

LESSON PLAN

Myth: The Holocaust Didn't Happen

Compelling Question: How does the myth that the Holocaust didn't happen 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 Holocaust didn't happen.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the definitions of antisemitism, myth and trope and their connection.
- Students will examine the claim that the Holocaust didn't happen and the purpose of this myth.
- Students will analyze the expressions and impact of examples of the antisemitic myth that the Holocaust didn't happen.
- Students will understand how Holocaust denial functions as an antisemitic conspiracy theory and why denialism is a form of an antisemitic conspiracy theory.
- 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 Denial](#)
- [Holocaust Denial: Anatomy of an Antisemitic Conspiracy Theory](#) (ADL)
- Computer (one per group of students)

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

PROCEDURES

[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 Holocaust never happened. 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 Holocaust didn't happen. 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. Explain to students that they are now going to look at ADL's resource hub, [Holocaust Denial: Anatomy of an Antisemitic Conspiracy Theory](#). Tell students that Holocaust denial is a growing problem and that they will be using this resource to explore the topic further.
2. Break students into small groups and before exploring the website, ask students the following questions to gauge what they might already know:
 - Despite the vast amount of research and documentation, why do people deny the Holocaust?
 - What are some common distortions and denial myths connected to the Holocaust?
3. Explain to students that they will navigate around the website, looking at the different features of the resource hub. As they navigate, students should reflect on their answers to the questions the class just discussed.
4. After exploring the website in depth, engage students in a class discussion by asking the following questions.
 - What new information did you learn?
 - What is the impact of Holocaust denial on the Jewish community and society at large?
 - What questions do you still have?
5. [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 this lesson on the myth of denial, 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](#)]

Additional Reading and Resources

- [Echoes & Reflections Unit 1: Studying the Holocaust](#)
- [Holocaust Denial: Anatomy of an Antisemitic Conspiracy Theory](#)
- [Online Holocaust Denial Report Card](#)
- [Blog from Echoes & Reflections](#)

Common Core Anchor Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
<p>Reading</p> <p>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.</p> <p>R2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p> <p>R3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</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>Writing</p> <p>W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p> <p>W8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.</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>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.</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>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.