Full name: State of Israel
Government: parliamentary democracy

Location: Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon
Seat of government: Jerusalem, though most foreign embassies are in Tel Aviv
Area: 22,072 sq km (8,522 sq miles), including Jerusalem and Golan; slightly smaller than New Jersey

Climate: temperate; hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas
Terrain: Negev desert in the south; low coastal plain; central mountains; Jordan Rift Valley
Natural Hazards: sandstorms may occur during spring and summer; droughts; periodic earthquakes

Population: 6.9 million (UN, 2006)
Ethnicity: Jewish 76.4% (of which Israel-born 67.1%, Europe/America-born 22.6%, Africa-born 5.9%, Asia-born 4.2%), non-Jewish 23.6% (mostly Arab)
Major Language: Hebrew, Arabic
Religion: Jewish 76.4%, Muslim 16%, Arab Christians 1.7%, other Christian 0.4%, Druze 1.6%, unspecified 3.9%
Life expectancy: 78 years (men), 82 years (women) (UN)

Currency: 1 new Israeli shekel (NIS) = 100 new agorot