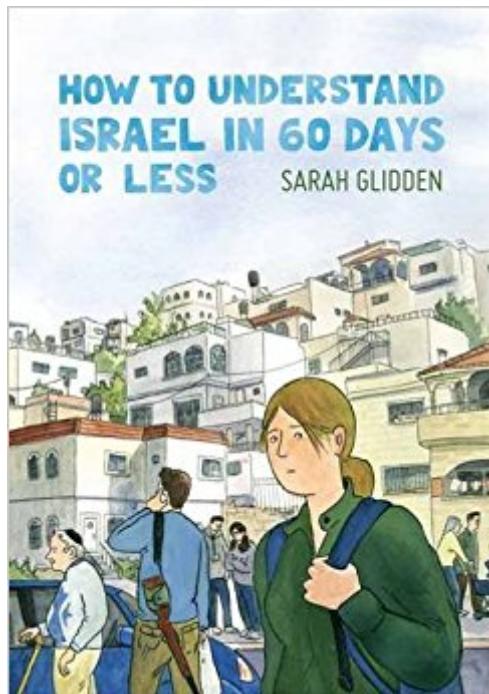


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# How To Understand Israel In 60 Days Or Less



## Synopsis

The award-winning graphic memoir about Israel that offers more questions than answers about identity and politicsSarah Glidden is a progressive Jewish American twentysomething who is both vocal about and critical of Israeli politics in the Holy Land. When a debate with her mother prods her to sign up for a Birthright Israel tour, Glidden expects to find objective facts to support her strong opinions. During her two weeks in Israel, Glidden takes advantage of the opportunity to ask the people she meets about the fraught and complex issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but their answers only lead her to question her own take on the conflict. Simple linework and gorgeous watercolors spotlight Israel's countryside, urban landscapes, and religious landmarks. With straightforward sincerity, lovingly observed anecdotes, and a generous dose of self-deprecating humor, *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less* is accessible while retaining Glidden's distinctive perspective. Over the course of this touching memoir, Glidden comes to terms with the idea that there are no easy answers to the world's problems, and that is okay. This debut book landed on several best-of-the-year lists, including Entertainment Weekly's; earned a YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens distinction; and won an Ignatz Award. Her second book, *Rolling Blackouts*, which documents her experience shadowing journalists in Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, will also come out this fall from Drawn & Quarterly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Glidden, a progressive American Jew who is sharply critical of Israeli policies vis-À-fÂ-vis the Occupied Territories, went on an all-expense-paid "birthright" trip to Israel in an attempt to discover

some grand truths at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This graphic memoir tells the touching and often funny story of her utter failure to do so. As the tour group moves from the Golan Heights to Tel Aviv, Glidden's struggles with propaganda and perspective lead only to a morass of deepening questions and self-doubt. Her neurotic need for objective truths and struggle to reconcile historical perspectives is hugely gratifying for the reader. This is especially true when the group visits Masada, the site of an epic confrontation between a sect of Jewish rebels and a Roman siege army that culminated in mass suicide. Gruesome fanaticism or a stirring clarion call for the burgeoning Zionism movement? You be the judge. As befits a travelogue, Glidden's drawings have the look of something jotted down on the fly; if it weren't for a haircut here or a pair of glasses there, many of the characters would be indistinguishable. Yet the simplicity of the drawing is offset by bright, delicate watercolors that belie our heroine's unresolved struggle with history and heritage. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr 10 Up  After years of questioning her heritage, arguing with her mother about what it means to be Jewish, and dating a  "goy,"  Glidden succumbed to the lure of an all-expense-paid trip to Israel through Birthright, a program that offers Jewish young adults first-time trips to the country. At the onset, she declared,  "I'm ready to go there and discover the truth behind this whole mess once and for all. It will be crystal clear by the time I come back."  An experienced traveler and a skeptic, she details her two-month excursion through cities and deserts. Readers witness her personal conflict as she seeks to view Israel with an objective eye. One effective literary device is the use of illustrated flashbacks from both Glidden's and Israel's past. The ghosts of David Ben Gurion and Sarah's deceased younger brother accompany her for several panels during her journey. She encounters the worldview of non-Eastern European Jews, Israeli soldiers, and her traveling companions, and begins to realize her limited perspective as she wonders  "how many other people on the trip I've completely misjudged."  The author's inner voices as she struggles with her conflicting emotions are brilliantly portrayed during brief trials in  "the court of birthright vs. brainwash,"  where she serves as the prosecutor, defense, and judge. The tongue-in-cheek title hints at both the subtle humor and the complex subject matter. Glidden's soft, watercolor palette and realistic art complement without overshadowing this thoughtful exploration of the role that cultural heritage plays in the search for personal identity.  Barbara M. Moon, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY

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This excellent book could very well be titled "It's Complicated." Author Sarah Glidden takes her birthright trip to Israel. Her underlying reason for going: to "find out the truth about this whole mess once and for all." Ms. Glidden makes it clear that she feels pretty strongly about the rights of Palestinians, the injustice of the wall, the harshness of Israeli policies. She steels herself against being "brainwashed" (a word she uses a few times) by her hosts and guides. But, once there, the author sees the nuances and complications present in all matters. Case in point: her blood starts to boil when she first takes sight of the wall. Far from ignoring it or giving it an impassioned defense, Sarah's guide gives the wall a review from both sides ("My personal opinion is that, while hate how it hurts many people, every day that I wake up and there's no attack on the news, I think about the wall.") Her take: it was "refreshing to hear [him] speak of the negative aspects of the wall without being prompted." This exchange is emblematic of what you'll find throughout the book. Sarah Glidden has crafted a fine remembrance of her trip. It speaks to the book's authenticity that other reviewers on these pages that have taken the same trip vouch for her accuracy. The work is heightened by her excellent drawings...especially her annotated maps.

I have to confess that I am not the target reader for this book. The book is intended for young Jewish people and I'm an older Christian woman, but I love it! I hope the author doesn't mind. It was beautifully written and the drawings made it something that nobody else can duplicate. Well done! Sarah knows how to describe and draw the emotions so accurately that I felt like I was there with her. Like the author, I recently took my first trip to Israel. I wanted to go there because I wanted to see where all the action happened. I wanted to enjoy the experience Sarah described so vividly of Masada, wondering what the "real" story was and the unforgettable moments going up to Jerusalem. I only had a 22-day trip and stayed in luxury hotels, so I missed some of the experiences of waking up out in the wilderness. I didn't get to know many Israeli natives as she and Melissa did, although I did spend quite a bit of time with the 3-4 that I did meet. I wanted to see the places where Jesus lived. I wanted to see the country that God chose for His own special purposes. We aren't so different though, because I also looked at faces and wondered where they were coming from and what they were thinking. Sometimes I misinterpreted a scowl, because I read too much into it. I too had places I would love to have gone and would probably have been fine, but chose not to, not really because I was afraid (I was with strangers for several weeks in a strange country that people are often afraid to visit), but just because. Even though we are so different in age and spiritual

beliefs, I could physically feel the process she was going through about whether to go to a certain place or not. She got to tour the Old City in Jerusalem without a guide, as I would have loved to have done. She bartered for sandals, exactly what I wanted to barter for as we were quickly rushed by and given no chance to stop. I truly enjoyed watching as Sarah and Melissa got turned around and as they ended up in a few situations I know I would have ended up in if I hadn't been in my controlled group environment. I envied them that experience while at the same time I know I wouldn't have done it. I almost felt myself being nervous and wondering what was going to happen. The important thing about this book is her emotional journey, when she had no intentions of having an emotional journey. She fought her own biases and probably added a few. I have to admit that I was holding my breath in a few of those experiences, going through them with her. The book is unique because it is in a very creative comic-book style, beautifully drawn by the author, who is an extremely talented artist. So, do I understand Israel even better after visiting it and seeing it from her perspective? Yes!

This is a powerful autobiographical tale of a young woman exploring her heritage and overcoming her own preconceived notions of what is real and what isn't. Sarah turns her art and view onto herself as she makes a journey into Israel in an attempt to discover the Israel of today. I've got to be honest I can't do justice in trying to do a brief blurb about the book, but I'll try. Sarah is Jewish and lives in New York. From afar she reads and keeps up with the Palestine/Israel conflict. But in order to truly understand it and see if her own opinions/beliefs are right, she and a friend join a heritage tour group. They travel to Israel and here Sarah holds "trial" in her mind at various stops, weighing what she is hearing with what she believes to be the truth. But along the way she discovers something...about the people that surround her and even more about herself. Sarah does an excellent job of being honest with herself and her opinions. And this is a must read for anyone, regardless of age, gender, or religion.

Great book; I highly recommend it. If you've enjoyed the works of Sacco, DeLisle, and the like, you'll dig this book. It doesn't pander, and as the book itself says, raises more questions than answers. A great travelogue that deals with some thought-provoking issues.

If you're new to traveling to Israel, especially with teenage kids, this is a great book to read before you go (and maybe while you're there). Sarah Glidden did a great job of describing what to expect, and made it easy and fun to read. I have recommended this book to others and will continue to do

so.

Great and quick read. The graphics are well-done. This book is highly useful if you wish to have a quick, visually appealing introduction into the Arab-Israeli Conflict. This is a great resource for high school teachers or students. The text is simple, effective and provides an intriguing book to start your research into the AIC. I would recommend this book to teenagers+ who have an interest in the AIC. The product arrived within the specified time and in the condition described by .

I went on a birthright trip in 2004 so this book brought back some memories. I love the artwork and hearing the author's experience.

Really good! If you've ever considered taking a heritage trip to Israel, read this first... She takes you step by step into her experience, inside and outside. Definitely worth the read. Even if you don't usually go for graphic novels, this one works.

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