

**Lesson/Unit Title:** *Determined to Stay: An Introduction*

**Grade Level:** 7-12

NOTE: This is a written description of the lesson on the *Determined to Stay: An Introduction* slide show. It is designed for classrooms reading all or excerpts from the book *Determined to Stay: Palestinian Youth Fight for Their Village*. If you want a stand-alone lesson that connects issues facing youth in the US and Palestine, particularly forced displacement, criminalization, and resistance, use the lesson titled “*Determined to Stay: A Case Study Examining the Idea of Home—Connecting Silwan, Palestine, to Communities in the United States.*” It’s a similar lesson, but uses fewer biographies and a jigsaw activity rather than a meet and greet.

As you think about your classroom, if you have concerns that asking your students to “become” Palestinians may be problematic at the beginning of the unit, you may want to use the jigsaw approach rather than the meet and greet. The goal is to get students excited about reading the book.

### **Ethnic Studies Values & Principles**

- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native peoples and people of color.
- Celebrate and honor Native peoples of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth.
- Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge.
- Critique empire and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, patriarchy, and heteropatriarchy.
- Challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels.
- Connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on the global and local levels.
- Conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for post-imperial life that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

### **Standards Alignment**

This will vary, depending on your state and district standards.

### **Lesson Purpose & Overview**

Students focus on the concept of home and how this is challenged by war, gentrification, violence, and other aspects of colonialism. Using stories from the Palestinian village of Silwan in Jerusalem and the United States, students draw parallels between young people’s experiences in these two situations. They explore how these experiences challenge their notion of home and the impact of colonial conquest on identity formation and the will to resist.

### **Key Terms**

Apartheid  
Zionism  
Settler  
Checkpoint

### **Guiding Questions:**

- How do you define home?
- How are our homes affected by things like war, gentrification, and violence?

- What is happening to youth in Silwan and what parallels can be drawn to youth experiences in the US?
- How do youth and their families resist?

## Lesson Outline

1. **Land Acknowledgment:** Here’s an example for California: “As we come together today, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of California’s First People. Let us acknowledge their past, present,
  - and future contributions to our California culture—and their struggles to be resilient in passing on their words, songs, and traditions in caring for the lands for all to live on.”
2. **Cultural Energizer:** Play [“I’m Coming Home”](#) By P Diddy and Dirty Money (see slide 3 for words). Ask students to reflect on the following questions:
  - How do you define home?
  - Why do people leave their homes? What might force them to have to leave?
3. **Videos.** Ask students to keep those questions in mind and take notes as they watch the videos on slide 5. Then ask them to talk to a partner. Tell them:
  - Person with the earlier birth month goes first
  - Be prepared to share out at least one response/idea for each reflection question
  - Take note of new ideas and add them to your notes
4. Bring the class back together and discuss:
  - What did you learn from the videos?
  - What did you and your partner discuss about the following questions:
    - How do you define home?
    - Why do people leave their homes? What might force them to have to leave?
    - What questions do you have?
5. **Review the maps** on slides 7 and 8.

The map on the left of slide 7 locates Palestine (Israel) on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at the crossroads of Eurasia, North Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula. The map on the right of slide 7 is a closer view of Palestine (Israel) and neighboring countries. Students can see the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including where Jerusalem is located.

The map on slide 8 shows the village of Silwan just south of Jerusalem’s Old City. It also shows some of the many Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem in violation of international law. North of the Old City is Sheik Jarrah, which, like Silwan, is under constant threat of seizure by Israeli settlers and authorities.

6. **Review vocabulary** students may need for the jigsaw activity (see slide 9):

Apartheid	A system of <b>institutionalized segregation based on race</b> in South Africa. The term is often used to describe Israel’s similar system of racialized discrimination and separation.	
Zionism	A <b>political ideology</b> that calls for the creation and expansion of Israel as a Jewish state in historic Palestine.	

Settler	An Israeli citizen who lives on Palestinian land or takes over a Palestinian home. (Similar to European settlers stealing Native American lands.)	
Checkpoint	A military barrier used by the Israeli military to control [Palestinians] movement from various areas.	

**7.Meet and Greet** (slide 9): The lesson is set up so that students “become” one of the people in *Determined to Stay* and tell their story to classmates. All of the students read and discuss Sara’s story—the first story in the [Determined to Stay Intro text set](#). There are 10 additional stories. Divide the text set so students only receive Sara’s story and one other. If you have 20-30 students, 2 or 3 students will read the same story.

Distribute copies of the [graphic organizer](#) and Sara’s story.

STEP 1: Start with Sara’s story. Tell your students:

- We’re going to learn more about Palestine, its connection to issues in the US and the book *Determined to Stay* by meeting some of the people in the book. In a small group, you’ll read the story of one of those people, put yourself in their shoes, and then introduce them to some of your classmates. For a little while today, you will “become” one of the people in the book. Meeting some of the characters in a book makes it easier to get involved in the story. In this case, the characters are real people.
- To start, we will all read Sara’s story. Use the [graphic organizer](#) to take notes. After students read and take notes on Sara’s story, discuss as a class.

STEP 2: Divide students into groups of 2 or 3 (adapt to class size as necessary). Give one of the remaining 10 stories to each small group. Tell your students:

- Each small group has the story of another person in the book. They might be from Palestine or they might be from the United States and have a special connection to Palestine.
- Read the story and take notes on your graphic organizer. What stood out to you?
- Discuss the story with your small group.
- Ask/answer clarifying questions
- Just for a few minutes, put yourself in that person’s shoes. You are going to tell their story to some of your classmates in first person, as if you were that person. How does that feel? How can you do that in a respectful way? How will you begin?

STEP 3: If your class is meeting in person, have the students get up, take their graphic organizers, and walk around the room to meet and greet each other. Encourage them to talk in first person, e.g., starting “My name is Jawad and I am from the village of Silwan. . . .” Each student should talk with at least three other people.

If you’re meeting online, scramble the breakout groups, give students about 10 minutes, then scramble the breakout groups again and give students another 10 minutes.

Tell students:

Go “meet and greet” other people whose stories are part of *Determined to Stay: Palestinian Youth Fight for Their Village*.

- If you are in the classroom, get up and walk around the room to meet and talk. Bring your graphic organizer. If you are meeting virtually, your teacher will send you to a new breakout group.
- Tell your story in first person, as if it were you. Answer clarifying questions.
- Then listen and take notes on other people’s stories. Ask clarifying questions.

- Get stories from at least 3 other people.

8. Bring the class back together for a **full-group discussion**. Some questions you might want to discuss:

- Whose story surprised you the most? Why? What did you learn?
- Whose story did you connect to the most?
- What did you learn that reminded you of what has happened in your own community or something that has happened to others?
- Based on the people you met, what questions do you have about *Determined to Stay*?
- What questions do you have about Palestine?
- What do you predict the book will be about?

(Depending on the themes you will be covering in the unit, you might want to dig deeper into comparisons of settler colonialism—connecting to the specific history of your area; the impact of criminalization of youth; similarities and differences between forced displacement in Palestine and the US; and/or the role of community wealth in resistance and resilience.)

9. Chart students' questions and predictions. Tell students:

- I hope this activity made you excited to read *Determined to Stay*. We'll see what questions we can answer as we go along, and we'll add lots of new ones.