



## Educator's Guide

# Moshe Dayan: Iconic Military Leader

Moshe Dayan, with his iconic eye patch, became the face of Israel's astonishing Six Day War. After leading Israel to victory in the 1956 Sinai Campaign, Dayan was appointed defense minister in 1967, ahead of the Six Day War, in order to assuage the public's growing fear of annihilation. But what was Dayan's role in the war itself? Why is he credited as the hero of the war, when Levi Eshkol was prime minister and Yitzhak Rabin was IDF chief-of-staff? What was his background and did his questionable private life dampen or heighten his heroic image?

Video: <https://unpacked.education/video/moshe-dayan-iconic-military-leader/>

## Further Reading

1. Mordechai Bar-On, *Moshe Dayan: Israel's Controversial Hero*, Chapter 10
2. David K. Shipler, Moshe Dayan, 66, Dies in Israel; Hero of War, Architect of Peace, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/17/obituaries/moshe-dayan-66-dies-in-israel-hero-of-war-architect-of-peace.htm>
3. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/moshe-dayan>
4. Primary source - PM Levi Eshkol's speech after the war, <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/prime-minister-levi-eshkol-statement-knesset-conclusion-june-war/>
5. Primary source - Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin's speech after the war, <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/israeli-chief-staff-yitzhak-rabin-right-israel/>



## Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. How did Moshe Dayan lose his eye?
2. With which historic 1967 capture is Dayan most closely associated?
  - a. Golan Heights
  - b. Jerusalem (correct)
  - c. Sinai Desert
  - d. West Bank
3. What did Dayan collect?
  - a. Stamps
  - b. Jewels
  - c. Wine
  - d. Ancient artifacts (correct)
4. Unlike most of Israel's early leaders, Dayan was born in \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Israel/Pre-State Palestine)
5. What was Moshe Dayan's title during the Six Day War?
  - a. Prime minister
  - b. IDF chief of staff
  - c. Defense minister (correct)
  - d. IDF battalion commander

## Discussion Questions

1. Why about Dayan's personality led him to become the icon of the Six Day War, as opposed to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol or IDF Chief Yitzhak Rabin?
2. Dayan was an avid collector who obtained some of his artifacts in questionable ways. Was Dayan "above" the law? Why do officials sometimes allow leaders to get away with things that the average person wouldn't be able to?



3. On June 8, 1967, Moshe Dayan announced:

*“We have returned to our holiest site so as never to part with it again. To our Arab neighbors, Israel stretches out its hand in peace, and the members of other religions may rest assured that all their religious rights and freedoms will be fully protected. We did not come to conquer the holy sites of others or to restrict their religious rights, but to ensure the integrity of the city and to live there with others in brotherhood.”*

In what ways has Israel lived up to this and in what ways do you think Israel can do better?

## Reflection Questions

1. On the one hand, Moshe Dayan is known for his indiscriminate womanizing and his anxiety and failures during the Yom Kippur War. On the other hand, he is remembered as one of the greatest Israelis to ever live. When you think about heroes, do you place them on pedestals as people who are so distinct or can one be a hero and be fallible? What makes someone a hero and why might or might not Dayan fall into the category of hero?
2. Former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon once said of Dayan: “He would wake up with a hundred ideas. Of them ninety-five were dangerous; three more were bad; the remaining two, however, were brilliant.” What do you make of this formula? Is it risky or remarkable in a leader?
3. In the course of history, it has frequently been military leaders who become political leaders, certainly in Israel. Why do you think Israeli leaders often come through the pipeline of the military? Imagine if politicians emerged from other fields (education, technology, psychology); do you think it would lead to better or worse leadership?
4. After watching this video on Moshe Dayan, what are two things you learned you found interesting and what is one thing you want to know more about?