

**Chapter 35 Viewpoint Activity**



The struggle for land between Israelis and Palestinians has been a cause of conflict in the Middle East for decades, despite many efforts at peace-making (textbook pages 916–917). One unusual peace effort is a summer camp in Maine called “Seeds of Peace,” where Israeli and Palestinian young people get to know one another as people, not enemies. This article focuses on two 16-year-old campers, one a Palestinian Arab, the other an Israeli Jew. ♦ *As you read, think about how efforts like this one might help the cause of peace. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**Sowing “Seeds of Peace”**

Together again in the Maine woods, [they] took up the argument they began when they met at camp three years ago.

“In 1948 the UN gave the Jews the right to build their own country—what Israel is today,” said one of the boys, Yehoyada Mande-el, who is known as Yo Yo and lives in Israel. “It’s a fact. We were happy. We were ready to settle for this. But the Arabs said no.”

Laith Arafeh is Palestinian and lives on the West Bank. “The UN resolution was unfair,” he countered. “It gave the Jews 56 percent of the land of Palestine when they were only 17 percent.”

“OK, let me finish,” Yo Yo said, waving his arms.... “Now, there was this war, the war of independence.”

Laith rolled his eyes. “We call it the catastrophe, the ‘48 war.” He looked at his watch. It was close to noon. . . . “I have to pray now,” he said.

“I’m coming with you,” said Yo Yo. . . . He wanted to take pictures of his friend kneeling for Muslim prayers on the soccer field. . . .

It is arguable whether bringing 130 young people together in the woods in Maine can change the situation back in their countries. But for a visitor to spend two days with Mohamed [another

Palestinian camper] and Yo Yo and Laith, and the others, is to see something powerful. They play soccer, baseball, basketball and tennis together. They eat together. . . . And they are changing.

When he heard about five Israelis dying in the latest suicide bombing of a bus, Laith told Yo Yo he was sorry. Eighteen months before, after an Israeli settler blew up the mosque in Hebron, Yo Yo telephoned Laith to say that he was sorry. The boys talk regularly on the telephone. . . .

Laith said his parents, both doctors, like Yo Yo. He added: “His mother is a nice lady. She came to my house.” Laith asked: “Do you think your father would come to my house if I invite him?”

Yo Yo’s voice was pained. “I don’t think so.”

“My father fought in the 1948 war, in ‘56 and ‘59,” Yo Yo said. “He has no reason to trust them. When I go to visit Laith, he always says, ‘Something bad is going to happen; they’re going to do something.’”

When Laith visits, Yo Yo said, his father says hello, nothing more. The silence hurts him, Laith said. But he added: “I can understand it.”

Source: “A Camp Sows the Seeds of Peace,” by Sara Rimer (*New York Times*, Sept. 3, 1995).

**“They play soccer, baseball, basketball, and tennis together . . . . And they are changing.”**

**Questions to Discuss**

1. What issues do the two boys bring up in their continuing argument?
2. What has affected Yo Yo’s father’s opinion of the Palestinians?
3. **Making Predictions** From this conversation, do you think that Laith and Yo Yo’s generation have a better chance of making peace than their parents’ generation could? Why?