



ON THE RISE: ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE

Several reports over the past few years have pointed to an increase in anti-Semitism in Europe, both in terms of hate incidents and anti-Jewish attitudes. Human Rights First (based in the U.S.), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (based in Vienna) and the Anti-Defamation League all report higher levels of anti-Semitism compared to previous years; and, in fact, nearly one-third of European Jews has reportedly considered emigration because they do not feel safe in their own country.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to define anti-Semitism, identify and categorize incidences of anti-Semitism, gain an understanding of the *Pyramid of Hate* and learn more about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe.

[NOTE TO TEACHER: In advance of the lesson, think about whether you have any students in your class who are Jewish. Sometimes students feel relieved to discuss a topic that is relevant to their lives while others might feel awkward or embarrassed. This does not mean you should not discuss the topic; however, be careful not to name them, point out who is Jewish or put specific students on the spot to speak for Jewish people or about anti-Semitism. Also, consider talking with the students or their parents in advance.]

ADL commissioned a study to gauge the attitudes and opinions towards Jews in over 100 countries around the world. To learn more about the results of the study, see [ADL GLOBAL 100™](#). See also ADL's education programs on [Confronting Anti-Semitism](#) and *Curriculum Connections* "[Challenging Anti-Semitism: Debunking the Myths and Responding with Facts.](#)"

Grade Level: grades 9–12

Common Core Anchor Standards: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to define anti-Semitism and cite examples of it
- Students will be able to distinguish between bias, prejudice and discrimination and understand how they relate to each other along the *Pyramid of Hate*
- Students will learn about the increase of anti-Semitic incidents reported in Europe
- Students will identify what can be done about anti-Semitism in Europe

Material:

- [Categorizing Incidences of Anti-Semitism](#) and [Pyramid of Hate](#) (one of each for each student)
- "Jews in Europe Report a Surge in Anti-Semitism" (*The New York Times*, November 8, 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/11/09/world/europe/jews-in-europe-report-a-surge-in-anti-semitism.html?_r=2&)

- [Global Anti-Semitism: Selected Incidents Around the World in 2013](#) (optional)
- Projector/screen, chart paper, markers

Vocabulary:

Review the following vocabulary words and make sure students know their meanings. Go over the words prior to the lesson and reinforce the definitions as they come up during the course of the lesson or prior to the reading assignment. (See also ADL's "[Education Glossary Terms](#).")

- Acute
- Anti-Semitism
- Bias
- Discrimination
- Emigration
- Harassment
- Hostility
- Immigration
- Nationalist
- Prejudice
- Stereotype
- Swastika

WHAT IS ANTI-SEMITISM?

1. Ask students: *What is anti-Semitism?* Record their responses on the board. Project on the board and read aloud the following definition of anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism is prejudice and/or discrimination against Jews. Anti-Semitism can be based on hatred against Jews because of their religious beliefs, their group membership (ethnicity) and sometimes on the erroneous belief that Jews are a race. Jews are, in fact, of all different races.

2. Ask if there are any clarifying questions.
3. Ask students if they can name any examples of anti-Semitism that they have witnessed or heard about in their school or community. If they can't come up with any examples, share the following:
 - Swastikas
 - Nazi symbols
 - Throwing a penny at a Jewish person
 - Thinking that all Jews are rich and/or cheap
 - A Jewish person being assaulted or attacked
 - Jokes about the Holocaust
 - Denying housing for a Jewish family
 - Thinking Jewish people have horns
 - Anti-Jewish graffiti
 - Vandalism in synagogues and Jewish cemeteries
 - Anti-Semitic comments made on social media (e.g. Facebook)
4. As a way to sort and distinguish their examples of anti-Semitism, have a discussion with students about the words "stereotype," "prejudice" and "discrimination." Ask the students if they can define each of the words. If they do not know, give the following definitions below, adding that a **stereotype** is a belief about a person or group of people, **prejudice** is an attitude about a person or group of people and **discrimination** is an action that can follow prejudicial attitudes.

It can be helpful to use one specific example (like sexism) to explain how stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination differ from one another but are also connected. With the example of sexism, explain that an example of a stereotype of women is to believe they are too “emotional” and therefore should not be taken seriously; an example of prejudice (attitude) would be not being open to women’s ability to perform certain jobs and an example of discrimination is denying a woman a job because she is a woman.

Stereotype: An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences.

Prejudice: Prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

Discrimination: The denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.

CATEGORIZING INCIDENTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

1. On the board, make a chart of three columns. Label the columns “STEREOTYPE”, “PREJUDICE” and “DISCRIMINATION”. (See the [Categorizing Incidences of Anti-Semitism](#) handout as an example.)
2. Working in pairs or triads, have students create a similar chart in their notebooks or distribute the [Categorizing Incidences of Anti-Semitism](#) handout to each student to use. Refer back to the examples of anti-Semitism and based on their understanding of the three terms, have students consider the examples and decide into which category they belong.
3. After students have completed their charts, go through each of the examples of anti-Semitism and place them in the correct column. This should be a give-and-take conversation where together, you come up with the most accurate category for each.
4. Lead a whole group discussion using the following questions:
 - Was it easy or difficult to figure out which was an example of stereotype, prejudice or discrimination? Why or why not?
 - Which ones are more prevalent?
 - Are some more serious than others?
 - How do the examples of anti-Semitism relate to each other?
5. Distribute the [Pyramid of Hate](#) handout to each student. Go over the different categories in the *Pyramid of Hate*, defining any words that the students do not know. Review the following points:
 - The *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates the way that anti-bias and hateful attitudes and behaviors can escalate if they are unchecked.
 - Many people describe the behaviors at the bottom level of the pyramid as being “subtle and insignificant.” Like a pyramid, however, the levels above are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower level as being acceptable or “normal,” it may not be long before the behaviors at the next level become more accepted.
 - While the “higher” levels of the pyramid are more life-threatening (e.g. genocide), the impact on the individual of experiencing the lower levels should not be underestimated.

6. For discussion, ask students the following questions:
 - What is the value of the *Pyramid of Hate* when learning about prejudice, discrimination and specific isms like anti-Semitism?
 - At what level of the pyramid do you think it would be easiest for someone (or an institution) to intervene?
 - What new information did you learn by looking at the *Pyramid of Hate*?

READING ACTIVITY: RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE

1. Explain to students that while there are reports citing a [decrease in anti-Semitism](#) in the United States, there has actually been an increase in Europe (see articles in the “Additional Reading and Resources” section). Make sure students know where Europe is in the world by showing them a map and ask students what countries are part of Europe. Tell students they will be reading an article, “[Jews in Europe Report a Surge in Anti-Semitism](#),” that summarizes a recent report about anti-Semitism in Europe.

Optional: Assign the article for students to read for homework in advance of this lesson.

2. After reading the article, explain to students that there have been other reports—besides the one cited in the article—that confirm the increase in anti-Semitism in Europe (see the “[Additional Reading and Resources](#)” section below).
3. Lead a whole group discussion about the article by asking the following questions:
 - What were some of the examples of anti-Semitism cited in the article?
 - Can you categorize each of those examples using the chart you created earlier? How does each fit into the *Pyramid of Hate*?
 - Why do you think the Fundamental Rights Agency did the report?
 - Why do some Jewish people in Europe want to leave their home countries?
 - Why do you think there has been a resurgence of hostility towards Jews in Europe over the past few years?
 - Are there any clues in the article you read?
 - How is anti-Semitism similar and different than other isms with which you are familiar?
 - In your opinion, what should be done about the anti-Semitism in Europe?
4. Provide this summary of the report findings:
 - Two-thirds of respondents said that anti-Semitism was a serious problem in their country; three out of four felt it had worsened in the past five years.
 - One in four said they had personally experienced anti-Jewish harassment in the past twelve months; while this included verbal attacks on the Internet, almost one in five had been harassed in person.
 - During the same period, 3% said they had been targets of anti-Semitic vandalism; 4% reported hate-motivated physical assaults or threats.
 - Two-thirds of those with school-age children or grandchildren were concerned that the children might experience such harassment at school or on the way to school.

- Close to a quarter said they sometimes refrained from visiting Jewish events or sites out of safety concerns. Nearly two out of five usually avoided public displays of Jewish identity such as wearing a Star of David.
 - Almost one in three had considered emigrating because they did not feel safe as Jews.
5. Lead a group discussion asking the following questions:
- How do you think it feels to be Jewish in some of these countries?
 - Have you ever experienced harassment at school because of who you are?
 - If not, how would you feel if you did?
 - In the example that two out of five Jewish people often avoided public displays of Jewish identity such as wearing a Star of David, how would you feel if you could not wear something (which is part of your religious, ethnic or racial identity) because you were scared you would be targeted?
 - What examples of anti-Semitism cited above stuck out for you the most? Why?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL)

You may also want to give students a writing assignment to do targeted research on incidents of anti-Semitism in specific countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Students can choose one of the countries and further investigate how anti-Semitism is impacting that country. There have been a wide variety of news articles about recent occurrences that they can investigate, which will help them dig deeper into the issue. They can also use ADL's [Global Anti-Semitism: Selected Incidents Around the World in 2013](#). The assignment should include evidence from sources, examples of incidents as well as the country's perspective on why this is happening and what they are doing about it.

SMALL GROUPS: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE?

Have students work in small groups to begin thinking about what can be done about anti-Semitism in Europe. The groups can be divided by constituencies for whom this is an important issue such as: (1) individuals—Jewish people, (2) individuals—non-Jewish people, (3) schools, (4) government. Have students work in small groups to come up with 3-5 ideas of what each of the constituencies can do. Have the students write their ideas on chart paper or on poster board and share with the rest of the class. Make sure students evaluate each of the ideas, assess their feasibility and discuss what steps would need to be taken to implement the idea.

CLOSING

Have each student share something they learned today.

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- [ADL GLOBAL 100™ Study](#)
- [“Anti-Semitism ‘on the rise’ say Europe’s Jews”](#) (BBC News, November 8, 2013)
- [“Antisemitism on the rise, says European survey”](#) (*The Guardian*, November 8, 2013)
- [ADL Survey in Ten European Countries Finds Anti-Semitism at Disturbingly High Levels](#) (ADL Press Release)

- [“Global Anti-Semitism: Selected Incidents Around the World in 2013”](#) (ADL, November 20, 2013)
- [2008 Hate Crime Survey: Antisemitism](#) (Human Rights First)
- [Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of anti-Semitism](#) (Survey by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA))

COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS

Content Area/Standard
Reading
Standard 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
Writing
Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Speaking and Listening
Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CATEGORIZING INCIDENCES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Place each example of anti-Semitism in the category you feel is most accurate.

STEREOTYPE	PREJUDICE	DISCRIMINATION

PYRAMID OF HATE

The *Pyramid* shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups, as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as being acceptable or “normal,” it results in the behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted. In response to the questions of the world community about where the hate of genocide comes from, the *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates that the hate of genocide is built upon the acceptance of behaviors described in the lower levels of the pyramid.

