

RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON ISRAEL FOR GRADES K – 12

PRESENTED BY THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE



These widely available books for children and teens, grades K-12, present the lives of typical Israeli children and young adults in every day settings. Some of these books are historical, some involve politics and some just tell a story about someone's life who happens to live in Israel. Each book has been chosen based on its quality, the presentation of Israel, and its avoidance of stereotypes in presenting the complexities of the region. They are suitable for personal reading, class discussions and reading assignments.

Kindergarten

Chicken Man

Michelle Edwards (Junebug Books, 2007)

When Rody is put in charge of the chicken coop on the kibbutz he lives on in Israel, he never wants to leave. But when he is transferred to another job, he learns important lessons about hard work and happiness.

Israel ABCs

Holly Schroeder (Picture Window Books, 2004)

This book highlights the wonderful people and places in Israel.

Welcome to Israel

Lilly Rivlin (Behrman House Publishing, 2000)

This book introduces readers to Israeli children living all over Israel. Through interactive and colorful features, children are able to learn about the unique nature of Israel and all the wonderful people who inhabit the land.

Elementary School

Behold the Trees

Sue Alexander & Leonid Gore (Scholastic, 2001)

Behold the Trees tells the history of Israel through the fate of its trees.

Dog of Knots

Kathy Walden Kaplan (Eerdmans, 2005)

This coming of age story tells of nine-year-old child, Mayim, who lost her father in the Six Day War when she was a baby. Describing Mayim's new life in Haifa, *Dog of Knots* paints a touching picture of daily life in Israel while examining attitudes toward war and peace.

Duel

David Grossman (Bloomsbury, 2004)

Duel is a mystery/coming of age story narrated by twelve-year-old David in Jerusalem, who befriends 70-year-old Heinrich Rosenberg.

Joshua's Dream

Sheila Segal (UAHC Press, 1992)

In this story Joshua learns about the heroic efforts of his Great Aunt Rivka and her hard work in settling and transforming the land of Israel. Joshua's love for his heritage climaxes when he has the opportunity to plant a tree in Israel.

Running on Eggs

Anna Levine (Cricket Books, 1999)

Running on Eggs is the story of a tentative friendship between Karen, an Israeli student, and Yasmine, her Arab contemporary, who train together for their school track team.

Samir and Yonatan

Daniella Carmi & Yael Lotan (Scholastic, 2002)

Samir, a Palestinian youth, must undergo an operation at an Israeli hospital and finds himself in a ward with Israeli children, including Yonatan. Despite Yonatan's introverted nature, he befriends Samir and draws him into a world where sickness, fear, and conflict can be overcome.

Middle School

After the War

Carole Matas (Simon and Schuster, 1997)

Ruth, 15, has survived the Nazi concentration camp, Buchenwald. She meets Saul, a young emissary from pre-state Israel, who persuades her to join a group of Jewish children on their way to find refuge in British Mandate-era Palestine.

Journey of Hope: the Story of Ilan Ramon, Israel's First Astronaut

Alan D. Abbey (Gefen, 2003)

Journey of Hope captures the courage and heroism of the life and death of Colonel Ilan Ramon. The book is filled with NASA photographs, images of Holocaust artifacts that Ramon carried with him onto the *Columbia* shuttle, the famous Hebrew poem read at his funeral and the complete transcript of President George Bush's comments at the official memorial ceremony for the Columbia Seven.

One More River

Lynne Reid Banks (HarpeCollins, 1993)

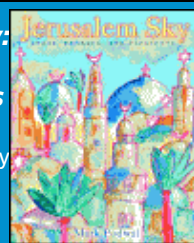
Fourteen-year-old spoiled Lesley moves with her parents from Canada to Israel.

Left behind is her brother Noah, a family outcast. Set in the period around the Six-Day War, *One More River* follows Lesley as she adjusts to her new life on an Israeli kibbutz and explores her friendship with Mustapha, an Arab boy from a nearby village.

Jerusalem Sky: Stars, Crosses and Crescents

Mark H. Podwal (Bantam Doubleday Dell Books, 2005)

Jerusalem Sky provides a starting point for discussing current events and their historical roots with children. Weaving legends and stories in with his magnificent artwork, Mark Podwal tells the tale of Jerusalem — famed city, historical battleground and shared sacred space of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.



Middle School (cont.)

Broken Bridge

Lynne Reid Banks (HarperCollins, 1996)
Broken Bridge, the sequel to *One More River*, continues the story of Lesley Shelby, whose parents came from Canada to live on a kibbutz in Israel.

The Return

Sonia Levitin (Random House, 1998)
The Return tells about Operation Moses – the 1985 airlifting of Ethiopian Jews from Sudan to Israel. Twelve-year-old Desta accompanies her brother and younger sister from Ethiopia to the Sudan, where Israelis are waiting to transport them to the Jewish state.

The Singing Mountain

Sonia Levitin (Simon and Schuster's, 2000)
What starts out to be a fun-filled trip to Israel with friends before starting college turns out to be a spiritual awakening for Mitch Green. To the consternation of his assimilated parents, Mitch becomes a *baal teshuvah* – someone who returns to his Judaism – and decides to stay in Israel after his trip.

High School

A Late Divorce

A.B. Yehoshua (Harvest Books, 1993)
A grandfather returns to Israel from America to get a divorce from his estranged wife, who is institutionalized in a mental hospital. Another woman, who is pregnant, is awaiting his return in America.

Alex, Building a Life

Alex Singer (Gefen Books, 1996)
This book contains the letters and thoughts of an American boy who was killed while in the Israeli Defense Forces. This moving compilation shows Alex Singer's heroism and passion for Israel.

Aliya

Liel Leibovitz (St. Martin's Press, 2005)
In this book, Liel Leibovitz looks at the various motivations for making Aliya. Through several narratives, Leibovitz shows that the reasons Jews move to Israel are as diverse and varied as the Jewish people themselves.

Exodus

Leon Uris (Bantam, 1983)
Leon Uris's classic novel tells the story of how Jews who survived the Holocaust in Europe struggled to come to pre-state Israel and helped create the Jewish state in 1948.

How to Ruin a Summer Vacation

Simone Elkeles (Flux, 2006)
The last place sixteen year-old Amy Nelson wants to spend her summer is in Israel and the last person she wants to spend it with is her father but she soon finds herself being dragged to Israel by her father. While at first she finds it difficult to adjust to the language and culture in a new country, Amy learns to open her mind and is able to connect to her heritage.

Light Years

Tammar Stein (Random House, 2005)
Maya Laor runs late for an outing in Tel Aviv and just misses being killed by the suicide bomber who kills her boyfriend. To escape the pain and create a physical and mental distance from Israel, Maya leaves Israel for an American university. *For older readers - sexually explicit passage.*

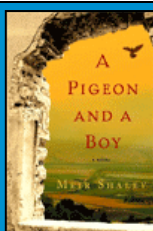
Real Time

Pnina Moed Kass (Clarion Books, 2004)
This novel tells the minute-by-minute account of a suicide bomb attack on a crowded Jerusalem bus and its aftermath, told from the viewpoints of the passengers, their families and friends, and the people who care for them in a Jerusalem hospital.

A Pigeon and a Boy

Meir Shalev
(Schocken, 2007)

A Pigeon and a Boy tells the story of a young pigeon handler who, right before he is killed in Israel's war of independence in 1948, sends one last pigeon to a girl he loved. Shalev intertwines this story with a contemporary love story to produce a tale which tells of the power and persistence of love.



Refiner's Fire

Mark Helprin (Harvest Books, 1990)
Refiner's Fire is the life story of Marshall Pearl, who is orphaned at birth on an immigrant ship off the coast of Palestine in 1947 and then brought to America. His journey takes him through the Hudson River Valley, to Harvard, to sea on a British merchant ship and finally back to Israel where he serves as a soldier in the Yom Kippur War.

The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu

Jonathan Netanyahu (Gefen, 2001)
This book contains the letters of Jonathan Netanyahu. The letters are dated from 1963, when he was 17, until 1976, when he was killed during the famous raid on the Entebbe Airport in Uganda.

The Lover

A.B. Yehoshua (Harvest Books, 1993)
As the Yom Kippur War rages in Israel, a husband searches for his wife's lover, who has returned to France seeking an inheritance.

When I Was a Soldier

Valerie Zenatti (Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2005)
A memoir originally written in French, *When I Was a Soldier* explores the transition that 18-year-old immigrant Valerie makes from civilian to military life. When she first enters the Israeli Army she finds it exciting, but soon thereafter, Valerie finds she is conflicted about her feelings towards Israel.

Yahrzeit

Liat Taiber-Ben David (Jewish Publications Society, 2005)
This book tells the story of Four Generations of Jewish women. Following them through the momentous occasions in Jewish history, *Yarzeit* conveys the rich history of the Jewish people and all they have endured.

