

LESSON PLAN

Myth: Jews are Disloyal

Compelling Question: How does the myth that Jews are disloyal fuel antisemitic attitudes and behaviors?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-1	2-6	50-60 minutes	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language.
7-8	9-12		

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this series of lessons, students will examine seven of the most common antisemitic myths. For each myth, students will use ADL's *Antisemitism Uncovered* resource to examine its history and historical context. Students will analyze historical and contemporary examples of each myth to understand its impact of antisemitism on the Jewish community and society at large. This lesson will examine the myth that the Jewish People are inherently disloyal or more loyal to Israel.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the definitions of antisemitism, myth and trope and their connection.
- Students will examine the myth that the Jewish people are inherently disloyal or more loyal to Israel.
- Students will analyze the impact of contemporary and historical examples of the antisemitic myth that Jews are disloyal.
- Students will recognize the connection between antisemitism and other forms of hate, bias and oppression.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- [Definitions: Antisemitism, Myth and Stereotype Handout](#) (one copy for each student)*
- [Antisemitism Uncovered Video: Myth of Disloyalty](#)
- [Myth: Jews are Disloyal Handout](#) (ADL)

**This handout is only required if the class will be using Information Sharing: What is Antisemitism, Myth and Stereotype?*

PROCEDURE

[This lesson is part of a unit exploring the different antisemitic myths that repeatedly show up in society. Begin with this introductory section if this is students' first lesson of the series; if students have already experienced this section during another lesson of this series, skip to the next section "Reflect on Prior Learning".]



Web Related Connections

LESSON PLANS

[Historical Antisemitism](#)

[Contemporary Antisemitism](#)

[Pyramid of Hate Minilesson](#)

[Swastikas and Other Hate Symbols](#)

[One-Day Lesson Plan: Responding to an Antisemitic Incident](#)

[Being an Ally, Advocate and Activist](#)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

[Antisemitism: What do Educators Need to Know](#)

[Online Courses](#)

STUDENT LEARNING

[Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism](#)

[Student Digital Activities](#)

Other Resources:

[Antisemitic Attitudes in America in 2024](#)

[Video Toolbox: Antisemitism](#)

[Antisemitism in the Classroom](#)

[9 Ways for Teaching Jewish American Heritage Month](#)

[Conversations that Matter: Understanding and Discussing Antisemitism with Young People](#)


Information Sharing: What is Antisemitism, Myth and Stereotype? (20 minutes)

1. Inform the students that today's discussion will be about antisemitism and how myths and stereotypes about Jewish people fuel this form of bias and oppression. To activate students' thinking, ask:
 - Why do people share false information?
 - Where do stereotypes and myths come from?
2. Distribute the [handout with the definitions of antisemitism, myth and stereotype](#).
3. Instruct students to read the definitions and to annotate them by marking significant words or phrases in the definition by underlining, circling, or a dot; and to use a question mark for any part of the definition they're unsure about.
4. Discuss the definition 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. 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.

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

5. Display the following statement and ask the students to analyze it:

Antisemitism relies on applying simple, false explanations to complex social problems. These explanations are often myths and stereotypes about the Jewish people fueled by false or warped interpretations of Jewish identity, culture, religion, and history. In nearly every generation, centuries-old antisemitic stereotypes and myths are recycled.

6. Instruct the students to answer the following:
 - What do you know about Jewish people and Jewish identity? Where does most of your information about and exposure to Jewish people/Jewish identity come from?
 - Why do false stereotypes persist from generation to generation?

[Note: It is important to note that students don't need to offer a "right" answer. This question is meant to activate and prime the discovery aspect of this learning experience]

[Begin with this section if this is not students' first lesson of the "Antisemitism Uncovered" Series.]


Information Sharing: Reflect on Prior Learning (10 minutes)

1. Invite students to share what they remember from their prior lessons about antisemitic myths.


Video Viewing (15 minutes)

1. Inform the students that they are now going to watch a [short video](#) from ADL's Antisemitism Uncovered series about the myth that the Jewish people are inherently disloyal or more loyal to Israel. They will be asked to discuss the following questions:
 - What surprised you about this myth?
 - In your opinion, what is the impact of this myth?
 - Where do you see this myth being played out today?

[Sample Script: As antisemitism in the present draws inspiration from ideas of the past, exploring the historical origins of these antisemitic myths is the first step toward understanding and addressing antisemitism. In this video, part of a series produced by the ADL called Antisemitism Uncovered, we will examine the myth that the Jewish People are inherently disloyal or more loyal to each other or to the State of Israel than to other institutions or nations where they live. After the video is over, partner with someone next to you to discuss what we watched. While you are watching, please write down your answer to the first question: What are your thoughts and feelings while you watch this video?]

2. Turn and Talk: Have students pair up with another student near them and invite them to discuss the reflection questions above.
3. Bring the students back together and debrief the reflection questions as a group.

Reading Activity (20 minutes)

1. Break students into small groups and pass out the **"Myth: Jews are Disloyal" Handout**.
2. Instruct students to read the handout about the Myth of Disloyalty and the three sections: Know It, See It and Address It. Students should discuss the reflection questions in each section:
 - **Know it**
 - Why do you think the myth of disloyalty has been repeatedly used by different groups in different time periods and parts of the world?
 - Are there countries that are important to you or your family outside the US? If so, what is your relationship to that place?
 - **See it**
 - How does the myth of disloyalty manifest in these examples?
 - What is the impact of these examples on the Jewish community and society at large both historically and today?
 - Which expressions of this myth are the most mundane or least likely to get noticed? Which are the most extreme or violent?
 - How might the Jewish community be impacted when policy makers claim American Jews have dual loyalty to the state of Israel?
 - **Address it**
 - How does this myth contribute to antisemitic attitudes today?
 - What information helps you reject this myth?
3. Bring the students back together and debrief with the following reflection questions as a group.
 - Why do you think Jewish people are repeatedly misrepresented or distorted in society, now and in the past?
 - Why do you think this idea has persisted from generation to generation?
4. [Optional] Instruct students to complete a journal entry reflecting on their observations and experiences to turn in during the next class.

Closing (5 minutes)

Have students consider what they learned over the course of the lesson on the myth of disloyalty, reflecting on the impact of this myth and how it connects to antisemitism. Ask each student to identify and share aloud one thing that they learned today because of the lesson. [This activity can be used via digital tool such as [Google Jamboard](#) or [Mentimeter](#)]

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. 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. 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). R4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. 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>Writing</p> <p>W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. 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. 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. 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. 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>L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. 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 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
<p>Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.</p>
<p>Self-Management: The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.</p>
<p>Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.</p>

Definitions of Antisemitism, Myth and Stereotype

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.

Myth

An unfounded or false notion that becomes a popular belief or tradition in society.

Stereotype

An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences.

Myth: Jews are Disloyal

Know It

Antisemitic ideology often uses the myth that Jewish people as having loyalty dual loyalties—meaning two competing loyalties. For centuries European countries restricted Jewish residents' right to enjoy full liberties and citizenship not allowing participation in civic, social, or political life. During the Enlightenment, Jews were widely granted these rights throughout western Europe. The Jewish community soon enjoyed greater contact with their non-Jewish neighbors and Jews became full members of society. However, this newfound freedom did not dispel centuries old anti-Jewish stereotypes.

One of the most infamous examples of this new reality was the treason trial of French army Captain Albert Dreyfus beginning in 1894. Referred to today as the Dreyfus Affair, the trial brought up questions of Dreyfus' allegiances and perpetuated antisemitic myths of a global Jewish conspiracy through the prosecution's case and media reporting at the time. The prosecution's case centered on false evidence and antisemitic stereotypes. Dreyfus was convicted, and while his sentence was eventually overturned in 1906 based on proof of this false evidence, the entire affair demonstrated the dangerous impact of the disloyalty myth.

Throughout the 20th century, Jewish people have been collectively blamed for fanning the flames of social and political unrest. Jewish people frequently were associated with the rise of communism and socialism and cast as agitators, yet socialist and communist regimes also portrayed Jews as disloyal. Leaders of the Soviet Union concocted the "Doctors' Plot," which cast a group of Soviet Jewish doctors as disloyal citizens. The doctors were falsely accused of plotting to assassinate members of the Soviet government and they were jailed and tortured. Some historians theorized that the affair was meant to lay the groundwork for a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Jews — though Stalin died before the doctors could be put on public trial.

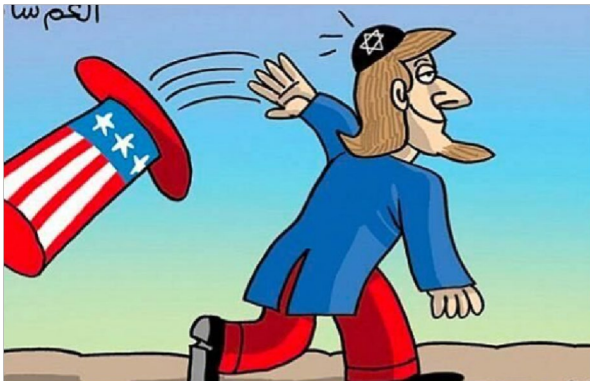

In the Middle East and North Africa, many Arab states believed their Jewish citizens, which had lived there for centuries following their expulsion from Israel, were now a threat because of the growing movement of Zionism. Mizrahi Jews were frequently suspected of putting a so-called "Zionist agenda" above the interests of their fellow citizens and, thus, subjected to attacks and legal persecutions. An example of this took place in Iraq in 1941, during an event known as the Farhud. By the 1940s, the Jewish community in Iraq made up nearly 3% of the population and had existed in this region since the sixth century BCE. In large population centers in Iraq, Jews made up at least 25% of the population. Over June 1–2, at least 180 Jews were killed and more than 1,000 were injured. Jewish homes, businesses, synagogues, and communal institutions were destroyed. At the core of this violent episode was the accusation that Iraqi Jews were Zionist agents of British imperialism. The events shook the Iraqi Jewish community, as most had seen themselves as Iraqi and held little interest in immigrating to Israel. A decade after the Farhud, most of the Iraqi Jewish community, about 124,000 Jews out of 135,000, had immigrated to the state of Israel.

In the United States, Jewish people in public service have been accused of having dual loyalties between the U.S. and Israel. Today, this is one of the most common manifestations of the myth of disloyalty, alleging that Jews are more loyal to Israel than their home country. Jewish Americans have been imagined as incapable of objectivity regarding Israel and have been assumed to be partial to Israel to the exclusion of American interests.

Reflection

1. What information about this antisemitic myth surprised you?
2. Why do you think the myth of disloyalty been repeatedly used by different groups in different time periods and parts of the world?
3. After watching and reading about it, what do you think is the impact of this myth?

See It

<p>“John Bolton [is] a dual citizen for instance of Israel and America....There’s no question that there are a number in — during the Bush years — there were a number of dual citizens, citizens of Israel, citizens of America who were making policy.”</p> <p>–Former U.S. Congressman Jason Lewis (R-MN) 2013</p>	<p>Éric Zemmour, journalist and French politician, attacked the Sandler family, who chose to bury their children in Israel after they were murdered in a terrorist attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse, France in 2012 because they were Jewish. He called them “foreigners above all” before questioning if “these people are French.”</p>
<p>On “Palestine Declassified,” a show on Iranian Propaganda Network Press TV known for promoting antisemitism and anti-Zionism, disgraced Bristol professor and conspiracy theorist David Miller alleged that the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) are foreign subversives working on behalf of Israel.</p>	<p>Former President Donald Trump repeatedly has questioned the loyalty of American Jews. He told White House reporters that “If Jews vote for a Democrat they are being disloyal, very disloyal, to Jewish people and very disloyal to Israel.”</p>
 <p><i>Image credit: Political Cartoon from the Middle East.</i></p>	 <p><i>A caricature of Alfred Dreyfus, the French Jewish army captain wrongly convicted of treason in 1895.</i></p> <p><i>Image credit: Lenepveu, V., No. 6 Le Traître! (1899), Musee des Horreurs (series of French anti-Semitic cartoons), Duke University Libraries.</i></p>

Reflection

1. How does the myth of disloyalty manifest in these examples?
2. What is the impact of these examples on the Jewish community and society at large?
3. Choose one example. Who is the target audience for the example? Why?

Address It

Many Jewish people feel a connection to Israel for religious, cultural, ideological, familial or emotional reasons. While Jewish people are often singled out for their relationship to Israel, it is common for any group of people to feel connections to their own ancestral lands.

People can be proud citizens of one nation and still feel emotional, spiritual and/or cultural attachments to other countries or regions.

Reflection

1. How might attacks on Jewish connections to the land of Israel normalize attacks against others who have connections to their ancestral lands?
2. How does this myth contribute to antisemitic attitudes today?
3. What information helps you reject this myth?