

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports

**Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development**

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State of Israel
Medinat Yisra'el
מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל

Location

Geographic Coordinates - 31 30 N, 34 45 E

Israel is located in the Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon.

☞ **Area** – 20,330 square km (land) 440 square km (water)

Area comparison to world: 154

Comparative size: slightly larger than New Jersey

☞ **Border Countries** – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria,

☞ **Climate** – Temperate; hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas

☞ **Natural Hazards** – Sandstorms (spring and summer) droughts, periodic earthquakes

☞ **Other Geographical Notes -**

- Lake Tiberias is and important source of fresh water.
- Dead Sea is the second saltiest body of water in the world



Statistics

- œ Population: 7,962,100 (11/2012)
- œ Literacy Rate: (definition: age 15 and older can read and write)
total population: 97.1%, male: 98.5%, female: 95.9% (2010)
- œ Average Years of Schooling Completed: 15 years (2008)
- œ Official Language: Hebrew
- œ Other Languages: Arabic (used officially by Arab minority) and English
- œ Ethnic Groups: Jewish: 76.4%, non-Jewish: 23.6% (mostly Arab) (2012)

œ Poverty: 23.6% of the population lives below the poverty line (2012)
(Israel's poverty line is \$7.30 per person per day) (2007)

œ Unemployment rate: 6.3% (2012 est.)

œ Life Expectancy at Birth: 81.07 years (2012)

œ Gender Ratio: 1.01 male: 1 female (2012)

œ Suffrage: (definition: the right to vote): 18 years of age; universal

œ Urban Population: 92% (2012)

Major Cities (Population): (2009)

œ Tel Aviv – Yafo: 3.219 million

œ Haifa – 1.027 million

œ Jerusalem (capital) – 768,000



Brief Overview of the Political Climate

- ⌘ Modern-day Israel is a small sovereign nation-state that was established in Palestine in 1948 as a homeland for the Jews following in the Holocaust in which 6 million Jews were killed by Germany's Nazi government during World War II.
- ⌘ The largely Jewish demographics stem from two waves of immigration: European Jewish Holocaust survivors and Jews from Mediterranean and North African countries, doubling the Jewish population of Israel from 1948-1952.
- ⌘ During the last decade of the 20th century, another influx of immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union brought another million inhabitants to the small nation.
 - ⌘ These immigrants tend to be at an economical disadvantage, as their education is typically not on par with Israeli standards. Therefore, they are often not qualified for more skilled jobs and professions.

Brief Overview of the Political Climate

- There is ongoing, long-standing, dispute between Israel and Palestine
- Key issues are: mutual recognition, borders, security, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, and finding a resolution to the refugee question.
- The violence resulting from the conflict has prompted international actions, as well as other security and human rights concerns, both within and between both sides, and internationally
- The Israeli Palestinian minority is largely segregated from the majority of the Jewish population.



Educational Opportunities in Israel

*Education is compulsory
and free
from the age of 5 to 15*

- ☞ Preschool is available to children between the ages of 3 and 6; obligatory from age 5 (kindergarten).
- ☞ Primary School: Grades 1 through 6
- ☞ Middle School: Grades 7 through 9
- ☞ Secondary School: Grades 10 through 12
 - ☞ Academic high schools prepare students for university
 - ☞ Vocational schools prepare students for various trades or are devoted to music or the arts
 - ☞ Yeshiva high schools combine general or technical studies with Torah studies
- ☞ Tertiary Schools (Universities) offer diverse programs and confer Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees, and Doctoral Degrees.
 - ☞ Israel has eight universities, the oldest and most prestigious of which is Hebrew University in Jerusalem
 - ☞ Bagrut ("full" matriculation certificate) and Psychometric Entrance Test (akin to SAT) are required for admission



Teachers and Classroom Atmosphere

- ☞ Teachers in Israel must hold a minimum of a Bachelor of Arts degree (or BEd) and a Teudat Hora'ah (teaching certificate) in order to teach in grades 1 through 9.
- ☞ Subject-specific Teudat Hora'ah are highly recommended (if not required) to teach Grades 10-12 and the Bagrut.
- ☞ In order to teach at the university level, an instructor must hold a PhD.
- ☞ Compared to the United States, teachers' annual salaries are comparatively low. Starting annual salary is \$14,099, and the top of the pay scale is \$23,009.
- ☞ There is a high need for teachers of English as a Second Language, as the study of English is mandated and instruction usually begins in sixth grade, or as early as second grade.
- ☞ In Democratic Schools, students run the school in conjunction with parents and teachers.
- ☞ Atmosphere varies greatly from school to school, depending greatly on socio-economic makeup of a neighborhood.
- ☞ General speaking, Israeli schools are much more informal, and less disciplined than their American or British counterparts.
- ☞ Children address teachers, principals, and other adults at the school by their first name, thus fostering familiarity.



Schools and Curriculum

Israeli schools are divided into five tracks: State, State-Religious, Independent Religious, Private, and Arab.

State Schools curriculum includes: mathematics, language skills, science, history, Jewish studies, art, and physical education.

State-Religious Schools curriculum emphasizes accelerated Jewish and religious studies as part of supplementary curriculum. Atmosphere is one of Torah observance and there are daily prayers and children and staff adhere to religious norms.

Independent Religious Schools curriculum includes very little in terms of secular subjects and focuses almost entirely on the Torah studies.

Private Schools often follow basic state curriculum and reflect the philosophies of specific groups of parents (ie. Democratic Schools) or are based on the curriculum of a foreign country (ie. The American International School in Israel)

State and State Religious Schools are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and are taught in Hebrew

State School Curriculum:
75% state-mandated and
25% supplementary.

Typical school year begins on September 1 and ends on June 30.

English instruction often begins between grades 4 and 6, and sometimes as early as second grade.

Arab Schools

Arab Schools (Christian, Druze, or Islamic) are taught in Arabic and offer a curriculum that emphasizes Arab history, religion and culture. Hebrew is taught in Arab schools from the fourth grade.

☞ Arab schools are operated by an Arab education system for the Israeli-Arab minority.

☞ There have been claims that the Arab schools do not receive the same resources that the Jewish education system receives.

☞ According to the Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education, the Israeli government spends an average of \$192 per year on each Arab student and \$1,100 per Jewish student.

☞ They also note that the drop out rate for Israeli Arab students is twice as high as that of Jewish students (12% compared to 6%)



The Value of Education in Israel

- ⌘ According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Education at a Glance report, released in 2012, Israel is the second most educated country in the world.
- ⌘ Between 6-10% of GDP is used for education expenditures
- ⌘ Most schools are subsidized by the state
- ⌘ 78% of the money invested in education is from public funds
- ⌘ 45% of the population has a university or college diploma





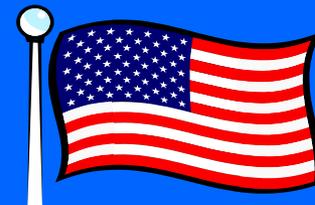
Israeli Views and Attitudes

Views of English and English Speakers

- ☞ English is the most commonly spoken foreign language in Israel
- ☞ English is now solidly entrenched in Israel as the "first foreign language," as defined in the Policy on Language Education in Israeli Schools (Ministry of Education, 1995, 1996).
- ☞ It is the language most generally associated with international trade and tourism, with higher education and research, and with the electronic media.
- ☞ After Hebrew and Arabic, it is considered the most valuable asset of a multilingual Israeli citizen.
- ☞ It is highly desirable to be able successfully communicate in both written and verbal English, and is a requirement for success in the English Bagrut.

Views of the United States and Americans

- ☞ In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center (2011), 72% of Israelis reported a favorable opinion of the United States.
 - ☞ 77% reported by Israeli Jews
 - ☞ 36% reported by Israeli Arabs
- ☞ A 2009 poll revealed that 72% of Israelis had a positive attitude toward the Americans and 68% view the US as an important, loyal ally.

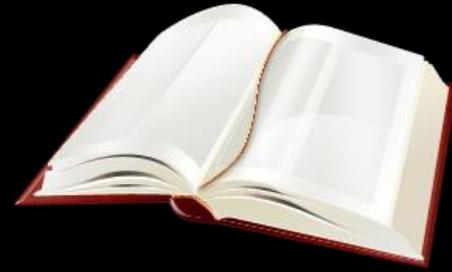


Immigration to the United States

☞ In 2011, the number of people from Israel obtaining legal permanent resident status in the US was 3,826.

- ☞ In recent years, immigration to the United States from Israel has been on the decline.
 - ☞ Data collected reveals a correlation between Israeli immigration to America and the state of America's job market. The number of Israelis immigrating to America has been steadily declining since 2008, just as the recession set in, bringing massive layoffs and skyrocketing unemployment figures.
- ☞ The majority of Israelis who immigrate to the United States have historically settled in New York, California, Michigan, Florida, and Illinois.
- ☞ Many Israeli immigrants are well-educated and possess specialized job skills that have allowed them to bypass the often frustrating experiences of less trained immigrants.
- ☞ A number of Israeli immigrants have relatives living in the United States, which eases their adjustment.
- ☞ Many Israeli Americans are accustomed to the closely-knit community and shared ideological experience of Israel. As such, Israeli Americans have formed extensive and vibrant communities within the larger American culture, particularly in the Los Angeles and New York areas.
 - ☞ This cultural network keeps immigrants linked to Israeli culture and the Hebrew language through media such as radio, newspapers and television broadcasts in Hebrew.

Resources



Books

Banks, James A. 2004. "Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives" San Francisco, California. Jossey-Bass.

Flaitz, Jeffra, ed. 2006. "Understanding Your International Students: An Educational Cultural and Linguistic Guide" Ann Arbor, Michigan. University of Michigan Press

Websites

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<http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Israel.html> (Slides 5, 6, 11)

<http://www.classbase.com/Countries/Israel/Education-System> (Slides 7, 8, 9, 10)

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<http://www.nbn.org.il/aliyahpedia/employment-a-entrepreneurs/professions-index/475-teaching.html> (Slide 8)

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<http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Aliyah/Aliyah+Info/Thoughts+on+Aliyah+and+Israel/Articles+about+Israel/Education+in+Israel+-+part+1.htm> (Slides 9, 10)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Israel (Slides 7, 8, 9, 10)

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<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israel-ranked-second-most-educated-country-in-the-world-study-shows-1.410415> (Slide 11)

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<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration> (Slides 12, 13)

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Israeli-Americans.html> (Slides 12, 13)

<http://forward.com/articles/154997/fewer-israelis-immigrate-to-us/?p=all> (Slide 13)



Photo Credits

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