

POV

Lesson Plan Both Sides of the Fence: The West Bank Security Wall

THE FILM

This lesson plan is designed to be used with the film **This Way Up**, which follows the lives of people in and around a nursing home near the Israeli security barrier in East Jerusalem. Classrooms can use this film and its companion website resources to examine the impact of the security barrier on everyday life and to deepen their understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Note: This film makes frequent use of English subtitles.

POV documentaries can be recorded off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from the initial broadcast. In addition, POV offers a lending library of DVDs and VHS tapes that you can borrow any time during the school year — FOR FREE! Get started by joining our Community Network: www.amdoc.org/outreach/events/

Please visit our Film Library at http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_filmlibrary.php to find other films suitable for classroom use.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- React in writing to the statement “Good fences make good neighbors.”
- Use viewing skills to determine how Israel’s security barrier affects the everyday lives of those shown in a documentary.
- Discuss how the security wall might impact the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians.
- Review key events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Complete a timeline of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that considers the perspectives of both sides.

GRADE LEVELS

6-12

SUBJECT AREAS

Civics, World History, Current Events, Geography

MATERIALS

- Method of showing the entire class online video clips and a website
- **This Way Up** [map](#) showing the proximity of the Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home to the security wall separating Israel and the West Bank
- [Interactive Timeline](#) of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED

Two 50-minute class periods

SUGGESTED CLIPS

Clip 1: Sneaking Over the Wall (length 1:33)

The clip starts at 25:31 with a woman sitting in a chair outside a store. It ends at 27:04 when some Israeli soldiers are shown.

Clip 2: A Son's Visit (length 5:37)

The clip starts at 49:43 with a shot of the security wall. It ends at 55:20 with the son going to the fence to leave.

BACKGROUND

The Israeli government began building a barrier in and around the West Bank in 2002, citing rising violence and security concerns. The project has been controversial from its inception. There has even been a heated debate over what to call the barrier – Israeli officials describe it as a fence, while critics often insist that it is a wall. The barrier, which runs more than 420 miles, is composed of different sections. Some parts, located in populated areas, consist of concrete slabs 26 feet high, with watchtowers occupied by border guards. In more isolated areas, the barrier includes multiple rows of fencing, with ditches, surveillance cameras and guards patrolling in vehicles.

The Catholic-run Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home located in East Jerusalem primarily serves elderly Palestinians of various faiths. The facility has space for about 50 residents, including many who are poor and disabled. The majority of residents – and staff – come from the West Bank, and most of their families continue to live there. The security barrier has made daily life more difficult for the staff and residents of the home from the West Bank, as visitors must go through a series of checkpoints or else must scale the wall without being detected. The access issues have also made the delivery of supplies and transportation to medical care more complicated for the home.

For more information on the security barrier and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, please see the [Resources](#) section.

ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to respond in writing to the prompt “Good fences make good neighbors.” After five minutes or so, discuss student responses. What do students think this statement means? Do students agree or disagree with the statement? Why?
2. Explain that in the Middle East, Israel is building a barrier more than 420 miles long that will separate it from neighboring Palestinians who live in the West Bank. The stated purpose of this barrier is to keep out Palestinian suicide bombers and other attackers who threaten Israeli safety in the ongoing conflict between these two groups. You may wish to share other details about the barrier from the [Background](#) section. Though the barrier was built for security purposes, it has also separated some people from their workplaces, schools and families.
3. To illustrate this impact, show students the two clips for this lesson. Tell the class that the video is taken from the documentary **This Way Up**, which focuses on the activities of people in and around the Catholic-run Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home in Jerusalem. Use POV's **This Way Up** [map](#) to point out the nursing home's proximity to the security barrier. Then show the clips to the class. Focus student viewing by having students take notes on how the security barrier is affecting the lives of those in the film.

4. Discuss what students observed in the video. How has life changed for people since the security wall was put in place? Do students think the wall will lead to greater peace between Israelis and Palestinians when it is completed, or provoke further conflict?

5. Review key events in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using the interactive [timeline](#). Point out that the timeline ends with the year 2000. Ask students to work together in groups to complete the timeline. Groups should divide up the workload by assigning each member a certain number of years between 2000 and the present, and then each person should research both the Israeli and Palestinian perspectives on important events in that time period.

6. After an appropriate research period outside of class, ask students to share their findings with others in their group and then submit the group's completed timeline.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Students can be assessed on:

- Contributions in class discussions and group work.
- Their groups' completed timelines.

EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- Investigate further the human impact of the security wall between Israel and the West Bank. On the POV website, read [first-person stories](#) about people partitioned from their families by the wall. Then, tell students to research Israeli perspectives about the barrier by reading materials such as news stories with quotes from Israelis or the Israel's Security Fence website in the [Resources](#) section. Students should then take these Israeli viewpoints and create first-person stories like the ones they read earlier. Stories from both sides of the issue may then be shared with the class as dramatic readings.
- Examine the role that boundaries play in human relationships. Begin by analyzing Robert Frost's poem "[Mending Wall](http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/frost-mending.html)," (<http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/frost-mending.html>) which questions why a fence must be rebuilt between neighbors each spring. What is the difference between a fence between neighbors and political walls such as the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall or the barrier between Israel and the West Bank? What social barriers exist at your school or in our country? Ask each student to choose a type of border and write an essay that describes the impact that the barrier has on those who are on each side of it.
- Watch, explore and discuss other POV resources that relate to borders or the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, including **9 Star Hotel** (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/9starhotel/index.php>) and the Web-exclusive *Borders* series (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/borders>). These resources have companion lesson plans to support their use in the classroom.

RESOURCES

Online NewsHour: Coverage: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/conflict/

The Online NewsHour provides up-to-date coverage of this conflict in the Middle East, including a map and background resources on peace efforts and key players. Of special note is the report "Two Views of the West Bank Barrier," which provides expert analysis and interviews with Israelis and Palestinians about the security wall between Israel and the West Bank.

Israel's Security Fence

<http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/questions.htm>

This FAQ explains the Israeli government's positions regarding the security fence.

***The Washington Post*: Line of Separation**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/israelbarrier/>

The Washington Post provides a detailed look at the barrier between Israel and the West Bank. The website includes a map, descriptions of barrier types and summaries of the impact that the barrier is having on both Palestinians and Israelis.

STANDARDS

These standards are drawn from "Content Knowledge," a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

Civics

Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.

Geography

Standard 9: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on the Earth's surface.

Standard 13: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of the Earth's surface.

Language Arts

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

World History

Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability and peace in an interdependent world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cari Ladd, M.Ed., is an educational writer with a background in secondary education and media development. Previously, she served as PBS Interactive's Director of Education, overseeing the development of curricular resources tied to PBS programs, the PBS TeacherSource website (now PBS Teachers) and online teacher professional development services. She has also taught in Maryland and northern Virginia.

Background Sources

"Line of Separation." *The Washington Post*. 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/israelbarrier/>;

"Two Views of the West Bank Barrier." The Online NewsHour. 2004.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/conflict/map_westbank.html