

## GRINGLAS UNIT ON ANTISEMITISM AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 420 MINUTES (ENTIRE UNIT)**

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Learn about the diversity of Jewish life and culture in the world today.
- Define and analyze historical and contemporary antisemitism in order to understand how antisemitism has morphed in the modern era.
- Assess how historical forms of antisemitism have influenced and find expression in current manifestations of antisemitism.
- Explain how antisemitism may sometimes be related to political, racial, or religious ideologies.
- Identify current features of antisemitism including Holocaust denial and distortion and the demonization of Israel.
- Reflect on the skills and dispositions needed to respond effectively to antisemitism.

### ALIGNED STANDARDS (CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.2, 9-10.2, 11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.6, 9-10.6, 11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1, 9-10.1, 11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2, 9-10.2, 11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.1, 9-10.1, 11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.2, 9-10.2, 11-12.2
- HSS.10.9.6: 6. Understand how the forces of nationalism developed in the Middle East, how the Holocaust affected world opinion regarding the need for a Jewish state, and the significance and effects of the location and establishment of Israel on world affairs.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

*This curriculum is a project of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JFCS Holocaust Center, with support from the California Department of Education, Marin County Office of Education, and the State of California.*

### CONTEXT:

The lessons in this unit increase students' understanding of Jewish people and awareness that antisemitism did not end after the Holocaust, and provide them with opportunities to learn about the persistence of antisemitism in its contemporary forms. Students investigate the ways in which

old ideas about Jews and Judaism have given rise to new expressions of antisemitism. In addition, students are introduced to individuals who refuse to be bystanders to bigotry as they explore the responsibility of all members of society to respond to and prevent antisemitism.

This unit is named in honor and memory of members of the Gringlas Family who were victims of the Holocaust.

#### GLOSSARY:

List the key academic vocabulary students need to know up front in order to understand and engage in this lesson. You may also include a longer list at the end of the lesson, if needed.

- **anti-Israel bias:** Extreme criticism of Israel, including false accusations directed against Israel, often with the aim of delegitimizing the country. Anti-Israel bias does not include legitimate criticism of the Israeli government, its policies, or its politicians.
- **antisemitism:** Prejudice or discrimination against Jews. Antisemitism can be based on hatred against Jews because of their religious beliefs or their group membership (ethnicity), but also on the erroneous belief that Jews are a race. Nazi antisemitism was racial in nature; Jews were viewed as racially inferior to Aryans and destructive of the world order. --antisemitic adj.
- **apartheid:** “Apartness”; a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race in South Africa until the early 1990s.
- **BDS Movement:** A global effort to isolate and punish Israel because of its perceived policies toward the Palestinians. While supporters of the BDS movement claim to embrace the tactic as a nonviolent way to pressure Israel into negotiations, such campaign efforts actually demonize Israel and place the entire responsibility of the conflict on one side: the Israelis. BDS activists regularly lobby multinational companies, churches, universities, actors, academics, and private individuals to cut ties with Israel or to refuse to engage in collaboration with Israelis
- **contemporary antisemitism:** A term used to describe a modern-day form of antisemitism that has developed in the late 20th and early 21st centuries and manifests itself in anti-Zionism and opposition to the State of Israel.
- **deicide:** the killing (or killer) of a god
- **delegitimization:** The act of weakening, destroying, or denying the status or authority of someone or something.
- **demonization/demonize:** The act of making a person or group seem like they are evil or threatening.
- **double standard:** A rule, code, policy, or standard that is unfairly applied to different people or groups in different ways.
- **genocide:** The United Nations defines genocide as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, including killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about a physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
- **hierarchy:** A system in which people or things are arranged according to their importance.

- **Holocaust:** The murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were also targeted by the Nazis.
- **Holocaust denial and distortion:** An antisemitic belief that the Holocaust never happened or that minimizes or trivializes it.
- **ideology:** A set of beliefs, opinions, and values held by an individual or a group.
- **Nazi:** Short for Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei (N.S.D.A.P.), the German national socialist political party that emerged in Munich after World War I. The party was taken over by Adolf Hitler in the early 1920s. The swastika was the party symbol.
- **neo-Nazi:** Groups that share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany; while they also hate other minorities, gays and lesbians and even sometimes Christians, they perceive "the Jew" as their cardinal enemy. ( Source: Southern Poverty Law Center )
- **oppression:** The act of governing or exerting control over people in cruel and unfair ways that deny them freedom and equal opportunity.
- **Palestine/Palestinian:** The Roman term for what is now Israel; the name used by the British during World War II to denote the area they held under a League of Nations mandate.
- **propaganda:** False or partly false information intended to shape people's opinion and action that fulfills the propagandist's intent.
- **Protocols of the Elders of Zion:** Originally written in 1903, Protocols is a work of fiction, intentionally written to blame Jews for a variety of ills. Those who distribute it claim that it documents a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world. The conspiracy and its alleged leaders, the so-called Elders of Zion, never existed.
- **scapegoat:** To blame an individual or group for something based on that person or group's identity when, in reality, the person or group is not responsible. Prejudicial thinking and discriminatory acts can lead to scapegoating. The individual or group blamed is the "scapegoat."
- **Segregate/segregation:** The act of setting apart, isolating, or dividing from the rest or from each other.
- **stereotype:** An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences.
- **swastika:** An ancient Eastern symbol appropriated by the Nazis as their emblem. (See Students' Toughest Questions for additional information.)
- **white nationalism:** A form of white supremacy that emphasizes defining a country or region by white racial identity and which seeks to promote the interests of whites exclusively, typically at the expense of people of other backgrounds.
- **white supremacist:** An individual or group who believes that whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds; whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; white "culture" is superior to other cultures; and/or that white people are genetically superior to other people.
- **xenophobia:** A fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners.
- **Zionism/anti-Zionism:** A political and cultural movement advocating a Jewish independent state in the Land of Israel. Anti-Zionism is a prejudice against the Jewish movement for self-determination and the right of the Jewish people to a homeland in the State of Israel. It may be motivated by or result in antisemitism, or it may create a climate in which antisemitism becomes more acceptable.

### Lesson One:

- [What Does It Mean to Be Jewish? Video](#)
- [Who Are the Jewish People Handout](#)
- [Rachel Slagter Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Rena Bernstein Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Map of Jewish Populations](#)
- [Jewish Migration and Antisemitism after the Holocaust Handout](#)
- [The Perseverance of Jewish Life Handout](#)
- [Readings About Poland Handout](#)
- [Andy Reti Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Postwar Life in Israel Handout](#)
- [Ruth Pearl Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Moshe Shamir Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Antisemitism in America Handout](#)
- [Regina Clipper Interview](#) and [Bio](#)

### Lesson Two:

- [Antisemitism Handout](#)
- [Features of Antisemitism Handout](#)
- [Anneliese Nossbaum Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [The Nature of Antisemitism Video](#)
- [Stephanie Testimony Video](#)
- [Video Toolbox on Antisemitism Video](#)
- [Anita Lasker Wallfisch Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Dr. Dave Rich Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Through Lines of Antisemitism Handout](#)
- [Antisemitism Over Time Handout](#)
- [Antisemitic Words and Images Handout](#)

### Lesson Three:

- [Tree of Life Synagogue Word Cloud Handout](#)
- [Judah Samet Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [History of White Supremacist Groups in the US Handout](#)
- [Eric Ward on Antisemitism Video](#)
- [Extreme Left Handout](#)
- [Modern Examples of Antisemitism](#)
- [Mohammed Dajani Daoudi Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Holocaust Denial Handout](#)
- [Lillian Eckstein Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
- [Felix Sparks Interview](#) and [Bio](#)

#### Lesson Four:

- [Profiles of Young Advocates Handout](#)
  - [Action Planning Handout](#)
  - [Taking Action Handout](#)
  - [Henry Oertelt Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
  - [Jair Melchior Interview](#) and [Bio](#)
  - [Group Action Project Handout](#)
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#### DIFFERENTIATION

Provide a list of differentiation strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners, including English learners, students in special education, and accelerated learners. Consider ways to support and extend student learning.

- Videos are short and designed to be played multiple times to assist with student understanding. Captions can be engaged as an additional strategy.
- The lesson includes audio-visual testimony, images and text. Instead of exploring each piece as a whole class, students can also be split into groups with assets assigned to align with students' preferred learning style. Students can share out to class or jigsaw content to further whole class understanding.
- Additional assets can be gleaned from Echoes & Reflections Unit II: Antisemitism to provide additional options for differentiation.

#### ASSESSMENT(S):

Identify how students will demonstrate their knowledge and applied learning of the material during/ after the lesson. Consider how teachers will know what students know and what they can do, in order to monitor student progress toward outcomes and inform instruction.

- Formative Assessments
  - Class Discussions
  - Small Group Discussions
  - The Perseverance of Jewish Life Graphic Organizer Activity
  - Features of Antisemitism Graphic Organizer Activity
  - The Through Lines of Antisemitism Activity
- Summative Assessments
  - Students design a bookmark, bumper, sticker, t-shirt, or social media content that speaks to the essential question, "What can we do to make a difference in the face of antisemitism?" Students draw on relevant information and ideas from the featured sources to devise a main slogan for their product and 3-5 brief accompanying phrases that challenge a specific example of antisemitism that they encountered in this unit. Students create their designs individually or in small groups. As an optional follow-up, they can print and distribute their designs to others.
  - Students complete a Group Action Project to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained throughout the unit by forming a response to antisemitism or another type of bias in their community. The Group Action Project document offers suggestions and resources for planning

actions, documenting and sharing project results, and reflecting on and evaluating student work. Kath Murdoch's "inquiry cycle" is offered as a guide to help students pace and organize their work.

### LESSON/ACTIVITY

Write out the steps of the lesson in a format easily understood by teachers. Highlight where the differentiation strategies and assessments (mentioned above) take place in the lesson. You might also include a calendar or timeline.

Due to the themes of hatred and discrimination that this lesson focuses on, it is advisable to evaluate if any individuals in your class may need a break from such content. While this unit is leveled Grades 6-12, Lesson 3 may be more appropriate for a high school audience.





## I: REBUILDING JEWISH LIFE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES**

### PROCEDURES

*Antisemitism is fueled by misconceptions and ignorance of what it means to be Jewish, and therefore a critical place for students to begin is to build knowledge and foster empathy for Jewish peoplehood. In this lesson, students will engage with primary sources, an interactive map and testimony from Jewish individuals, designed to help build students' understanding of the effects that antisemitism has had on every aspect of Jewish life, culture, traditions, and places of residence after the Holocaust.*

**1** Students learn they will be introduced to some of the core components of Jewish peoplehood and Judaism, and the diversity of culture, values, and people that exist throughout the world. The graphic organizer, [Who are the Jewish People?](#), is distributed for students to take notes and engage with the following resources:

- [What Does it Mean to be Jewish?](#) (video)
- [Brief History of Israel](#) (handout)
- [About Jews and Judaism](#) (handout)

**2** Students watch the testimonies of [Rachel Slagter](#) and [Rena Bernstein](#). As they watch the clips, they add more details onto their graphic organizer and then discuss the following questions:

- Why did Rachel decide to live in Israel? What makes life there special to her?
- What is your reaction to Rena's testimony? How do her experiences complicate your understanding of what it means to be Jewish, especially for a Jewish person who had to pretend to be Christian in order to save herself during the Holocaust?
- How has your understanding of Jewish identity evolved? Explain the various ways that Jewish identity is complex, dynamic, and deeply personal to each individual.

**3** Students learn that the Holocaust had a dramatic effect on Jewish life, especially in terms of the devastation of the Jewish population in much of Europe, most dramatically in Poland, the Netherlands, and parts of Eastern Europe. It also caused a large influx of Jews to Mandatory Palestine, later Israel, and the United States and other countries (including Australia, Canada, and countries in Latin America) during and after the Holocaust.

**4** Students explore the [Map of Jewish Populations](#) that details the countries of the world and their respective Jewish populations over the last 125 years. Students are instructed to search several countries throughout the world on different continents and of different sizes. Students are to pay particular attention to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa where approximately 850,000 Jews were forced to leave once Israel was established in 1948. Then, students discuss the following questions:

- How does this map help build on your knowledge of what it means to be Jewish? What are some additional characteristics you would add to your graphic organizer?
- Wherever Jews have lived, except for Israel after 1948, they have been a small percentage of the population. How does this map help you understand the effects of antisemitism?
- What can you infer by exploring the change of Jewish populations throughout the world?

**5** The student handout, [Jewish Migration and Antisemitism after the Holocaust](#), is distributed. Individually or in pairs, students read and annotate the handout by highlighting push factors for why Jews would want to leave Europe after the Holocaust. The class then discusses some of the following questions:

- What were some of the legal restrictions that existed to limit emigration of Jews out of Europe?
- What were some of the emotional factors experienced by Jews to either return to their prewar home or to leave? And if they decided to leave, where do you think they should have tried to go? Where did they go?
- Refer back to the Brief History of Israel handout if necessary. Were you surprised by the event of the Exodus 1947? How does this event help you understand the complex nature of postwar Europe, British Mandatory Palestine, and the founding of the State of Israel?

**6** In small groups and utilizing the Map of Jewish Populations, students complete the graphic organizer, [The Perseverance of Jewish Life](#), to examine a case study of Jewish life and culture after the Holocaust and how antisemitism has shaped the experiences of Jewish life in three distinct areas of the world: Poland, Israel, and the United States.

- [Poland](#):
  - Reclamation of Jewish Life in Poland after near Annihilation
  - [Andy Reti \(bio\)](#), describing the reasons he ultimately left Eastern Europe in 1956.
  - Life and Tragedy: The First Jewish Preschool in Lodz in 50 Years
- [Israel](#):
  - [Postwar Jewish Life in Israel](#)
  - [Ruth Pearl \(bio\)](#), describing what she experienced during the Farhud, the anti-Jewish pogrom in Baghdad, Iraq, 1941.
  - [Moshe Shamir \(bio\)](#), describing his emotions when he arrived in the State of Israel after surviving slave labor camps and a ghetto in Transnistria, and an internment camp in Cyprus.
  - A Survivor of the Holocaust and October 7, 2023
- [USA](#):
  - [America: Land of Antisemitism, Refuge, and Opportunity](#)
  - [Regina Clipper \(bio\)](#), describing antisemitic discrimination in the workplace while working in New York City.



**7** Students present their findings to the class, tracing the human story they encountered in Poland, Israel, and the United States. As a summative task, the class then discusses some or all of the following questions:

- Regardless of where they were, how did antisemitism shape the lives of the Jewish people you studied?
- Reflecting on this lesson, what is the most significant aspect of Jewish life, populations, and culture that you have learned?



## REBUILDING JEWISH LIFE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES**

### CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
7. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and Proficiently.

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

1. Draw evidence from literary and/or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.



## II: WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM AND WHAT ARE FEATURES OF ANTISEMITISM?

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 60 MINUTES**

*Utilizing expertise from scholars and examples of historic and current antisemitism, this lesson seeks to help students to define and identify some of the essential features of antisemitism, particularly its enduring nature and ability to be manipulated in times of fear and uncertainty.*

### PART I: HOW IS ANTISEMITISM ITS OWN IDEOLOGY?

- 1** Students turn and talk to a partner about what the term antisemitism means to them. The handout, [Antisemitism](#), is distributed or displayed and students discuss together, noting similarities to or differences from their personal definitions. Students learn that antisemitism is latent in parts of society, often laying relatively dormant until periods of social unrest when it can ignite.
- 2** In pairs, students are assigned one of the two sections below. After completing the [Features of Antisemitism graphic organizer](#) about the videos they watched, students switch partners and share their findings with their new partner who watched the other videos.
  - Section 1: Students view the brief video, [The Nature of Antisemitism](#), in which Professor Peter Hayes of Northwestern University discusses whether antisemitism has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other prejudices. Then, students watch the [testimony of high school student Stephanie](#) about her specific experience with antisemitism.
  - Section 2: Students view a short portion from the [Video Toolbox on Antisemitism](#). They note key ideas, paying particular attention to stereotypes that appear repeatedly in different eras and the religious origins of antisemitism. Then, students watch the [testimony of Anneliese Nossbaum](#) ([bio](#)).
- 3** As a culminating activity, in groups or as an entire class, students discuss the following questions:
  - What were some common features of antisemitism that you found throughout the different videos?
  - What illustrations of contemporary antisemitism do Anneliese and Stephanie provide? What other examples are you aware of in your own communities that show the destructive impact of antisemitism?
  - How do you think social media has contributed to the mainstreaming of antisemitism? Why is it dangerous for antisemitism to become socially acceptable?
  - According to Professor Hayes, what makes antisemitism distinct from other forms of hate?
  - How are Anneliese and Stephanie's lives harmed by the antisemitism they have faced? How is society harmed?

## PART II: HOW HAS ANTISEMITISM BEEN EXPRESSED OVER TIME?

**4** Students learn that they will investigate the ways in which antisemitism has been expressed over time and its connection to current manifestations in the world today. Students learn that antisemitism is latent in certain parts of society, often surges in times of fear and uncertainty (although it may surge in other contexts as well), and often functions as a skewed worldview that makes people vulnerable to conspiracy theories. Students view the [testimony of Anita Lasker Wallfisch](#) (bio) and the [interview with Dr. Dave Rich](#) (bio) and discuss the following questions:

- What are some features of antisemitism that Anita and Dave describe?
- Anita mentions the cycle of antisemitism that can often be triggered by a specific event. What are some recent examples of events that have sparked a rise in antisemitism?
- How has antisemitism become more normalized in your community today?
- According to Dave Rich, how does antisemitism differ from other types of prejudice?

**5** The handout, [The Through Lines of Antisemitism](#), is distributed and students review the directions. In small groups, they prepare for the exercise by replicating the chart from the handout on large sheets of chart paper or other format. They then proceed as follows:

- Part 1 – Historical Survey: Small groups are assigned at least one of the six sources in the handout, [Antisemitism Over Time](#), which tracks some of the ways antisemitism has manifested over the past century. Groups review the assigned source(s) and add notes to their chart.
- Part 2 – Contemporary Examples: Small groups are assigned at least one statement and one visual from the [Antisemitic Words and Images handout](#), which focuses on modern-day examples of antisemitism. As students review, they add notes to their chart, paying attention to the ways in which the contemporary manifestations are similar to and distinct from the historical case studies.
- OPTIONAL: Consult the historical antisemitic tropes: [antisemitism.adl.org](http://antisemitism.adl.org)

**6** When groups have finished, students post their charts so they are visible to the whole class. Volunteers share back or highlight significant facts or ideas from the sources. The following questions are discussed:

- What enduring elements of antisemitism continue to show up time and again? From your perspective, why has antisemitism endured?
- What similarities and differences did you notice between earlier and more recent examples of antisemitism?
- How do these examples of antisemitism harm Jewish individuals?
- How does the persistence of antisemitism cause harm to society?



The quotes below from historian and Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of Britain, are posted.

Students journal in reflection of this lesson using the following prompts: “How has the blaming of Jews for the ills of society and the belief in conspiracy theories fueled antisemitism in the past and today? How does believing in antisemitic myths harm a person, a community, and society?”

- *“Antisemitism is not simply the hatred of something ‘foreign,’ but the hatred of a perpetual evil in the world. Jews are not an enemy but the ultimate enemy.”*
- *“The hate that begins with Jews does not end with Jews.”*

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**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 60 MINUTES**

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## III: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FORCES THAT DRIVE ANTISEMITISM TODAY?

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES**

*In this lesson, students learn how antisemitism has frequently been used as a political weapon to attack opponents, gather support, and ultimately to gain power and influence. Invoking the Holocaust in order to misuse it is a particularly disturbing tactic that denies, distorts, and trivializes the horrors of the Holocaust. Students discover the dangers of allowing hate speech to go unchecked in which antisemitism can spread quickly and lead to real world violence.*

### **PART I: HOW HAS ANTISEMITISM MANIFESTED FROM THE RADICAL RIGHT IN AMERICA?**

**1** Students share any prior knowledge they may have about the Tree of Life Synagogue attack that took place in Pittsburgh in 2018. The following background is shared as needed:

*On the morning of October 27, 2018 (a Saturday, the Jewish holy day) Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA yelling "All Jews must die!" He opened fire on the congregants, killing eleven and wounding six others. Bowers told a law enforcement officer that Jews "were committing genocide against his people." Authorities later found virulent antisemitic, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant posts on Bowers' social media profiles. The last of his posts reflecting his belief that Jews are enabling undocumented immigrants to enter the U.S.—stated that "[Jewish organizations] like to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in." The Tree of Life shooting is the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in U.S. history.*

**2** The [Tree of Life Synagogue Attack Word Cloud handout](#) is projected or distributed. The word cloud reflects some of the language the assailant posted online in the lead-up to the attack. In pairs or small groups, students analyze the language for clues about what might have fueled his irrational hatred and they identify traditional antisemitic themes. As a class, students discuss their findings. The following themes are considered:

- The U.S. is being attacked and "invaded"; overrun by "foreign" and dangerous people (Jews, Israel, Muslims, migrants, refugees, etc.).
- Jews, Jewish organizations, and Israel are evil and engineering an "invasion" for self-serving purposes.

- White people in the U.S. are being “replaced” and their “way of life” threatened; they must unite and fight for their country.
- The Holocaust was justified and a modern-day genocide against Jews and other “enemies” (refugees, Muslims, non-White people, etc.) is warranted. Students should pay particular attention to the “other enemies” language, and discuss how antisemitism overlaps with racism and different hatreds of many other marginalized groups.
- **To conclude this activity, students [view the testimony of Judah Samet \(bio\)](#), a Holocaust survivor and a member of the Tree of Life Congregation at the time of the attack. After watching, students discuss some or all of the following questions:**
  - What emotions came up when encountering this word cloud? What words did your eye first move towards?
  - Even if hate speech does not escalate to violence, why is it harmful and to whom? Is antisemitism harmful only to Jews?
  - Judah reacts to the news of the shooting with, “For me, it’s never over.” What does he mean by this?
  - How has dehumanizing language like “invaders” and antisemitic rhetoric exhibited by Bowers been normalized? Why is this so dangerous?
  - By analyzing the language of the word cloud and the experience of Judah, what conclusions can you draw about how hate escalates?

**3** Students view the video, [Eric Ward on Antisemitism at the Heart of White Nationalism](#) and then review the student handout, [The History of White Supremacist Groups in America](#). Students learn that an increase in white nationalism—such as that exhibited by Bowers as well as attackers involved in the 2017 Charlottesville rally and 2019 Poway Synagogue shooting in CA—is one trend that both fuels contemporary antisemitism and demonstrates its most deadly consequence. Students discuss the following questions:

- How does the antisemitism promoted by white nationalist groups today build on old ideas? How is it different?
- How does fear and uncertainty animate the antisemitism seen in White Nationalism and how is it used to incite violence?
- How does antisemitism and a belief in conspiracy theories fuel hatred and violence against other vulnerable populations?
- How does antisemitism jeopardize the civil liberties of all people and threaten democratic society?
- According to Eric Ward, why is it important for marginalized people other than Jews and society as a whole to fight antisemitism?

## PART II: HOW HAS ANTISEMITISM MANIFESTED IN THE EXTREME LEFT IN AMERICA?

**4** Students learn that, especially since the attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and the resulting war between Israel and Hamas, a significant and observable rise in antisemitism has manifested in the extreme political left. Influenced by multiple sources, including sources firmly outside of the political left, it is often centered on opposition to the State of Israel, sometimes because of certain policies and sometimes its right to exist at all. Students review the [Brief History of Israel handout](#) if necessary.

- 5** The handout, The [Through Lines of Antisemitism](#), is distributed and students review the directions. In small groups, they prepare for the exercise by replicating the chart from the handout on large sheets of chart paper. They then proceed as follows:
- Section 1 – Historical Survey: Small groups are assigned at least one of the three sources in the handout, [Antisemitism That Finds Common Cause With the Extreme Left](#), which tracks antisemitism from the fundamentalist, extremist Arab world (known as “Islamist antisemitism”) as well as the historic roots of antisemitism in the former Soviet Union and in liberation movements, that have found common cause with the Extreme Left in the United States.
  - Section 2 – Contemporary Examples: Small groups are assigned at least one case study from the [Modern Examples of Antisemitism That Find Common Cause with the Extreme Left](#), which focuses on modern-day examples of antisemitism. As students review, they add notes to their chart, paying attention to the ways in which the contemporary manifestations are similar to and distinct from the historical case studies.

- 6** When groups have finished, they post their charts so that they are visible to the whole class. Volunteers share back or highlight significant facts or ideas from the sources. The following questions are discussed:
- What are some myths and tropes from the past that have been adapted into the modern progressive movement? Cite specific sources that demonstrate a throughline of antisemitism from its historic roots to a modern example.
  - How have language, ideologies, and movements of the past been manipulated to foment antisemitic beliefs today?
  - In what ways has the State of Israel become a target, and how are accusations against it used to promote antisemitic ideas?
  - How does the criteria of Double Standards help explain why so much attention is given to the policies of the government of Israel?
  - How do these dangerous ideologies that rely on antisemitism threaten and harm American society and Americans?

- 7** Students watch the [interview with Dr. Dave Rich \(bio\)](#). They discuss some or all of the following questions:
- How has Holocaust language been manipulated to promote antisemitism? Why do you think that is?
  - What are some of the myths and tropes Dave mentions? Connect them to the [Antisemitism That Finds Common Cause With the Extreme Left handout](#) and examples you have studied so far. Why do you think these conspiracy theories continue to be recycled, especially among the political left?
  - Dave talks about the double hit that occurs when an antisemitic statement is defended even after the offender is alerted of its antisemitism. Why is this harmful to Jews? To the larger society?
  - Why do you think antisemitic language has become more socially acceptable? How does this threaten a safe and stable democratic society for all people?



Students reflect on the sources examined from the far right, far left, and Islamist antisemites which have become increasingly normalized throughout America, regardless of where one is on the political spectrum. Students view the [interview with Dr. Dave Rich \(bio\)](#) who discusses research from Britain that examined antisemitic attitudes from the left, right, and throughout the political spectrum. Students discuss some or all of the following questions:

- How has antisemitism become normalized in society? Where and from whom have you seen and heard antisemitic myths, tropes, and anti-Jewish attitudes?
- How does social media contribute to making certain forms of hate socially acceptable? In what ways has antisemitism spread online led to harassment and violence against Jews and other people?
- What is the connection between negative attitudes against the State of Israel and antisemitic beliefs? How has opposition to Israel been used to spread antisemitism?
- Why is it dangerous for antisemitism to be absorbed into larger society? What problems does that create for Jews? How does it threaten democratic society?

## PART II: HOW HAS ANTISEMITISM MANIFESTED IN THE EXTREME LEFT IN AMERICA?



Students view the [testimony of Mohammed Dajani Daoudi \(bio\)](#) and discuss the following questions:

- How was the Holocaust taught to Mohammed when he was in Lebanon?
- According to the Arab education Mohammed received in Lebanon, what was the purpose of the Holocaust? How is this a form of Holocaust denial? Why is this antisemitic?
- What is the relationship to the education Mohammed received in Lebanon about the Holocaust and the Holocaust inversion you have seen in Part Two of this lesson?
- Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust? How can understanding the history of the Holocaust help combat antisemitism?



Students define the words denial (the action of declaring something to be untrue), distortion (the action of giving a misleading account or impression), and inversion (the reversal of relationship). The handout, [Holocaust Denial, Distortion, and Inversion](#) is distributed and reviewed as a class. Students learn that denial, distortion, trivialization, and inversion of the Holocaust and of Jewish victimhood are often features of contemporary antisemitism.



Students view the video, Holocaust Denial, Explained, from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. They review the biographical information and testimonies of [Lillian Eckstein \(bio\)](#) and [Felix Sparks \(bio\)](#). Students note the emotions of the interviewees, key words, and phrases that stand out to them, and thoughts and questions that come up as they listen. They discuss some or all of the following questions:

- Why do people deny, distort, and trivialize the Holocaust?
- How are Holocaust denial, distortion, and trivialization a form of antisemitism?
- How is the Holocaust used and manipulated as a weapon of antisemitism?
- Why might some people be influenced by the ideas of Holocaust deniers?
- Felix Sparks says he will fight the “stupidity and viciousness” of Holocaust denial to his “last breath.” What are some ways you can stand up to this form of antisemitism when you encounter it?

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Students create a “found poem” using the notes they took in response to the videos. To accomplish this, they choose at least ten key words and phrases from their notes that best describe the forces driving antisemitism today. They write each word or phrase on a separate slip of paper and arrange the slips into a poem that answers the supporting question and communicates their point of view. When students finish, they silently exchange their poems with peers in groups of three and attach written comments to one another’s work using sticky notes.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FORCES THAT DRIVE ANTISEMITISM TODAY?

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES**

### CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
7. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and Proficiently.

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

1. Draw evidence from literary and/or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.





## IV: ACTION AND AGENCY: COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 60 MINUTES**

*In this lesson, students consider the skills and qualities needed to act effectively to advocate for Jewish people and combat antisemitism by reflecting on case studies and testimonies. They learn practical ways to respond to antisemitism in their communities and identify a range of actions they might take in response to real-life scenarios of antisemitism.*

**1** The lesson begins with students reflecting on quotes from Miep Gies, one of Anne Frank's rescuers, about courage and our responsibility to take action against prejudice and hate. Background information from the Miep Gies Quotes handout is shared with the class and some or all of the quotes from the handout are displayed around the room. Students walk around the room, reviewing the quotes and choosing one to stand by that resonates for them. In small groups, they discuss some of the following questions:

- *What resonated for you about the quote? Why is it meaningful to you? [Self-reflect on what values/skills are mentioned in this quote. Why is this value important in society?]*
- *Do you think that elevating people to the status of "hero" is helpful or harmful in our society? Why?*
- *What is your personal definition of moral courage?*
- *What qualities or skills does it take for ordinary people to display courage?*
- *Do you find Gies' idea of "remorse" to be a motivating emotion? Why?*

**2** Students reflect on Miep Gies' sentiment that even an ordinary person can "turn on a small light in a dark room." They learn that, during this lesson, they will investigate ways that ordinary people (them!) can stand up against prejudice and intolerance in their communities.

**3** Students identify people they know in their own lives or in public life or history who have worked for a more just society. They turn and talk to a partner about what they think enabled these people to help others. The handout, [Profiles of Young Advocates](#), is distributed, which features stories of ordinary people who have embodied characteristics such as being proud of their identity, combating antisemitism, and building bridges between different groups of people. In small groups, students read at least one of the profiles and create a list of attributes and values that enabled that person or people to advocate for a better society.

After creating their lists, each group decides on three qualities they think are most important to be proud of one's identity, combat antisemitism, and build bridges. They write those qualities "graffiti

style” on large sheets of chart paper posted at the front of the room. The class discusses why they prioritized these qualities and what they think it might take for them to manifest these characteristics in situations involving antisemitism and hatred in their own lives.

**4** Students next practice applying some of the behaviors they have thought about to real-life scenarios. The handout, [Action Planning](#), is distributed and the directions are reviewed together. In small groups students are assigned a scenario from the [Taking Action: Scenarios for Discussion](#) handout (or they select one that feels relevant to them). Students discuss the scenario using the questions provided and then complete the action planning grid in response to the scenario.

**5** When students have completed the task, they create new groups using the jig-saw method, so that each new group contains students who have worked on different scenarios. In their new groups, students report back on the highlights of their initial discussions and share the action plans they have devised.

**6** Students review the biographies and view the testimonies of [Henry Oertelt \(bio\)](#) and [Jair Melchior \(bio\)](#), which emphasize the importance of creating understanding across our human differences and standing against all forms of prejudice. They discuss some or all of the following questions:

- Jair Melchior stresses self-reflection. What can you personally do better to learn more and better understand antisemitism and its damaging effect on Jews and society? What can your community do?
- Henry Oertelt says he is the prime example of what can happen when no one speaks up against prejudice. What can we all do to speak up when we experience or witness hatred around us?
- What can and should we do to combat antisemitism that calls for violence, particularly calls to kill Jews wherever they are?
- Why is combating antisemitism an essential component of protecting diverse democracies? Why is it important for Jews and non-Jews to fight antisemitism?

**7** As a summative assessment, students design a bookmark, bumper, sticker, t-shirt, or social media content that speaks to the essential question, “What can we do to make a difference in the face of antisemitism?” Students draw on relevant information and ideas from the featured sources to devise a main slogan for their product and 3-5 brief accompanying phrases that challenge a specific example of antisemitism that they encountered in this unit. Students create their designs individually or in small groups. As an optional follow-up, they can print and distribute their designs to others.

#### **Optional Extension:**

Students complete a Group Action Project to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained throughout the unit by forming a response to antisemitism or another type of bias in their community. The [Group Action Project document](#) offers suggestions and resources for planning actions, documenting and sharing project results, and reflecting on and evaluating student work. Kath Murdoch’s “inquiry cycle” is offered as a guide to help students pace and organize their work.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

1. Students will investigate the scope and scale of antisemitism in the modern world. They begin by defining these key terms (scope is the extent or range of something; scale is the size of something).

Utilizing the resources found in The Scope and Scale of Antisemitism handout and the [ADL A.T.L.A.S.](#) (Antisemitism Trends, Learnings and Statistics) students create a graph or graphic representation depicting one facet of antisemitism in the United States or globally, such as:

- A comparison of attitudes toward Jews across several countries
  - The number of hate crimes in the U.S. motivated by bias against different religions
  - A comparison of hate crimes in the U.S. across different categories (e.g., race gender, religion)
  - Knowledge of and attitudes about the Holocaust
  - Types of antisemitic incidents in the U.S.
2. Using the film, [Extremism in America](#), the corresponding lesson plans from Retro Report, and the Southern Poverty Law Center's [Hate Map](#), students research one event or hate group tied to white supremacist ideology. Students create a poster, presentation, or other visual representation to present their findings and share with their larger school community.
  3. Reflect on the ways that Jewish people have been scapegoated historically and in current times. Scapegoating in this context means blaming Jews individually or collectively for something, based on stereotypes or prejudices, when in reality Jews are not responsible. Record examples of scapegoating that you have learned about in this or other units of study and choose one example to research further. Make comparisons to other groups that are scapegoated today, identify some of the factors that lead to scapegoating behavior, and discuss how we can respond when we encounter scapegoating in our communities.
  4. In his testimony Henry Oertelt says, "I am the prime example of what can happen to people that are suffering under prejudicial circumstances and biases...and we have to learn to speak up when we see prejudice and hatred." Write an essay exploring the following questions: Why do you think more people don't speak up when they witness these types of behaviors? How have the individuals you have been introduced to in this unit, including Henry, helped you think about your role in your own community?
  5. While much media attention is often given to antisemitic and other hateful acts, the efforts of individuals and communities to combat such acts are often less publicized. Research examples of Jewish people and communities that have shown agency and resistance against this type of persecution. Present your findings in a multimedia presentation.
  6. Assign students to complete [Awareness to Action: Challenging Antisemitism](#), a four-part digital learning experience created by ADL and designed to not only unravel the complexities of antisemitism, but to empower the next generation to challenge all forms of bias. This course can help students reshape the narrative about antisemitism, foster deeper understanding of Jews and Judaism, and create a sense of belonging, both inside and outside the classroom.

## REFERENCES

- Echoes & Reflections. (2025, January 27). *Unit 11 - Gringlas Unit on Antisemitism After the Holocaust*. <https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-11/?state=open#content>



## ACTION AND AGENCY: COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

**TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 60 MINUTES**

### CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

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