel withdraw from the territories? How should international law impact the decisions Israel makes as a sovereign country? How is it similar to UN resolution 242?



Reflection Questions

- 1.** What new insight did you gain about decision making or leadership from the Yom Kippur War?
- 2.** After this war, every family in Israel had either lost a loved one or knew someone who did. What effect do you think this has on a country and a people?
- 3.** Can you think of a time when your over-confidence led to negative results? Was there a time you wish you had been more confident in yourself?
- 4.** In light of dystopian novels like *The Plot Against America* or TV shows like *The Man in the High Castle*, rewrite the ending of the Yom Kippur War. You can format this as a narrative or a short screenplay. In the scenes you describe, make sure to include an explanation of the choices you made, the changes to the original, and the specific impacts it would have on Israelis, Arabs and the neighboring countries.
- 5.** Many say that the Yom Kippur war irrevocably shattered much of Israel's soul. Describe the ways you agree with this and describe the ways in which you can see things differently.