



PREPARING TO TEACH THIS UNIT

Below is information to keep in mind when teaching the content in this unit. This material is intended to help teachers consider the complexities of teaching about contemporary antisemitism and to deliver accurate and sensitive instruction.

1 **When teaching about the Holocaust, it is essential to introduce students to the concept of antisemitism.** The Antisemitism unit provides important context to understanding how the Holocaust could happen and delves into related concepts of propaganda, stereotypes, and scapegoating.

2 **Because antisemitism did not end after the Holocaust, teachers can help make this history relevant and meaningful to students' own lives by connecting past events to the present through the exploration of antisemitism today.** It is recommended that teachers introduce students to contemporary expressions of antisemitism after they have an understanding of the traditional forms of antisemitism that have existed for centuries.

- Introducing students to contemporary antisemitism will likely expose them to new and unique themes, including the demonization of Israel and its leaders. It is important to recognize that Israel, as any other democracy, can and should be receptive to fair and legitimate criticism; however, condemnations of Israel can cross the line from valid criticism into expressions of denigration that can be considered antisemitic.
- It is possible that students may witness an antisemitic incident in their own communities or schools, read or hear about an incident in the news or on social media, or may even be a victim of antisemitism themselves, but may not understand the source or impact of the act—they may even think that such words or actions are “no big deal.” This material provides teachers and their students with an opportunity to explore the complex phenomenon of contemporary antisemitism as well as options to respond and take action to prevent it as they consider the importance of doing so.
- While this unit is specific to contemporary antisemitism, the material provides a springboard for discussion about prejudice and bias against other groups and the harm to individuals and society when such attitudes go unchecked. Students should be encouraged to discuss the role and responsibility of individuals to recognize and interrupt bias no matter what group is being targeted.
- It is important that students have a clear understanding of the vocabulary used in these lessons. Teachers may decide to distribute the Key Words to each student for reference or point out where students can access the [Glossary](#).
- In advance of discussing the topics covered in this unit, teachers should think about whether they have any students in their class who are Jewish. Some students might feel relieved to discuss a topic that is relevant to their lives while others might feel awkward or embarrassed. This does not mean that teachers should not discuss the topic; however, be careful not to point out who is Jewish or put specific students on the spot to speak for Jewish people or about antisemitism. Consider talking with the students or their families in advance.

Throughout this lesson, “antisemitism” may appear as “anti-Semitism.” Our editorial style is to write “antisemitism”; however, we have not changed alternate spellings in direct quotations or titles.