



EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (9–1)

# HISTORY

## THE MIDDLE EAST: CONFLICT, CRISIS AND CHANGE, 1917–2012



Student Book

Hilary Brash

Series Editor: Nigel Kelly



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SAMPLE

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SAMPLE

# ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is written for students following the Edexcel International GCSE (9–1) History specification and covers one unit of the course. This unit is The Middle East: Conflict, Crisis and Change, 1917–2012, one of the Breadth Studies.

The History course has been structured so that teaching and learning can take place in any order, both in the classroom and in any independent learning. The book contains five chapters which match the five areas of content in the specification:

- Build-up of tension in Palestine, 1917–48
- The creation of Israel, the war of 1948–49 and the Suez Crisis of 1956
- Tension and conflict, 1956–73
- Diplomacy, peace then wider war, 1973–83
- The attempts to find a lasting peace, 1987–2012

Each chapter is split into multiple sections to break down content into manageable chunks and to ensure full coverage of the specification.

Each chapter features a mix of learning and activities. Sources are embedded throughout to develop your understanding and exam-style questions help you to put learning into practice. Recap pages at the end of each chapter summarise key information and let you check your understanding. Exam guidance pages help you prepare confidently for the exam.

## Learning objectives

Each section starts with a list of what you will learn in it. They are carefully tailored to address key assessment objectives central to the course.

## Timeline

Visual representation of events to clarify the order in which they happened.

## Extend your knowledge

Interesting facts to encourage wider thought and stimulate discussion. They are closely related to key issues and allow you to add depth to your knowledge and answers.

**ATTEMPTS AT LASTING PEACE** THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012 85

**5.1 REVOLT**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the causes of the First Intifada
- Understand the events of the First Intifada
- Understand the impact of the First Intifada on Palestinians and on Israelis.

1988 Yasser Arafat renounces terrorism    1991 The end of the Cold War    1995 Oslo II    2000 The Second Intifada starts    2005 The Second Intifada ends    2008–09 The Gaza War

1987 The start of the First Intifada    1991 The Gulf War    1993 The Oslo Accords The setting up of the Palestinian National Authority    1995 Assassination of Rabin    2003 Roadmap for Peace    2006 Hamas wins control of Gaza

**LIFE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

**KEY TERM**

**Jewish settlers** Jews who lived in new settlements built in the West Bank and Gaza. For many very religious Jews, Israel's victory during the Six Day War was a sign from God that the Promised Land had been restored and it was their duty to settle in the West Bank and Gaza. Other settlers were encouraged to live in occupied territories by generous Israeli subsidies and tax breaks

**SOURCE A**

Children crossing overflowing raw sewage in the Jabalya Refugee Camp in Gaza.



**CREATION OF ISRAEL** THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012 35

**THE IMPACT OF ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA, 1955**

**EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

**WHY DID ISRAEL ATTACK GAZA?** Israel was not a priority for Nasser and he had made an effort to keep the border quiet, so the scale of Israeli actions against Gaza in 1955–56 is puzzling. One suggestion is that David Ben-Gurion feared a united Arab front led by Nasser, and the development of close ties between the USA and Egypt. If he could expose Nasser as weak, it would undermine him in Arab eyes. If he could push Nasser into asking the USSR for help, it would damage US–Egyptian relations. Ben-Gurion may also have wanted to provoke an Egyptian response in order to justify Israel's high military expenditure in a time of economic difficulty.

Humiliating proof of Egypt's military weakness came in February 1955 when the IDF launched a massive raid on an Egyptian army headquarters in Gaza, killing 38 Egyptian soldiers. The IDF claimed it was a reprisal for the killing of a cyclist in Israel by Palestinian militants, one of whom carried documents linking him with Egyptian intelligence.

The Egyptian public demanded revenge and Palestinians in Gaza rioted, chanting, 'Give us weapons'. Nasser needed to act if he was to keep his image as the strongest leader of the Arab world. He negotiated a secret arms deal with Czechoslovakia, a Soviet ally. In return for \$300 million of Egyptian cotton, Egypt was rearmed with massive Soviet firepower: 100 self-propelled guns, 200 armoured personnel carriers, 300 tanks, 200 MIG-15 fighters and 50 bombers.

In August 1955, a Fedayeen raid killed 11 Israelis; the IDF reprisal attack on Gaza left 72 Egyptian soldiers dead. In response, Nasser made public the Czechoslovakian arms deal. He also imposed a complete blockade on all trade through the Straits of Tiran. His popularity in Egypt had never been higher: he was standing up to Israel.

In two critical respects, though, Nasser's actions **backfired**.

- Israel decided war against Egypt was inevitable and it would be better to fight sooner rather than wait until Nasser's new Soviet weapons had arrived. In November 1955, an IDF attack on Gaza killed 50 Egyptian soldiers and, in April 1956, an Israeli mortar attack on Gaza caused 58 civilian deaths. However, these efforts didn't provoke Egypt into a war.
- News that Egypt was purchasing large quantities of Soviet weapons caused shock and concern in the West. In October 1955, the USA and Britain offered to loan Egypt \$270 million for the Aswan Dam. They hoped to win Egypt back from an **alliance** with the USSR. But that failed to happen and, in July 1956, the USA and Britain suddenly took back their offer. Perhaps they hoped this tactic would make Nasser rethink his Soviet alliance.

**NASSER NATIONALISES THE SUZ CANAL**

Nasser's response a week later came as a shock: he **nationalised** the Suez Canal. He said that he would compensate the shareholders and use the toll money from the Canal to build the Aswan Dam. His action was greeted with delight throughout the Arab world, but with furious protests from Britain and France. Both considered the action illegal, and a major threat to their trade and position in the Middle East.

**KEY TERM**

**nationalise** to transfer control of something (e.g. a company) from private to state ownership. So the Canal was now owned by the Egyptian government

**ACTIVITY**

- 1 Imagine that you are the editor of an Egyptian newspaper. Under a bold headline, write a paragraph praising Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. You could explain how this action will help Nasser to achieve his dreams for Egypt.
- 2 Now imagine that you are the editor of a British newspaper. Under an equally bold headline, write a paragraph explaining why you strongly condemn Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal.

## Source

Photos, cartoons and text sources are used to explain events and show you what people from the period said, thought or created, helping you to build your understanding.

## Key term

Useful words and phrases are colour coded within the main text and picked out in the margin with concise and simple definitions. These help understanding of key subject terms and support students whose first language is not English.

## Activity

Each chapter includes activities to help check and embed knowledge and understanding.

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**Exam-style question**  
Questions tailored to the Pearson Edexcel specification to allow for practice and development of exam writing technique. They also allow for practice responding to the command words used in the exams.

**Skills**  
Relevant exam questions have been assigned the key skills which you will gain from undertaking them, allowing for a strong focus on particular academic qualities. These transferable skills are highly valued in further study and the workplace.

**Hint**  
All exam-style questions are accompanied by a hint to help you get started on an answer.

**14 BUILD-UP OF TENSION THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012**

In July 1947, for example, the Hagannah bought an old American passenger ship, renamed it *Exodus 1947*, and sailed it to France. There it picked up 4,500 Jews, many of them Holocaust survivors. The *Exodus* then sailed for Palestine, where it was stopped by the Royal Navy and the passengers were transported back to France. When the passengers refused to leave the ship and went on hunger strike, the British took them to Hamburg in Germany, where they were forced to return to refugee camps. The incident caused worldwide outrage against Britain, and played a major part in moving sympathy towards the idea of establishing a Jewish state.

**SOURCE B**  
The SS *Exodus* being refused permission to dock at Haifa by British authorities, July 1947.



**EXAM-STYLE QUESTION**  
Explain two causes of the Jewish insurgency in Palestine in the years 1945 to 1947. (8 marks)

**A01 A02**  
**SKILLS** ADAPTIVE LEARNING

**HINT**  
This question is testing your ability to explain why an event happened. A good answer would include supporting details. Read page 10 again to help you and remember to write about two causes.

**66 TENSION AND CONFLICT THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012**

**RECAP**

**RECALL QUIZ**

- 1 Name two decisions taken by Arab leaders at the Cairo Conference, 1964.
- 2 In which year did each of the following happen: the Suez incident, the drought over the Golan Heights, the battle for Karameh?
- 3 Give two reasons for Israel's victory in 1967.
- 4 Name the five pieces of territory taken by Israel in the Six Day War.
- 5 Can you explain the following: Resolution 242, the War of Attrition, the occupied territories?
- 6 Which Palestinian group was responsible for: Dawson's Field; the massacre at Munich; raids from Karameh?
- 7 In 1973, who was in control of: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Israel, the PLO?
- 8 What is 'Yom Kippur'?
- 9 Give three reasons why the Israelis survived the Yom Kippur War.
- 10 Give two ways in which the Yom Kippur War changed global attitudes to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

**CHECKPOINT**

**STRENGTHEN**

**S1** Summarise the events of the Six Day War.  
**S2** Draw a concept map to show the different examples of the tactics used by Fatah, the PFLP and the Black September Organisation. In a different colour, add Israel's reaction to each of these.  
**S3** Sadat's armies were defeated and surrounded in the Yom Kippur War. Give two reasons why he might nevertheless feel the war was a sort of victory.

**CHALLENGE**

**C1** Which country do you think was most responsible for the outbreak of the Six Day War: Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the USA or the USSR? Explain your answer.  
**C2** Whose approach was more successful: Fatah's, the PFLP's or Black September's? Explain your answer. How successful were Israel's responses to Palestinian activities?  
**C3** How important was the involvement of the superpowers, the USA and the USSR, in causing the Yom Kippur War and then in stopping the war?

**SUMMARY**

- In 1964, Arab states set up the PLO and committed themselves to the destruction of Israel.
- With Syrian support, Fatah launched raids on Israel; Israel always retaliated to these raids.
- Syria and Jordan accused Nasser of not supporting Palestinians.
- Nasser's actions in May 1967 led many to believe that an Arab attack on Israel was about to happen.
- Israel decided to strike first and the Arabs were beaten in 6 days.
- After the Six Day War, the UN adopted Resolution 242, a 'land for peace' solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- However, Israel annexed Jerusalem and imposed a military occupation on the other territories it had taken in 1967.
- Egypt began a War of Attrition against Israel, hoping to make it withdraw from the banks of the Suez Canal.
- Following 1967, Palestinians resolved not to rely on other Arab states. Different Palestinian groups used different tactics from raids on Israel to international terrorism.
- These tactics resulted in fierce retaliation from the Israelis, the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan and negative publicity. However, they also drew attention to the need to solve the Palestinian issue.
- On Nasser's death in 1970, Sadat took power, but he failed to persuade Israel to return Sinai.
- Sadat secretly planned a joint war with Syria against Israel.
- Israel survived the Yom Kippur War and gained more land.
- However, Sadat was now seen as a hero and he had broken the stalemate over Sinai.

**Checkpoint**  
Checkpoints help you to check and reflect on your learning. The Strengthen section helps you to consolidate knowledge and understanding, and check that you have grasped the basic ideas and skills. The Challenge questions push you to go beyond just understanding the information, and into evaluation and analysis of what you have studied.

**Summary**  
The main points of each chapter are summarised in a series of bullet points. These are great for embedding core knowledge and handy for revision.

**Exam guidance**  
At the end of each chapter, you will find two pages designed to help you better understand the exam questions and how to answer them. Each exam guidance section focuses on a particular question type that you will find in the exam, allowing you to approach them with confidence.

**Student answers**  
Exemplar student answers are used to show what an answer to the exam question may look like. There are often two levels of answers so you can see what you need to do to write better responses.

**82 DIPLOMACY, PEACE, WAR THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012**

**EXAM GUIDANCE: PART (B) QUESTIONS**

**A01 A02**  
**SKILLS** ADAPTIVE LEARNING

**Question to be answered: Explain two causes of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. (8 marks)**

**1 Analysis Question 1: What is the question type testing?**  
In this question you have to demonstrate that you have knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied. In this particular case it is knowledge and understanding of the invasion of Lebanon by Israel, and why it happened.  
You also have to explain and analyse historical events and periods to explain why something happened.

**2 Analysis Question 2: What do I have to do to answer the question well?**  
Obviously you have to write about the invasion of Lebanon! But it isn't just a case of writing everything you know. You have to write about why it happened. To do this well, you need to give detail showing what caused the invasion to happen, but you need to make sure you are explaining why that detail actually led to the invasion. We call this explaining why your chosen causes produced the given outcome (i.e. the invasion of Lebanon in 1982).  
In this case, there are many causes of the invasion of Lebanon. You might write about long-term or underlying causes like Palestinian attacks on north Israel from southern Lebanon, or you might write about the immediate event leading to the invasion, for example.

**3 Analysis Question 3: Are there any techniques I can use to make it very clear that I am doing what is needed to be successful?**  
This is an 8-mark question and you need to make sure you leave enough time to answer the other two questions fully (they are worth 22 marks in total). Therefore, you need to get straight in to writing your answer. The question asks for two causes, so it's a good idea to write two paragraphs and to begin each paragraph with phrases like 'One cause was...' 'Another cause was...' You will get a maximum of 4 marks for each cause you explain, so make sure you do two causes.  
How many marks you score for each cause will depend on how well you use accurate and factual information to explain why the invasion occurred.

**Advice on answering the question**  
Three key questions about the exam question are answered here in order to explain what the question is testing and what you need to do to succeed in the exam.

**Pearson Progression**  
Sample student answers have been given a Pearson Step from 1 to 12. This tells you how well the response has met the criteria in the Pearson Progression Map.

**Commentary**  
Feedback on the quality of the answer is provided to help you understand their strengths and weaknesses and show how they can be improved.

**DIPLOMACY, PEACE, WAR THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012 83**

**Answer A**  
The underlying cause of the invasion of Lebanon was Israel's anger at the PLO. The PLO was making many cross-border and rocket attacks on northern Israel from Lebanon. Israel wanted to take control of south Lebanon and destroy PLO bases there, and to create a buffer zone which would protect northern Israel from PLO attacks. The bigger cause was that the Palestinians attempted to assassinate the Israeli Ambassador in London – it gave Israel the excuse that it needed to go ahead.

**What are the strengths and weaknesses of Answer A?**  
It has potential. It has the strength of setting out two reasons, and distinguishing between underlying and trigger reasons. But it hasn't provided much factual information to support those reasons, or fully explained why they caused the invasion. It is doubtful that this answer would score more than four marks.

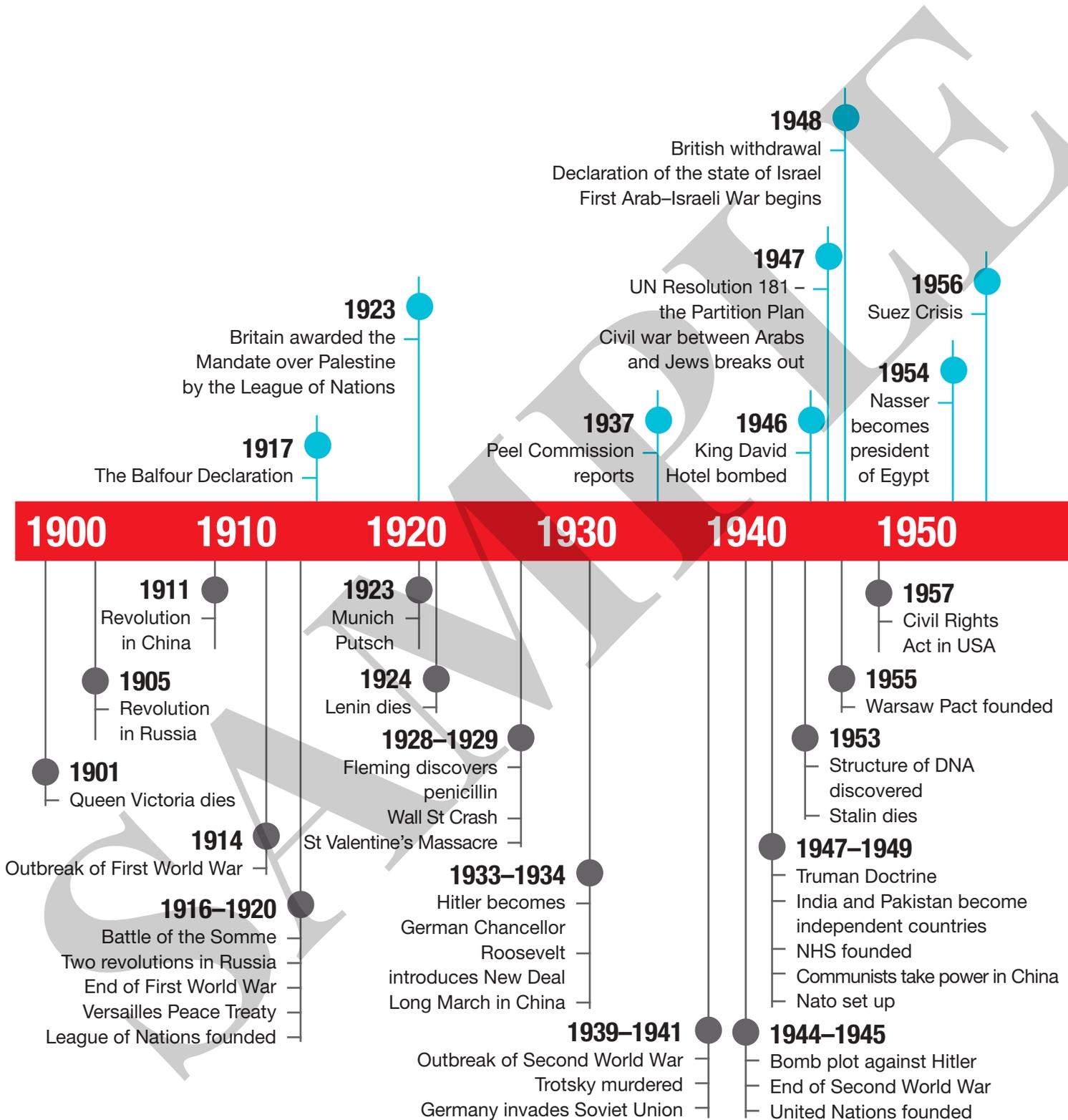
**Answer B**  
The immediate reason for the invasion of Lebanon was an event that happened in June 1982: three Palestinians attempted to assassinate the Israeli Ambassador in London. Israel used this as an excuse to launch the invasion – it was a regional attack on the PLO although those involved were not in fact PLO members. So the attempted assassination had provided Israel with the justification it needed and the invasion began.

**The underlying cause of the invasion was Israel's need to secure farms and towns in Galilee from the almost constant attacks they had suffered since the PLO had been expelled from Jordan and based itself in southern Lebanon. In March 1978, for example, a Palestinian raid resulted in the Coastal Road Massacre. These attacks then escalated in intensity and danger when the PLO received Soviet aid including long-range rocket launchers. By mid-1982, there were so many attacks and counter attacks that the PLO and Israel were effectively at war. The UN was meant to be in charge of keeping peace on the border, but it was powerless to stop them. So Israel invaded in order to destroy the rocket launchers, drive the PLO out of south Lebanon, and establish a buffer zone there that would enable people in Galilee to live in safety. This aim quickly grew into a decision to destroy the PLO in Lebanon completely, which explains why Israel carried its invasion right up to Beirut. The underlying cause meant that Israel felt the need to try to resolve the problems caused by the PLO by carrying out an invasion of Lebanon to expel it.**

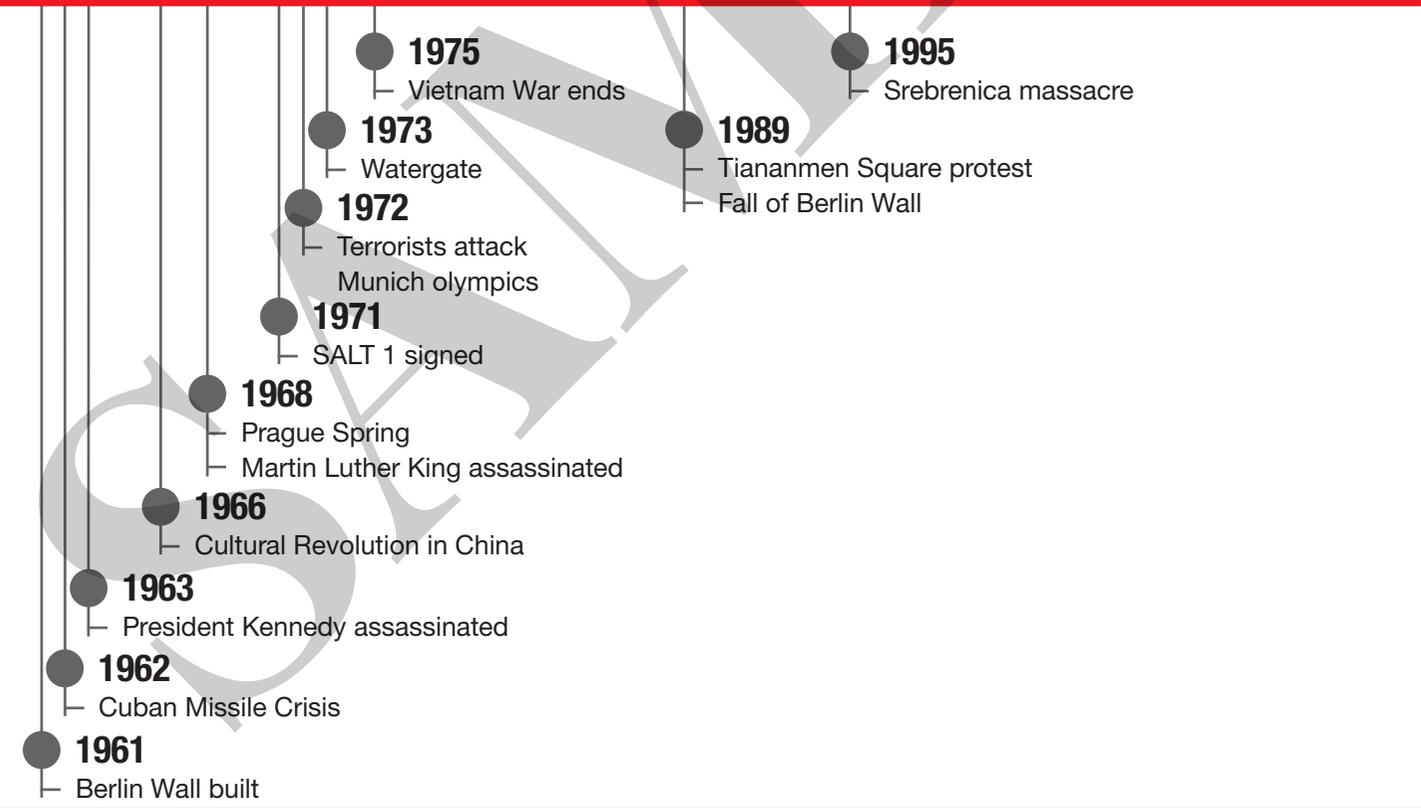
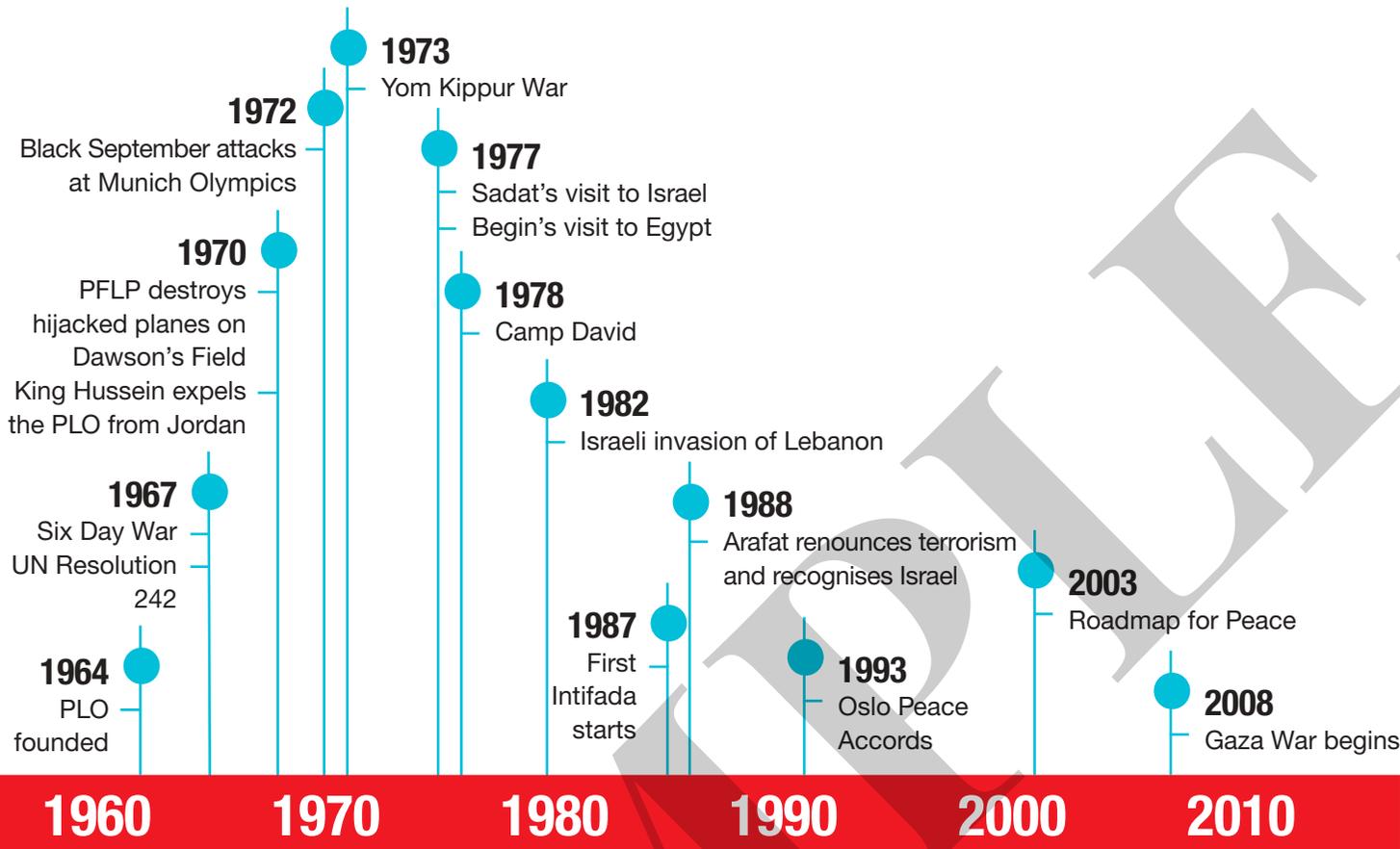
**What are the strengths and weaknesses of Answer B?**  
This is an excellent answer. It gives two causes and provides factual support in showing how those causes brought about the invasion. It would be likely to receive full marks.

**Challenge a friend**  
Use the Student Book to set a part (B) question for a friend. Then look at the answer. Does it do the following things?  
 Provide two causes  
 Provide detailed information to support the causes  
 Show how the causes led to the given outcome.  
If it does, you can tell your friend that the answer is very good!

## TIMELINE – THE MIDDLE EAST, 1917–2012



## TIMELINE – WORLD



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# 2. THE CREATION OF ISRAEL, THE WAR OF 1948–49 AND THE SUEZ CRISIS OF 1956

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand why Israel was able to survive the First Arab–Israeli War
- Understand the impact of this war on Palestinians
- Understand the causes and consequences of the Suez Crisis of 1956.

Six months after the UN had voted to partition Palestine, Jewish leader David Ben-Gurion announced the birth of a new state, Israel. Israelis enjoyed just one day of peace. On 15 May 1948, the same day that the last exhausted British troops left, five Arab states invaded, determined to destroy the new state. Israel survived, but the consequences of the First Arab–Israeli War were a disaster for Palestinian Arabs.

The neighbour Israel had the most to fear from was Egypt. It had the biggest population and, from 1954, a new leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. As Nasser improved Egypt's armed forces, Israeli concerns increased. These concerns led Israel to form a plan with Britain and France to seize control of the Suez Canal in 1956. The Suez Crisis that followed was a disaster for Britain and France, but Israel got the military and economic security it wanted. For Nasser, the Suez Crisis was also a triumph.

## 2.1 THE FIRST ARAB–ISRAELI WAR, 1948–49

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the reasons why Israel survived the First Arab–Israeli War
- Understand the impact of this war on Palestinians
- Understand the reasons for Jewish migration to Israel, and the impact of this.

On 14 May 1948, at 4 p.m., David Ben-Gurion announced the foundation of the state of Israel. The ceremony took just 32 minutes. The USA immediately recognised the new state. A little while later so did the USSR. Arab states immediately denounced it. At midnight on 14 May, the British Mandate ended and, on Saturday 15 May 1948, the last British soldier left Palestine.

The same day, 15 May, the new state was invaded by the armies of five Arab states – Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq – determined to destroy Israel. The civil war had become an international war.

### PHASE 1: MAY–JUNE 1948

In the first 3 weeks of the war, Israel struggled for survival. Only one in three of its troops had weapons, and it had only five field guns. The Arab forces had 152. For a time, it appeared that the new country might be cut in two.

- The Arab Legion, the army of Transjordan, occupied the West Bank and captured east Jerusalem (including the walled Old City, which contained holy sites like Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall).
- Iraqi forces invaded the north.
- Egyptians attacked from the south.

### EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

#### THE DEFENCE OF YAD MORDECHAI

A clear example of Israel's weakness in this phase, but also the determination and co-ordination of its forces, was the defence of Yad Mordechai. This isolated *kibbutz* (communal farm) was attacked by 2,500 Egyptian troops in May 1948. Just before the attack, 92 women and children were evacuated (moved to a safe place). The remaining 110 settlers, including 20 women, with 40 Palmach (the best-trained section of the Haganah), managed to delay the Egyptians for 5 days before the *kibbutz* fell. The delay gave Israeli forces further north time to organise a defensive line, which prevented the Egyptians taking Tel Aviv.

### SOURCE A

David Ben-Gurion proclaims the new state of Israel, 14 May 1948. A picture of Theodor Herzl hangs on the wall behind him (see page 4).



Then, on 11 June, the United Nations intervened. Its negotiator, Count Bernadotte, managed to arrange a month's truce. Without this truce, Israel might not have survived, and it used the time the truce gave it well. It established a military structure with only one man in charge, David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv, who gave orders to four regional commands. It also ignored the UN's **embargo** on weapons. Money from Zionist supporters in the USA was used to buy weapons from Czechoslovakia, including 30,000 rifles, 4,500 machine guns, 47 million rounds of ammunition and 84 aeroplanes.

### PHASE 2: JULY 1948

Two days before the truce ended, Israeli forces went on the offensive. Surprise was their main weapon. Following intensive fighting around Tel Aviv, Israeli troops occupied the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramleh, and expelled the Arab populations of these towns. A second truce was arranged by the UN. This one lasted for 3 months.

### PHASE 3: OCTOBER 1948– JULY 1949

Once again, Israel broke the truce early, this time to gain land before an eventual peace settlement. Israeli forces captured Galilee from the Lebanese and then retook the Negev Desert, pushing the Egyptian forces back into the Sinai Desert. The war then moved slowly to a close when **armistice** agreements were signed with Egypt (February), Lebanon (March), Transjordan (April) and Syria (July). Only Iraq refused to sign one.

### THE REASONS FOR ISRAEL'S VICTORY

At first, Israel's chances of winning the war looked very slim. Five states were fighting against one. Put another way, 41 million Arabs faced 650,000 Jews. There were several reasons for the Israeli victory.

- 1 The Arab states did not send their entire armies to the war. Over-confident, they thought that Israel would be easy to defeat. When the war started, the combined Arab forces sent to attack Israel totalled only about 20–25,000. With about 35,000, Israel's forces were larger. Both sides increased their armies during the war but, by December 1948, Israel's forces had grown to 108,000, double the number of the Arab forces.
- 2 The Israelis were also much more experienced as fighters than the Arabs. Many Haganah members had served with the British forces in the Second World War, while Irgun and Lehi members had experience fighting against the British. The Israelis were also helped by about 5,000 foreign volunteers, most of whom had military experience. In contrast, only Transjordan had an effective army, the Arab Legion.
- 3 The first truce called by the UN was absolutely crucial to Israel's survival. Before that, Israel had been dangerously short of weapons and looked as though it would be cut in two. During this truce, while the Arabs did little, Israel regrouped, increased its forces and bought weapons from Czechoslovakia.
- 4 Israeli tactics were more effective. Attacks were co-ordinated centrally and troops were moved quickly from one part of the country to another as needed. In contrast, the Arab armies were un-coordinated and failed to communicate. There was no single leader and each country had its own reasons for fighting the war. The Transjordan Arab Legion, for example, had been ordered simply to occupy that part of Palestine given to the Arabs, not to attack the lands given to Israel. Their aim, just to take land, was not popular with other Arabs states. This lack of an agreed plan worked to Israel's advantage.

### EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

#### COUNT BERNADOTTE

Count Bernadotte was a Swede who had negotiated the release of prisoners, including Jews, from the Nazis during the Second World War. During the truce of June 1948, he proposed a peace plan that would have given the Negev Desert to Arabs and permitted Arab refugees to return to their homes. In September 1948, he was assassinated by the militant group Lehi, which accused him of anti-Semitism.

### KEY TERM

**armistice** an agreement to stop fighting until a final peace settlement can be made

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## TRANSJORDAN'S AIMS

Transjordan went to war to gain the West Bank, not to destroy Israel. In 1950, Jordan (as Transjordan became known) then formally annexed the West Bank. This move was condemned as illegal by other Arab states. In 1952, while on a visit to Jerusalem, Jordan's King Abdullah I was assassinated by a Palestinian Arab.

- 5 Finally, the Israelis' exceptionally determined fighting spirit helps to explain why they won the war. They knew that defeat meant the destruction of their new country, so they were fighting not just for their lives but also for Israel's right to exist. Perhaps they felt they were also fighting for all the Jews who had died in the Holocaust.

Even before the war had formally ended, the new state had held its first elections and, in January 1949, David Ben-Gurion became the first prime minister of Israel.

## EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Explain **two** causes of Israel's success in the First Arab–Israeli War. (8 marks)

A01

A02

SKILLS ADAPTIVE LEARNING

## HINT

Remember that you only have to write about two causes. So choose the two causes that you consider the most important, and that you can support with exact evidence.

## THE RESULTS OF THE 1948–49 WAR

**1948** 700,000 Palestinians flee or are expelled before and during the 1948–49 war

**1950** The Law of Return passed

**1949** Creation of UNRWA to help Palestinian refugees  
Reorganisation of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)

**1949–51** 700,000 Jews migrate to Israel

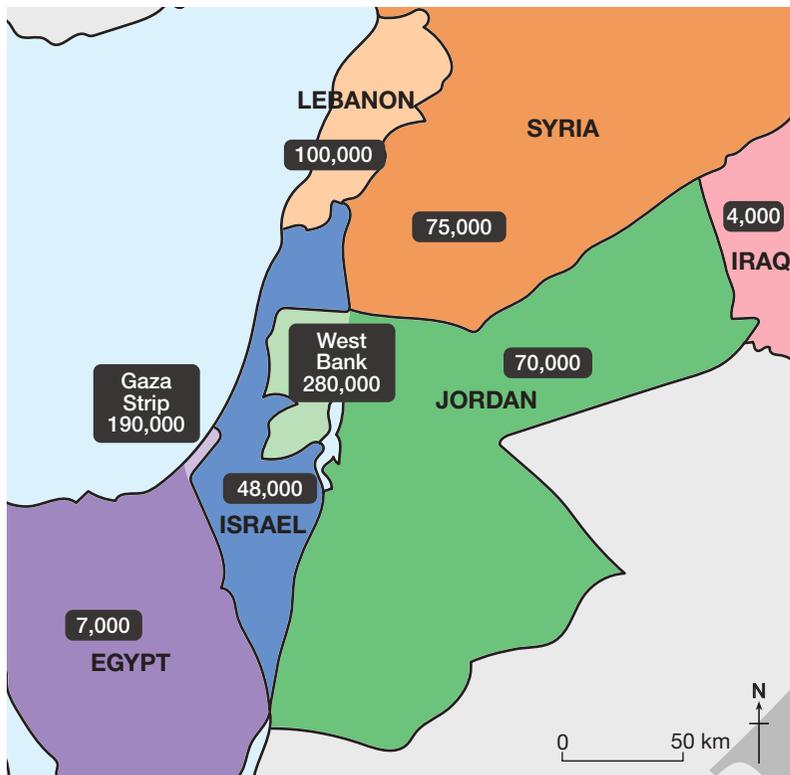
**1950–55** Increasing tension between Israel and Egypt

## THE IMPACT OF THE WAR ON PALESTINIANS

## SOURCE B

A mural painted in 2011 in Gaza. Many Palestinians still own the keys to the homes they left in 1947–49.





▲ **Figure 2.1** A map showing the destinations of the Palestinian refugees, 1947–49. Note that 48,000 Palestinians became refugees within Israel

For Palestinian Arabs, 1948 is *al-Nakba* – ‘The Catastrophe’. For them the 1948–49 war was a disaster. In 1947, about 900,000 Arabs lived in the region that became Israel. About 300,000 of these had fled before the war even started in May 1948; a further 400,000 fled during the war. By the end of the war, 700,000 Palestinians had become landless refugees. Even those areas that were meant to be Palestinian Arab, according to the Partition Plan, had been lost, taken over by Israel, Egypt and Jordan (as Transjordan was now called).

Ever since 1949, Palestinians have argued that they have a right to return to their lands. In their view:

- They did not choose to leave their land and they were not told to by Arab leaders.
- The Israelis’ aim was an Israel without Arabs: they deliberately set out to expel all Palestinians, and had started this policy (Plan D) before the war started.
- The Israelis achieved their goal by using violence, threats and deliberately causing panic.

#### SOURCE C

An account by a member of the Haganah in the 1948–49 war. Here he describes what happened in Jerusalem.

An uncontrolled panic swept through all Arab quarters; the Israelis brought up jeeps with loud speakers which broadcast ‘horror sounds’. These included shrieks, wails and anguished moans of Arab women, the wail of sirens and the clang of fire alarm bells, interrupted by a... voice calling out in Arabic “Save your souls, all ye faithful: the Jews are using poison gas and atomic weapons. Run for your lives in the name of Allah.”

The Israeli view was very different.

- Israel did not create the problem: the war was started by the Arabs who invaded Israeli territory on 15 May 1948.
- Palestinians were not forced to leave: they chose to leave or were told to go by Arab leaders. These leaders promised them a quick victory followed by a **triumphal** return, and made up stories of atrocities to frighten them into leaving.
- Palestinians were not permitted to return when the war ended because they would have formed a security threat inside Israel.

#### SOURCE D

From an account by an Irish journalist in 1961.

I decided to test the charge that Arab evacuation orders were broadcast by Arab radio – which could be done thoroughly since the BBC monitored all Middle Eastern broadcasts throughout 1948...

There was not a single order, or appeal, or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine in 1948. There is a repeated monitored record of Arab appeals, even flat order, to the civilians of Palestine to stay put.

#### ACTIVITY

Look at Sources C–D, and read pages 18–20 and 26–27 again.

- 1 List five reasons why so many Palestinians left their land in 1947–49.
- 2 If you were a UN investigator, whose view of the Palestinian flight would you support – the Israeli or the Palestinian one? Explain your decision.

## THE REFUGEE STATUS OF PALESTINIAN ARABS

### KEY TERMS

**UNRWA** the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. Set up in 1949, it provides basic services like water and sanitation, health care and education

**Arab League** an organisation of Arab countries that was set up in 1945, to promote closer relations between Arabs. It originally had six members (those that invaded Israel in 1948, and Saudi Arabia)

Whatever had caused Palestinians to leave their homes, the consequences were beyond doubt: Palestinian Arabs no longer had a land of their own and most have remained refugees ever since.

- About 100,000 middle-class Palestinians, many of whom had left before the 1948–49 war even began, started new lives elsewhere in the Middle East, for example in Kuwait, Cairo or Damascus, or migrated to the USA.
- The rest, the vast majority, became refugees in neighbouring states, where they were settled in 54 vast tented camps: four in Jordan; 19 on the West Bank (then occupied by Jordan); 15 in Lebanon; eight in Gaza (then occupied by Egypt); and nine in Syria. Emergency relief was provided by **UNRWA**.

The **Arab League** told its members to deny citizenship to Palestinian Arab refugees (and their **descendants**). That way, Palestinians would keep their identity and protect their ‘right to return’ to their homeland. This meant that, in Lebanon and Egypt, for example, Palestinian refugees found it hard to travel or apply for local jobs. Only Jordan ignored the instruction and granted citizenship to all Palestinians.

Life for those in the eight camps in Gaza was probably the toughest. Gaza is a small strip of land just 45 km long and 8 km wide. The original population was about 20,000. The arrival of 190,000 refugees resulted in overcrowding, water shortages, poor sanitation and a collapse of the local economy.

Many refugees tried to return home to collect their possessions or to harvest their crops. About 16,000 cases of this sort of **infiltration** had occurred by 1953, mostly from Jordanian territory. It was risky because Israeli troops were under orders to stop them by any means necessary.

## THE GROWTH OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

### KEY TERM

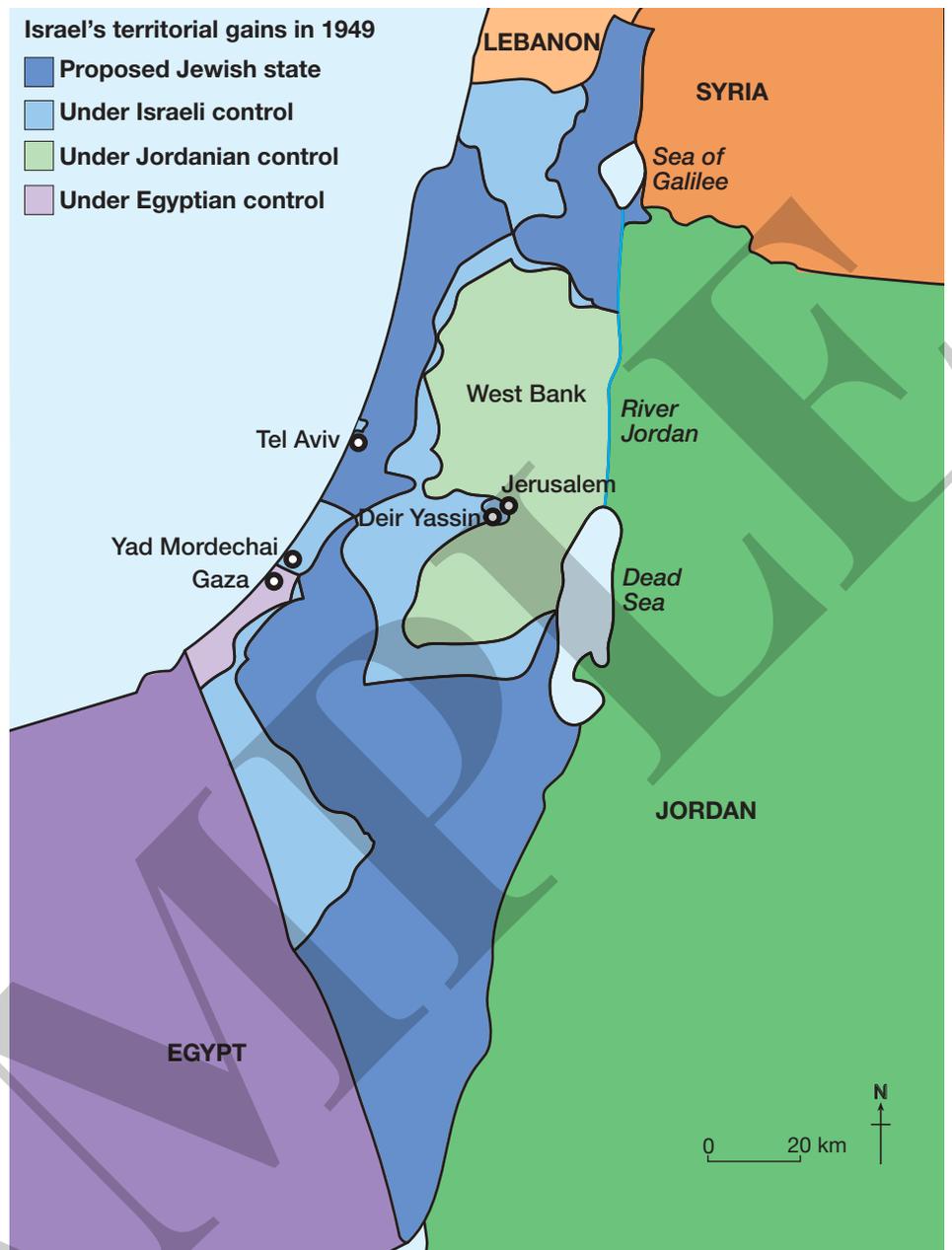
**Fedayeen** an Arabic word meaning ‘those who sacrifice themselves’. Fedayeen were Palestinian freedom fighters or terrorists, depending on one’s point of view

Feelings of bewilderment and shock soon turned to bitter hatred and some Palestinians began infiltrations that were aimed at attacking Jews. Between 1950 and 1953, 153 Israelis died and 202 were injured as a result of the missions of these **Fedayeen**. Israel always retaliated fiercely. In October 1953, for example, Israeli troops attacked Qibya in the West Bank, killing 69 villagers and destroying 45 houses, as a reprisal for the death of three Israelis. To stop the cycle of violence, the Jordanian authorities worked to prevent infiltrations from the West Bank in 1954. However, infiltrations continued from Gaza, which was under Egyptian control.

## THE IMPACT OF THE WAR ON ISRAELIS

For Israelis, 1948 is their Year of Liberation and the 1948–49 war is their War of Independence, which they see as an extraordinary victory and a triumph. 6,000 Israelis had died, but the new state of Israel had survived. It had kept the land given to it under the Partition Plan and had also captured 50 per cent of the area given to the Arab state. The new state of Israel was now easier to defend, had additional fertile land and had access to Jerusalem. Ignoring the UN Partition Plan (and the fact that Jordanian troops occupied the east of the city), Jerusalem was declared the capital of Israel.

► Figure 2.2 A map of the ceasefire lines showing Israeli gains



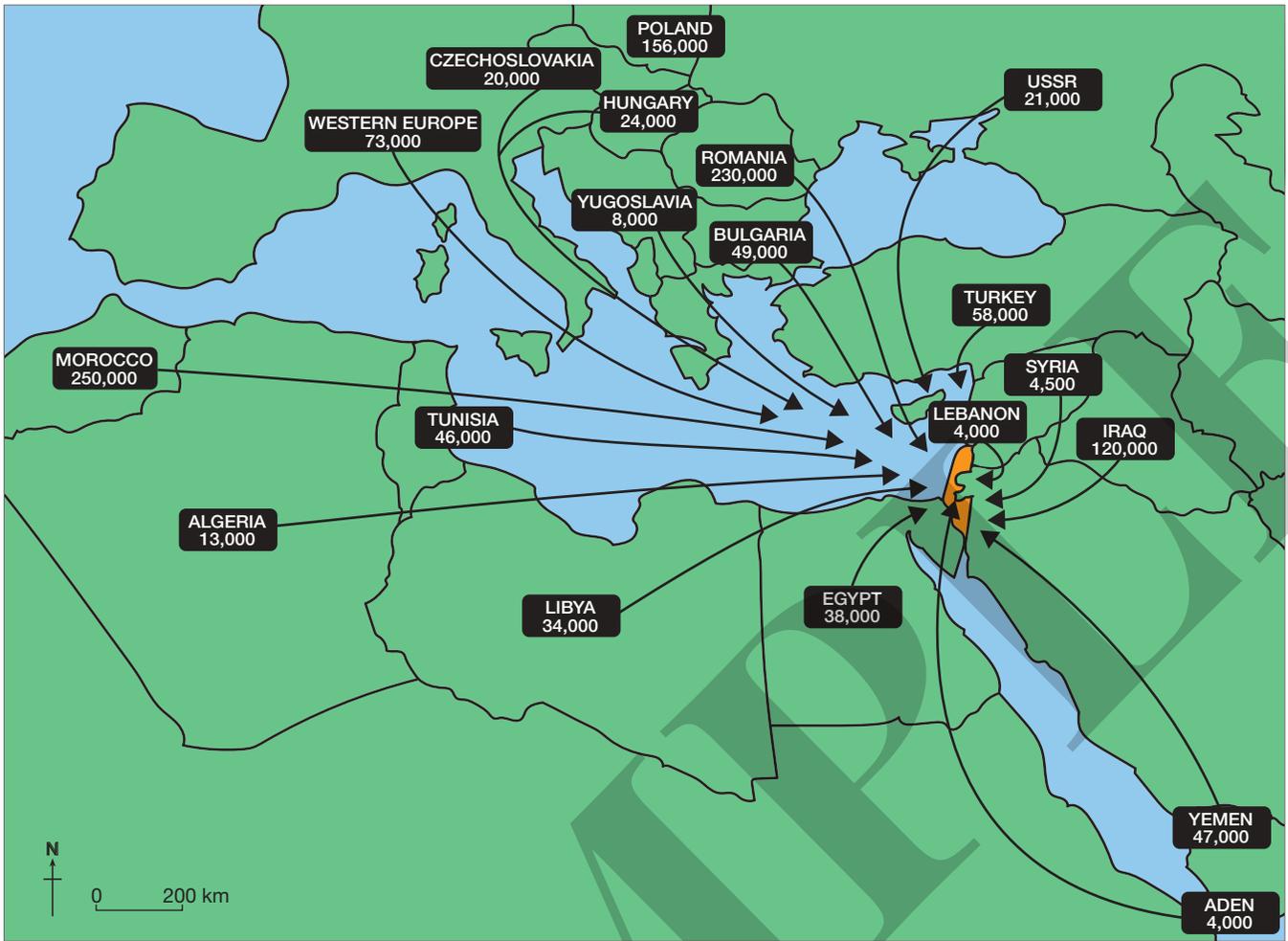
## THE LAW OF RETURN, 1950

### EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

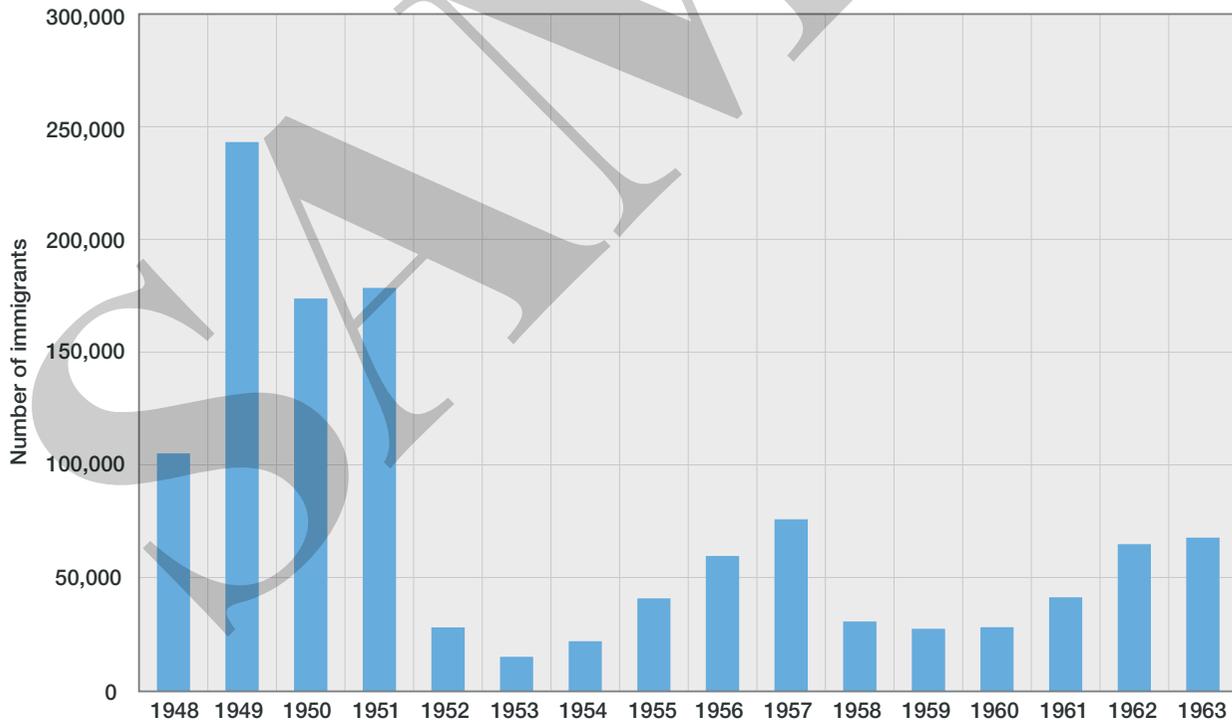
#### THE KNESSET

The Knesset is the name of the Israeli Parliament, which has 120 elected members. Today, the Knesset is housed in a building in Jerusalem that was financed by James Armand de Rothschild, an English Jew, at the then massive sum of 6 million Israeli pounds. Before that was completed in 1966, the Knesset met in several places, including a cinema in Tel Aviv.

The new state of Israel had a very small population. Over the next 3 years this was almost doubled to 1.5 million by the arrival of large numbers of Jewish immigrants. The first group came from Europe. Some were Holocaust survivors from camps in Germany. Many more were Eastern Europeans, seeking a new life away from Soviet control. Large numbers then came from Arab countries where growing anti-Semitism following the 1948–49 war was making life dangerous. All this immigration was supported by the Knesset, which passed the Law of Return in July 1950. This said that any Jew in the world had the right to come to Israel and become an Israeli citizen.



▲ Figure 2.3 A map showing the countries of origin of immigrants to Israel, 1948–67



▲ Figure 2.4 A graph showing immigration to Israel, 1948–63

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## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## OPERATIONS TO ESCAPE ANTI-SEMITISM

In Operation Magic Carpet, 1949–50, US and British aircraft airlifted 47,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel following violent anti-Semitic riots in Yemen.

In Iraq also, Jews were blamed for *al-Nakba*. Zionism was made a capital offence (punishable by death) in 1950 and Jews were sacked from jobs in the government. There was panic when Jewish targets were bombed. Almost the entire Jewish population of Iraq – over 120,000 people – asked to leave. They were airlifted to Israel in Operation Ezra and Nehemiah, 1950–51.

## EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

Explain **two** ways in which Jewish immigration into Israel in 1948–52 was different from Jewish immigration into Palestine in 1920–39. **(6 marks)**

## HINT

This question is asking you about differences. You could look at differences in the amount of immigration, or where the immigrants came from, or who authorised (gave official permission for) the immigration. You will need to refer back to Chapter 1 as well as reading this page carefully.

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## THE ISRAELI DEFENCE FORCES

At the start of the 1948–49 war, David Ben-Gurion had transformed the Haganah into the Israel Defence Forces or IDF. It had a small core of professional soldiers, but the majority were ‘reserves’. From 1949, every non-Arab 18-year-old male had to serve in the IDF for 30 months while females served for 18 months (this is known as conscription). Conscripted troops formed the majority of the IDF. All ex-conscripts then became the reserve forces, expected to train for a month every year until they were 55.

Defending the new country was such a priority that the IDF received the largest share of the government’s budget. By 1956, 35 per cent of all government spending was on defence.

Absorbing so many immigrants from such diverse backgrounds was a challenge. Most arrived with no money; many were in shock; some could not read or write; they spoke different languages. They all had to be housed and fed. Conditions early on were harsh. Temporary ‘tent cities’ were put up for shelter – in one there were 350 people to each shower and in another 56 to each toilet. Unemployment in these ‘cities’ was high.

The new immigrants also had to be **assimilated**. Israel was becoming a very divided society. ‘Old’ Jews – the pre-1949 settlers from Europe who belonged to the Ashkenazi branch of Judaism – dominated all the important positions in politics, the military and employment. The ‘new’ Jews, such as Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews from Arab states and North Africa, felt so excluded that there were riots in 1959 in the slum suburbs of Haifa. Different tactics were used to assimilate the immigrants.

- Since Judaism was the one thing that Israeli Jews held in common, religious leaders were given a high profile. They decided who was Jewish, which was important for deciding who could move to Israel under the Law of Return.
- Students were all taught in Hebrew.
- Communal farms called *kibbutzim* were established where everyone worked together.
- Ancient and recent Jewish history was used to give people a sense of unity and determination.
- Above all, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) united a diverse people into one nation, as everyone had to perform military service.

## EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Examples of the way history created the national spirit.

- In 1961, the nation was reminded of the horrors of the Holocaust when the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann was abducted from Argentina by the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, and taken to Jerusalem for a televised trial.
- In 1963–65, the first chief of staff of the IDF, Yigael Yadin, excavated Herod’s fortress at Masada, where 960 Jews had committed mass suicide rather than submit to the Romans. Until the 1990s, the IDF conscription ceremony included the words, ‘Masada shall not fall again’.
- Using history also involved editing out references to an Arabic past in Palestine. By 1950, about 200 Arabic place names had been changed, and empty Palestinian homes were destroyed or given to Jewish immigrants.

## ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH EGYPT

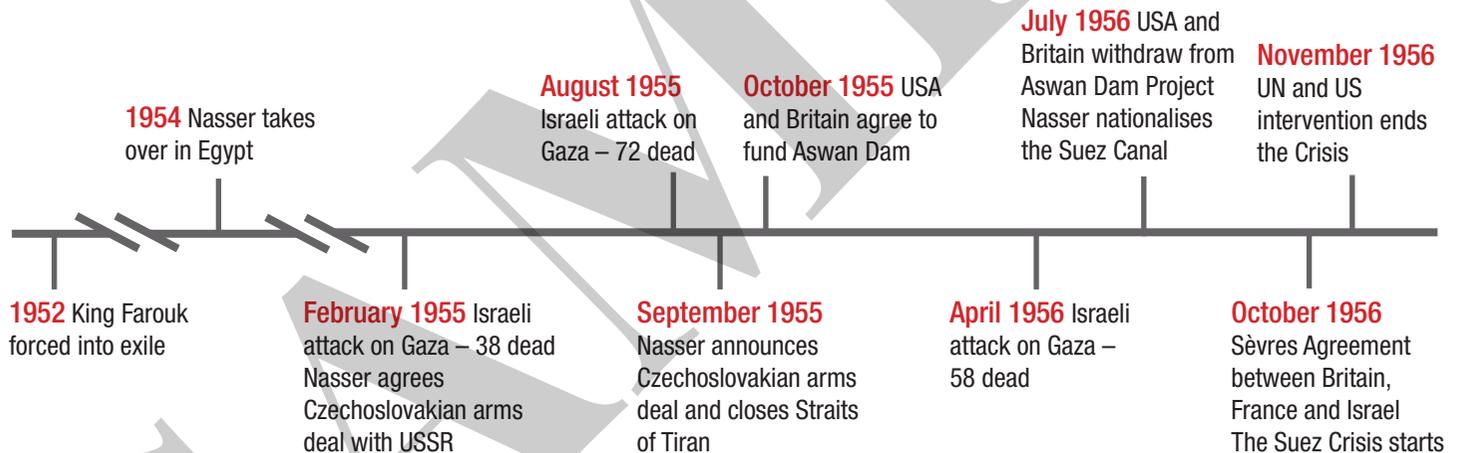
Israel's struggle to survive economically was made more difficult because the Arab League boycotted all trade with Israel, and also boycotted any foreign company trading with Israel. Egypt searched all ships using the Suez Canal, confiscating any items they thought had been purchased at an Israeli port or that might be bound for Israel's armed forces. From 1951, Egypt also started making life difficult for foreign ships that were heading up the Gulf of Aqaba towards Israel's southern port of Eilat. Since the Straits of Tiran, at the entrance of this gulf, were dominated by the Egyptian town of Sharm el Sheikh, this was easy to do. Although Egypt controlled Gaza, it also did nothing to stop the Fedayeen raids on Israel from there.

Relations then got even worse because of events inside Egypt, when the weak King Farouk was eventually replaced by a dynamic new leader, Nasser.

## 2.2 THE SUEZ CRISIS OF 1956

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the reasons why Nasser's ambitions and actions caused mounting concern in Britain, France and Israel
- Understand the terms of the Sèvres Agreement and the events of the Suez Crisis
- Understand the results of the Suez Crisis.



King Farouk of Egypt had a reputation as a **playboy**. He was only 16 when he became king in 1936 and he used his vast wealth to enjoy a lavish lifestyle. He owned dozens of palaces and cars, and 1,000 suits. While most Egyptians lived in poverty, he indulged in rich banquets and spent lavishly on his jewel and coin collections. Egyptians became increasingly frustrated with his incompetent and corrupt government. They also disliked that fact that Farouk did nothing to remove British involvement in Egyptian affairs. 80,000 British troops were still in the country, guarding the Suez Canal, even though Egypt had been an independent state for many years and there was no longer any threat of a Nazi invasion.

Egypt's defeat by Israel in the 1948–49 war triggered Farouk's removal. He was personally blamed for his troops' lack of preparation and faulty weapons. In 1952, the 32-year-old king was forced to abdicate by a group of disillusioned army officers.

### ACTIVITY

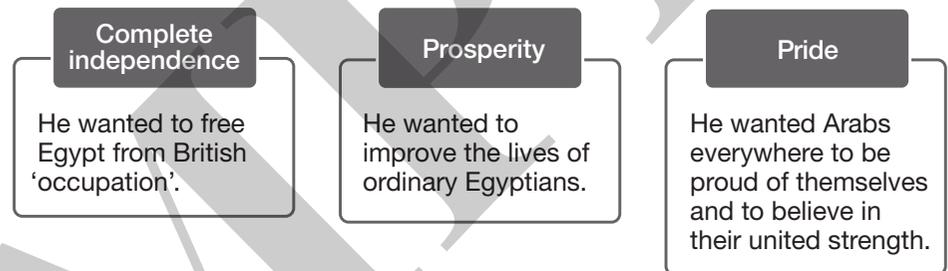
To help you understand this section, label a blank map with the following:

Countries: Israel, Egypt  
 Places: Cairo, Sharm el Sheikh, Aswan, Sinai, Gaza  
 Seas: Mediterranean, Red Sea  
 Waterways: River Nile, Suez Canal, Straits of Tiran  
 Now shade in the areas controlled by Israel and Egypt in 1952.

## NASSER AND EGYPT'S LEADERSHIP OF THE ARAB WORLD

In 1954, one of these army officers, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, took over the government. Nasser had ambitious dreams:

► Figure 2.5 Nasser's three dreams



He achieved the first ambition quickly. Britain agreed that its troops would withdraw from the Suez Canal zone. They agreed to return only if another country attacked the Canal.

Nasser then began his programme of internal reform. Most Egyptians lived in poverty, while a privileged few owned most of the arable land (land used for farming). Nasser planned to redistribute this land to the **peasants**, and to build schools and hospitals. He also aimed to dam the River Nile at Aswan in order to control the Nile's annual floods, and to provide hydroelectric power and water for **irrigation**. He asked the USA and Britain to lend him the money needed for the dam. They were keen for any ally against the USSR, and so they opened talks about the loan.

### KEY TERM

**Arab nationalism** the main goal of Arab nationalism was to achieve Arab independence, first from the Ottomans, and now from Britain and France. Some Arab nationalists wanted to create a single Arab state that would unite all the Arabs of North Africa and the Middle East. Other Arab governments did not agree with this aim, but they were united in their hatred of Israel

However, when Nasser began to work on his third ambition, the West started to have concerns. Nasser's broadcasts on Cairo Radio were heard by millions of Arabs. He wanted all Arab states to be proudly independent and neutral in the Cold War. He soon became the champion of **Arab nationalism**. But, if Egypt was going to lead and defend a united Arab world, Nasser would need to purchase modern weapons. He asked the USA, but they refused because they thought he would use the weapons against Israel.

## THE IMPACT OF ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA, 1955

### EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

#### WHY DID ISRAEL ATTACK GAZA?

Israel was not a priority for Nasser and he had made an effort to keep the border quiet, so the scale of Israeli actions against Gaza in 1955–56 is puzzling. One suggestion is that David Ben-Gurion feared a united Arab front led by Nasser, and the development of close ties between the USA and Egypt. If he could expose Nasser as weak, it would undermine him in Arab eyes. If he could push Nasser into asking the USSR for help, it would damage US–Egyptian relations. Ben-Gurion may also have wanted to provoke an Egyptian response in order to justify Israel's high military expenditure in a time of economic difficulty.

Humiliating proof of Egypt's military weakness came in February 1955 when the IDF launched a massive raid on an Egyptian army headquarters in Gaza, killing 38 Egyptian soldiers. The IDF claimed it was a reprisal for the killing of a cyclist in Israel by Palestinian militants, one of whom carried documents linking him with Egyptian intelligence.

The Egyptian public demanded revenge and Palestinians in Gaza rioted, chanting, 'Give us weapons'. Nasser needed to act if he was to keep his image as the strongest leader of the Arab world. He negotiated a secret arms deal with Czechoslovakia, a Soviet ally. In return for \$300 million of Egyptian cotton, Egypt was rearmed with massive Soviet firepower: 100 self-propelled guns, 200 armoured personnel carriers, 300 tanks, 200 MIG-15 fighters and 50 bombers.

In August 1955, a Fedayeen raid killed 11 Israelis; the IDF reprisal attack on Gaza left 72 Egyptian soldiers dead. In response, Nasser made public the Czechoslovakian arms deal. He also imposed a complete blockade on all trade through the Straits of Tiran. His popularity in Egypt had never been higher: he was standing up to Israel.

In two critical respects, though, Nasser's actions **backfired**.

- Israel decided war against Egypt was inevitable and it would be better to fight sooner rather than wait until Nasser's new Soviet weapons had arrived. In November 1955, an IDF attack on Gaza killed 50 Egyptian soldiers and, in April 1956, an Israeli mortar attack on Gaza caused 58 civilian deaths. However, these efforts didn't provoke Egypt into a war.
- News that Egypt was purchasing large quantities of Soviet weapons caused shock and concern in the West. In October 1955, the USA and Britain offered to loan Egypt \$270 million for the Aswan Dam. They hoped to win Egypt back from an **alliance** with the USSR. But that failed to happen and, in July 1956, the USA and Britain suddenly took back their offer. Perhaps they hoped this tactic would make Nasser rethink his Soviet alliance.

### KEY TERM

**nationalise** to transfer control of something (e.g. a company) from private to state ownership. So the Canal was now owned by the Egyptian government

### NASSER NATIONALISES THE SUEZ CANAL

Nasser's response a week later came as a shock: he **nationalised** the Suez Canal. He said that he would compensate the shareholders and use the toll money from the Canal to build the Aswan Dam. His action was greeted with delight throughout the Arab world, but with furious protests from Britain and France. Both considered the action illegal, and a major threat to their trade and position in the Middle East.

### ACTIVITY

- 1 Imagine that you are the editor of an Egyptian newspaper. Under a bold headline, write a paragraph praising Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. You could explain how this action will help Nasser to achieve his dreams for Egypt.
- 2 Now imagine that you are the editor of a British newspaper. Under an equally bold headline, write a paragraph explaining why you strongly condemn Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal.

**SOURCE E**

Crowds cheer Nasser following his nationalisation of the Suez Canal, 1956.

Britain, France and Israel were united in their anger against Egypt, and had growing concerns about Nasser's popularity and new military strength. They decided to work together.

### NASSER'S MOTIVES FOR NATIONALISING THE SUEZ CANAL

It was the decision of the USA and Britain to withdraw the loan to build the Aswan Dam that led to Nasser nationalising the Canal. He wanted to show Britain and France that he did not need their support and he could find his own resources to build the dam.

But he had other motives too.

- He wanted to show that he was the leader of the Arab world and to promote Arab nationalism.
- He wanted to gain full independence for Egypt and break free from British colonialism. Egypt's future should be decided by Egyptians, not the West.
- He was keen to improve Egypt's economy and the lives of its people. The Aswan Dam would provide irrigation and hydro-electricity to boost agriculture. Nationalising the Suez Canal would provide Nasser with his own funds to build the dam.

### THE SÈVRES AGREEMENT

In secret, David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan, the head of the IDF, flew to France on 22 October 1956. At an isolated house outside Sèvres, they met with French and British ministers. Over the next 3 days, a plan was made: Israel would attack Egypt; Britain and France could then invade Egypt, while pretending to keep the peace. If the plan succeeded, Israel's security and ability to trade would be assured, while Britain and France would regain control of the Suez Canal. All three hoped to overthrow Nasser.

### THE SUEZ CRISIS, 1956

The Sèvres Agreement was immediately put into action. On 29 October 1956, Israel invaded Egypt, occupied Gaza and dropped paratroopers into Sinai, near the Suez Canal. A further 1,000 men in 200 vehicles set off for Sharm el Sheikh

across almost 300 km of desert. On 30 October, Britain and France ordered Israel and Egypt to stop fighting and to withdraw 16 km either side of the Canal. As predicted, Nasser refused. So, in early November, Britain and France launched an airborne attack, defeating Egyptian forces and advancing towards the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, Israel had taken control of Sharm el Sheikh and ended the blockade. From a military point of view, everything seemed to be going well, except that Nasser sank ships in the Suez Canal to block it.

However, from a political point of view, the action of Britain and France was a failure. On 6 November, UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld called a ceasefire. The American president, Dwight Eisenhower, was highly critical of the attack and the USSR threatened to intervene on Egypt's side. Britain, France and Israel were forced to withdraw their troops from Egypt and a UN peacekeeping force was sent in to supervise the ceasefire. The whole crisis had lasted only 8 days, but it had a powerful impact.



- ① 29 October  
Israeli paratroopers land east of Suez Canal.
- 30 October  
Britain and France order Israel and Egypt to withdraw their troops 16 km on each side of the Suez Canal. Israel accepts, but Egypt refuses.
- ② 30 October–5 November  
Israeli troops advance across Sinai.
- ③ 31 October  
British and French bomb Egyptian airfields.
- ④ 2 November  
Israeli paratroopers dropped near Al Tor.
- ⑤ 5–6 November  
British and French forces invade Port Said and move inland to take control of the Suez Canal.
- ⑥ 5 November  
Israeli soldiers capture Sharm el Sheikh and lift the blockade on the Straits of Tiran.
- ⑦ 5 November  
Nasser sinks ships to block the Canal.
- 6 November  
Britain and France strongly criticised by USA & USSR. Britain and France agree to UN ceasefire.

▲ Figure 2.6 The Suez Crisis

### EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

SKILLS ADAPTIVE LEARNING

Explain **two** causes of the Suez Crisis of 1956.

**(8 marks)**

#### HINT

This question is asking you about causation. You could explain the causes of the Suez Crisis from two angles – the reasons why the Israelis decided to attack, and the reasons for British and French involvement.

### RESULTS OF THE SUEZ CRISIS

- The short campaign was a success for Israel. It gained no land since it had to withdraw from Sinai and Gaza, but it had achieved both of its objectives: security and the ability to trade. Egypt's military strength had been temporarily wrecked, Fedayeen bases had been destroyed, and the blockade on the Straits of Tiran had been lifted. The IDF had also shown that it could beat an Arab state and it had captured many weapons. UN

peacekeepers were sent to Sinai to keep the peace on the Egyptian–Israeli border, which added to Israel’s sense of security. Morale in Israel was higher than ever.

- For Britain and France, however, the Suez Crisis was a humiliating disaster. They had failed to remove Nasser or to regain control of the Suez Canal. By using such underhand tactics, the international reputation of both countries was damaged. They were also now seen as allies of Israel and therefore lost influence with other Middle East countries. The crisis caused deep political divisions in Britain and France, and the British prime minister, Anthony Eden, resigned.

## SOURCE F

A Soviet cartoon showing Egypt as a sphinx and a defeated British lion and French cockerel. The sphinx has the lion’s tail in its paws.



## ACTIVITY

Study Source F.

- 1 What do you think the cartoonist is trying to say?
- 2 Do you think it is an accurate message or is there any reason to doubt it?

- The Crisis marked the arrival of the world’s two **superpowers** on the Middle Eastern stage. The USSR now had a firm ally in the area, Egypt, which looked to it for protection. Meanwhile, the USA emerged as the most important Western power in the region, as Britain and France had been humiliated and forced to back down by the Americans.
- Egypt gained from the crisis. Nasser now had complete control of the Suez Canal (the sunken ships only took 6 months to remove). The USSR agreed to finance the Aswan Dam, so Nasser was also able to go ahead with his plans to improve life for Egyptians. With Soviet support, he was also able to rebuild his armed forces. However, life became very difficult for Egypt’s 40,000 Jews. Nasser seized Jewish businesses and banned Jews from working as teachers, lawyers or doctors. About 25,000 Jews migrated as a result.

## SOURCE G

Nasser and the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, open the Aswan Dam, 1964.

## ACTIVITY

When historians consider the significance of an event, they ask questions like ‘How deeply were people’s lives affected by the event?’, ‘How many people were affected by it?’, ‘Was the impact just local, or wider than that?’, and ‘Did the event cause a stir at the time? Is it still remembered today?’

To work out the significance of the Suez Crisis, it helps to understand the situation before and after the event. Draw a table with two columns and three rows. Label the columns ‘Before the Suez Crisis’ and ‘After the Suez Crisis’. Label the rows ‘Israel’s security’, ‘Egypt’s strength’, and ‘Britain’s influence’.

- 1 Fill in the table using the information in this section.
- 2 Which country was the most affected by the Suez Crisis? How did you decide?
- 3 In your view, does the Suez Crisis count as an event of major significance? Give three reasons for your view.



- Nasser’s gains from Suez extended beyond Egypt. He was hailed as a hero by other Arab states for standing up to the bullying tactics of the British and French. In 1958, he was invited by Syria to join their two countries to form a United Arab Republic, with Nasser as the first president. Some Arabs hoped that the UAR would be the first step towards creating an Arab state that would unite all the Arabs of North Africa and the Middle East. When Nasser visited the Syrian capital, Damascus, in February 1958, he was cheered by massive crowds. The UAR experiment did not last, since Syria withdrew in 1961 (it disliked being the junior partner), but the fact that it had been proposed at all was a measure of Nasser’s popularity and importance in the Arab world.
- Of course, the Suez Crisis did not solve the underlying dispute between Israel and its neighbours – Israel’s right to exist. Though Nasser now focused on internal reforms, Syria was as determined as ever to destroy Israel.

## THE ATTITUDES OF THE SUPERPOWERS

Both the USSR and the USA had a keen interest in the events in Egypt. At this time they were involved in a Cold War and each of them was determined to maintain an influence in the region. The USSR had already increased its standing in Egypt by allowing its ally, Czechoslovakia, to supply Soviet weapons. When the attack on the Canal took place, the USA criticised what Britain and France had done and called a United Nations Security Council meeting to condemn the attack. Although the USA did not lose face over what happened, the USSR gained influence as the Western allies squabbled among themselves over what had happened.

## RECAP

### RECALL QUIZ

- 1 When did the British finally leave Palestine?
- 2 Name the five states that invaded Israel in 1948.
- 3 Give two reasons why Israel was so successful in the First Arab–Israeli War.
- 4 Give two reasons for the flight of Palestinians in the period 1947–49.
- 5 What was UNRWA?
- 6 Give two reasons why Israel passed the Law of Return.
- 7 In what year did each of the following happen: the overthrow of King Farouk of Egypt; Nasser becomes leader of Egypt; Nasser nationalises the Suez Canal?
- 8 Why did the USA and Britain withdraw their offer to finance the Aswan Dam?
- 9 Give four ways in which Egypt changed in the period 1954–56.
- 10 Give two consequences of the Suez Crisis for Israel.

### CHECKPOINT

#### STRENGTHEN

- S1** Explain two ways in which the state of Israel by 1949 was different from the Jewish state that the Partition Plan of 1947 had proposed.
- S2** Explain the importance of: the Straits of Tiran to Israel; the Suez Canal to Britain; the Aswan Dam to Egypt.
- S3** What did the USSR gain from the Suez Crisis?

#### CHALLENGE

- C1** How far was the UN responsible for Israel's success in the 1948–49 war?
- C2** How far did Israel change in the years 1948 to 1956?
- C3** How far were the USA and USSR responsible for change in the Middle East in 1947–56?

### SUMMARY

- In May 1948, after the British withdrew, five Arab states invaded the newly created state of Israel. This led to the Arab–Israeli War, 1948–49.
- By 1949, Israel had survived and captured more land, but 700,000 Palestinians had become refugees.
- Surrounded by enemies, Israel focused on defence and increasing its population.
- Nasser took over in Egypt in 1954 and his plans for reform were supported by the West.
- However, when he bought Soviet weapons, America and Britain withdrew support for his Aswan Dam project.
- To raise money, Nasser took over the Suez Canal, which infuriated Britain and France.
- Israel was concerned by Egypt's behaviour over the Straits of Tiran and its military strength.
- In October 1956, Britain, France and Israel conspired together to attack Egypt.
- The Suez Crisis lasted 8 days: though Israel achieved its goals, Britain and France were humiliated.
- Egypt gained from the Suez Crisis: Nasser was now seen as a hero in the Arab world and, with Soviet help, Egypt built the Aswan Dam and rearmed.

# EXAM GUIDANCE: PART (C) QUESTIONS

A01

A02

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING,  
DECISION MAKING

**Question to be answered: How far was Britain responsible for increased violence in the Middle East in the period 1917–47?**

**You may use the following in your answer:**

- the Peel Commission
- the Jewish insurgency

**You must also use information of your own.**

(16 marks)

1

## Analysis Question 1: What is the question type testing?

In this question you have to demonstrate that you have knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied. In this particular case it is knowledge and understanding of the role of Britain in the period 1917–47 and how there was an increase in violence in the region.

You also have to explain, analyse and make judgements about historical events and periods to give an explanation and reach a judgement on the role of various factors in bringing about changes.

2

## Analysis Question 2: What do I have to do to answer the question well?

- You have been given two factors on which to write: you don't have to use those factors (though it might be wise to do so). You must, however, include at least one factor, other than those you have been given.
- That factor might be the terms of the Mandate, or the Nazi policies in Germany in the 1930s.
- But you must avoid just giving the information. What changes did these events cause?
- You are also asked 'how far' Britain was responsible for the change. So, when discussing these events, you need to consider whether it was Britain that was causing the change.

3

## Analysis Question 3: Are there any techniques I can use to make it very clear that I am doing what is needed to be successful?

This is a 16-mark question and you need to make sure you give a substantial answer. You will be up against time pressures so some useful techniques to help you succeed might be.

- Don't write a long introduction. Give a brief introduction that answers the question straight away and shows what your paragraphs are going to be about.
- To make sure you stay focused on the question and avoid just writing narrative, try to use the words of the question at the beginning of each paragraph.
- Remember this question is a causation question, so (as in Question b) make sure what you are writing about explains why this did or did not mean Britain caused change.



### Answer

Here is a student response with teacher comments.

*Good introduction.*

*Nice paragraph. Answers the question, gives contextual knowledge and links violence to British actions.*

*Good detail, linking violence back to a British decision. However, you do need to refer to this violence as the 'Jewish insurgency' in order to make the link to the question explicit.*

*This is a very disappointing paragraph. Can you say what those policies were? You need to mention how they led to increased immigration, British controls, Jewish terrorism and perhaps the Holocaust and US Zionist pressure. Is any of that Britain's fault?*

*Good concise finish.*

*This period was one where there was an increase in violence in the Middle East. A major cause of this was a hardening of attitudes between Jews and Palestinians and in how both those groups viewed the British. British policies in this period were partly responsible for this change, but some factors (e.g. the impact of Nazi policies) were not the responsibility of the British.*

*There was a change in the amount of violence in this period and Britain was responsible for much of this violence, especially up to 1948. For example, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which agreed to the use of Palestine as a Jewish homeland; Britain then allowed Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s. This resulted in considerable tension and increasing levels of violence as Palestinian Arabs resented the fact that they had not been granted independence at the end of the First World War. They blamed Britain for this, and even more deeply resented the fact that they had not been consulted about Jewish immigration. They felt they were being swamped, so they turned to violence to show their discontent and to try to get the British to change their mind.*

*Arab resentment escalated from clashes with Jews into a full scale revolt when Britain published the Peel Commission's proposal to partition Palestine, an idea Arabs rejected. However, Britain's decision to shelve the Peel proposals in 1939 and then its decision to strictly limit Jewish migration after the Second World War upset the Jews in the region and caused an increase in Jewish terrorism. Gangs like the Irgun and Lehi were determined to force a change of policy on Britain. In October 1945, they blew up the Palestine railway system and, over the next 3 years, they killed British troops, bombed airfields and bridges, and targeted 'anything British'. They even blew up the British headquarters at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in July 1946.*

*However, there were definitely some causes of violence in the region that were not Britain's fault. For example, Britain could not be blamed for what happened as a result of the impact of the anti-Jewish policies adopted by the Nazis in the 1930s. That had a major impact on events in Palestine.*

*In conclusion, Britain was responsible for much of the increased violence because of policies such as the Balfour Declaration and Peel Commission, but not for tension created as a result of Nazi policies.*

### Work with a friend

Discuss with a friend how you would turn the weaker paragraphs in the answer to ones that would enable the whole answer to get very high marks.

Does your answer do the following?

- Identify causes
- Provide detailed information to support the causes
- Show how the causes led to the given outcome
- Provide factors other than those given in the question
- Address 'how far?'