

## Dear Educators,

As the war between Israel and Hamas progresses, an increasing amount of violence is being shown and talked about in the media. While it might be tempting to avoid discussing these events, that might not always be possible—and might not be beneficial. To help you and your students get accurate and age-appropriate information about the war, TIME for Kids has written an explainer, which can be found on the next page of this guide. It's difficult to bring tough topics into the classroom, so we've included the article in the guide to give you control over whether and when the discussion happens. If you feel prepared to have this conversation with your students, the lesson plan below can provide some guidance. We've taken an approach that invites you to meet your students where they are on the topic, before reading or opening a discussion about the article in your classroom. Of course, you know your students best. Assess their maturity and sensitivity before deciding if, when, and how to approach this topic.

—The TFK Education Team

## ARTICLE

### TFK EXPLAINS: THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

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#### PRE-WORK

##### Teachers

- Before you use this lesson plan, we recommend that you read the article. Make a list of questions that come to mind, to prepare for questions students might ask.
- Assess your own feelings about the Israel-Hamas war. Do you have strongly held beliefs or emotional responses that might influence how you teach this topic? If so, how can you ensure an unbiased approach?

##### Students

- Have students take out a piece of paper and respond to the following: What have you seen or heard about the Israel-Hamas war? Where did you see or hear these things? What questions do you have about the war?
- Have students hand in their papers. It's okay if they have nothing to write or they're unsure. Their responses are to help you gain an understanding of what students are coming in with and where to start the conversation.

#### INDEPENDENT WORK

##### Teachers

- Read through students' responses. Look for questions they have that are answered by the text. Choose two or three to guide a discussion. Spot trends in what they've heard about the war. Identify any misinformation or gaps in their understanding.

##### Students

- Read the article. Take note of how the text answers any of your questions, or if any the information differs from what you thought or heard previously.

#### DISCUSSION

This discussion might need to take place the following day to ensure you have time to prepare and assess your students' level of understanding and sensitivity. Present two questions that students raised in the pre-work. Give them time to reflect on these questions or to discuss them in small groups. Then hold a fishbowl discussion. Place five or six chairs in a circle in the center of the room. This will be the "fishbowl" in which students who are prepared to contribute will begin the discussion. You can choose these students from those who showed the firmest understanding in the pre-work. Or you can ask for volunteers. The other students will sit around the fishbowl as observers and take notes during the discussion. Once a student in the fishbowl has contributed, they can be tapped out by someone in the outer circle who wishes to join in. This method gives hesitant students time to understand the discussion and reflect on how they might contribute. You should be prepared to address any misunderstandings or add a new question to the discussion. Close out the lesson with a class debrief. Then give students an exit ticket for reflection. A prompt could be: "I came in thinking . . ." and "I am leaving thinking . . ." Or you can have them write down one or two more questions and address these the following day.



AHMAD SALEM—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

**INCOMING AID** On October 21, trucks carrying supplies line up in Egypt to cross into Gaza.

# TFK EXPLAINS: THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

**On October 7, the militant group Hamas launched a deadly attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip, starting a war. Here, TFK explains.**

## How did the war start?

On October 7, Hamas carried out a surprise attack on Israel. Hamas and Israel have fought multiple wars since the militant group seized control of Gaza in 2007. But this was the deadliest attack in years. After firing rockets, Hamas sent armed attackers across Israel's border, killing people and taking more than 200 hostages. In all, more than 1,400 people were killed.

## How has Israel responded?

Israel's government began launching air strikes in Gaza. The Palestinian territory was already under a 16-year land, sea, and air blockade. Israel announced a total **siege** that further restricted supplies of food, water, and fuel. Palestinian officials say the air strikes have killed more than 9,000 people.

On October 27, Israel began sending ground troops into Gaza.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, says the goal is to "demolish" Hamas.

## What's the situation now?

Israel's air strikes have destroyed whole neighborhoods in Gaza. Conditions there were already dire. For years, most Palestinians have relied on international aid.

Before it began the air strikes, Israel warned that more than a million people in northern Gaza should flee the area. Many have gone to the southern part of the territory. They are living in schools and emergency shelters.

## How have world leaders reacted?

The United States and other allies have pledged support for Israel. They're also expressing concern for **civilians** in Gaza. But most countries have gone further, backing a U.N. call for a cease-fire.

The U.S. has sent **diplomats** to Israel several times to try to persuade Netanyahu to let aid into the territory. A trickle of supplies has been allowed to enter from Egypt, a neighboring



country. But officials say more is needed. The diplomats are also working to get the hostages released.

## What might happen next?

Israel says it will continue its ground assault in Gaza. The U.N. will continue efforts to provide desperately needed aid to people there. It's also in talks with Israel and Arab nations in the hopes of preventing the war from spreading across the region.

## Power Words

**civilian** *noun*: a person who is not a member of the police or the armed forces

**diplomat** *noun*: an official who represents one country in another

**siege** *noun*: a military blockade of a place to prevent aid or supplies from going in; a persistent attack