

## Teaching about the Holocaust: Recommendations for Combating Antisemitism, and Promoting an Anti-Hate and Anti-Bias Curriculum

**Overview:** The purpose of social studies in FCPS is to empower all students to be positive contributors to their communities. One way to do this is to support educators — and their students — with the resources and context to analyze the past and the knowledge to impact the present and future. Antisemitism and persecution of Jews have recurred throughout ancient and modern history, before and after the Holocaust. As social studies educators, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to confront antisemitic hate in the past and in our world today. When planning learning experiences for social studies classes, provide additional time for students to understand antisemitism at both the historical and contemporary levels. As always, we should approach historical events from multiple perspectives - social, economic, cultural, military, and political.

**Student Outcomes:** Social studies enables students to construct their own understanding of the past, apply that knowledge in the present, explore their worldview, and develop skill sets that transfer beyond the classroom. Specifically, teaching about the Holocaust should empower students [to take action against bias and hate](#) in a world that has become increasingly susceptible to hate, including antisemitism (see below for data). These experiences emphasize three areas of student learning:

- What should students know about antisemitism, the Holocaust, and genocide?
- What should students be able to do to [connect the past to the present](#)?
- Who should students “be” when it comes to combating hate and bias?

-Adapted from [Echoes and Reflections](#)

*“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

### What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that the Germans belonged to a race that was "superior" to all others. They claimed that the Jews belonged to a race that was "inferior" and were a threat to the so-called German racial community.

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

The murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were also targeted by the Nazis.

[Echoes and Reflections Audio Glossary](#)

## What is Genocide?

The definition of the crime of genocide as contained in Article II of the [Genocide Convention](#) was the result of a negotiating process and reflects the compromise reached among United Nations member states in 1948 at the time of drafting the Convention. Many States have also criminalized genocide in their domestic law; others have yet to do so.

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

[United Nations Office of Genocide Prevention](#)

## What is Antisemitism?

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish Community institutions and religious facilities.

[ADL Definition, access this link to view additional information about antisemitism.](#)

Antisemitism is prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, is history's most extreme example of antisemitism. Violent antisemitism and hatred did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany. It is important to stand up to antisemitism in all of its forms today.

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

## What is anti-hate, anti-bias education?

Anti-hate education is based in the belief that acts of discrimination, bullying, harassment, violence, vandalism, or any form of intimidation have no place in school.

[National School Climate Center](#)

Anti-bias education is an approach to teaching and learning designed to increase understanding of differences and their value to a respectful and civil society and to actively challenge bias, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination in schools and communities. It incorporates an inclusive curriculum that reflects diverse experiences and perspectives, instructional methods that advance all students' learning, and strategies to create and sustain safe, inclusive and respectful learning communities.

[Anti-Defamation League](#)

## How do I incorporate anti-hate, anti-bias instruction in my learning experiences about the Holocaust?

Practices include:

1. building and drawing upon intergroup awareness,
2. understanding and skills engaging families and communities in ways that are meaningful and culturally competent,
3. encouraging students to speak out against bias and injustice,
4. making the implementation of anti-bias curriculum part of larger individual, school and community action and
5. supporting students' identities and making it safe for them to fully be themselves;
6. do not allow hate speech to go unchallenged in the classroom and school environment.

[Learning for Justice Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education](#)

7. Define the term Holocaust.
8. The Holocaust was not inevitable.
9. Avoid simple answers to complex questions.
10. Strive for precision of language.
11. Strive to balance perspectives that inform your study of the Holocaust.
12. Avoid comparisons of pain.
13. Avoid romanticizing history.
14. Contextualize the history.
15. [Translate statistics into people.](#)
16. Make responsible methodological choices.

[Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

## How is Antisemitism different from Racism

While Nazis thought of Jews as a distinct race, they are not. The following articles discuss antisemitism and its relation to racism:

[Is antisemitism a form of racism? | Anne Frank House](#)

*Jews are not a race, and categorizing people according to race is wrong and dangerous. Even so, some people still believe in the concept.*

[Summary of antisemitism | Echoes and Reflections](#)

*Antisemitism is the term used for hatred of Jews as a group or Jews as a concept. It is an archaic term conceived in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the social sciences were trying to develop "scientific" terms to match those of the pure sciences.*

## Essential Questions

- What responsibilities do individuals have to prevent hate and bias in our world?
- Why does genocide happen and how can it be prevented?
- How does learning about the Holocaust impact your understanding of power, privilege, and bias?

- What can we learn about human behavior from confronting the history of the genocide?
- What can resistance to hate and bias look like?
- What can we learn about ourselves from studying the Holocaust?
- What new questions does this unit raise for us in the twenty-first century?

## Resources & Strategies

Designing learning experiences for students involves making decisions about instruction, assessment, and content. The items below provide options for collaborative teams to use with their classes.

### Contemporary Antisemitism

Essential Learning for Students ([Echoes and Reflections](#)) :

1. Analyze historical and contemporary instances of antisemitism in order to understand the evolution of antisemitism.
2. Understand the lasting impact of the Holocaust in order to analyze acts of antisemitism that exist in the world today.
  - a. Antisemitism may be used to [question the legitimacy of Israel](#).
  - b. [Holocaust denial](#) and misinformation regarding the claims below:

German civilians were powerless to act against the Holocaust.	Jews provoked the Holocaust.	The Allies in WW 2 did not know about the Nazi's atrocities.	Jewish resistance to the Holocaust didn't happen.	The Holocaust did not happen. The number of people murdered is exaggerated.
---	------------------------------	--	---	---

3. Examine modern hate movements to understand how antisemitism continues to influence our world today.
4. Reflect on the skills and dispositions needed to respond effectively to antisemitism and other forms of bias.
5. Identify specific actions that students can take in their daily lives to combat hate.

Some tools that might assist in analyzing contemporary antisemitism:

- [Anti-Defamation League H.E.A.T Map of Extremism and Antisemitic Behavior](#)
  - interactive and customizable map detailing extremist and antisemitic incidents around the nation
  - [ADL Tracker of Antisemitic Behavior](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League Audit of Antisemitic Incidents \(2019\)](#)
- [Jewish Teens Experience Anti-Semitism on TikTok](#)
- [Gringlas Unit on Contemporary Antisemitism](#)
  - This unit includes three lessons that are estimated to take six 80 minute blocks. Teachers may find valuable resources to support the development of their own lessons, such as:
    - Video testimonies

- Student handouts that discuss the origins and definition of antisemitism, contemporary antisemitism and words and images of antisemitism

## Taking Informed Action

Students can apply their learning on topics in many ways through the practice of “Taking Informed Action.” When designing this type of experience, be sure to provide choices regarding:

1. the type of product or presentation students will create
2. the audience and context (classroom, school, community, state etc.) of who will engage with student created products that demonstrates their learning.

Additionally, providing options for the type of informed action students take is important. This includes:

- Reflecting on the skills and dispositions needed to respond effectively to antisemitism and other forms of bias.
- Identifying specific actions that they can take in their daily lives to combat hate.
- Communicating their ideas about how different forms of prejudice are interconnected.
- Constructing evidence-based arguments on the features of contemporary antisemitism.

The links below provide additional information on how to design taking informed action experiences for students.

- [Using Facts to Respond to Antisemitism](#)
- [Responding to Rising Antisemitism](#)
- [Take Action: Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in 2019](#)
- [Take Action: Fighting Hate from Home](#)
- [Dos and Don'ts in Responding to Anti-Semitism](#)
- [Informing “Informed Action” with Systems’ Thinking Routines](#)
- [Graphic organizer for action planning \(from the Gringlas unit noted above\)](#)

## Developmentally Appropriate Imagery and Content

As with other difficult histories, it is important that we carefully consider the materials we use to teach this content to our students. Therefore, one should consult the guidelines and resources below when considering what resources to utilize in one's teaching of this topic. There are sources noted below.

[Facing History and Ourselves](#) and [Yad Vashem](#) provide guidance on how to choose images for teaching about genocide. Teachers should thoughtfully consider the purpose of the chosen images. It is important that you consider the emotional impact of the images you choose to share with students. This will include understanding the context of the image prior to sharing it with students. Alerting students that the images are graphic and may evoke an emotional response and explicitly stating that the teacher is available to support students during and before the lesson, will provide a space for students to share their concerns or worries. Teachers must be cognizant of those students who have experienced trauma in their home country, as Holocaust images may trigger emotional reactions.

[Guidelines for Teaching the Holocaust](#) (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

Middle school teachers may want to review Echoes and Reflections guidelines for [Pedagogical Principles for Holocaust Education](#). The language may be more accessible for middle school students.

Specific Resources:

- [Daniel's Story](#) at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is appropriate for students 8 - 13.
  - *Note: Daniel's Story is a work of fiction. Non-fiction options can be found in the lists below and in [the oral histories provided in another section of this document](#).*
- [Jewish Book Council](#)
- [Books about the Holocaust with Age Appropriate Designation from Common Sense Media](#)

## Appropriate for Grade 7-12 Students

### [Making Thinking Visible Routines](#)

The list below provides strategies for students to think about unit content, society, and their own views.

- [Claim, Support, Question](#)
- [I used to think... Now I think](#)
- [Parts, People, Interactions](#)
- [Unveiling Stories](#)
- [Projecting Across Time](#)
- [The Three Whys](#)
- [Lenses for Dialogue](#)

When using strategies that promote perspective-taking, be cautious about those routines and simulations that might encourage students to take on the perspectives of people who have died as a result of the Holocaust or people who support antisemitic practices. An example of a routine that might be problematic would be Step Inside.

### **Organizations Dedicated to Studying the Holocaust and Have Lessons and Resources**

- [Echoes and Reflections](#) (a partnership between the Anti-Defamation League, Yad Vashem and USC Shoah Foundation)
  - [Yad Vashem](#)
  - [USC Shoah Foundation](#)
    - [iWitness](#) - Approved for use in FCPS - parental permission required
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [Virginia Holocaust Museum](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves](#) and specifically their [resources on the Holocaust and Human Behavior](#).

### **Oral Histories Archives and Guest Speakers**

- [iWitness](#) has extensive testimonies from survivors, and is approved for use in FCPS with parental permission. Each survivor testimony has been clipped and cataloged so that teachers and students can search for topics such as: Courage, Justice, Resistance, Camps, Contemporary Antisemitism, etc. Additionally, the site covers other mass atrocities such as Nanjing and Anti-Rohingya mass violence.
- [Oral Histories](#) from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum

- [Oral Histories](#) from the VA Holocaust Museum
- [Oral Histories - Survivors and Witnesses](#) from Facing History and Ourselves
- Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), Contact: Sara Winkelman [SWinkelman@jcouncil.org](mailto:SWinkelman@jcouncil.org)
  - [Student to Student Program](#)
  - Holocaust Survivors' Speakers' Bureau (contact Sara Winkleman) [SWinkelman@jcouncil.org](mailto:SWinkelman@jcouncil.org)

Middle School Developmentally Appropriate Resources	High School Developmentally Appropriate Resources
---	---

Using a comparative approach supports students' learning about the impact of antisemitism and the Holocaust. For example, learning about pre-World War 2 Jewish life (the rich cultural and religious heritage for Jews in Europe) and then the post-World War 2 period (attempts to rebuild lives, social quotas, pogroms after the war) highlights what was lost and what obstacles emerged.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Virginia Collaborative C3 Inquiry: What Conditions and Ideas Made the Holocaust Possible?</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Hate in the Hallways: Recognizing the history of defamatory symbols can help schools see fewer of them</a> Learning for Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">The Holocaust Encyclopedia</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Digital Collection: Background Information on the Holocaust and Genocide</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Choices: Archives of Video Clips on Genocide and the Holocaust</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">TED Ed: Lessons From Auschwitz</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Mass Atrocities from the USHMM</a></li> <li>● C3 Framework Inquiries           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">The Holocaust and Bystanders</a></li> <li>○ Why Has the UN Failed to Prevent Genocide? <a href="#">PDF</a> and <a href="#">WORD VERSION here</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--

**For questions or concerns, please contact:**

<p><b>Jessica Chun</b>  <a href="#">Middle School Social Studies Specialist</a>            571-423-4794  <a href="mailto:jachun@fcps.edu">jachun@fcps.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Dr. Craig Perrier</b>  <a href="#">High School Social Studies Specialist</a>            571- 423 -4792  <a href="mailto:cjperrier@fcps.edu">cjperrier@fcps.edu</a></p>
<p><b>Dr. Ma'asehyahu Isra-UI</b>  <a href="#">K-12 Social Studies Coordinator</a>            571-423-1462  <a href="mailto:misraul@fcps.edu">misraul@fcps.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Colleen Eddy</b>  <a href="#">Director, K-12 Curriculum and Instruction</a>            571-423-4605  <a href="mailto:CAEddy@fcps.edu">CAEddy@fcps.edu</a></p>