



LESSON PLAN: A Model for the Escalation of Hate

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson students reflect on actions that can lead to the escalation of hate in a society, and what responsibility individuals have in interrupting the cycle of hate. Students view visual history testimonies exploring the impact of escalating hate on Jewish people, and how one person took action in response. Using the “Pyramid of Hate” model, students identify examples from unit sources that represent how antisemitic prejudice escalated to violence in 1930s Germany. They then reflect on a well-known quote in order to investigate the role of individuals in standing against hate.

PART 1: WHAT ACTIONS AND EVENTS IN NAZI GERMANY DEMONSTRATE THE ESCALATION OF BIASED ATTITUDES TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

1 Students watch testimony clips from individuals who discuss how the situation in Germany had escalated for their families: **Esther Clifford (bio)** and **Alfred Gottschalk (bio)**. As they watch the clips, students take notes on the *Testimony Reflections* handout.

2 After viewing the testimony clips, students journal and/or participate in a discussion in response to some of the following questions:

- Why did Esther’s mother say she’d “go to the jungle and live on bread and water”? How did countries around the world respond to Jews trying to leave Germany?
- Discuss the significance of Alfred Gottschalk’s statement, “Nothing Jews had done for their country made any difference.”
- According to these testimonies, in what ways did life for German Jews become more desperate from 1933–1938?
- What evidence is presented in the testimonies that demonstrates the escalation of hate against Jews in Nazi Germany?

3 Students are introduced to the *Pyramid of Hate* handout and review the sections as a class. In pairs, students identify unfamiliar vocabulary and use the **Echoes & Reflections Online Glossary** and other sources to record definitions and examples as follows:

Term	Meaning	Examples that we have observed, experienced, or learned about
E.g., Harassment	repeated threats, slurs, intimidation, attacks, or other hostile behavior; persecution	- We have seen LGBT students repeatedly ridiculed at school - We know of African Americans who have been mistreated by the police

- 4 As a class, students consider how prejudiced attitudes might, if left unchecked, eventually lead to violence and share examples that illustrate the progression through each part of the pyramid.
- 5 In small groups, students replicate the Pyramid of Hate model on large sheets of chart paper. They work together to identify at least three examples for each section of the pyramid using information from the visual history testimonies they have viewed, the **Nazi Germany and Anti-Jewish Policy** handout, and other unit source material, including the **Echoes & Reflections Timeline of the Holocaust**. Students write each example on a sticky note and place on the appropriate section of the Pyramid. Students may have different perspectives on the placement of examples and may decide to include the same example on more than one part of the Pyramid – they should discuss their thought process as they work toward a consensus.
- 6 After completing their pyramids, students post them around the room and participate in a silent gallery walk, reviewing and reflecting upon the examples their peers have identified. Students use sticky notes to post reactions or outstanding questions they may have. The class then discusses some of the following questions:
 - Which parts of the pyramid primarily reflect acts by individuals? Which reflect official acts by government or state-sponsored actors?
 - Do events on the pyramid always follow an upward progression or are they nonsequential (e.g., do acts of discrimination always precede violence or does the order vary?) Explain your thinking.
 - Describe an event that demonstrates the escalation of anti-Jewish acts. How does the pyramid model explain the ways in which antisemitic hate accelerated in Nazi Germany?

PART 2: WHAT ROLE DOES INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY PLAY IN INTERRUPTING THE ESCALATION OF HATE?

Post the supporting question above for students as you begin this part of the lesson.

- 7 Students reflect on a time they did not stand up for someone in need by extending the following prompt: “I didn’t speak up because...” This can be done as a silent reflection, through individual journaling, or as a think-pair-share.
- 8 Students are introduced to Reverend Martin Niemöeller and his poem using the handout **They Came For** and further consider the role of the individual in interrupting cycles of bias or hate. Students react to the poem, making connections to their personal experiences, their study of the Holocaust, and other local or world events. They discuss some of the following questions:
 - Why do you think Reverend Niemöeller did not initially “speak up” when Hitler’s government began its persecution of various groups in Germany?
 - What other factors may have motivated people’s choices to be passive or complicit in response to hate?
 - Did non-Jews have a responsibility to interrupt escalating antisemitism, as individuals or members of community groups and organizations? Why? What actions could they have taken?
 - What are the risks involved in standing up against injustice? What are the costs involved in not standing up?

9 Students watch a testimony clip from an individual who took action in response to Nazi injustice: **Ellen Brandt (bio)**. As they watch the clip, students take notes on the *Testimony Reflections* handout.

10 After viewing the testimony clip, students journal and/or participate in a whole group discussion in response to some of the following questions:

- How did Ellen Brandt respond to what was happening around her in Germany at the time? What do you think enabled her to stand up in the face of such violent opposition?
- What does Ellen mean when she says, “Traffic didn’t stop for us, but we marched”? What personal qualities does it take to persist when others seem indifferent?

11 As a summative task, students reflect on the lesson supporting questions and journal in response to the prompt below. When they are finished, they participate in a “silent pass.” Students trade their writing with a partner, silently read, and add comments using sticky notes that highlight connections to the lesson’s themes. Students’ writing can be collected to check for understanding of concepts.

Write your own version of the Niemöeller text expressing your feelings about a current-day situation related to the escalation of bias or hate. The topic can be a personal experience or a reflection on a community, national, or global event. Start with “I/we/they didn’t speak up because…” Consider the following as you write:

How do events you learned about German society during the Weimar Republic relate to the present-day situation you are considering?

What is the role of the individual in interrupting the escalation of bias or hate?

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 90 MINUTES