In cities, Palestinian families consist of parents and their children. Families in the countryside may have grandparents also living with them. One or both parents may work outside the home. However, parents in Palestine usually arrive home from work about the same time as their children. In Palestine, family members typically eat lunch together as a family, and help themselves sporadically at dinner or breakfast. Middle Eastern cooking can be complicated so Palestinian parents cook for their children, and children are rarely expected to cook.

**Teen Life:** If a Palestinian has a sibling close in age they may share things. Siblings may share clothes, computers, and a bedroom. If an item is not normally shared, then the norm is to ask permission. In Palestine, parents are highly respected and there are limits as to how far a child can engage in argumentative behavior with his parents. Palestinian teenagers are mostly dependent on their parents. Palestinian students coming on the YES Program typically learn how to become more independent and responsible for their actions while in the U.S.

**Responsibilities:** In Palestine, most teens depend on their mothers for household upkeep. Palestinian teenagers get their money from their parents for personal items and social activities, and sometimes from babysitting work or from paid chores. Palestinian teenagers are responsible for their homework, keeping their room clean, and sometimes for watching younger siblings, especially if parents are busy at work.

**Parental Involvement:** Fathers in Palestine are often more responsible for working and bringing in a household income, whereas mothers are more involved with children and school. Palestinian families may monitor their children’s use of the computer, though not all do. In Palestinian public school, parents may only become involved if their child exhibits serious behavioral concerns, and are not generally kept up to date with academic progress. Public transportation in Palestine is easy for Palestinian students so parents do not always need to transport their teenagers. Many Palestinian parents attend their children’s activities.

**Pets:** Pets are uncommon in Palestinian homes.

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**School**

**Classes:** Palestinian students are evaluated on written exams which mostly focus on memorization. A small part of the evaluation depends on homework and projects. Some teachers in Palestine evaluate students on class participation, which is about 10% of the student’s grade. In Palestine, all students who are in the same grade take the same subjects. Students remain in one classroom while the teachers rotate rooms. Palestinian students go to the same school from first grade to twelfth grade in villages, but in cities the students change schools after sixth grade. There are typically about 38 students in each class. Most schools in Palestine are not co-ed; rather, they are schools either for girls or for boys. There are a few schools which are gender mixed in which boys and girls study in the same classes.

**School Relationships:** In Palestine, showing respect to teachers differs from school to school. Rarely, there are some schools where the students have a friendly, yet respectful, relationship with their teachers. In most schools, students are asked to address teachers with appropriate title like Ms., Mrs., Mr. and the teacher’s name.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Palestinian students generally join clubs outside the school for extracurricular and schools do not typically have clubs. There are many centers, mostly in urban areas, which encourage sports and music, and provide classes. Most villages and rural areas do not have clubs in school or even in the community. Palestinian students generally join clubs outside the school for extracurricular as schools generally do not have clubs. Extracurricular activities often include sports like soccer, basketball, and swimming, or playing musical instruments, art and drawing, and dancing, particularly the Palestinian folkloric dancing “Dabkeh”.
For Palestinians, personal space often means “private time,” and may not refer to the distance kept between people when talking or during general independent pursuits.

**Mixed Gender Socializing:** Mixed gender socializing within a group is normally considered acceptable. Socializing in mixed gender one-on-one relationships is generally unacceptable by the community.

**Friendships:** Palestinian teens typically socialize in groups. However, there are one-on-one relationships between same-gender friends which are often very close. Friendships are made through school, from the neighborhood, and through the family. In Palestinian culture, people usually share or borrow money from each other with the idea that borrowed money will be returned as agreed upon.

**Communication Styles:** Palestinian teenagers are taught to express their negative emotions in an appropriate way that does not disrespect others.

**Eye Contact:** It can be considered disrespectful in Palestine to make direct eye contact with a person while talking to them.

**Religion:** In Palestine, Muslims attend Friday noon prayers as a weekly religious event with their family. Christians attend Sunday church services with their family.

**Holidays:** Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are spent visiting family and cooking certain meals and sweets. New Year and Christmas are also holidays.

**Guest Culture:** It is considered a courtesy to offer food or drink to a guest more than once in order to show respect and hospitality. If the guest says no the first time, which they probably would, it is expected that the host will offer a second time and insist that the guest accept the offer. In some situations, it is considered rude to reject the offer after the host insists. It is also rude to not offer any drink or food to guests. It is not common for people to ask for food or drink from a host.

**Lunch and Diets:** Food portions are relatively large. Leftover meals are a common practice. Usually, students would take cold meals to school, mostly a cold cut sandwich. This would be their brunch meal. Normally, parents would prepare this meal for their children to take to school. After they return home, students would have a hot meal lunch.

**Personal Hygiene:** Generally in Palestine, people shower every day or once every two days. Palestinian teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away). Each person has their own towel. It is very uncommon for people to wear the same clothes for two days in a row; however, they sometimes do not wash their clothes after wearing them one time.