What is Judaism?

Diaspora Dynamics: Mapping and Analysis

High School (Grades 9-12)

Diaspora Dynamics: Mapping and Analyzing Jewish Global Dispersion

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Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Part 1: Geographic Mapping and Quantitative Analysis

Task 1: Create a Multi-Layered Diaspora Map

Using a world map, Google Earth, or digital mapping tool, create a comprehensive visualization of Jewish diaspora:

Layer 1: Origin and Ancient Presence (use gold/yellow)

- Mark the Land of Israel/ancient Judea
- Label Jerusalem (capital and spiritual center)
- Indicate extent of ancient Israelite kingdoms (approximate)

Layer 2: Roman Era Dispersion - 70 AD onwards (use red arrows)

- Show expulsion from Jerusalem following Roman destruction of Second Temple
- Map initial diaspora routes:

* To Roman Empire territories (Italy, Spain, Greece)

* To Persian Empire territories (Mesopotamia, Persia)

* To North Africa (Egypt, Cyrenaica)

Layer 3: Medieval and Early Modern Communities (use different colors for each)

- **Blue:** Ashkenazi communities (Rhine Valley → Central Europe → Eastern Europe)

* Include: Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine

* Mark major centers: Prague, Krakow, Vilna, Warsaw

- **Red:** Sephardi communities (Iberian Peninsula → North Africa and Ottoman Empire after 1492 expulsion)

* Include: Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria

* Mark: Toledo, Cordoba, Istanbul, Salonica

- **Green:** Mizrahi communities (continuous presence in Middle East)

* Include: Iraq, Persia/Iran, Yemen, Syria, Egypt

* Mark: Baghdad, Isfahan, Sana'a, Damascus, Cairo

- **Purple:** Other distinctive communities

* Ethiopia (Beta Israel)

* India (Cochin Jews, Bene Israel, Baghdadi Jews)

* Central Asia (Bukharan Jews)

Layer 4: Modern Era - 20th-21st Centuries (use different arrow styles)

- Immigration to United States (1880s-1920s, post-WWII)
- Aliyah to Israel (multiple waves: 1882-1903, 1904-1914, post-WWII, Soviet Jews 1970s-1990s, Ethiopian Jews)
- Holocaust devastation (mark destroyed communities)
- Current major population centers

Map Key Requirements:

Create a comprehensive legend including:

- Colors and what they represent
- Different arrow styles showing various migration periods
- Symbols for major population centers
- Timeline showing different periods represented

Task 2: Quantitative Analysis

Use your map and research to complete this data analysis:

A. Calculate Geographic Dispersion

1. **Origin point:** Jerusalem coordinates: 31.7683°N, 35.2137°E
2. **Measure distances** from Jerusalem to major diaspora centers:
3. **Average distance of diaspora communities from homeland:** _____ km
4. **Geographic range:** From westernmost community (_____) to easternmost community (_____) = _____ km span

B. Population Distribution Analysis

Research current Jewish population by region:

Analysis Questions:

1. What percentage of Jews live in their ancestral homeland vs. diaspora? _____
2. What does this distribution reveal about Jewish geographic reality?

_____

_____

Task 3: Geographic and Environmental Factors

Analyze how geography influenced diaspora settlement patterns:

1. **What geographic features** (mountains, rivers, seas, deserts) appear near major Jewish communities?

_____

_____

2. **What role did trade routes** (Silk Road, Mediterranean trade, etc.) play in diaspora settlement?

_____

_____

3. **How might climate differences** (from Mediterranean Israel to Arctic Russia to tropical India) have affected cultural practices?

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: Comparative Diaspora Analysis

Choose one other diaspora population to compare with Jewish diaspora:

Options: Armenian diaspora, African diaspora, Chinese diaspora, Irish diaspora, Palestinian diaspora, Greek diaspora

Diaspora chosen: _____

Comparison Matrix:

Analytical Questions:

1. What similarities exist between these two diaspora experiences?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What significant differences exist?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What factors seem most important in enabling diaspora communities to maintain cultural identity?

Rank these factors (1=most important, 7=least important) and explain your ranking:

_____ Language maintenance

_____ Religious practice

_____ Endogamy (marriage within community)

_____ Institutional structures (schools, community organizations)

_____ Connection to homeland

_____ Discrimination from surrounding society

_____ Distinctive cultural practices (food, holidays, customs)

Explanation of your ranking:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. How does forced diaspora (Jewish, Armenian) differ from voluntary diaspora (Chinese, Irish economic migration)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: Historical Analysis - Cause and Effect

Trace the Causes and Effects of Key Historical Events:

Event 1: Roman Destruction of Second Temple (70 AD)

Immediate causes:

_____

_____

Immediate effects:

_____

_____

Long-term effects:

_____

_____

Event 2: Spanish Expulsion of Jews (1492)

Immediate causes:

_____

_____

Immediate effects:

_____

_____

Long-term effects:

_____

_____

Event 3: Holocaust (1933-1945)

Immediate causes:

_____

_____

Immediate effects:

_____

_____

Long-term effects:

_____

_____

Part 4: Cultural Adaptation and Preservation Analysis

Case Study: Choose ONE Jewish community from your map

Community chosen: _____

Geographic location: _____

Time period of development: _____

Research and analyze:

1. Environmental Context

a. What was the surrounding culture/religion? _____

b. What language(s) were spoken in the region? _____

c. What was the political structure? _____

d. What was the economic structure? _____

2. Cultural Adaptations (ways this community was influenced by surroundings)

Language:

_____

_____

Food and culinary traditions:

_____

_____

Music and artistic expression:

_____

_____

Dress and material culture:

_____

_____

Other cultural adaptations:

_____

_____

3. Jewish Elements Preserved (ways this community maintained Jewish identity)

Religious practices:

_____

_____

Holiday observances:

_____

_____

Hebrew language use:

_____

_____

Torah study and texts:

_____

_____

Community institutions:

_____

_____

4. Synthesis Analysis

How did this community balance adaptation (fitting into local context) with preservation (maintaining Jewish distinctiveness)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What does this case study reveal about the nature of cultural identity and resilience?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 5: Critical Evaluation

Thesis Development

Based on your geographic analysis, comparative study, and case research, develop a thesis statement answering this question:

"What factors enabled Jewish communities to maintain cultural and religious identity across 2,000 years of geographic dispersion and diverse cultural contexts?"

Your thesis (2-3 sentences):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Supporting evidence (list at least 5 specific pieces of evidence that support your thesis):

1.

_____

_____

2.

_____

_____

3.

_____

_____

4.

_____

_____

5. _____

_____

Extension Research Questions

Choose ONE question to investigate further:

■ How did Jewish communities serve as cultural and economic intermediaries between different civilizations?

■ What role did persecution and discrimination play in maintaining Jewish distinctiveness?

■ How did the printing press impact Jewish textual traditions and cultural unity?

■ What are the demographic projections for Jewish communities over the next 50 years?

■ How do contemporary Jewish communities navigate assimilation vs. preservation?

■ What lessons from Jewish diaspora experience apply to current refugee and immigrant populations?

Question chosen: _____

Research plan (sources you'll consult, questions you'll explore):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____