



LESSON PLAN: Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism

- 1** Begin this lesson by helping students develop a framework for learning about contemporary antisemitism by defining the term “antisemitism.” Display the **definition of antisemitism** handout and read and discuss together.
- 2** After reviewing the definition, have students share their thoughts about whether antisemitism is primarily a problem of the past or if they think it is also a concern today. Invite students to share examples of antisemitism that they are aware of in their own communities or on a national and/or international level. If students have ever encountered or witnessed words or actions that they would describe as antisemitic, have them explain what happened and how they and/or others responded.
- 3** Display **the photo of antisemitic graffiti** and ask students to describe what they see and share their thoughts about the image and its message. Ask students if they are surprised at how recently this act of vandalism took place and whether the incident fits the definition of antisemitism and why.
- 4** Using the various examples discussed, elicit students’ thoughts on whether they think the antisemitism of today is the same or different from the antisemitism expressed during the Holocaust.
- 5** Display the ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism (global100.adl.org). Provide the following background information about the survey:
 - This index is one source of data about the depth and breadth of antisemitic attitudes around the world. In May 2014, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released the results from its worldwide survey of 53,100 adults in 101 countries plus the West Bank and Gaza to measure the level and intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment across the world.
 - The ADL Global 100 Index scores for each country and region represent the percentage of respondents who answered “probably true” to six or more of 11 negative stereotypes about Jews. An 11-question index has been used by ADL as a key metric in measuring antisemitic attitudes in the United States for the last 50 years.
 - For more information about where and how the survey was conducted, including a list of the 11 questions used, visit the “About” section of the ADL Global 100 survey.
- 6** Display and direct students’ attention to the “Map” section on the ADL 100 Global website and elicit responses to the following questions:
 - What is the first thing you notice when you look at this map?
 - What conclusions can you make about antisemitism today from looking at this map?

- What questions do you have after looking at this map?

7 Assign students to go the **ADL Global 100 website** on their own or in pairs and explore the “Did You Know” section. Distribute the **Antisemitism Today: Interpreting Data** handout and instruct students to answer the questions. Remind students to click on the links on the webpage, which provide important details.

8 After reviewing some or all of the responses to the questions about the survey data, tell students they will now watch two clips of testimony from individuals who experienced antisemitism after the Holocaust. After introducing students to **Felix Sparks (bio)** and **Marta Wise (bio)**, show the two clips of testimony.

9 After students have watched the testimonies, ask them if they heard anything from Felix and Marta that supported or differed from what they know or understand about antisemitism today. Additional questions for discussion might include:

- What are some possible reasons why both Felix and Marta believe it is important to speak about their experiences during the Holocaust?
- What is the value of hearing from both a survivor and a liberator?
- What is meant by “Holocaust denial”? [Review definition in **Glossary**.]
- Why is Holocaust denial a form of antisemitism?
- What do you learn from Marta’s testimony about how Holocaust denial is spread and perpetuated?
- What evidence does Felix provide in his testimony that refutes the claims of Holocaust deniers?
- Why do you think Felix feels so strongly about combating Holocaust denial?
- Why do you think that Marta says it’s important for young people to hear survivor accounts?
- Soon there will no longer be any direct eyewitnesses to the Holocaust alive to share their stories. What effect, if any, will this have on those who say the Holocaust didn’t happen or try to minimize it?

10 Prepare students to read the **Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism** handout by reviewing key terms and phrases as necessary. Distribute the text and have students study it as a whole group, in small groups, or individually.

11 After reading the handout, conduct a discussion with students using some or all of the questions below¹.

¹Teachers may want to display the discussion questions to guide students as they read the text.

- Why is antisemitism referred to as “the longest hatred”?
- How did antisemitism change after the Holocaust? What reasons were given for the change?
- In what ways is contemporary antisemitism different from earlier forms of antisemitism that you have studied?
- According to the text, what are some classic themes and stereotypes about Jews that continue today?
- What does the term “new antisemitism” mean?
- What examples of contemporary antisemitism were discussed in the text?
- What are some of the ways that antisemitism is spread today? Why do you think these methods might be difficult to counter or combat?

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Conduct a “3-2-1 Assessment” whereby students respond to the following:

- List three things you learned about contemporary antisemitism by participating in this lesson.
- Name two things that surprised you or that you didn’t understand.
- Identify one question you still have about contemporary antisemitism.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES