

Lesson Plan: Jewish Refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – Testimony of Gina Bublil-Waldman

Grade Level: 9–12 (High School)

Subject Areas: Social Studies / History, English Language Arts (ELA)

Duration: 60–75 minutes

Lesson Type: Primary Source Analysis & Discussion

Lesson Overview

Students will examine the personal testimony of Gina Bublil-Waldman, the first woman to testify at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on behalf of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This lesson involves analyzing the historical context, human rights implications, and personal narrative of displacement. It integrates reading, critical thinking, discussion, and writing skills aligned with Common Core standards.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the historical context of Jewish communities in the MENA region and the factors leading to their displacement.
- Analyze a primary source testimony for perspective, bias, and historical significance.
- Evaluate the role of international organizations like B’nai B’rith International in advocating for refugees.
- Develop an evidence-based argumentative or analytical response connecting historical events to contemporary issues.

Materials

- [Video testimony of Gina Bublil-Waldman](#)
- Whiteboard or chart paper for class discussion
- Student notebooks or devices for writing assignments
- Historical background readings on Jewish communities in the MENA region

Standards Alignment

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6:** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1:** Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Lesson Procedure

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin with a brief lecture on Jewish communities in North Africa and the Middle East before 1948.
- Highlight the forced displacement of Jewish populations following the creation of Israel and regional conflicts.
- Introduce Gina Bublil-Waldman and her testimony at the UNHRC.
- Provide the YouTube link for students.

2. Video & Transcript Review (15 minutes)

- Play a 10–15 minute portion of the video testimony.
- Distribute the transcript of her testimony.
- Ask students to annotate the transcript, noting:
 - Key events and dates
 - Evidence of discrimination or ethnic cleansing
 - Emotional appeals and personal experiences
 - References to organizations like B’nai B’rith International

3. Group Discussion (15 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups. Provide discussion prompts:
 - How does Bublil-Waldman’s testimony help us understand the human impact of historical events?
 - Why is it important for organizations like B’nai B’rith International to advocate for refugee rights?
 - What connections can you make between historical Jewish displacement and modern refugee crises?
- Groups share their findings with the class.

4. Primary Source Analysis Activity (15 minutes)

- Students answer the following individually or in pairs:
 - Identify three pieces of evidence from the testimony that highlight human rights violations.
 - Explain how Bublil-Waldman’s personal narrative adds depth to historical facts.

- Discuss how this testimony could influence international policies or public awareness.

5. Writing Assignment / Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

- Students write a short essay or paragraph responding to one of the following prompts:
 - “Using evidence from Gina Bublil-Waldman’s testimony, explain how personal stories can shape historical understanding and human rights advocacy.”
 - “Compare the displacement of Jewish communities from MENA to another refugee crisis. What lessons can be learned?”

Assessment

- Participation in discussion and group activity
- Annotations and notes from the transcript
- Written response demonstrating understanding, evidence use, and critical thinking

Extension / Homework

- Research other refugee groups represented at the UNHRC. Prepare a short presentation on their historical context and challenges.
- Write a reflection connecting the testimony to current global refugee issues and the role of advocacy organizations.

Modifications / Accommodations

- Provide guided notes or highlight key sections of the transcript for students with reading difficulties.
- Allow students to respond verbally or through a visual project instead of writing.