



Lesson Plan (50 minutes)

When the Jewish State was Almost in Uganda

Step 1: Start with the goals/questions

Goals: What are the goals of this lesson?

Affective – Students will appreciate the intensity of antisemitism facing Jews in the early 1900s and its impact on the Zionist movement.

Behavioral – Students will want to “do more” with their knowledge and understanding surrounding the early years of the Zionist movement, whether by visiting Israel, or getting involved in Zionist organizations in their schools and communities.

Cognitive – Students will develop a strong skill set in comparing and contrasting different perspectives on the Uganda plan.

Essential Questions/Big Ideas:

What deep questions and enduring understandings do we want students to be grappling with?

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is the primary goal of Zionism: to end antisemitism; to provide a safe haven for Jews; to empower Jewish self-determination; to return to our historic roots in the Land of Israel; or something else all together?2. When is it preferable to detour from a goal in service of a greater good?3. How essential is the Land of Israel to Zionism? Can Zionism exist without the State of Israel? | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Israel is in constant tension between balancing pragmatic needs and idealistic values.2. The Zionist movement contained many groups with divergent and competing views about the priorities and values of the future Jewish state.3. Antisemitism often plays a major role in shaping the direction of Jewish history. |
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Step 2: Learning Plan

Hook/Trigger: (5 minutes)

Will I use a UED video, question, scenario...

Share the following scenario with your students and ask them to choose one of the prompts to answer:

Imagine a Jewish state had been created somewhere other than in Israel.

1. Would it hold the same appeal to you? Would you be more likely or less likely to make *aliyah* to a Jewish state if it were outside the Land of Israel? Would it make a difference if you were facing antisemitism and persecution?
2. Is the draw for you the fact that it is an independent Jewish state, irrespective of its location, or is it important that it be specifically in the Land of Israel? Alternatively, would you consider moving to the Land of Israel if it were ruled by a different people?

Learning Activity: (35 minutes)

What am I using from UED resources (video, discussion question, game, debate)? Do these materials fit the unit goals/essential questions?

1. Video and Kahoot: (13 minutes) Watch the [Uganda video](#) and play the [Kahoot](#)/review questions.

2. Discussion: Uganda: temporary or permanent? (5 minutes)

Herzl saw the Uganda plan as a temporary solution to the horrible antisemitism and pogroms faced by Jews in Russia. This was only supposed to be a detour, with the ultimate goal being a permanent state in the Land of Israel.

- i. If the Uganda plan had been accepted, do you think the Jewish state would have ever relocated to the Land of Israel?
- ii. Would Jews have still felt the need for a state in the Land of Israel when they already had one in Africa? Would the world have supported such a move?
- iii. Would accepting the Uganda plan have led to more Jews being saved? Would it have solved the problem of antisemitism in Europe?
- iv. Would the State of Israel still have been created in 1948 or much later on?

3. Learning Activity: Debate (17 minutes)

Divide your students up into different groups attending the Sixth Zionist Congress, including Herzl, the Russian Jewish group, the religious Zionists led by Rabbi Reines. Have each group prepare arguments either in favor of or against the Uganda plan. Students can use quotes from the video, and resources from the further learning section ([here](#), and [here](#)), to prepare their arguments. Some model arguments are included below.

- a. **Herzl:** The current priority must be saving Russian Jews from the dangers of more pogroms such as Kishinev. The Jews need their own land and state in order to end antisemitism. Uganda is a temporary, but necessary detour to save the Russian Jewish community. This does not mean we will give up on our ultimate dream of a state in our ancestral homeland.
- b. **The Russian delegation:** *Im Eshkakhech Yerushalayim Tishkach Yemini! If I forget Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!* Did our ancestors suffer and wander for two thousand years to settle in Uganda? Better to suffer through pogroms and attacks rather than give up on our homeland. What type of meaningful state could we create in a foreign land? We reject any proposal for a state anywhere other than the Land of Israel.
- c. **Rabbi Reines:** Although religious Zionists will always pray for a future state in the Land of Israel, Zionism has always been about the political redemption of the Jewish people. It is possible for this to happen in a different land temporarily, while we continue to hope for our dream of a State in Israel. This is especially true when the alternative is more spilling of Jewish blood. The Torah always prioritizes life over land.
- d. **Religious Zionists:** A state anywhere other than in the Land of Israel is a rejection of what we pray for three times a day and the ultimate message of the Torah: the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel.

After each presentation, the group must answer questions and challenges from other delegates in defense of their position. At the end, hold a vote on the Uganda Plan where students can vote as themselves and see if it passes.

Reflection: (5 minutes)

How can I help students connect with the material on a deeper and personal level?

Balancing Pragmatism and Idealism

Included in the debate over the Uganda plan is the question of whether it is appropriate to detour from a goal in service of the greater good. This can be debated both on personal and national levels. Ask your students to respond to one question from each category:

Personal:

- What are times where you feel detouring from the plan is the right choice? What are situations where this may endanger the ultimate goal?
- Share a time where you had to choose between a less ideal short-term solution versus your longtime dream and goal. How did you decide what to do? What factors played into your decision?

National:

- When should Israel put pragmatic concerns over its ideals? What do you think Israel should do in these scenarios?
- Should Israel take a stronger stand on the Ukraine war, even if this may alienate Russia and risk Israel's ability to control the flow of terrorist arms into Syria?
- Should Israel call Turkey out for its Armenian genocide if this risks losing an important ally in the Middle East?
- Should Israel [refuse to sell arms](#) to countries with dubious human rights reputations even if this means a loss of significant income?

Step 3: Assessment

Checking for Understanding: (5-10 minutes)

Were my learning goals met?

Good idea or bad idea?

Was Herzl's Uganda plan a good idea or not?

Place two signs on the board - one that says "Yes" and one that says "No". Ask the students to write their answer and reasoning on a post-it note and affix it to where on the board it would fall between yes or no.

Have a few students share their responses with the group.

What to think about when lesson planning:

- Is my lesson being driven by the goals/essential questions?
- Is the UED video the hook or the learning activity?
- Do I have to adjust for the age levels of my students (excerpts, simplify the questions...)?