

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHY THE LANGUAGE WE USE ABOUT THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT MATTERS

Have you ever noticed that various news sites use very different terminology when reporting stories about decisions of the Israel government, Hamas, negotiations with the Palestinians and various forums in the United Nations? In this guide, we'll unpack what these words mean, and how one can spot the narrative of a certain news site or advocate based on the language they use.



ACTIVITY

1. Read through the words below and have the teacher or facilitator explain the meaning of each.
2. Students should circle all the words they have heard before in reports they have read about Israel.
3. Students should highlight words used in reports that are usually sympathetic to the Israeli narrative in blue, and reports that are sympathetic to the Palestinian narrative in red.
4. Encourage students to now find the top story from Israel today and open a report about it on TWO of the following news sites:
 - +972mag (Far Left): www.972mag.com
 - Ha'aretz (Left): www.haaretz.com
 - Times of Israel (Centre): www.timesofisrael.com
 - JPost (Right): www.jpost.com
 - Arutz 7 (Far Right): www.israelnationalnews.com
 - Al Jazeera Middle East www.aljazeera.com/middle-east/
 - Al-Monitor www.al-monitor.com

5. Have the students read both stories and note where the language used differs from one site to another. For example, is the territory referred to as Judea and Samaria or the West Bank? Is the holy city referred to as Israel's capital city Jerusalem, or disputed East Jerusalem?
6. Write a review of the two articles read, noting the agenda you feel each is trying to convey to its readers by the language, photos and headlines chosen.

CONCLUSION

In this activity we explored how language is used to create narratives about perpetrators and victims when reporting about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What lessons can we take from this regarding how we consume media in the future?

<p>BARRIER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall • Fence • Security Fence • <u>Fence against terror</u> • <u>Separation Fence</u> • <u>separation barrier</u> • <u>Anti Terrorist Fence</u> • <u>Apartheid Wall</u> • <u>Demographic wall</u> • <u>Israeli West Bank Barrier</u> 	<p>NAME OF THE CONFLICT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israeli Palestinian Conflict • Israel/Palestine • Jewish Arab Conflict • <u>War on Terrorism</u> • Good Vs Evil • Jihad • Intifada • Struggle <u>against Apartheid</u> • Resistance against <u>Occupation</u> • War on Radical Islam • <u>Matzav</u> (Situation)
<p>PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE ADMINISTERED TERRITORIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabs • Palestinians • Victims • Potential Terrorists • Occupied Palestinians • Demographic threat • Muslims 	<p>PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE ADMINISTERED TERRITORIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlers • Residents • Occupiers • Hilltop Youth • Colonialists • Extremists • Jews • Zionists • Israelis

THE LAND

- West Bank
- Judea and Samaria ([Yesha](#))
- Occupied Territories / Palestine / East Jerusalem
- Disputed Territories
- Arab Territories
- Beyond the Green Line
- June 1967 Borders
- 1949 Armistice Line
- Gaza Strip / Gush Katif
- Golan Heights / Occupied Syria
- Palestine
- Israel

IDF-HAMAS WAR TERMINOLOGY

- Israeli warplanes
- IDF forces
- Gaza Siege
- Blockade on Hamas weapons
- Hamas terrorists
- Iron Dome
- Israeli bombardment
- Israeli home front command
- Eviction
- Sheikh Jarrah [real estate dispute](#)
- Sheikh Jarrah [ethnic cleaning](#)
- Al-Aqsa [provocation](#)
- Temple Mount [rock throwing](#)
- [Police brutality](#)
- [Arab riots](#)
- Lehava [Jewish supremacists](#)
- Jewish [self defence](#) groups
- [Nationalist violence](#)
- [Terrorism](#)



ACTIVITY

WEST BANK OR JUDEA AND SAMARIA? OCCUPIED OR DISPUTED TERRITORIES?

In April 2018, United States Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, sought to adopt the Israeli name for the West Bank, Judea and Samaria, in his official remarks and statements, but was [initially prevented](#) from doing so by the Trump administration, officials told the Associated Press.

The territory, captured by Israel during the Six Day War in 1967 and regarded as occupied by most of the international community, is referred to in internal Israeli discourse primarily by its biblical name. Its southern part is known as Judea, while the northern part is called Samaria.

It is known internationally as the West Bank due to its location west of the Jordan River, which separates the territory from Jordan.

US administration sources added that Friedman, who lobbied heavily for Trump's recognition of Jerusalem and the embassy's relocation to Jerusalem, has also championed the recent removal of the term "occupied territories," which had been the standard for more than 20 years, from the title of sections covering Israel, the West Bank and Gaza in the State Department's annual human rights reports released Friday.

The 2017 report did not entirely eliminate the term from the report, but it significantly reduced its use. Compared with more than 40 references in the 2016 report, the words "occupation" or "occupied" appeared only six times.

Whereas previous iterations of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices had a section on "Israel and the Occupied Territories," the 2018 document refers instead to "Israel, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza."



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it matter whether the US uses a certain term in its official documents?
2. If you read an article that consistently used the terms "Judea and Samaria" and "Disputed territories," what would you assume to be the bias of the author?
3. If you read an article that consistently used the terms "West Bank" and "Occupied Palestinian territories," what would you assume to be the bias of the author?
4. Read two examples below from the Israel Forever Foundation and B'Tselem. What can you learn about the narrative of these two organizations from the language used in these two articles that appear on their websites?

THE CASE FOR JUDEA AND SAMARIA AND DISPUTED TERRITORY

Aryeh Green

https://israelforever.org/interact/blog/west_bank_time_to_retire_the_term/

I am perfectly comfortable, like the majority of Israelis, considering the idea of a withdrawal from the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, ancient heartland of our ancestral homeland, in the pursuit of real peace with our Arab neighbors.

Yet even if we wish to cede territory, the starting point must be the veracity of our claim to it, the indigenous nature of our people in this land and the very legitimacy of the founding of the nation-state of the Jewish people here. (This, aside from our legal claim based on international law, considering that the defensive nature of the '67 6-Day War, and not least our responding to constant shelling from Jordan, is taught by all western law schools as the paradigm of defensive war under the terms of the UN Charter.)

This means reasserting the very legitimacy of Zionism and Israel. It can - must - be done by our use of accurate, rather than political language. Describing this area as the "West Bank" is a

THE CASE FOR WEST BANK AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

B'Tselem

https://www.btselem.org/duty_to_end_occupation

Israel must stop denying the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem are occupied territory.

Today, Israel holds sway over 13 million people living in the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, yet only eight million of them – those who are Israeli citizens, regardless of whether or not they live within the boundaries of the Green Line – participate in the political process that determines the future of this geographic area.

Israel captured the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in June 1967. It has maintained control – in one form or another – over these territories and their people ever since. For more than half a century, Israel has kept up a reality of dispossession, oppression and human rights abuse in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank:

In the West Bank, Israel is implementing policies whose long-term objectives are plain to see. It is doing so

political act, as much as many would say “but that’s what everyone calls it”. So went the argument against returning to a (historically more rigorous and justifiable) use of the names Myanmar, Sri Lanka, etc.

Just because Jordan used the term to assert its claim for the ‘other’ side of the river and it was adopted by the Arabs and then most of the rest of the world is no excuse. And this is not merely true for our politicians and spokespeople, though it certainly should guide them as well.

A concerted effort by all Zionist organizations, media, government offices and academia over two or three years can change public perception as well as policy around the world. And the leadership of the mainstream Israeli press, as well as responsible media abroad, is instrumental - and crucially needed.

both through its own direct control as well as via the Palestinian Authority. Israel’s conduct and the official positions expressed by increasing numbers of Israeli leaders confirm that it does not view the occupation as temporary. Instead, it treats the West Bank as if it were part of its sovereign territory: grabbing land, exploiting natural resources for its own needs and building permanent settlements designated for Israelis only.

At the same time, for the past fifty years, Palestinian West Bank residents have been living under rigid military rule that primarily serves the interests of the State of Israel and Israeli settlers.

East Jerusalem, which is part of the occupied West Bank, was annexed by Israel in breach of international law. Israel treats the Palestinian living in the city as unwanted immigrants and systematically applies policies designed to dispossess them of their homes and drive them from their city. Israeli officials deny state responsibility for this situation, and similarly deny responsibility for the violation of Palestinians’ human rights attendant on this reality.

Instead, they pin these policies on the need to maintain Israel’s security interests. It is an attempt to put the onus for Israel’s continued control over the Palestinians – directly in the West Bank or indirectly in Gaza – largely on the Palestinians themselves.

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**BOTH ARTICLES EDITED FOR SPACE
AND CLARITY. READ FULL VERSION
OF EACH AT THE LINKS PROVIDED**