

MAPS AS NARRATIVE

Every map tells a story. Whenever we choose a map, whether or not we are conscious of it, we are choosing a particular narrative and perspective. No map is perfectly “accurate.” Every map is the product of a series of decisions taken by the map-maker. This excerpt from the television show *The West Wing* demonstrates the ways in which maps are shaped, shared and interpreted.

When it comes to Israel, maps are rapidly changing and, in many cases, are used by individuals and groups all over the world, both within and outside of Israel, as a tool to make a point, political or otherwise. This topic introduces learners to the concept of map as “story-teller” and provides them with tools to analyze and choose maps of Israel that reflect perspectives they wish to convey and that, hopefully, reflect their relationship with Israel.

Through the use of “Core Ideas,” “Questions to Explore,” “Group Activities,” and “Source Materials,” this resource provides learners with tools to analyze and choose maps of Israel that reflect perspectives they wish to convey and that, hopefully, reflect their relationship with Israel. The resource culminates with an activity in which the learners recommend a map of Israel to their institution.

A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES

The State of Israel was created by individuals who embodied multiple voices and perspectives on nationalism, religion, and modernity all of which were united by one core idea: the importance of the creation of a Jewish State. The dynamics of contemporary Israel has been shaped by the inter-action, discussion, debate, controversy, and sometimes tragedy of diverse narratives and viewpoints.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- ▶ How do various viewpoints play out in the use of different maps in different contexts?
- ▶ What does a given map come to teach us about the worldview of the user?
- ▶ What map best expresses my voice and relationship with Israel?

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

This section is for groups engaging in the final project of recommending a map to be used throughout the learners’ educational setting.

This can be done in one session or over 2-3 sessions, depending upon the desired quality of presentation, the nature of the presentation and available time.

The first part of this section might be done in small groups. Groups can be divided in a number of ways:

- ▶ Affinity groups: learners that like the same map
- ▶ Diverse groups: each learner in the group prefers a different map
- ▶ Random

Learners decide on which map they think is most appropriate for their setting and justify their decision.

They then need to bring it back to the larger group. The educator can use whichever decision-making process seems most appropriate for the group. It is possible to recommend one map or to recommend different maps for different places in the setting.

Learners then divide up the work of creating a presentation to the community leadership. It should be professional looking. One group can create the framework for the presentation, another group write up the justification, another create the actual presentation to the individual(s) to whom they are presenting.

Schedule the presentation. Present and come back to reflect on the experience (what was the response, were learners surprised, excited, troubled? What new insights did they gain about why the choice of map matters and why the choice of maps of Israel, in particular, matters?

Mount or frame the chosen map and hang it in a prominent place or places – maybe with a short ceremony.

UNIT 1: GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

This section can be used independently or as the “hook” or introduction to a larger unit or project focused on exploring contemporary portrayal of Israel in maps.

Core Ideas

- ▶ Maps are subjective, interpretive documents in which groups or individuals express their perspective(s) and viewpoints.
- ▶ The “accuracy” of maps is not absolute.
- ▶ When choosing a representative map, one must clarify and grasp its particular perspective

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- ▶ How do various viewpoints play out in the use of different maps in different contexts?
- ▶ What does a given map come to teach us about the worldview of the user?
- ▶ What, if anything, characterizes a map that is “accurate”?

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

The following introductory activities can be used as stand-alone activities or as part of a series.

Activity #1: Mapping Our Own World – Creating Maps of Educational Setting

Activity #2: Maps of the World – Accuracy and Perspective

ACTIVITY #1

The goal of this activity is to demonstrate, through a place with which learners are thoroughly familiar, how their unique perspectives can lead to very different interpretations of what seems like something obvious and concrete (a building).

Time frame: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Paper, colored markers, pencils and clipboards

In this activity learners work on their own or in groups of two to create a map of their educational setting (school, camp, synagogue). The goal is for a stranger to be able to learn about the place, what's important, how to get around. The learners should try to reflect their space with two-dimensional lines and words. Challenge them to create simple maps that highlight details they feel are important for a new student coming to the school.

Learners can walk around as they figure out what to include, how to do so and so forth. They should be prepared to share their maps as part of a map exhibit. Once learners have completed their maps and hung them up, they should walk around and look at each others' maps noting differences and similarities and images that surprised them.

- ▶ What differences stand out among the maps?
- ▶ If one of the maps includes places or information not included in other maps, is one map “correct” and the other “incorrect”? Why or why not?
- ▶ How did you decide what to include and what to omit?
- ▶ Why do you think the same spaces were represented in different ways?

If possible, display a traditional world map printed in the US and the Gall-Peters version for learners to explore later in the module. Leave learners with the question (or put it as a caption near the maps): Which one is right? Why?

ACTIVITY #2

This activity asks learners to explore multiple examples of ways in which a map is shaped by its creator and tells a particular story.

Time frame: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Multiple maps, devices with internet access, device for screening and viewing a YouTube clip

View this excerpt from *The West Wing*, and think about the questions below:



- ▶ Which map do you know best?
- ▶ What might it feel like to use one of the other maps shown in the clip?
- ▶ Exploring Maps

This section is designed to introduce learners to exactly how maps tell stories. The maps below are a just a few out of a myriad of possible maps. In addition to (or instead of) using these maps, you might want to bring additional examples or ask learners to find interesting and/or unique maps online. In either case, they can respond to the questions below.

Finally, learners might be divided into small groups with each group receiving one or two maps explore, the goal being for them to “tell the story” of their map. Some of the questions they will want to address can include:

- ▶ What was important to the creator of your map(s)? How do you know this?

- ▶ What is different about the world when one looks at it through a particular lens, as portrayed by your map?
- ▶ What makes your map(s) more appealing?
- ▶ What do you not like about your map(s)?
- ▶ What new insight or perspective does this provide about the people who either like or, perhaps use, this map(s)?

SAMPLE MAPS

1. Gall-Peters Projection or TheTrueSize.com world map interface: Published in 1974, the Gall-Peters Projection attempts to show the landmasses in proportional relative size. TheTrueSize.com website provides users with tools to view different parts of the world in accurate proportion to other parts of the world.
2. The New Yorker Map: A famous cover of the New Yorker magazine which attempts to depict the typical New Yorker's view of the rest of the United States
3. Baseball Fans Across America: A map distributed on Facebook, which overlays baseball team fan loyalty on the map of the United States.
4. Tribal Nations Map: Maps by Aaron Carapella that use Tribal Nation's original indigenous names for themselves, and show where Tribes were just before contact with outsiders. (Source: www.tribalnationsmaps.com)

Learners (preferably reporting by groups – not individually) can share their maps by telling the “story” the mapmaker might be trying to convey.

WRAP UP

Option 1

If your learners created a map of the learning setting, you may want to ask them how they would change the maps they drew based on their study of these maps. Would they want to emphasize new things? What – or whose – point of view is represented in each of the maps that learners created? You might also want to do Option 2 below.

Option 2

If your learners did not create a map of their setting ask them:

- ▶ When do they use maps?
- ▶ What might they take into account or think about the next time they decide to use a map to learn about a new place?
- ▶ What makes a map speak to someone, tell its story?

Summative Ideas

Share all or some of the ideas below:

- ▶ Maps are subjective, interpretive documents in which groups or individuals express their perspective(s) and viewpoints.
- ▶ The “accuracy” of maps is not absolute.
- ▶ When choosing a representative map, one must clarify and grasp its particular perspective

Next Steps

If the next step is to study maps of Israel, share with the learners that they will be turning their attention to the map of Israel, the diverse portrayal of Israel through maps and the stories the map-users or map-makers are attempted to tell with their given map.

UNIT 2: CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

This section focuses on the maps of Israel and can be used independently of the section about maps in general. However, it is worthwhile to ensure that students have some familiarity with the notion that maps are subjective, interpretive documents representing particular worldviews or perspectives.

Core Ideas

- ▶ Maps are subjective, interpretive documents in which groups or individuals express their perspective(s) and viewpoints.
- ▶ The “accuracy” of maps is not absolute.
- ▶ When choosing a representative map, one must clarify and grasp its particular perspective
- ▶ The map of Israel can be as much a political as a geographical or historical document.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- ▶ How do various viewpoints play out in the use of different maps in different contexts?
- ▶ What does a particular map of Israel come to teach us about the worldview or political stance of the user?
- ▶ Why is a particular map chosen at a particular moment and in a given place?
- ▶ What can we learn by analyzing and interpreting the maps of Israel used by those outside and around Israel (media, Palestinians, other countries)?
- ▶ What factors do I (we) need to take into consideration when we choose to use or not use a particular map? What are the benefits and/or risks of the choices I make?

INTRODUCTION: A MAP IS NOT JUST A MAP



Viewing guide for clip

- ▶ What are the responses of Charlie, Leo, CJ, and Toby?
- ▶ What reasons do they give for their opinion?

Debrief of clip

- ▶ Ask learners to share their responses to the viewing guide questions.
- ▶ What can we learn about the complexity of using a particular map (or not using a particular map, as the case may be)?

Map of Israel from Jewish Perspectives

The educator can now lay out the task as framed by the Culminating Project. Any or all the ideas below can be linked to this Project. For example, learners can begin to weigh in on which maps they would feel comfortable recommending to their community and begin to justify their recommendations.

Activity #1: Examining 3-5 maps of Israel (included in this is a brief examination of the evolution of the map from 1947-1948-1967-1978-Present)

Activity #2: Seeking out Israel maps in the learning setting

Activity #3: Interviewing others about their perspective on which map to use

Source Materials: Maps of Israel (1947 – Present)

ACTIVITY #1

Examining current maps of Israel

Goal: Learners will discern multiple possibilities for choosing which map of Israel to use. This is NOT an exercise in which map is correct or “accurate.” Rather, the goal is for learners to use analytical skills to decipher the stance and meaning of a particular portrayal.

Optional Opening: 30-40 min

Depending on the background of the learners they might benefit from a brief survey of the evolution of Israel’s map since the founding of the State in 1947 (1947-1948-1967-1978-present). The rationale for this is to provide learners with enough historical background to interpret today’s maps. For example, they might benefit from seeing a map of Israel prior to 1967 (including the 10-mile wide portion of the county) and after 1967.

One way to do this: In small groups, give students the maps to compare and contrast. They can note (perhaps in marker or on a separate piece of paper) the differences between maps. Then share findings with the large group (as groups report out, only include what hasn’t already been reported, the educator can contextualize the differences with a brief description of the precipitating event (War of Independence, 6-Day War, Camp David Accords, etc.).

Core Activity: 30-40 min

Using the maps or 3-5 maps of your choosing, (these are maps used by the Israeli Jews and Jewish communities outside of Israel), learners will look for differences between the maps, such as:

- ▶ Where are the borders of the country?
- ▶ What is included in the border of the country, what isn’t?
- ▶ Who do you think is the intended audience for the map? What makes you think that?
- ▶ Why might one map not include any border to indicate territories captured in 1967? Why might the map publisher include these borders?
- ▶ What is the map trying to convey about Israel? (it might be a tourist map, a topographical map, etc.)

ACTIVITY #2

The map(s) of Israel in our setting: 30-40 minutes

Goal: Learners become sensitized to which maps are hanging in their educational setting and to begin to ask the question, “Why this map?”

Some of this can be done as part of a formal session or outside of the session, to be brought back to the next session.

Learners look for maps of Israel posted in their setting or larger communities (hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, camp buildings, and more). They can take a photo of the map with their smartphones and bring them to the next session.

- ▶ When they reconvene, learners can compare the maps in their settings to those they examined earlier.
- ▶ Which map/maps is/are most similar to the ones you found?
- ▶ Who might have made the decision to use a particular map?
- ▶ Why do you think these are the maps that are used?

ACTIVITY #3

Map interviews – individually or in pairs (they can report back to the group of 3-4 from the Map Research activity afterwards)

Goal: Learners start to discern the potential power of choosing a particular map. In addition, they may come away with an understanding of how people use a particular map of Israel to reflect on their own connection to Israel.

- ▶ Learners choose 2-3 different maps to share with 1-2 individuals whom they will interview.
- ▶ Interviewees can include other personnel (teachers, administrators, unit heads, rabbis), adult family members or friends or others of their choosing. Learners should choose individuals whom they think will have some knowledge of or opinion about maps of Israel. If the group is doing the final project in which they recommend a map for the community to use, professional (rabbi, camp director) and, where appropriate, lay (president, board member, etc.) leadership should be included as interviewees.
- ▶ Potential interview process:
 - ▶ Explain why you are doing this interview
 - ▶ Describe the process: we are going to look at two to three maps together and I would like you to respond to some questions
 - ▶ Look at the maps together

- ▶ Questions:
 - What are the similarities or differences between the maps?
 - What, if any, message does the map convey?
 - Which one do you prefer and why?
 - What other thoughts do you have about what map of Israel we should use in our community or are the best to portray Israel?
- ▶ Sharing findings – Learners should prepare a short synopsis of their interview results including:
 - ▶ Who was interviewed?
 - ▶ Which map the individual preferred?
 - ▶ Why?
 - ▶ How the interview swayed or influenced your opinion about which is the best map of Israel to use and why?

If the group is not doing the final project (recommending a map), skip to Final Reflection section.

SOURCE MATERIALS

- ▶ 1947 – UN Partition
- ▶ 1948 - Post Independence
- ▶ 1967 - Post 6-Day War
- ▶ 1973 - Post Sinai War
- ▶ Map with Green Line
- ▶ Map without Green Line
- ▶ SPNI Map of Israel

FINAL REFLECTION

A final individual reflection can ask learners to focus on what new insights they gained about what maps convey or don't convey, why the map of Israel poses unique challenges or questions and their own thoughts on which map(s) of Israel best convey the Israel they want to convey.