



## GRINGLAS UNIT ON ANTISEMITISM AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

*“Hatred goes into you like a disease. You have to be aware, you have to fight it.” – JOSEPH GRINGLAS, SURVIVOR OF THE BLIZYN, AUSCHWITZ, AND DORA NORDHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMPS*

### PREPARING TO TEACH THIS UNIT

Below is information to keep in mind when using this lesson. This material is intended to help teachers consider the complexities of teaching about antisemitism after the Holocaust and how it manifests today in order to deliver accurate and sensitive instruction. For interested educators, Echoes & Reflections staff provides one on one support in lesson planning and preparation. Contact us [here](#) to learn more.

- 1** When teaching about contemporary antisemitism, it is essential to introduce students to the historical context behind this enduring hatred. [Unit II: Antisemitism](#) is a necessary prerequisite because it provides important understanding of the long history of antisemitism and its classic tropes and delves into related concepts of stereotypes, propaganda, and scapegoating.
- 2** This unit begins with an exploration of Jewish life and culture and the impact antisemitism has had on it. This is an essential aspect of studying antisemitism and must be completed to fully understand the extensive ramifications of antisemitism. Studying antisemitism becomes more relevant and creates greater empathy when more is understood about its targets.
- 3** When discussing stereotypes with students, there is always the risk of introducing them to generalizations that they did not know before. Special care should be taken to reinforce the idea that while stereotypes and myths are easy to believe and may even seem plausible, that does not make them true. It is also important to create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions about the origins of specific stereotypes and why certain stereotypes continue to be believed. When discussing these issues with students, be cautious of the effect this discussion might have on them and present them with context and in developmentally appropriate ways.
- 4** 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. Students who are directly affected by antisemitism 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 antisemitism as well as options to respond and take action to prevent it as they consider the importance of doing so.

**5** While this unit is specific to antisemitism after the Holocaust, 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. It is important to recognize that different kinds of bias have similarities, but they also have important differences. Encourage students to recognize the distinct history and impact of antisemitism and its destructive impact and harm to society as a whole and not just to “the Jews” when it goes unchecked. Students should also be encouraged to discuss the role and responsibility of individuals to recognize and interrupt antisemitism to protect and preserve democratic societies.

**6** In advance of discussing the topics covered in this unit, teachers should think about their own beliefs, feelings, and knowledge about Jews and their comfort level with teaching about antisemitism. 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 avoid 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 providing the students or their families with an opportunity to discuss any concerns in advance.

## ABOUT THIS UNIT

### INTRODUCTION

The lessons in this unit increase students’ understanding of Jewish people and awareness that antisemitism did not end after the Holocaust, and provide them with opportunities to learn about the persistence of antisemitism in its contemporary forms. Students investigate the ways in which old ideas about Jews and Judaism have given rise to new expressions of antisemitism. In addition, students are introduced to individuals who refuse to be bystanders to bigotry as they explore the responsibility of all members of society to respond to and prevent antisemitism.

This unit is named in honor and memory of members of the Gringlas Family who were victims of the Holocaust. Watch this short video, [The Bond of Brothers: Joseph and Sol Gringlas](#), to learn about brothers **Joseph Gringlas (bio)** and **Sol Gringlas (bio)** who dedicated themselves to speaking to young people about their experiences and the critical importance of standing up to antisemitism.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Who are the Jewish people and how has antisemitism impacted the global Jewish community since the Holocaust?
- How has antisemitism transformed over time, and how have certain elements remained the same?
- How is antisemitism able to lay dormant in a society, and yet surge in times of fear and uncertainty?
- How does antisemitism threaten democratic society and all peoples?
- What strategies can be employed to address, understand, and prevent the manifestations of antisemitism that threaten democratic society today?

## OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn about the diversity of Jewish life and culture in the world today
  - Define and analyze historical and contemporary antisemitism in order to understand how antisemitism has morphed in the modern era.
  - Assess how historical forms of antisemitism have influenced and find expression in current manifestations of antisemitism.
  - Explain how antisemitism may sometimes be related to political, racial, or religious ideologies.
  - Identify current features of antisemitism including Holocaust denial and distortion, and demonization of Israel.
  - Reflect on the skills and dispositions needed to respond effectively to antisemitism.
1. [Learn and Confirm Chart](#)—Similar to a KWL chart, a tool to help students track ongoing learning throughout the unit
  2. [Evidence-Based Writing Rubric](#)—Guidelines that can be adapted and used for assessing student writing assignments
  3. Additional Resources—Further reading and sources of information for educators