



Educator's Guide

Second Intifada

Israel ushered in the new millennium differently than most countries: with the onset of a violent Intifada, or uprising. On the heels of the failed Camp David Summit with Ehud Barak and Yassir Arafat, some 4,000 people were killed, including many civilians. Terror and fear reigned for about four years. The Second Intifada was predated by the First Intifada, Camp David Summit, and Ariel Sharon's memorable visit to the Temple Mount, and culminated with the construction of a controversial security wall and Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza. Watch this video and use these prompts to help students make sense of it all and internalize these complicated and tragic events.

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/G7zG1ox91DY>

Further Reading

1. Daniel Gordis, *Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn*, chapters 16-17
2. <http://jcpa.org/article/the-palestinian-authoritys-responsibility-for-the-outbreak-of-the-second-intifada-its-own-damning-testimony/>
3. Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History*, chapter 19
4. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-second-intifada-begins/>
5. Sari Nusseibeh, *Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life*, Chapter 28
6. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-of-al-aqsa-intifada>
7. Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First*, pp. 487-497



Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. When did the Second Intifada begin?
 - a. 1998
 - b. 2000
 - c. 2002
 - d. 2005
2. How did the Second Intifada differ from the First Intifada?
3. What role did the Camp David Summit play in the Second Intifada?
4. What most effectively put an end to suicide bombings and terror attacks?
 - a. Arafat-Sharon negotiations
 - b. Security fence
 - c. Increased security forces
 - d. PA restraint
5. Why did Israeli society move significantly to the political right after these events?

Discussion Questions

1. Historian Anita Shapira writes, “For Arafat, as long as there was no peace, he was a hero.” What does she mean by this? Do you think this statement sheds light only on Arafat or do you think it is also descriptive of most Palestinians?
2. At the closing of the Camp David Summit, in which no peace plan was reached, President Bill Clinton said to Yassir Arafat, “I am a failure and you have made me one.” How did Arafat make Clinton seem like a failure? Why would a third-party president take this matter of foreign politics so much to heart?
3. The Israeli left, which had been a large body that strongly supported the peace process and compromise, came to see negotiating with the Palestinians as “dangerously naive” (in Daniel Gordis’ words) after Arafat’s rejection and the Second Intifada. The country has swung to the [right](#) ever since. When two parties do not trust one another, is peace possible? How is peace attainable or is the conflict intractable?



- 4.** What the Jews call the Temple Mount and Muslims call the Noble Sanctuary is one of the most sensitive places in the world. Learn more about it [here](#). Ronen Bergman in *Rise and Kill First* notes that “Any incident on the Temple Mount would be a snowball that could quickly set off an avalanche.” On the one hand, Ariel Sharon had the right to visit the Temple Mount. He declared, “It is the right of every Jew in Israel to visit and pray on the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount is ours.” On the other hand, he was greeted by Palestinians who remembered him as “The butcher of Beirut, murderer of children and women.” Do you think Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount was a critical moment in the sparking of the intifada?

- 5.** A key turning point in the Second Intifada was when two Israeli reservists, Vadim Nurzhitz and Yossi Avrahami made a wrong turn into Ramallah. They were beaten, stabbed, and had their eyes gouged out. They were then lynched throughout the city while the Palestinian mob cheered and the Palestinian Authority police stood idly by. This was called an “emblematic attack.” Israel lost all trust in Arafat and Ehud Barak, who was prime minister at the time put the blame on Arafat. Israelis believed the peace process was over. Do you think this event should be marked as the end of the peace process? Are there other events you would point to?

Reflection Questions

- 1.** If something is legal and technically correct, does that automatically make it the right thing to do? Are there times when you are allowed to do something but you know it may not be the right thing to do? Are there times when something is not legally right, but it is the right thing to do?

- 2.** [Sari Nusseibeh](#) offers a window into how some Palestinians internalize how the Second Intifada, what they call the “Al Aqsa Intifada” started. After Sharon made his visit, the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem named Faisal Hussein was roughed up a bit as a skirmish broke out. Nusseibeh writes, “As chance would have it, his turban, a symbol of the exalted status, got knocked off his head and tumbled into the dust. Viewers saw the highest Muslim cleric of this highly



charged Muslim site standing bareheaded. He might as well have been naked. Shame and outrage can be intimately coupled in the Middle Eastern psyche.” When hearing this, to what extent can you empathize with the anger of many Palestinians and where does your empathy end?

- 3.** The Second Intifada was a time of stress and fear for Israelis, with suicide bombings and other terror attacks occurring frequently and at random. Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz called it a “national trauma... No tourism, people were scared to go to shopping malls, scared to sit at restaurants, and didn’t ride in buses.” Put yourself in the shoes of Israelis at the time and journal your thoughts on this time period.
- 4.** When Ariel Sharon took over as prime minister from Ehud Barak, he was seen as someone who felt deep pain for his people when they were killed. His military secretary Yoav Galant said about him, “his heart was crushed.” Why is empathy and compassion for one’s own people such an important aspect of leadership?
- 5.** The video mentions two teenage boys who were killed while hiking near their home. One of them was Koby Mandell, whose parents established an [organization](#) in his memory that helps bereaved families “rebuild their lives and create meaning out of suffering.” To you, what does it mean to create meaning out of suffering? How might one who has experienced such tragedy find meaning in loss?
- 6.** In the Arab-Israeli conflict, language and words matter. The saying goes, “if thought corrupts language, language can corrupt thought.” Bearing that in mind, when thinking about and referring to the wall Israel built during the Second Intifada, do you think the wall should be referred to as a “separation fence,” a “security barrier” or as some even suggest, “The Apartheid wall”?