The Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Middle East stretches from Egypt across to Iran. From Turkey in the north, the region extends down to the Arabian Peninsula. It is a diverse area with many languages, religions, and ethnic groups. Often, differences among the groups cause conflict in the region. One of these conflicts is between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries.

Jews and Arabs both claimed to be the rightful owners of the area along the Mediterranean Sea called Palestine. Jewish kings had ruled from Jerusalem for thousands of years until the Jews were forced out around 135 A.D. The Arabs had taken over Palestine in the 600s. During the Crusades in the 1000s and 1100s, Christians from Europe fought the Arab Muslims for control of the area.

In the early 1900s, Palestinians, or people who lived in Palestine, became anxious because thousands of Jewish immigrants were moving to Palestine. The Palestinians, who were Muslims and Christians, felt crowded by the European immigrants. A group called the Zionists said that the Jewish people should have a homeland in Palestine. They wanted the homeland to be in Palestine because Jerusalem, the Jewish holy city, was there.

Jewish leaders asked for part of Palestine to be given to them. At the end of World War II, the United Nations (UN), an international peacekeeping organization, made a decision. UN leaders said Palestine should be broken into two separate areas: a Palestinian state and a Jewish state. Jerusalem would be an international city that neither side owned.

Palestinians did not think this plan was fair. The Arab countries agreed with the Palestinians. However, many European nations and the United States felt sorry for the Jews. Millions of Jews had been murdered in Europe during the Holocaust. Many people thought the Jews should get their own nation.

On May 14, 1948, Israel proclaimed itself a nation. The next day, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria invaded Israel. Israel won the war against the unprepared Arabs. Over the years, many conflicts have occurred between the Arab states and Israel. Wars broke out again in 1956, 1967, and 1973.

Israeli and Arab representatives have met over the years to talk about peace. Egypt and Jordan signed peace agreements with Israel. In 1993, Israeli and Palestinian representatives made a plan for peace. However, complicated tensions in the Middle East have made it hard to form a lasting peace.
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Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. Jews and Arabs both claimed to be the rightful owners of _________.
   A. Saudi Arabia
   B. Palestine
   C. Iraq
   D. Egypt

2. The Zionists wanted the Jewish homeland to be in Palestine because _________.
   A. the weather was nice there
   B. the area had good farmland
   C. it had valuable oil fields
   D. their holy city, Jerusalem, was there

3. At the end of _________, the UN said the Jews should have their own nation called Israel.
   A. the Crusades
   B. World War I
   C. World War II
   D. the Cold War

4. The UN is a/an _________.
   A. international peacekeeping organization
   B. terrorist group
   C. trade agreement
   D. religious organization

5. Israel proclaimed itself a nation in _________.
   A. 1948
   B. 1956
   C. 1973
   D. 1993
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Crossword Puzzle
Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS
4. Thousands of Jewish ________ moved to Palestine in the early 1900s.
5. The ________ after Israel declared itself a nation, it was invaded.
7. ________ was meant to be an international city that neither side owned.
9. Israeli and Arab representatives have started talking about ________.
10. The ________ said that the Jewish people should have a homeland in Palestine.

DOWN
1. Many nations felt sorry for the ________ because of the Holocaust.
2. The ________ ________ is a diverse area with many languages, religions, and ethnic groups.
3. Many ________ have broken out between the Arabs and Israelis.
8. The UN broke Palestine into ________ separate states.
1. Which countries border Israel?

2. What borders Israel to the west?

3. In which country is Jerusalem located?
Quiz: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

True/False
Decide if each statement is true or false, and write “true” or “false” in the blank.

1. Jews and Arabs both claimed to be the rightful owners of Palestine.  ________

2. The United Nations is a religious organization.  ________

3. The holy city of Constantinople is located in Israel.  ________

4. Israeli and Arab representatives have started talking about peace.  ________

5. Many felt sorry for the Palestinians because of the Holocaust.  ________

Multiple Choice
Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

6. The Middle East has many ________.
   A. languages
   B. religions
   C. ethnic groups
   D. all of the above

7. Israel has NOT been in conflict with ________.
   A. Egypt
   B. Iraq
   C. Syria
   D. the United States

Short Answer
Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. Why did the Zionists want the Jewish homeland to be in Palestine?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________