

T-CHART: ISRAEL/PALESTINIANS

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Assignment: Read the passages on *Israel & The Palestinians: The "Right of Return."* Then complete the chart below, listing reasons why the Palestinians should be granted the right of return in the left column, and reasons why the Palestinians should not be granted the right of return in the right column.

Make as many points as you need for each side. The first three are already labeled for you.

Reasons why the Palestinians should be given the right of return	Reasons why the Palestinians should not be given the right of return
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which side do you agree with? Cite examples from the text to support your answer:

Israel & The Palestinians: The “Right of Return”

One of the most difficult issues that Israelis and Palestinians must solve in order to work out a peace agreement is the issue of the “Palestinian right of return.” When the state of Israel was established in 1947, a war broke out between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Many of the Arab residents who lived in what became Israel fled their homes during the war. Many more fled during the 1967 war. Now, many Palestinians want the right to return to their homes in Israel. This is an issue that is very emotional for people on both sides. Read the following passages, and then discuss the reasons why the Palestinians should and should not be allowed the right of return.

I am Israeli and I am 15 years old. My grandparents came to Israel from Europe, where they were both in concentration camps during World War II. My parents were born here, just like me, my older sister, and my younger brother. For us, Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, and it is the place where we belong.

I know that the Palestinians say they want to come back. But I don’t understand why. They have lived in other countries for many years. Palestinians my age were born in other countries, just like their parents and their grandparents. I feel like an Israeli. Why doesn’t a Palestinian born in Jordan feel like a Jordanian?

Jews come to Israel from all over the world, and we treat them like they belong here from the moment they arrive. When the Palestinians fled to other countries, they were forced to live in refugee camps and treated like second-class citizens. If the Palestinians are mad at anyone, they should be mad at the Arabs who made them stay in refugee camps instead of letting them get on with their lives.

There are a lot of people in Israel. I don’t know where all the Palestinians would go if they did decide to come back. There aren’t enough houses to go around. And what about work? Lots of people who live here already have trouble finding jobs—what are the Palestinians supposed to do if they come back?

I think the Palestinians should get on with their lives. I don’t understand why anyone would spend their entire life trying to get the right to move to a country they’ve never even been to. I know that being forced to leave your home is hard, but my grandparents did it, and they lived long happy lives. Why can’t the Palestinians?

I am Palestinian and I am 14 years old. I live with my family in a refugee camp in southern Lebanon. My grandparents were born in a village near the city of Haifa in what is now Israel. They had a farm there. Then the Jews came from Europe and the war happened and my grandparents had to flee to Lebanon.

Life is hard here. We can’t leave the country because we’re not citizens of Lebanon, and we don’t have passports. It’s hard to get jobs, and it’s hard for us to go to college or university. For us, our best hope is that we can go home to my grandparents’ farm. Then we’d be full citizens with all the rights other people have.

This is about what’s right. No one invited the Jews to come to Palestine. They just showed up. Our land was taken away from us. Since then, we’ve been living in terrible conditions in Lebanon. I don’t blame the Lebanese. They didn’t ask for all of us to come here, but we didn’t have anywhere else to go. The Lebanese government shouldn’t have to take responsibility for a bunch of outsiders.

The Israelis say that there’s no room for us. They say that there wouldn’t be any jobs for us. But Jews come to Israel all the time. Since the early 1990s, nearly 750,000 Jews have come to Israel from Russia, and the Israelis never said, “No, you can’t come, there’s no space or jobs for you.” But that’s what they say to us. I think the Israelis are just trying to keep us out. They want Israel to be only for the Jews.

I just want the same chance for a normal life as anyone else. But I can’t have that chance when I’m living in a refugee camp. The Israelis should admit that they did something wrong and give us back what is rightfully ours.

Refugee: a person who seeks shelter from war, disaster, or persecution by leaving their home.