What is Antisemitism? (HS)

Student Learning

Overview

Define and identify examples of antisemitism using your own experiences as well as official sources. Through readings, videos, and an analysis of primary source material, identify the connecting themes of antisemitism and discover the ways in which age-old, pernicious beliefs about Jews have persisted into the modern era and morphed into contemporary expressions of anti-Jewish hatred.

What is antisemitism?
Write your personal definition of antisemitism.

What does the term antisemitism mean to you?

In what ways does antisemitism manifest in the world today?

Did you know?

Antisemitism has existed for millennia and is still prevalent today, which is why it is referred to as the “longest hatred.” The term contemporary antisemitism is used to describe this form of hatred in today’s world, and that it both reflects old hatreds and expresses itself in new and problematic forms.
Read the Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism handout above. As you read, highlight key ideas.

- What did you highlight as important to your understanding?
- What questions did the reading raise for you?

Watch the short video Antisemitism after the Holocaust, in which Professor Alvin Rosenfeld of Indiana University discusses the persistence of antisemitism. Professor Rosenfeld points to the need to better understand the "sources and agents" of contemporary antisemitism.

- What can we do to better understand where this form of hate is coming from and why?

Prof. Peter Hayes discusses whether antisemitism has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other prejudices and hostilities.

Many thought antisemitism would fade away after the Holocaust. Why do you think it has endured?

Watch, Learn and Reflect

Watch, Remember and Connect
Erica van Adelsberg was born on October 2, 1928, in Munich, Germany. Erica had one brother, Ernest. Erica grew up in a secular Jewish family. After the Nazis’ rise to power in 1933, her family moved to the Netherlands. In January 1942, the family was sent to Westerbork, then to Bergen-Belsen in 1944. In April 1945, while being deported further west, Erica was liberated by two Russian soldiers. When the war began, Erica was eleven years old.

- Erica says that we must “come to a feeling that there is something more for us to do.” Have you experienced this feeling in response to antisemitism or other forms of hate?
- What does it compel you to do?

Anneliese Nossbaum was born on January 8, 1929, in Guben, Germany. In 1932, the family moved to Bonn, Germany, where her father was employed as a cantor. In 1941, the family was forced to move to a monastery complex in Bonn that the Nazis had confiscated from the nuns who lived there. In July 1942, Anneliese and her parents were deported to Theresienstadt, a camp-ghetto in Czechoslovakia. In October 1944, they were deported to the Auschwitz camp complex in Nazi-occupied Poland. Anneliese and her sister were later deported to Freiberg, a labor camp in Germany, and to Mauthausen, a concentration camp in Austria. When the war began, Anneliese was ten years old.

- What illustration of contemporary antisemitism does Anneliese provide?
- What other examples are you aware of in your own communities that show the destructive impact of antisemitism?

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