

Theodor Herzl | Lesson Plan

How did Theodor Herzl's initiative contribute to the establishment of the present-day country of Israel?

Students will understand the purpose and necessity of Theodor Herzl's goal of returning the nation of Israel to the Jews' ancient homeland. They will recognize the importance of perseverance and translating goals into action.

Learning Objectives:

- Examine the military and political history of the nation of Israel.
- Define antisemitism and recognize the persecution that the Jewish people have endured for generations.
- Explore Theodor Herzl's goal to form a modern nation for the Jews in their ancient homeland and the Zionist Congress he formed to accomplish that goal.
- Express the importance of taking initiative and translating goals into action.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Israel:** The ancient land of the Hebrews at the Southeast end of the Mediterranean Sea, established as a modern Jewish state in 1948.
- **Jewish:** Belonging or relating to the religion of Judaism.
- **Persecution:** Continually treating others cruelly because of race, religion, or politics.
- **Antisemitism:** Hostility or improper treatment toward Jewish people.
- **Prejudice:** Hatred toward a person or group because of their religion, race, or nationality.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, Israel, Discrimination

What You'll Need

- Video: *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of Modern Israel* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of Modern Israel* (Click [Here](#))
- Globes or world maps, one per small group

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Assign students to small groups and give each group a globe or map.
2. Play a quick game in which groups compete to be the first to find a country on a globe or map.
3. Give one point to a team when they are the first to find and show you the country that is called. (This game can be played non-competitively if desired.)
4. Call out 6-10 different countries in different parts of the world.
5. End the game by challenging groups to locate the country of Israel.



6. As students observe the location of Israel on the maps, ask them to imagine what it would be like if they and their families were kicked out of their own land. Explain that is exactly what happened to the Jews, who were the original and rightful inhabitants of the nation of Israel.
7. Inquire if students have ever heard of a man named Theodor Herzl. Reveal that Herzl was a man who organized a world congress to re-establish a Jewish homeland. His initiative contributed to the foundation of the modern country of Israel.
8. Provide a quick summary of Israel's history: The land of Israel was promised to the Jewish people by God. Their holy city, Jerusalem, was selected by Him. For hundreds of years, the Jews had a homeland but always faced threats and were often defeated by other nations. Sometimes, God gave them miraculous victories. But they were a small people and often lost control of the land. Throughout history, Jews have suffered greatly and endured terrible persecution throughout the world. They have been singled out because of their religion, race, success, and sometimes simply for being an easy target. But as a result of the hard work and perseverance of visionaries like Theodor Herzl and the unwavering faith of the Jewish people, Israel became a country again in 1948.
9. Distribute the "Theodor Herzl Worksheet" and encourage students to complete it as they watch the video.

Watch and Complete: (15 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause the video as needed to allow students to fill in the correct answers as they are discussed.

Wrap-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Give students time to complete their worksheets.
2. Invite volunteers to share their responses to the short answer portion of the worksheets.
3. Collect the worksheets as a formative assessment or participation credit.
4. As a culminating discussion, pose the following questions:
 - How did Theodor Herzl's perseverance contribute to the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland?
 - Why do you think it was important for the nation of Israel to be returned to its original inhabitants?
 - What are the dangers of antisemitism?
 - What principles in our world are worth fighting for? How can you contribute to solutions both now and as you grow up?
5. End the lesson by clarifying the purpose and importance of learning about Theodor Herzl. Studying his life and character teaches us many valuable lessons, such as taking initiative, translating goals into action, and understanding the historical necessity for a Jewish homeland.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.