

**Lesson/Unit Title:** *Determined to Stay: A Case Study Examining the Idea of Home—Connecting Silwan, Palestine, to Communities in the United States*

**Grade Level:** 7-12

NOTE: This is a written description of the lesson on the [Determined to Stay Slide Deck](#). This lesson is a stand-alone introduction to issues that connect youth in Palestine and in the United States. If you are introducing a unit focused on the book *Determined to Stay: Palestinian Youth Fight for Their Village*, use the lesson titled “Determined to Stay: A Meet and Greet Introduction.” It’s a similar lesson, but includes an expanded set of biographies for the meet and greet activity.

**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,
  - o 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 a song about home or choose a short poem (song suggestion: Daughtry: Coming Home, Poem suggestion: [What is home?](#) Musab Abu Toha  
 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:
    - o How do you define home?
    - o Why do people leave their homes? What might force them to have to leave?
    - o 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.Jigsaw Activity** (slide 9): Divide students into groups of four (this works best in person, but can be easily adapted to breakout groups online). Distribute copies of the [graphic organizer](#) and Sara's story (Story A in [the text set](#)).

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

- o We're going to learn more about Palestine and its connection to issues in the US by reading interviews with Palestinian youth and with a Native American from California.. We'll read different interviews and then share what we've learned.
- o To start, everyone in the groups will read Story A (Sara's Story). Use the [graphic organizer](#) to take notes.
- o In your group, read and discuss Sara's story. Add to your notes from the discussion.

STEP 2: Tell your students:

- o Now we're ready to read a few more stories. Decide who in your group is letter B, C, D and E.
- o Read the [story](#) that matches your letter. Take notes on your story.

STEP 3: Distribute Stories B, C, D, and E to the appropriate students in each group. (Alternatively, you can assign students to groups and stories ahead of time).

Tell your students:

- o Get together with the other people from your class who read the same letter story as you.
- o Discuss the story. What stood out to you?
- o Share [your notes](#) from the story and add things you may have missed
- o Ask/answer clarifying questions

STEP 4: Tell your students:

- o Return to your home group
- o Share a summary of your story - your group mates will fill in their charts for your story
- o Take turns until you all have A, B, C, and D completed

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?
- What are some ways that Palestinians are resisting efforts to force them from their homes? What are ways that people in your community resist?
- Based on the stories we shared, what do you think might be similar about Palestine and the US? What is different?

(Depending on your class and situation, 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.)

### Assessment, Application, Action & Reflection

Have students pick the narrator of one of the stories and write a letter or record a flipgrid to them (slide 11). Suggestions for topics include:

- What home means to you.
- What did you learn from their story (and the lesson)?
- How is their idea of home the same and/or different from yours?
- What is happening in your community that is similar to what they are experiencing?
- What connections did you make to their story?
- What questions do you have for them?

