

On the Rise: Antisemitism in Europe

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	45–60 Minutes	Reading: R1 Writing: W1 Speaking & Listening: SL1
MS	HS		



Web Related Connections

- Lessons**
- [Antisemitism Around the World: Global 100](#)
 - [Antisemitic Incidents: Being an Ally, Advocate and Activist](#)
 - [Swastikas and Other Hate Symbols](#)
 - [Antisemitism After the Holocaust](#)

- Other Resources**
- [Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era](#)
 - [Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate Awareness to Action](#)
 - [6 Tips for Supporting Jewish Students in the Classroom](#)

Key Words

(See ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).)

- antisemitism
- bias
- dignity
- harassment
- investigate
- monitoring
- obstacles
- perceptions
- polarized
- prejudice
- prosecute
- stereotype
- swastika

LESSON OVERVIEW

Antisemitism in Europe has been on the rise and continues to persist. In a 2024 report, the EU (European Union) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) reports rising antisemitism, high levels of antisemitism online, and more than three-quarters of Jewish people hide their Jewish identity at least occasionally--with many avoiding Jewish events or sites because they do not feel safe. In addition, an ADL survey measuring antisemitic attitudes across Europe found that some of the most stubborn anti-Jewish tropes remain deeply entrenched in 10 European countries, with roughly one in four people harboring extensive classic antisemitic beliefs.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to define antisemitism, identify and categorize incidences of antisemitism, gain an understanding of the *Pyramid of Hate* and learn more about the rise of antisemitism in Europe.

[NOTE TO TEACHER: In advance of the lesson, consider whether you have any students in your class who are Jewish. Sometimes students feel relieved to discuss a topic that is relevant to their lives while others might feel awkward or embarrassed. This does not mean you should not discuss the topic; however, be careful not to name them, point out who is Jewish or put specific students on the spot to speak for Jewish people or about antisemitism. Also, consider talking with the students or their parents/families in advance.]

ADL commissioned a study to gauge the attitudes and opinions towards Jewish people in over 100 countries around the world. To learn more about the results of the study, see [ADL GLOBAL 100®](#).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define antisemitism and cite examples of it.
- Students will be able to distinguish between bias and discrimination and understand how they relate to each other along the *Pyramid of Hate*.
- Students will learn about the increase of antisemitic incidents reported in Europe.
- Students will identify what can be done about antisemitism in Europe.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- [Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism and Pyramid of Hate](#) (one of each for each student)
- [“Jews in Europe still face high levels of antisemitism”](#) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (one of each for each student)

- [Global Antisemitism: Select Incidents in 2019](#) (optional)
- Projector/screen, chart paper, makers

PROCEDURES



What is Antisemitism?

1. Ask students: *What is antisemitism?* Record their responses on the board. Project on the board and read aloud the following definition of antisemitism.

Antisemitism is the marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Jewish based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Jewish people, Judaism and Israel.
2. Ask if there are any clarifying questions.
3. Ask students if they can name any examples of antisemitism that they have witnessed or heard about in their school or community. If they can't come up with any examples, share the following:
 - Swastikas and other antisemitic graffiti
 - Nazi symbols
 - Throwing a penny at a Jewish person
 - Holding stereotypes about Jewish people (e.g., thinking all Jewish people are rich or cheap)
 - A Jewish person being assaulted or attacked
 - Jokes about the Holocaust
 - Denying housing for a Jewish family
 - Vandalism in synagogues and Jewish cemeteries
 - Antisemitic comments, memes and tropes made on social media
4. As a way to sort and distinguish their examples of antisemitism, have a discussion with students about the words "stereotype," "prejudice" and "discrimination." Ask the students if they can define each of the words. If they do not know, give the following definitions below, adding that a stereotype is a belief about a person or group of people, prejudice is an attitude about a person or group of people and discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial attitudes.

It can be helpful to use one specific example (like sexism) to explain how stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination differ from one another but are also connected. With the example of sexism, explain that an example of a stereotype of women is to believe they are too "emotional" and therefore should not be taken seriously; an example of prejudice (attitude) would be not being open to women's ability to perform certain jobs and an example of discrimination is denying a woman a job because she is a woman.

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 and are often rooted in painful histories.

Prejudice: A premature judgment or belief formed about a person, group or concept before gaining sufficient knowledge or by selectively disregarding facts. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes and grows out of bias.

Discrimination: The denial of justice, resources and fair treatment of individuals and groups (often based on social identity), through employment, education, housing, banking, political rights, etc. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.



Categorizing Incidents of Antisemitism

1. On the board, make a chart of three columns. Label the columns "STEREOTYPE", "PREJUDICE" and "DISCRIMINATION". (See the [Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism](#) handout as an example.)

2. Working in pairs or triads, have students create a similar chart in their notebooks or distribute the [Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism](#) handout to each student to use. Refer back to the examples of antisemitism and based on their understanding of the three terms, have students consider the examples and decide into which category they belong.
3. After students have completed their charts, go through each of the examples of antisemitism and place them in the correct column. This should be a give-and-take conversation where together, you come up with the most accurate category for each.
4. Lead a whole group discussion using the following questions:
 - Was it easy or difficult to figure out which was an example of stereotype, prejudice or discrimination? Why or why not?
 - Which ones are more prevalent?
 - Are some more serious than others? Please explain.
 - How do the examples of antisemitism relate to each other?
5. Distribute the [Pyramid of Hate](#) handout to each student. Go over the different categories in the *Pyramid of Hate*, defining any words that the students do not know. Review the following points, using these words or put into your own words.:
 - The *Pyramid of Hate* illustrates the prevalence of bias, hate and oppression in our society. It is organized in escalating levels of attitudes and behavior that grow in complexity from bottom to top.
 - Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels; unlike a pyramid, the levels are not built consecutively or to demonstrate a ranking of each level. Bias at each level reflects a system of oppression that negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society. Unchecked bias can become “normalized” and contribute to a pattern of accepting discrimination, violence and injustice in society.
 - While every biased attitude or act does not lead to genocide, genocide takes place within a system of oppression in which the attitudes and actions described at the lower levels of the pyramid are accepted. When we challenge those biased attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, others and institutions, we can interrupt the escalation of bias and make it more difficult for discrimination and hate to flourish.
6. For discussion, ask students the following questions:
 - What is the value of the *Pyramid of Hate* when learning about prejudice, discrimination and specific isms like antisemitism?
 - At what level of the pyramid do you think it would be easiest for someone (or an institution) to intervene?
 - What new information did you learn by looking at the *Pyramid of Hate*?



Reading Activity: Antisemitism in Europe

1. Explain to students that we are going to read a press release together about antisemitism in recent years. Make sure students know where Europe is in the world by showing them a map and ask students what countries are part of Europe. Distribute a copy of the press release from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) called "[Jews in Europe still face high levels of antisemitism](#)" that summarizes a survey they did on discrimination and hate crimes against Jewish people in Europe.

Optional: Assign the article for students to read for homework in advance of this lesson.
2. Start with these questions:
 - What thoughts and feelings came to mind as you read the article?
 - What did you learn that you didn't know before?
 - What were some of the examples of antisemitism cited in the article?
 - Why do you think the Fundamental Rights Agency did the report?

- How is antisemitism similar and different than other isms with which you are familiar?
 - In your opinion, what should be done about the antisemitism in Europe?
 - How would you summarize this article if you were telling someone about it?
 - What is your biggest takeaway from reading this article?
3. If time permits, share some of these other [statistics from the report](#):
- 90% of respondents experienced antisemitism online.
 - 56% experienced antisemitism offline from people they know (56%), in public (52%), in the media (51%) or at political events (49%).
 - 37% were harassed because they are Jewish and of those, 86% experienced it multiple times.
 - 53% continue to worry for their own and 60% for their family's safety and security.
 - 75% feel that people in their country hold them responsible for the Israeli government's actions because they are Jewish.
 - 76% hide their Jewish identity at least occasionally and 34% avoid Jewish events or sites because they do not feel safe there.
 - 20% say that they felt discriminated against for being Jewish in the year before the survey, most often when in contact with an educational institution or in the context of work.
4. Lead a group discussion asking the following questions:
- What thoughts and feelings came to mind as you learn about these statistics?
 - How do you think it feels to be Jewish in some of these countries?
 - Have you ever experienced harassment at school because of who you are? What was that like?
 - If not, how would you feel if you did?
 - What examples of antisemitism cited above stuck out for you the most? Why?



Small Groups Activity: What Should Be Done About Antisemitism in Europe?

Have students work in small groups to begin thinking about what can be done about antisemitism in Europe. The groups can be divided by constituencies for whom this is an important issue such as: (1) individuals—Jewish people, (2) individuals—non-Jewish people, (3) schools, (4) government, (5) social media companies and (6) businesses, places of work. Have students work in small groups to come up with 3–5 ideas of what each of the constituencies can do. Have the students write their ideas on chart paper or on poster board and share with the rest of the class. Make sure students evaluate each of the ideas, assess their feasibility and discuss what steps would need to be taken to implement the idea.

Closing

Have each student share something they learned today.

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- [ADL GLOBAL 100® Study](#)
- [‘Europeans are experiencing a wave of antisemitism,’ survey finds](#) (*The Guardian*, July 2024)
- [Jews in Europe face rising antisemitism](#) (DW.com, July 2024)
- [Antisemitic incidents in Europe rise as Gaza War rages, survey shows](#) (Reuters, July 2024)

- [Antisemitism in Europe is Worsening, Here's What Needs to Change](#) (American Jewish Committee, July 2024)

Common Core Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R1: 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.
Writing
R1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Speaking and Listening
SL1: 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.

CASEL'S SEL Competencies

COMPETENCIES
Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
Responsible Decision-Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.
Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism

Place each example of anti-Semitism in the category you feel is most accurate.

STEREOTYPE	PREJUDICE	DISCRIMINATION

Pyramid of Hate

The **Pyramid of Hate** illustrates the prevalence of bias, hate and oppression in our society. It is organized in escalating levels of attitudes and behavior that grow in complexity from bottom to top. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. Bias at each level negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society and it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge and dismantle as behaviors escalate. When bias goes unchecked, it becomes “normalized” and contributes to a pattern of accepting discrimination, hate and injustice in society. While every biased attitude or act does not lead to genocide, each genocide has been built on the acceptance of attitudes and actions described at the lower levels of the pyramid. When we challenge those biased attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, others and institutions, we can interrupt the escalation of bias and make it more difficult for discrimination and hate to flourish.

