**Title:** Ulpan in Eilat, 1962

**Year (Hebrew):** 5722

**Year:** 1962

**Location:** Israel

**Short description**

A photograph of a Hebrew lesson taking place in an ulpan in Eilat in 1962.

**Detailed description**

​​​​​​This is a photograph from the NLI’s Eddie Hirshbein Collection showing students studying in an ulpan – a Hebrew language school for new immigrants to Israel – in Eilat in 1962.

In the classroom are young adults, both women and men. The man standing in the centre of the photograph, who seems to be the teacher, is holding a piece of paper with the letter” מ/ם” on it, which suggests that this a class of beginners who are just learning the Hebrew alphabet. Both the teacher and the students are wearing casual clothing from the 1960s, with a number of them wearing shorts and sandals. The classroom furniture is basic, and there are writing implements and pamphlets on the tables.

**Would You Like to Know More?**

**Ulpan** – The first Hebrew ulpan was established in 1949 in Jerusalem. Its goal was to teach the Hebrew language as well as Israeli culture in order to facilitate the absorption of the many new immigrants who were arriving in Israel. Since then, hundreds of ulpanim have opened in Israel, and the target audience has also expanded, with ulpanim teaching Hebrew not only to potential immigrants but also to tourists and foreign workers.

**Immigration to Israel in the early years of the State**– The early years of the State of Israel were noted for the large wave of immigration from all over the world. During its first three and a half years, 688,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel, doubling its population. The immigrants were mostly Holocaust survivors from Europe and refugees from Arab countries. This welcome influx of Jews to Israel required many resources. The new immigrants needed housing and jobs. They also needed to quickly integrate into Israeli society, and thus there was a massive campaign to teach them Hebrew.

**Aliya in the 1960s**– This photograph shows new immigrants (*olim*) in the 1960s. During this decade 427,828 new immigrants arrived in Israel, almost double the number in the decades before and after. The majority of the *olim* in this period came from Morocco and Romania, but a relatively large number also came from the Soviet Union. One of the reasons for this large wave of immigration was the euphoria following the victory of the Six-Day War.

**Teaching Suggestions**

​​​**​**​**​​​Jewish History**teachers can use this photograph to explore immigration to Israel after the establishment of the State and the new immigrants’ integration into Israeli society.

**Sociology**teachers can use the photograph to discuss a country’s responsibility for the successful integration of immigrants.

In **Geography** lessons students can examine the different countries from which these immigrants came to Israel.

**Israel Studies** teachers can use this photograph when discussing *aliya* to Israel and the ways for the new immigrants to integrate into their new country.

**Discussion Points**

**Observation**

* Describe the picture.
* What is happening in this picture?
* Which Hebrew letter is the teacher holding?
* Describe the participants' clothes.
* How old are the participants in the classroom?
* Which language is being taught here?
* What is this kind of language school called?

**Reading Between the Lines**

* Why did people enrol in an ulpan?
* Why does the State of Israel fund these language schools?
* What do you think is the level of Hebrew of these students?
* Where do you think these students came from?
* When did the first ulpan open in Israel?
* What difficulties do immigrants face in their new countries?
* What is the ideal age for language learning? Why?

**Connections**

* Does Israel still provide free language schools for immigrants?
* What, in your opinion, is the importance of learning a new language?
* Imagine that you are a new immigrant to Israel. What do you think are five of the most important sentences or phrases for daily life?  
  Write them down in Hebrew.

**Creative Ideas**

* You have been given the responsibility to plan a new ulpan.
* What do you think is the most interesting and effective way to learn Hebrew?
* What facilities would help new immigrants to learn Hebrew in the best and fastest way?
* Create an advertising campaign publicising your ideas.

**Target audience:** Primary School, Junior High, High School, Informal Education, Higher Education

**NLI Links**

[Bitmuna Photo Collection](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,bitmuna&sortby=rank&vid=NLI_Photo&lang=iw_IL&offset=1)

[Learn Hebrew in These Ways, 1940s](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?docid=EDU_XML_ENG700253955&presentorid=EDU_XML_ENG&searchurl=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.nli.org.il%2Fsites%2Fnlis%2Fen%2Feducation%2Fpages%2Fresults.aspx%23%3Fquery%3Dlsr16%2Cexact%2CPrimary+Source%26query%3Dany%2Ccontains%2Culpan%26institution%3DNNL%26vid%3DEDU_XML_ENG%26loc%3Dlocal%2Cscope%3A(EDU_XML_ENG)%26sortField%3Dlso04%26indx%3D1%26bulkSize%3D8)  
[Aliyah Pamphlet, 1948](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?docid=EDU_XML_ENG003913177&presentorid=EDU_XML_ENG&searchurl=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.nli.org.il%2Fsites%2Fnlis%2Fen%2Feducation%2Fpages%2Fresults.aspx%23%3Fquery%3Dlsr16%2Cexact%2CPrimary+Source%26query%3Dany%2Ccontains%2Colim%26institution%3DNNL%26vid%3DEDU_XML_ENG%26loc%3Dlocal%2Cscope%3A(EDU_XML_ENG)%26sortField%3Dlso04%26indx%3D1%26bulkSize%3D8)