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| The Beginning | Summarize the reading in this section to teach with your partner |
| The Jewish state of Israel was established in 1948 (following World War II and the Nazi Holocaust). Prior to that time the area was called Palestine and was home to Arab Muslims, who were displaced and becamerefugees when Israel was established. Adjacent to Israel is a turbulent area called the [West Bank](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/West_Bank). The West Bank includes many sites that hold cultural, historical and religious significance for Jews, Muslims (identified as Palestinians) and Christians, and there has been a very long history of violent conflict as Israelis and Palestinians have both laid claim to this region.  Since 2007, the West Bank has officially been governed by the Palestinian Authority (PA), a provisional government created as a stepping-stone to eventually creating a United Nations-recognized state of Palestine, much like the Jewish state of Israel. The West Bank is occupied by Israeli military (as it has been since 1967), and the area is considered 60% under Israeli control.  In an effort to prevent violence, the Israeli military limits Palestinians' places of residence (including refugee camps) within the West Bank, and their movement within the region is controlled by numerous barriers and checkpoints. In addition, nearly 500,000 Jews live in the West Bank in Israeli-organized settlements. These settlements are technically illegal under international law, although Israel disputes this.  In November 2012 in Gaza (another highly disputed area adjacent to Israel), Israel launched a serious offensive in response to what it perceived as “relentless” Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel. Palestinians, meanwhile, have said that Israeli “surgical strikes” frequently kill civilians. Violence erupted in and around Gaza again in summer 2014, following the breakdown of a fragile Palestinian reconciliation deal.  Hamas, a militant fundamentalist Islamic organization operating in both the West Bank and Gaza, has refused to recognize the state of Israel but said it would support a Palestinian state. Peace talks between Israel and Hamas were considered unlikely as of summer 2014. |  |