

ERETZ YISRAEL: THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Episode 2 — Featuring Noa Tishby

Grades 6–8 | 45-Minute Lesson | World History / Jewish Studies

Subject	World History / Jewish Studies / ELA Integration
Grade Level	6–8
Duration	45 minutes
Presenter	Noa Tishby — Israeli actress, author, and advocate
Unit Theme	Jewish History, Identity, and the Land of Israel

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

California History-Social Science Standards (Grades 6–8)

- HSS 6.3 — Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Ancient Hebrews.
- HSS 6.3.1 — Describe the origins and significance of Judaism, including the covenant, the Torah, and the role of the Temple.
- HSS 6.3.3 — Explain the significance of Abraham and Moses and the Exodus narrative in Jewish identity.
- HSS 7.2 — Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Islam.
- HSS 7.6 — Students analyze the causes and consequences of the Crusades.
- HSS 8 / WHG — Students analyze major events from the late 19th and 20th century, including the founding of the State of Israel.

Common Core ELA Standards (Grades 6–8)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 — Cite textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 — Determine the central idea of a source and summarize the evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4 — Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text, including domain-specific vocabulary.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1 — Engage effectively in collaborative discussions with diverse partners.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.1 — Write arguments supported by relevant evidence and clear reasoning.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9 — Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis.

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- Video: "What is the Land of Israel?" — Episode 2, featuring Noa Tishby (projected or individual devices)
- Student handout packet (classroom worksheet + map activity)
- Vocabulary worksheet (one per student)
- Physical or projected map of the ancient Near East / modern Middle East
- Colored pencils or crayons (for map activity)
- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- Sticky notes (for warm-up and four-corners movement activity)
- Optional: Timeline strip on classroom wall

- Optional: Index cards for exit ticket (or printed exit ticket section of handout)
- Optional: QR code to Noa Tishby interview or Israel advocacy website

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify and sequence key events in the history of the Land of Israel from the Biblical period through 1948.
- Explain what the covenant between God and Abraham means and why it matters to Jewish identity.
- Name at least three empires that controlled the Land of Israel and describe Jewish life during those periods.
- Describe the significance of Jerusalem and the Two Temples in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.
- Define and correctly use unit vocabulary terms in context.
- Write a brief evidence-based response explaining one way Jewish identity remained connected to the land.

STEP-BY-STEP LESSON PROCEDURE

WARM-UP

■ 5 minutes

- As students enter, display this prompt on the board: "Imagine your family had to leave your home and couldn't come back for 100 years. Do you think your great-great-grandchildren would still remember where you came from? What would help them remember?"
- Students write a 2–3 sentence quick-write response on a sticky note or the top of their handout.
- Share out: call on 2–3 volunteers. Post sticky notes on a "Memory Wall" on the board.
- Teacher transition: "Today we're going to meet a people who didn't just remember for 100 years — they remembered for 2,000. And we're going to hear the story from someone who comes from that place herself."
- *Teacher Note: Middle schoolers connect strongly to family and belonging. The "Memory Wall" turns an abstract historical concept into something tactile and personal. Leave the sticky notes up during the lesson — reference them in the closing discussion.*

VOCABULARY PRE-TEACH

■ 3 minutes

- Display 4 anchor words on the board: Covenant, Diaspora, Exile, Sovereignty.
- Read each word aloud together. Point to its location on the vocabulary worksheet.
- Say: "Keep your ears open — when you hear one of these words in the video, give a thumbs up!"
- This creates active listening accountability and pre-activates vocabulary schema.
- *Teacher Note: Middle schoolers need vocabulary embedded in an active task, not passive pre-reading. The thumbs-up protocol keeps energy up during video viewing.*

DIRECT INSTRUCTION — VIDEO VIEWING

■ 8–10 minutes

- Introduce Noa Tishby: "Our storyteller today is Noa Tishby — she's an actress, a bestselling author, and she spoke at the United Nations about Israel. Most importantly, she says at the end of the video: 'This is also the place I come from.' Listen for that."
- Distribute the student handout so students can follow the note-taking guide while watching.
- Play Episode 2: "What is the Land of Israel?" — without pausing.
- After the video: give students 60 seconds of silent processing time before any discussion.
- *Teacher Note: Do not pause the video. Tishby's energy and delivery is the instruction — interrupting it breaks the narrative spell. The 60-second silent pause after viewing gives processing time especially important for ELL students and introverts.*

MAP ACTIVITY

■ 7 minutes

- Direct students to the map section of their handout.
- Guide students through the labeling sequence step by step: (1) Label the Land of Israel / Canaan. (2) Label Egypt — draw an arrow for the Exodus route. (3) Label Babylon. (4) Label Rome. (5) Star Jerusalem.
- Color-coding: use the color key on the handout to shade each empire's approximate area.
- Partner check: compare maps with a neighbor. "Which empire controlled the land longest? Does that surprise you?"
- Movement option: Walk to the wall map and add a sticky note label for your assigned empire.

■ *Teacher Note: Map coloring is a natural kinesthetic task and ideal for students who need movement. The partner comparison adds structured talk before whole-class discussion.*

GROUP WORK — JEWISH IDENTITY & TRADITIONS

■ 8 minutes

Divide into groups of 3–4. Assign one discussion question per group (printed on handout):

Group 1 — The Promise: God promised a specific land to Abraham and his descendants. What does it mean when something is "promised"? Is a promise made thousands of years ago still binding today?

Group 2 — Keeping the Memory Alive: The video says Jews prayed every day to return to Israel and said "Next year in Jerusalem" for 2,000 years. What traditions or practices help people remember a place they've never been to?

Group 3 — One Land, Three Faiths: The video mentions that Israel is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. How can one land be so important to three different groups? What might that cause?

Group 4 — Noa's Story: Noa Tishby ends by saying "It's also the place I come from." Why does it matter that our storyteller is personally connected to this history? How does that change the way you received the information?

- Groups discuss for 5 minutes, then select a spokesperson.
- Each group writes ONE key idea on the board or a large sticky note to share.

■ *Teacher Note: Group 4 is the highest-order thinking question — assign it to stronger readers or as the advanced extension. Group 2 is most accessible for ELL students and connects personally to many students' family experiences of displacement.*

GUIDED DISCUSSION

■ 7 minutes

Each group shares their key idea. Then guide the class with these questions:

- "Look back at your sticky note from the warm-up — did anything in the video change or deepen your answer?"
- "Noa says this land 'witnessed empires rise and fall but retained its unique role.' What does it mean for a place to have a unique role in history?"
- "The video calls the Exodus 'a defining moment.' What was a defining moment in YOUR family's history? What makes a moment defining?"
- "What do you still wonder about? What question does this video leave you with?"

■ *Teacher Note: The last question ("What do you still wonder?") is important for middle schoolers — it validates intellectual curiosity and models the idea that history raises more questions than it answers. It also surfaces misconceptions to address.*

VOCABULARY WRAP-UP

■ 3 minutes

- Students complete vocabulary definitions on their worksheet (own words, not dictionary copy).
- Review 2–3 terms together as a class. Cold-call: "Who can use the word DIASPORA in a sentence about something we watched?"
- Bonus challenge for early finishers: use two vocabulary words in one sentence.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT — EXIT TICKET

■ 5 minutes

Students respond individually in writing on their handout or an index card:

Exit Ticket Prompt — Choose ONE:

Option A (Evidence): Using at least ONE specific fact or detail from the video, explain ONE reason why the Land of Israel is called the heart of the Jewish story.

Option B (Connection): How does the Jewish experience of exile and return remind you of something from another group's history, your own family's history, or something else you have studied? Explain using at least one detail from the video.

■ *Teacher Note: Option A is appropriate for on-grade and ELL students. Option B is appropriate for advanced students and those with strong family connections to displacement. Collect and sort exit tickets into three piles: solid evidence use, partial, needs re-teaching. Use this to plan your follow-up lesson.*

DIFFERENTIATION

Population	Strategies
ELL Students	Provide vocabulary worksheet with picture supports or bilingual glossary (Hebrew/Farsi/Spanish as applicable). Allow video with English captions. Offer sentence frames for exit ticket: "The Land of Israel is important because ____." Pair with English-proficient partner during group work. Accept verbal responses for exit ticket.
Advanced Students	Assign Group 4 discussion question. Require both pieces of evidence for exit ticket. Extension: Write a short paragraph from the perspective of a Jewish exile in Babylon — what do you remember about home, and what do you hope for? OR research the Cyrus Cylinder as a primary source.
Students Needing Movement	Wall map sticky-note labeling activity (students walk up to post labels). "Four Corners" discussion variation — post group questions in room corners and students physically move to their question. Stand-and-share for group spokesperson. Allow students to kneel, stand at desk, or use clipboards during video.
Students with IEP/504	Provide partially pre-filled timeline (key events labeled, students add dates). Offer graphic organizer version of notes. Reduce exit ticket to one sentence with one supporting detail. Extended time on vocabulary worksheet. Allow oral response to exit ticket recorded by teacher or aide.

Below Grade-Level Readers

Pair vocabulary pre-teach with visual word wall (pictures next to terms). During group work, assign the spokesperson role to build confidence. Provide a "story map" organizer on handout rather than open-ended notes. Use the map activity as the primary anchor for timeline sequence.

ENRICHMENT EXTENSIONS**Music**

- Listen to a recording of "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" (Jerusalem of Gold) by Naomi Shemer, written in 1967 just before the Six-Day War. Discuss: What emotions does the music convey? How does music carry longing for a place? Compare to a Persian, Spanish, or other cultural song about a homeland.
- Students write 2–3 lines of original lyrics about a place that matters to them, in any language.

Math / Science

- Scaled Timeline: If Abraham lived approximately 2000 BCE and Israel was reestablished in 1948 CE, that is nearly 4,000 years. If 1 inch = 100 years on a paper timeline strip, how long would the strip need to be? Students calculate, then plot 8–10 events from the video.
- Geography Science: Research why the Dead Sea is getting smaller. How has the geography of the Land of Israel shaped who lives there and who has wanted to control it? Create a simple labeled diagram.

Art / Visual Arts

- Create an illustrated "story scroll" — roll paper that shows 8 key events from the video in sequential comic-strip style. Each panel includes one image and one caption sentence. Display as a classroom gallery.
- Research the Arch of Titus in Rome. What does the carved relief show? Draw a sketch of it and label what you see. Then write: "What does it tell us that this arch is still standing 2,000 years later?"

Optional Learning Extension (Homework / Next Class)

- Family Interview: Ask someone older in your family — a parent, grandparent, or family friend — if your family has ever had to leave a place they loved. What do they remember about that place? Write 3–5 sentences about what you learned.
- Find one photograph, map, or artifact online related to any event from the video's timeline. Print or screenshot it and write 2 sentences explaining what it is and why it matters.