



Educator's Guide

Israeli Nobel Laureates

Israelis have won 12 Nobel Prizes - no small feat for such a small country. The categories have ranged from literature to chemistry to peace. Who are these 12 prize winners, and what were their world contributions? This video presents the winners and their accomplishments. Watch the video and use the prompts below to learn about and take pride in Israel's impressive achievements.

Link to video: <https://unpacked.education/video/israeli-nobel-laureates/>

Further Reading

- 1.** Unpacked for Educators, "Israel's World Contributions"
<https://unpacked.education/israel-and-or-lagoyim/>
- 2.** Unpacked for Educators, "Israel's Purpose"
<https://unpacked.education/why-should-the-state-of-israel-exist/>
- 3.** Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*
- 4.** Stephanie Denning, "How Kahneman Won The Nobel Prize"
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stephaniedenning/2016/12/28/the-undoing-project-how-to-judge-a-book-by-its-cover/#5207c2061372>
- 5.** David Yin, "What Makes Israel's Innovation Ecosystem So Successful"
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidyin/2017/01/09/what-makes-israels-innovation-ecosystem-so-successful/#1ab576b970e4>
- 6.** Robert Aumann, "Robert Aumann: Biographical"
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2005/aumann/biographical/>



- 7.** Kara Rogers, “Ada Yonath: Israeli Biochemist”
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ada-Yonath>
- 8.** Adam Kirsch, “Israel’s Founding Novelist”
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/21/israels-founding-novelist>

Review – Did the students understand the material?

- 1.** Who won a Nobel Prize in Literature?
 - a.** Daniel Kahneman
 - b.** Shai Agnon
 - c.** Robert Aumann
 - d.** Ada Yonath
- 2.** Whose work in game theory afforded him the Nobel Prize in Economics?
 - a.** Daniel Kahneman
 - b.** Shai Agnon
 - c.** Robert Aumann
 - d.** Ada Yonath
- 3.** For what agreement did Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat share a Nobel Peace Prize?
- 4.** In what area of science have Israelis won six Nobel prizes?
 - a.** Biology
 - b.** Physics
 - c.** Ecology
 - d.** Chemistry

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Why do you think it is that this tiny country has managed to win the world’s most prestigious prize several times over? More broadly, Jews around the world have won 22.5% of Nobel Prizes, though they make up just 0.2% of the world’s population. How do you explain this?



- 2.** Which of the personalities you learned about do you find most impressive? Why?
- 3.** When learning about Israel, why might it be important to focus on aspects of Israeli history and culture outside of war and the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- 4.** Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yassir Arafat won a Nobel Peace Prize for the Oslo Accords, which has not resulted in the peace that Israel maintains with sovereign nations like Egypt and Jordan. Do you think the committee was right to award this prize, or was it premature? Do later events impact this prize, or is hindsight 20-20?

Reflection Questions

- 1.** Since medieval times, Jews would be called the “people of the book,” or *ahl al-kitab*, which was a name Muslims used to use for followers of monotheism who were devoted to the “Book.” Yet many early Zionists were not happy with the bookishness associated with the Jewish people and wanted to create a new image of a resilient and brave new Jew who was deeply connected to the soil. Why do you think some early Zionists wanted to shed the old image of the Jew? Does learning and studying resonate more with you or does getting your hands dirty?
- 2.** If you were to become an expert in any field, what would it be and why?
- 3.** What does it really mean to win a Nobel Prize? Why is it such a source of pride for the individual and his or her country?
- 4.** If you are Jewish, do you feel that education has been given a unique status in your home or community? How so?