

# Israel Entrepreneurship Week

**Fit for:** History Class

**Topic:** Israeli Entrepreneurship as a Solution to Nation-Building Challenges



## Preparation

Print the character cards (see appendix: 6 historical figures). Distribute one card to each group.

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## Goals

To help students understand that during the early stages of building the State of Israel, many people acted with an entrepreneurial mindset — even though they didn't call themselves “entrepreneurs.”

They faced real social challenges: no infrastructure, no shared language, no funding, no formal education systems - and they found creative ways to overcome them.

In other words, they did exactly what entrepreneurs do today:

**See a problem -> Imagine a solution -> Find a way to make it happen.**

In this activity, students will learn about these figures and then attempt to solve similar challenges using their own innovative thinking.

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## Instructions

1. After assigning the cards, ask each group to:
    - Read about their historical figure.
    - Understand the challenge they faced.
    - Think of a modern-style project or initiative they would develop to solve it.
  2. Encourage students to dream big - no limits on budget or technology.  
The goal is to connect them to the spirit of nation-building through innovation.
  3. Discuss the actual solutions that were found- were they good? Would you change anything in them?
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 **What did the leaders do?**

After the students presented their ideas, we provided them with examples of initiatives that the leaders had actually taken.

**Eliezer Ben Yehuda**

(There was no common spoken language among Jews in Israel, and modern Hebrew words didn't exist.)

1. Spoke Only Hebrew at Home
2. Invention of new Hebrew words that entered the Hebrew language
3. Founded the Hebrew Language Committee
4. Published Hebrew Newspapers

**David Ben-Gurion**

(The Negev was empty, dry, and lacked infrastructure)

1. Proclaimed the State of Israel
2. Unify the various defense bodies into one body - the Israel Defense Forces
3. Promoted the development of the Negev and expanded residential and agricultural lands

**Golda Meir**

(The young state of Israel had no budget for security, infrastructure, or basic services)

1. International diplomacy and fundraising - played a key role in securing financial and military support from the United States and other allies.
2. Established Israel's National Insurance system and laid the foundations for the country's welfare infrastructure.
3. Broke down gender barriers, inspiring increased involvement of women in politics and public service in Israel.

**Henrietta Szold**

(Young immigrants arrived without access to education or healthcare)

1. Founded Youth Aliyah- which rescued over 11,000 Jewish children from Nazi Europe, providing them with safe passage to Israel.
2. Established Youth Villages - offering shelter, education, and vocational training to immigrant youth.
3. Promoted healthcare and social services accessible to all, regardless of background, laying the foundation for Israel's public health system.

### **Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi**

(Youth weren't connected to agriculture or working the land)

1. Established an agricultural youth village in Ein Kerem to continue educating and integrating young immigrants into agricultural life.
2. Actively encouraged young women to participate in agricultural work.
3. Integrated Immigrant Youth into Agricultural Communities.

### **Berl Katznelson**

(The Jewish settlement in Israel included different groups – immigrants from different cultures, different languages, different opinions – and there was no common culture to unite them.)

1. Co-founded the "Histadrut", a unifying labor organization that provided social services, healthcare, and employment among workers from varied backgrounds.
2. Established the 'Davar' Newspaper that became a central platform for disseminating Hebrew language, socialist-Zionist ideals, and cultural content, helping to shape a common national narrative.
3. Revived Hebrew as a spoken language and encouraged the development of Hebrew literature.

### **Wrap-up Discussion**

- What was it like to try solving these challenges?
- Did you find the problems easy or difficult to solve? Why?
- What obstacles or difficulties did you encounter while developing your solutions?
- In your opinion, what qualities or actions define an entrepreneur?