

On the Rise: Antisemitism in Europe

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	45–60 Minutes	Reading: R1 Writing: W1 Speaking & Listening: SL1
MS	HS		



Web Related Connections

Lessons

- [Antisemitism Around the World: Global 100](#)
- [Challenging Antisemitism: Debunking Myths and Responding with Facts](#)
- [Deadly Shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue](#)

Other Resources

- [Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era](#)
- [Shooting at a Pittsburgh Synagogue](#)
- [Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate](#)

Key Words

(See ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).)

acute
antisemitism
bias
discrimination
emigration
harassment
hostility
immigration
nationalist
prejudice
stereotype
swastika

LESSON OVERVIEW

Several reports over the past few years have pointed to an increase in antisemitism 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 ADL all report higher levels of antisemitism compared to previous years; and, in fact, more than 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 antisemitism, identify and categorize incidences of antisemitism, gain an understanding of the *Pyramid of Hate* and learn more about the rise of antisemitism 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 antisemitism. 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](#).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define antisemitism 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 antisemitic incidents reported in Europe.
- Students will identify what can be done about antisemitism in Europe.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- [Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism and Pyramid of Hate](#) (one of each for each student)
- “Anti-Semitism on the Rise in the EU” (Deutsche Welle, October 14, 2019, www.dw.com/en/anti-semitism-on-the-rise-in-the-eu/a-50820057)

- [Global Antisemitism: Select Incidents in 2019](#) (optional)
- Projector/screen, chart paper, makers

PROCEDURES



What is Antisemitism?

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

Antisemitism is the marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Jewish based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Jewish people, Judaism and Israel.
2. Ask if there are any clarifying questions.
3. Ask students if they can name any examples of antisemitism 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
 - Antisemitic comments made on social media (e.g., Facebook)
4. As a way to sort and distinguish their examples of antisemitism, 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 and are often rooted in painful histories.

Prejudice: A premature judgment or belief formed about a person, group or concept before gaining sufficient knowledge or by selectively disregarding facts. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes and grows out of bias.

Discrimination: The denial of justice, resources and fair treatment of individuals and groups (often based on social identity), through employment, education, housing, banking, political rights, etc. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.



Categorizing Incidents of Antisemitism

1. On the board, make a chart of three columns. Label the columns “STEREOTYPE”, “PREJUDICE” and “DISCRIMINATION”. (See the [Categorizing Incidences of Antisemitism](#) 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 Antisemitism](#) handout to each student to use. Refer back to the examples of antisemitism 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 antisemitism 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 antisemitism 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 antisemitism?
 - 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 Antisemitism in Europe

1. Explain to students that while there have been reports that cited a [decrease in antisemitism](#) in the United States, there has actually been an increase in Europe since 2013 and most recently in the United States as well (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, “[Anti-Semitism on the Rise in the EU](#),” that summarizes a recent report about antisemitism 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 antisemitism 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 antisemitism 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 antisemitism similar and different than other isms with which you are familiar?
 - In your opinion, what should be done about the antisemitism in Europe?
4. Provide this summary of the report findings:
- Eight in ten (85%) respondents said that antisemitism was a serious problem in their country; almost nine in ten (89%) felt it had worsened in the past five years.
 - More than one in four (28%) said they had personally experienced anti-Jewish harassment in the past twelve months; while they indicated that the internet is where they experienced the most severe form of verbal attacks, they are more commonly harassed in person.
 - During the same period, 2% said they had been targets of antisemitic vandalism; 2% reported hate-motivated physical assaults.
 - Almost one in 10 (8%) of those with school-age children said they themselves or their children experienced discrimination in school.
 - One in three (34%) said they sometimes refrained from visiting Jewish events or sites out of safety concerns. More than two thirds (71%) usually avoided public displays of Jewish identity such as wearing a Star of David.
 - More than one third (38%) 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 one in three 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 antisemitism 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 antisemitism in specific countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden, Romania and the United Kingdom. Students can choose one of the countries and further investigate how antisemitism 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 Antisemitism: Select Incidents in 2019](#). 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 Activity: What Should Be Done About Antisemitism in Europe?

Have students work in small groups to begin thinking about what can be done about antisemitism 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](#)
- ADL’s [Global Antisemitism: Select Incidents in 2019](#)
- [“Anti-Semitism on the Rise in the EU” \(Deutsche Welle, October 14, 2019\)](#)
- [“The Alarming Rise of Anti-Semitism in Europe”](#) (Human Rights Watch, January 4, 2019)
- [Antisemitism in Europe](#) (European Jewish Congress)
- [“Europe’s Jews are Resisting a Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism”](#) (TIME, June 20, 2019)
- [Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism - Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU](#) (Survey by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA))
- [Young Jewish Europeans: Perceptions and Experiences on Antisemitism](#) (Survey by FRA)
- [“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)
- [2008 Hate Crime Survey: Antisemitism](#) (Human Rights First)

Common Core Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R1: 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
R1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Speaking and Listening
SL1: 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 Antisemitism

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

STEREOTYPE	PREJUDICE	DISCRIMINATION

Pyramid of Hate

The **Pyramid of Hate** illustrates the prevalence of bias, hate and oppression in our society. It is organized in escalating levels of attitudes and behavior that grow in complexity from bottom to top. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. Bias at each level negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society and it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge and dismantle as behaviors escalate. When bias goes unchecked, it becomes “normalized” and contributes to a pattern of accepting discrimination, hate and injustice in society. While every biased attitude or act does not lead to genocide, each genocide has been built on the acceptance of attitudes and actions described at the lower levels of the pyramid. When we challenge those biased attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, others and institutions, we can interrupt the escalation of bias and make it more difficult for discrimination and hate to flourish.

