

LESSON PLAN

Antisemitism and Sports: Antisemitism, Sports and Society

Compelling Question: What is the impact of the relationship between antisemitism, sports and society?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Competencies
K-2	3-5	75–90 Minutes	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language
MS	HS		

LESSON OVERVIEW

Antisemitism is a complex system of oppression which has far reaching impacts on the Jewish people. Antisemitic ideas in society contribute to injustice for Jewish people and others, including in the industry and culture of sports. Antisemitic conspiracy theories about “Jewish power” and “disloyalty” that are common in society can also be found in contemporary and historical narratives of sports and athletics.

This intersection between antisemitism, sports and society offers students the opportunity to examine antisemitism and its societal impacts. In this lesson, students will analyze the 1919 Chicago “Black Sox” Scandal and the antisemitism that manifested as a result.

[Pedagogy Note: This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn about antisemitism and how it manifests and sports. This lesson should be preceded by the lesson *Antisemitism and Sports – Manifestations of Antisemitism* and followed by *Antisemitism and Sports – Advocating for Change* as part of a mini unit. If conducting this lesson in isolation, be sure to provide and/or review information that helps the learner investigate manifestations of antisemitism from ancient history to the modern day and explore the impact of antisemitism on the Jewish people.]

[Note to Teacher: It is important to consider that you may have students in your classroom who are Jewish. Be prepared and sensitive to those students, considering the extent to which they are a minority or majority of your classroom, and plan accordingly. Some students who are Jewish may feel relieved and comfortable discussing these issues in class and others may feel nervous, uncomfortable, or angry to be talking about a sensitive topic. You may want to communicate with those students in advance and determine how they can discuss this topic while feeling comfortable and safe.]

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will review the definition of antisemitism and antisemitic myths and tropes about Jewish people.
- Students will increase their understanding of the influence of bias, power and privilege on individual attitudes and behaviors.



Web Related Connections

Lesson Plans

[Ruining the Game: Antisemitism and Sports](#)

[Antisemitism Around the World: Global 100](#)

[On the Rise: Antisemitism in Europe](#)

[Antisemitism and Sports Unit](#)

Other Resources

[Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice](#)

[Athletes and Activism](#)

[Believe in Something: Nike, Kaepernick and Social Change](#)

[Major League Baseball and the Negro League: Correcting an Injustice](#)

Key Words

Antisemitism
Bias
Bigotry
Discrimination
Ethnicity
Explicit Bias
Hate
Identity
Ideology
Implicit Bias
Injustice

- Students will examine historical antisemitism and analyze antisemitism as a system of oppression.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- Paper
- Pens
- Large Post It Notes or Chart Paper
- Individual Post It Notes
- Supplemental Resource: “[Antisemitism as a System of Oppression](#)” handout (1 per student)
- Supplemental Resource: “[Close Reading Protocol](#)” handout (1 per student)
- Supplemental Resource: “[The Black Sox Scandal](#)” handout (1 per student)
- Supplemental Resource: “[The Dearborn Independent, September 3, 1921](#)” handout (1 per student)

Key Words (cont.)

Intersectionality
Marginalization
Microaggressions
Multicultural
Oppression
Prejudice
Race
Religion
Religious Bias
Social Power
Stereotype
Systemic Racism



Information Review: Antisemitism as a System of Oppression (10 Minutes)

1. Distribute the “Antisemitism as a System of Oppression” handout, one per student.
2. Instruct students to review the handout and to annotate the text by marking significant terms or phrases by underlining, circling, or a dot; and to use a question mark for any part of the definition about which they’re unsure.
3. Review the materials with students. Invite students to share out the parts of the definition they marked and elaborate on their meaning and to ask questions about the definition.
4. Ask students to consider what aspects of the definition they find most useful or clarifying and which parts of the definition they find challenging or confusing.
5. Tell students that in the next activity, they will be examining a historical document that shows antisemitic ideas in context.

[Instructor should model writing out these notes/questions/etc. around the definition.]



Close Reading Activity (20 Minutes)

1. Instruct students to count off from one to six to form six small groups and pass out one copy of each additional resource: “[Close Reading Protocol](#)”, “[The Black Sox Scandal](#)” and “[The Dearborn Independent, September 3, 1921](#)” to each participant.
2. Instruct students to consider the impact of the article they are about to examine.
3. Students should use the 4 I’s of Oppression framework on the “Antisemitism as a System of Oppression” Handout to guide their analysis of the new materials.
4. Instruct the students to complete the activity using the “Close Reading Protocol” handout.
5. Ask students to do a gallery walk of the summaries that have been created by other groups.
6. At this point bring the groups back together to transition to the closing class discussion so that students can make connections beyond the text.

Closing (10 Minutes)

1. Once you have concluded the previous discussion, inform the group that you will conclude the lesson with a final reflection.
2. Ask the students to reflect on the following questions and write their responses.
 - What, if anything, surprised you as you learned about these examples of antisemitism in history and today?
 - What connections can you draw between the 4Is Framework, the reading and antisemitism?
 - Why do you think these antisemitic themes persist?
3. Invite the students to share some of their answers aloud.

Additional Reading and Resources

- [Antisemitism Uncovered](#)
- [ADL Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2022](#)
- [ADL Sports Leadership Council](#)
- [Ford's Anti-Semitism](#) (PBS)

Common Core Anchor Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
<p>Reading</p> <p>R1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>R2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p> <p>R3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).</p> <p>R4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.</p> <p>R5: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.</p> <p>R6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.</p> <p>R7: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</p> <p>R8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</p> <p>R9: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).</p>
<p>Writing</p> <p>W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p>W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>W5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p> <p>W8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.</p> <p>W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p>
<p>Speaking and Listening</p> <p>SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p>SL2: Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.</p> <p>SL3: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</p> <p>SL4: Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.</p>
<p>Language</p> <p>L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <p>L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p> <p>L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies</p> <p>L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>L6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</p>

CASEL's SEL Competencies

COMPETENCIES
Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
Self-Management: The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

Antisemitism as a System of Oppression

Antisemitism

The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Jewish based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Jewish people, Judaism and Israel.

As antisemitism manifests in different layers of our society, we see this phenomenon surface in the world of sports. Antisemitism and sports follows the same patterns as other areas of society. Antisemitism's persistence and adaptability is rooted in the stereotypes and myths about the Jewish people that have been recycled and repurposed for centuries. These false interpretations and fantasies about the Jewish people have led to antisemitism being used to justify exclusion or oppression of Jewish athletes, coaches, and supporters. The most common antisemitic tropes include:

1. The myth that the Jewish People are inherently disloyal or more loyal to Israel
2. The myth that Jews have too much power
3. The myth that Jews are greedy, overly wealthy or fixated on money
4. The myth that the Jewish People are collectively responsible for the death of Jesus Christ
5. The myth that Jews use Christian blood for religious rituals
6. The myth that the events of the Holocaust did not occur or were exaggerated
7. The misappropriation of the events of the Holocaust and the comparison of actions of Jews or the State of Israel to Nazis
8. The myth that anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel is never antisemitic

Many incidents of antisemitism and sports have clear intent, such as the use of Nazi imagery or language. However, some incidents of antisemitism are rooted in a lack of understanding about Jewish people and antisemitic stereotypes. Just because no harm was intended does not mean no harm was caused. It is important to consider not only intent, but impact.

Definitions: 4 I's Of Oppression

Oppression: A system of mistreatment, exploitation and abuse of a marginalized group(s) for the social, economic or political benefit of a dominant group(s). This happens within a social hierarchy where people are ranked according to status, often based on aspects of social identity.

In any society, there are core belief(s) or **ideologies** about how the dominant and marginalized groups relate to each other, which are embedded in the societal **institutions** (e.g., government, economy, criminal justice system, health care, education, media, etc.). These core beliefs are also expressed through **interpersonal** relationships and communication and in the **internalized** messages that people have about themselves and how they should be treated.

4 I's of Oppression



Ideology

Core beliefs about how the dominant and marginalized groups relate to each other in an oppressive society. These beliefs may say that one group is superior to the other or that one group has the right to control the other. Positive qualities are often attributed to the dominant group, while the opposite qualities are attributed to the marginalized group.



Institutional

Sectors of society in which the ideology has become rooted, including government, economy, criminal justice system, health care, education, the media, and more. Within these aspects of society, the marginalized groups experience unfair treatment, discrimination, disparities and biased practices.



Interpersonal

Behaviors and communication through which the ideology is expressed directly or indirectly. The belief that one group is better than another group gives "permission" for individual members of the dominant group to personally disrespect, devalue or mistreat individuals in marginalized groups. This can include jokes, slurs, exclusion, stereotyping, threats, bullying, physical assaults, dehumanization, and more.



Internalized

Over time, members of the marginalized group absorb the ideology, creating feelings of inferiority or acceptance of stereotypes, prejudices and negative messages about themselves and their identity group. This can cause feelings of powerlessness, despair, passivity, aggression, self-harm, and more.

Close Reading Protocol

I. Read Text Aloud to Group

- a. Read the article aloud.
- b. Follow along with your copy of the reading and circle unfamiliar words.
- c. As a group, review the words that were circled to provide definitions.

II. Read Silently

- a. Read the article silently.
- b. Mark words that stand out to them for any reason.
- c. After reading, reflect on the following questions:
 - i. Notice the headings and titles of this publication. What do they communicate?
 - ii. What words or phrases are repeated often in the headings and text?
 - iii. What message is communicated in the article excerpt?"
 - iv. What choices about sentence length and structure does the author make?
 - v. What ideas are communicated about baseball?
 - vi. Does the structure of this text tell us anything about the likely reader of the Dearborn Independent?

III. Answer Text-Dependent Questions

- a. As a group, discuss and write out your answers to the following questions:
 - i. What can you infer about the author's or the newspaper's ideology?
 - ii. Based on your reading of this text, what institutional examples of antisemitism were present at this time?
 - iii. For a reader of this text, what interpersonal examples of antisemitism might be considered acceptable or even recommended?
 - iv. What does this article tell you about antisemitic beliefs that may be internalized?

IV. Create Summary

- a. In your small group, create a summary on paper that captures the essence of the text and your responses to the text-dependent questions
- b. Your group should write a summary for the front cover, headline and selected portion of the article for this portion of the close read.
- c. This summary will be read by other groups, so make sure the summary is legible and structured.

The Black Sox Scandal

The 1919 World Series featured the Cincinnati Reds and the Chicago White Sox. The Sox were the reigning World Champions and owned by former player, Charles Comiskey. Comiskey was notorious for underpaying his players and, by the rules of the day players had no leverage to change teams. Upon reaching the World Series, a group led by Arnold Rothstein, a Jewish mobster, conspired with eight of the White Sox players to manipulate the outcome. The White Sox, despite being favored, fell to the Cincinnati Reds and accusations that the series was rigged began before it was even played. Despite being acquitted at a criminal trial, the offending players were banned for life by Major League Baseball. The story of the “Black Sox” as they became to be known was front page news and dominated the sports world for years.

At the time, one of the most widely circulated newspaper was famed American industrialist and automobile magnet Henry Ford’s *Dearborn Independent*. The *Dearborn Independent* was required by Ford Motor Company to be distributed in all their dealerships and at its peak had a circulation of almost one million. The newspaper became infamous for its aggressive antisemitic content¹, often posting disparaging articles about the Jewish people, promoting antisemitic stereotypes and tropes, and promoting antisemitic conspiracy theories. As part of this campaign, Ford’s paper seized on the Jewish connection to the scandal with headlines such as “Jewish Gamblers Corrupt American Baseball”. Over the course of full-length articles, the paper attacked Jewish values and painted a warped picture that Jewish influence was destroying baseball and by extension, America.

The *Dearborn Independent* continued to publish anti-Jewish stories over 91 weeks until a libel lawsuit was filed after the paper blamed the Jewish people for provoking violence against themselves. The lawsuit along with a sustained effort by the ADL to boycott the paper and Ford products led to the eventual collapse of the paper. Ford issued a public apology but there have been doubts raised about its sincerity or if he authored it. When its last issue was published in 1927, the paper had the second largest reach in the United States.

¹ (Jaher, 2021)

Jewish Gamblers Corrupt American Baseball

"The Cleanest Sport" Near Its Doom From "Too Much Jew." Baseball Has Passed Under Control of "the Sport Spoilers." Can It Be Saved?

Jews Are Not Good Sportsmen

AND this is not of our own choosing. Baseball is a trivial matter compared with some of the facts that are awaiting publication. Yet it is possible to see the operation of the Jewish Idea in baseball as clearly as in any other field. The process is the same, whether in war or politics, in finance or in sports.

To begin with, Jews are not sportsmen. This is not set down in complaint against them, but merely as analysis. It may be a defect in their character, or it may not; it is nevertheless a fact which discriminating Jews unhesitatingly acknowledge. Whether this is due to their physical lethargy, their dislike of unnecessary physical action, or their serious cast of mind, others may decide; the Jew is not naturally an out-of-door sportsman; if he takes up golf it is because his station in society calls for it, not that he really likes it; and if he goes in for collegiate athletics, as some of the younger Jews are doing, it is because so much attention has been called to their neglect of the sports that the younger generation thinks it necessary to remove that occasion of remark.

And yet, the bane of American sports today is the presence of a certain type of Jew, not as a participant but as an exploiter and corrupter. If he had been a sportsman for the love of sport he might have been saved from becoming an exploiter and corrupter, for there is no mind to which the corrupting of a sport is more illogical and even unexplainable than the mind of the man who participates in it.

The Ford International Weekly

THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT

Per \$1.50

Dearborn, Michigan, September 3, 1921

Five Ten Cents

The Peace Dove's Chances
in Washington

The Peril of Baseball— "Too Much Jew"

The First of Two Articles

What Do You Know About
Muscle Shoals?

William Allen White, Editor, Politician and Novelist
A Forty Million Dollar Bridge at Frisco Bay
Borrowed Stimulants Keep Austria Alive

Mr. Ford's Page Editorials Briefly Told and Many Other Interesting Features

