

Lesson Plan: A Day in the Life - Stories from Palestine and Israel

Subject: Social Studies, Geography, Language Arts

Age Group: 10-year-old (Grade 4-5)

Time Allotment: 90 minutes

Guiding Philosophy: This lesson focuses on empathy, storytelling, and understanding daily life rather than complex political history. The goal is to see the region through the eyes of children, fostering curiosity and compassion.

Materials Needed:

- Large sheet of paper or poster board
 - Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
 - A computer or tablet with internet access
 - Notebook and pen/pencil
 - A small ball or object (for a warm-up game)
 - Printed or digital map of the region (a simple one showing major cities like Jerusalem, Gaza, Tel Aviv, Ramallah)
 - Pre-selected, age-appropriate video clips (see suggestions in lesson steps)
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Lesson Procedure

Part 1: The Word Association Warm-Up (10 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to see what the student already knows or feels about the topic in a low-pressure way.

1. Sit with the student. Gently toss the small ball back and forth.
2. Say the word "Home." Each time you catch the ball, say one word that comes to mind when you think of "home" (e.g., "safe," "family," "bed," "food"). Do this for a minute.
3. Now, change the main word. Say, "Let's try another one. I'm going to say the word 'Palestine.' What's the very first word that pops into your head?"
4. Go back and forth a few times, catching any words the student offers without judgment. Do the same with the word "Israel."
5. **Teacher's Note:** Don't correct or explain anything yet. Just listen. Write down the words the student uses. This gives you a starting point for the lesson. Acknowledge their thoughts with phrases like, "That's an interesting word, thank you for sharing."

Part 2: Mapping Our World (20 minutes)

This part connects the abstract place to a physical map and introduces the idea of different communities living close together.

1. Show the student the simple map of the region. Point out the major cities you listed in the materials.
2. Ask curious questions: "What do you notice about this map? Look how close these cities are to

each other. It's a smaller area than our state!"

3. Introduce the core concept: "In this part of the world, two main groups of people, Israelis and Palestinians, live very near each other. They have different histories, cultures, and beliefs, and they both feel a very deep connection to this same land. Because they both see it as their home, there have been many disagreements, called a conflict, for a very long time."
4. Watch a short, neutral, kid-friendly video about the geography or culture of the region. Good search terms are "A kid's life in Jerusalem" or "Food in Palestine." (*Suggested resource: Find a short, dialogue-free video from a travel show or a documentary that simply shows scenes of daily life in a market, a school, or a neighborhood in both an Israeli and a Palestinian city.*)
5. After the video, ask: "What did you see that looked familiar to our life? What looked different?"

Part 3: The Story-Building Project (45 minutes)

This is the main activity. The student will create two fictional characters to explore different perspectives through a creative lens.

1. **Character Creation:** On a new page in their notebook, ask the student to invent two 10-year-old characters.
 - **Character A:** A Palestinian child named Layla who lives in the city of Ramallah.
 - **Character B:** An Israeli child named Noam who lives in the city of Tel Aviv.
2. **Brainstorming:** For each character, brainstorm answers to these questions. Write them down.
 - What is their favorite food?
 - What game do they love to play with their friends?
 - What is one thing they look forward to every day?
 - What is one thing they worry about? (For Layla, it might be waiting at a checkpoint. For Noam, it might be hearing a siren.)
 - What is their biggest dream?
3. **"A Day in My Life" Story:** The student chooses ONE character (Layla or Noam) and writes a short story (a few paragraphs) about a typical day in their life. Encourage them to use the details they just brainstormed. The goal is to imagine what walking in that child's shoes would feel like.
4. **Creative Map-Making:** While they write, or after, they will use the large sheet of paper to draw a "story map." This isn't a real geographical map. It's a map of their character's day.
 - They can draw the character's house, the path to school, the park where they play, the market their family visits.
 - Ask them to add one special or challenging part of their character's day to the map. For Layla, maybe it's drawing the wall she sees every day. For Noam, it might be drawing a public bomb shelter near his favorite park. This helps make the abstract challenges of the conflict more concrete and personal to the character.

Part 4: Sharing and Reflection (15 minutes)

This is where the learning is solidified through discussion and connection.

1. Ask the student to share their character's story and explain their story map.
2. Ask thoughtful, open-ended questions:
 - "What do you think is the best part of Layla's/Noam's day?"
 - "What part of their day seems the hardest?"
 - "What do you think Layla and Noam might have in common, even if they've never met?" (Guide them towards commonalities like love for family, desire to play, enjoying good food, wanting to feel safe).
 - "After imagining their lives, what new words come to mind when you think about this place?" (Compare this to the warm-up words).
3. **Closing Thought:** End by emphasizing empathy. "The news often talks about big ideas like governments and armies. But it's important to remember that places like Palestine and Israel

are filled with millions of kids, just like you and like the characters you created, who are all just trying to have a good day. Understanding their stories is the first step to understanding the whole picture."

Extension Ideas (Optional)

- **Food:** Research a simple recipe for a common Israeli snack (like Bamba) or a Palestinian dish (like hummus or knafeh) and make it together.
- **Music:** Listen to a popular Israeli pop song and a traditional Palestinian folk song. Talk about the different feelings the music evokes.
- **Art:** Look up Palestinian embroidery (tatreez) or modern Israeli art and have the student create a design inspired by what they see.