



Educator's Guide

Women in Zionism

You've heard of Golda Meir, but there are many lesser-known women who contributed significantly to the State of Israel, before and after its establishment. This video presents a list of 10 influential women in Israel's history who each helped to shape Israeli society in their own field. From Hemda Ben-Yehuda to Nechama Leibowitz, these women span the gamut of religious, secular, right, left, young, old, European, Israeli-born, and everything in between. Watch this video and use the prompts below to learn about these fascinating women.

Link to video: <https://unpacked.education/video/the-women-of-zionism/>

Further Reading

- 1.** Unpacked for Educators, <https://unpacked.education/is-zionism-to-jews-what-feminism-is-to-women/>
- 2.** Unpacked for Educators, <https://unpacked.education/video/golda-meir-iron-lady-of-the-middle-east/>
- 3.** Gil Troy, "The Zionist Ideas' Reclaims Women's Voices" <https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2018/04/16/zionist-ideas-reclaims-women-s-voices/>
- 4.** The Jewish Agency, <http://archive.jewishagency.org/women-israel/content/36606>
- 5.** Jewish Women's Archive, <https://jwa.org/womenofvalor/szold>, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/ben-zvi-rahel-yanait>, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/katznelson-rahel>, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/leibowitz-nehama>



- 6.** World Zionist Organization,
<http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/en/AttheCZA/AdditionalArticles/Pages/Hemda.aspx>

Review – Did the students understand the material?

- 1.** What role did Hemda Ben-Yehuda play in the development of the Hebrew language?
- 2.** Who founded Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, which also underwrites the world-renowned Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel?
 - a.** Henrietta Szold
 - b.** Hannah Senesh
 - c.** Rahel Yanait Ben-Tzvi
 - d.** Hadassah Cohen
- 3.** In her short life, Hannah Senesh served as both a paratrooper and a...?
 - a.** Journalist
 - b.** Poet
 - c.** Dancer
 - d.** Film-writer
- 4.** Who is Israel’s only female prime minister to date?
- 5.** Ruth Calderon founded Alma, which is a...?
 - a.** Women’s political group
 - b.** Secular yeshiva
 - c.** Popular cafe for intellectuals
 - d.** Women’s dance group

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Several of these women gave up comfortable homes in Europe and America to move to pre-state Palestine and live in much tougher conditions. What do you



think drove them to do so? What gave them the strength to put their Zionist dreams into action?

- 2.** Golda Meir is Israel's only female prime minister so far. The video states that since Golda did not stress women's issues in particular, "feminism in Israel could have asked more of Golda Meir." Do you agree with this? Should she have "done more" for women specifically, or does her role as prime minister and treating gender as a non-issue serve as a form of feminism in itself?
- 3.** Why do you think the producers chose to make a separate video on women and Zionism? Should these women have been better included in the other videos in their respective areas, or are they better highlighted as a distinct group? Explain.
- 4.** When learning about Israel, people often reduce Israel to the Arab-Israeli conflict. What are the reasons they often do that, and why do you think there is value in learning about the other aspects of Israeli history and society?
- 5.** Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour [proclaimed](#) in 2017 that Zionism and feminism are incompatible. How would you respond to her?

Reflection Questions

- 1.** If you could meet any of these women, who would you like to meet and why? What would you speak to her about?
- 2.** Each of these women contributed to the State of Israel in a field that interested her. How can you take an interest or passion of yours and use it to contribute to your community, country or Israel?
- 3.** Who is a woman in your life whom you admire? What qualities do you find admirable in her?