

Educator's Guide

★ GREAT JEWISH LIVES ★

THE MONTEFIORES

Champions of the Jewish People



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FOR THE TEACHER

This guide consists of lessons to assist you in using *The Montefiores: Champions of the Jewish People* in your classroom. The guide is written in a chapter-by-chapter format and includes a synopsis, pre-reading activities, and comprehension questions, as well as supplementary activities to be used at the end of the book.

The book and its accompanying guide can be used in a number of ways. Students reading at the same level might participate in a small-group guided reading of the book, returning to it over several weeks as they read and discuss it with the teacher. The entire class might read the book and discuss it in small groups using literature circles or reciprocal teaching. The teacher can then use the suggested questions to guide students in their discussions. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. Students should be encouraged to support their answers with evidence from the text. Students might keep a notebook of their responses throughout the year, which can then be used for progress monitoring and assessment purposes.

This teacher's guide includes many document-based questions. These questions focus on utilizing critical-thinking skills. Students are also asked to make comparisons, draw analogies, and apply historic analysis using primary and secondary sources from this time period. Source material for questions include photographs and documents. The questions can be used to teach students how to analyze source documents and deepen their understanding of the life and times of the person featured in this biography.

Using this guide can help you as a teacher create more active readers. Students who are encouraged to think about their reading, make inferences, compare and contrast events and characters, and notice author's language will read more closely and carefully. They will become more thoughtful readers, and their reading comprehension will improve. Working on this in the context of authentic literature helps to inspire a motivation and love for reading.

SYNOPSIS Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore, two of the richest Jews in the world in the early 1800s, devoted themselves to helping the Jewish people in every possible way. With their wealth and influence, they assisted countless people in many different situations.

Pre-Reading Activities

Use one or more of the following activities to introduce the book.

1. **Predictions:** Preview the book by reading the title, the author, and looking at the illustration on the cover. Have you read any other books in this series? What clues can you gather about the book from the phrase “Champions of the Jewish People”? What is a champion, and what might that word mean in this context?
2. **Building Background:** The Montefiores lived in Jerusalem during the early 1800s. Give students background information on Palestine at that time. Flip through the book and discuss the photographs. What do they tell readers about this time period?
3. **Genre Focus:** *The Montefiores: Champions of the Jewish People* is a biography. This means that it tells the true story of a person’s life. As you read this book, complete the graphic organizer at the end of this packet to describe the character traits of the Montefiores, their life, and accomplishments.



INTRODUCTION

1. What are some questions you now have about the Montefiores? Note these questions and leave space to record their answers as you read the rest of the book.
2. Consider what Moses Montefiore answered his family and friends when asked about his Jewish name. He said, “Moses I was, Moses I remained. I live as Moses, and I will die Moses.” What does this show us about his personality and character?
3. Look closely at the photograph of Sir Moses on page IX. Based on this photo and information given in the introduction, what predictions might you make about his personality?



CHAPTER 1: MEET THE MONTEFIORES

SYNOPSIS Moses Montefiore is born in Italy in 1784 to a wealthy family. He marries Judith Barent-Cohen, also of a wealthy family, and they begin their lives together doing good deeds for the Jewish people.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about Moses Montefiore's childhood and his marriage to Judith Barent-Cohen.

Guided Questions

1. Based on the information provided about Moses's parents, what kind of family did he grow up in? What were some of their values?
2. Compare and contrast Moses and Judith Montefiore. In what ways were their upbringings similar? In what ways were they different?
3. Consider the story of Judith Montefiore falling down the steps. What does this story show us about her personality?
4. What were some of the ways that Moses and Judith Montefiore helped their fellow Jews when they were newly married?



CHAPTER 2: A LONG-AGO WORLD

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores begin to travel the world, visiting France and Italy and then returning to their home in England.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the Montefiores' travels.

Guided Questions



1. Describe some of the ways transportation in the Montefiores' days was different from today.
2. Explain why the Montefiores wanted to travel more than others, especially when travel was so dangerous.
3. Read carefully Lady Judith's reaction to her husband's suggestion to travel to France. What does this show us about her personality?
4. Even on their pleasure trip to France, what were some of the ways the Montefiores tried to help the Jews of France?
5. **Document-based question:** Refer to the photograph of the Montefiore carriage on page 11. What details do you notice that show the couple's wealth?

CHAPTER 3: NEW PLANS

SYNOPSIS At forty years old, Moses Montefiore retires from his work and begins to devote his life to helping the Jewish people.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Moses Montefiore stops working and begins to focus only on helping the Jewish people.

Guided Questions



1. Explain why Moses Montefiore chose to retire even though he was very young.
2. What did Moses Montefiore mean when he said, “This is one problem our money can’t take care of”?
3. If Lady Judith wanted people to keep kosher, why didn’t she just tell them so? Why did she go through the effort of publishing a cookbook?
-  4. **Document-based question:** Refer to the front page of Lady Judith’s cookbook on page 16. What do the details on the page indicate about Lady Judith’s personality?
-  5. **Creative writing:** Design an advertisement for Lady Judith’s new kosher cookbook.

CHAPTER 4: THE SECRET OF THE RING

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores especially want to help the Jews who live in the Land of Israel. They often travel there and look for ways to make the Land of Israel safer and nicer.

➔ **Prompt:** Read to find out how — and why — the Montefiores especially help Jews who live in the Land of Israel.

Guided Questions

1. When the Montefiores visited the Land of Israel, they “...were more than just tourists.” Support this statement with evidence from the text.
2. Demonstrate how the story of the ring helps to explain the Montefiores’ interest in the Land of Israel.
-  3. **Creative writing:** It says about the Montefiores: “Being uncomfortable or facing danger wasn’t going to stop them from doing whatever they could to help other people.” Describe someone else you know who also goes out of his way to help other people. What does he do? How does he help them?
-  4. **Document-based question:** Describe life in the Land of Israel during the 1800s based on the photograph on page 21.





CHAPTER 5: JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores travel to Israel on a difficult journey and look for ways to help the Jewish community in that country.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Montefiores arrive in Israel and what they do when they are there.

Guided Questions



1. Describe some of the difficulties the Montefiores faced on their way to Israel.
2. Explain how Moses Montefiore made sure that he and the governor of Jerusalem would remain on good terms.
3. List some of the ways the Montefiores planned to help the people in the Land of Israel.
-  4. **Focus on geography:** Trace the route the Montefiores traveled to reach the Land of Israel. Compare this to the route we use today.
-  5. **Creative writing:** Design an announcement telling the people of Jerusalem that Judith's forty-third birthday is approaching. Be sure to invite the poor people to come receive charity.

CHAPTER 6: A NEW HOME

SYNOPSIS In 1831, the Montefiores buy a new home in East Cliff Lodge and build a shul there.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the new home the Montefiores build for themselves.

Guided Questions

1. Describe the Montefiores' new home in East Cliff Lodge.
2. "But something was missing." What was missing from their new home, and what does this suggest about the Montefiores?
3. Compare and contrast the Montefiores' celebration of their new home to celebrations today. How are they similar? How are they different?
-  4. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph of East Cliff Lodge on page 32. What details do you notice that indicate the Montefiores' wealth?
-  5. **Creative writing:** Design an invitation inviting the people of Ramsgate to the celebration in honor of the new shul in East Cliff Lodge.



CHAPTER 7: A VISIT TO KEVER RACHEL

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores visit Kever Rachel and sponsor a renovation, including the famous dome over the grave.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the Montefiores' visit to Kever Rachel.

Guided Questions

1. Explain why visiting Kever Rachel was particularly meaningful for Judith.
2. Compare and contrast what Kever Rachel looked like when the Montefiores visited it with what it looked like after the renovation.
3. Why do you think the renovations of Kever Rachel took three years to complete?
4. Describe how the Kever Rachel building changed once again after the Montefiore renovation. Why does it look different today?
5. **Document-based question:** Refer to the excerpt from Judith's diary on page 35. What does this show us about her personality?



CHAPTER 8: DANGER IN CHEVRON

SYNOPSIS Moses and Judith Montefiore visit Chevron. At Me'aras Hamachpeilah they are attacked by Arab mobs, and they appeal for help from the governor of Jerusalem.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the Montefiores' experience in Chevron.

Guided Questions


1. Why did Moses and Judith particularly want to visit Chevron?
2. Describe some of what the Montefiores experienced on their Shabbos in Chevron.
3. Why did the governor of Chevron try to dissuade Moses Montefiore from visiting Me'aras Hamachpeilah?
4. Why did Moses Montefiore ask the governor of Jerusalem to help protect him from the Arabs in Chevron?
5. Explain why there was a festive party when the Montefiores, their servants, and the soldiers were ready to leave Chevron.

CHAPTER 9: TROUBLE IN SYRIA

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores help save the Jews of Syria from a terrible decree.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out more about how the Montefiores help the people of Syria.

Guided Questions


1. Explain what problem faced the Jews of Damascus, Syria, and why they appealed to the Rothschilds for help.
2. Explain why the Montefiores traveled to Egypt in order to help the Jews of Syria.
3. Describe some of the ways Moses Montefiore was shown honor by the Jews of Constantinople.
4. What character traits of Moses Montefiore were demonstrated through the story of the new firman? Explain.
5. “When they got back to England, the Montefiores were treated like heroes.” Why?
6.  **Document-based question:** Refer to the photograph of the Rothschilds’ Gunnersbury House in London on page 51. Compare and contrast this with the photograph of East Cliff Lodge on page 32.

CHAPTER 10: BEYOND THE CITY WALLS

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores buy land to build the first community outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. This will help the overcrowding and disease in the Old City.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Montefiores help the community in Jerusalem to expand.

Guided Questions



1. Explain why the Montefiores wanted to build a new community outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.
2. "And when the Montefiores wanted to do something, it got done." Support this statement with examples from the book.
3. Describe some of the steps the Montefiores took to build a community outside the walls of the Old City.
-  4. **Creative writing:** Write a diary entry of Moses Montefiore from the day he finally finished the purchase of land from Achmad Aga Dijar. Include some of his thoughts and feelings.

CHAPTER 11: A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores encourage people to move to Mishkenot Sha'ananim, and slowly the neighborhood grows and develops.

➔ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the new neighborhood grows and develops.

Guided Questions

1. Compare and contrast the new neighborhood of Mishkenot Sha'ananim with the Old City of Jerusalem. How was life in the new apartments easier and more convenient?
2. If you were living in those times, would you choose to move to Mishkenot Sha'ananim? Why or why not?
-  3. **Creative writing:** Assume you live in the new neighborhood of Mishkenot Sha'ananim. Write a thank-you letter to Moses Montefiore for all of his assistance. Be sure to include specific examples of what he did for you and how this made your life easier.
-  4. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 68. How does this apartment complex differ from the ones built nowadays? Why do you think it was built in one long row of attached houses?



CHAPTER 12: HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, AND A WINDMILL

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores help the Jews of Jerusalem by establishing a hospital, schools, and a windmill.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Montefiores help make daily life easier for the Jews of Jerusalem.

Guided Questions


1. The Montefiores made sure the new hospital had a shul attached to it. What does this show about them? Explain.
2. Compare and contrast the girls' school created by the Montefiores with girls' schools today.
3. Explain why Moses Montefiore built a windmill in Jerusalem and why this windmill was not as successful as he had hoped it would be.
4. Explain why the British soldiers did not actually blow up the Montefiore windmill in 1948. What did they do instead?

CHAPTER 13: A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

SYNOPSIS The Montefiores celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary, and Judith dies three months later.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Montefiores celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary and how Judith dies shortly after that.

Guided Questions



1. Why did the people of their town celebrate the Montefiores' anniversary?
2. Why do you think Moses Montefiore chose the writing of a Torah scroll as the celebration of his anniversary?
3. "Above all else, Judith's greatest love was the Torah." Support this statement with examples from the book.
4.  **Document-based question:** Refer to the photograph on page 80. What details do you notice in the picture?

CHAPTER 14: A LIFETIME OF GIVING



SYNOPSIS Sir Moses Montefiore continues his charitable deeds until the end of his life. He passes away at the age of 101.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out about the end of Montefiore’s life.

Guided Questions

1. Consider the title of this chapter, “A Lifetime of Giving.” How does this title fit Moses and Judith Montefiore?
2. Why was Moses Montefiore’s hundredth birthday a day of celebration around the world?
3. As Moses Montefiore became older and weaker, he continued to seek ways to help poor people. What does this show us about his personality?
-  4. **Creative writing:** Design the front page of a London newspaper published on the day Moses Montefiore passed away.
-  5. **Document-based question:** Refer to the photograph on page 84. What details do you notice in the picture?

A TASTE OF JUDITH’S COOKING

-  1. **Document-based question:** Choose one recipe from the cookbook. Compare and contrast the way the food was prepared in Lady Judith’s time with the way it’s prepared today.
-  2. **Document-based question:** Consider the recipe for removing freckles on page 89. What does this suggest about that time?

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Use one or more of the following activities to conclude the book.

Geography

Using a world map, indicate all the places where the Montefiores helped the Jewish people. For each place, include one or two sentences describing what they did for the Jews of that community.

Crafts

Design a flag to wave at the Montefiores' golden wedding anniversary. Be sure your flag includes some description of how the Montefiores helped the Jewish community.

Focus on Character

Review the author's note at the back of the book. What additional information does this give you about the Montefiores' personality?

Who Were Moses and Judith Montefiore?



Sir Moses Montefiore

★ FACTS ★

Year of His Birth: _____

Place of His Birth: _____

His Parents' Names: _____

Year of His Death: _____



Lady Judith Montefiore

★ FACTS ★

Year of Her Birth: _____

Place of Her Birth: _____

Her Parents' Names: _____

Year of Her Death: _____

His major accomplishments were:

Her major accomplishments were:

Some of his outstanding character traits were:

Some of her outstanding character traits were:



Biography Sketch

Physical Description

Actions

Name

His Thoughts and Feelings

What Others Say and Think about Him

Biography Sketch

Physical Description

Actions

Name

Her Thoughts and Feelings

What Others Say and Think about Her
