



Educator's Guide

Antisemitism Explained Program Resource Pack

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The resurgence of attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the USA and the globe, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought the issue of antisemitism into sharp focus once again.

To understand the historical roots of current antisemitic events and to unpack how antisemitism shapes and affects young Jews' identities and the world in which they live, use the following six videos written by award-winning journalist Yair Rosenberg and their accompanying educational resources. These seven to ten minute videos are designed to debunk seven of the most common myths about this phenomenon.

[Link to series](#)

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Historically, antisemites have blamed Jews for everything, from being disloyal citizens to controlling the media and politics, from being communists to being capitalists and even the blood libel of killing Christian children to use their blood in the baking of matzah. Why do you think antisemitism still exists and what do you think is the best way to respond to it?
- 2.** Why is it more important to focus on the antisemitic ideas expressed rather than the individuals expressing them? What are the implications of focusing on the individuals expressing them rather than the ideas themselves?
- 3.** Is criticizing Israel antisemitic? At what point does legitimate criticism of Israel become antisemitic? Give concrete examples.
- 4.** The two leading early Zionists Theodor Herzl and Ze'ev Jabotinsky offered contrasting perspectives on the relationship between antisemitism and Zionism. Herzl believed Zionism would solve the "Jewish Question," and that having a sovereign state would eliminate antisemitism altogether, arguing that "Antisemites will become our surest friends." Jabotinsky did not think antisemitism would ever vanish, and he believed the goal of Zionism would be to



protect the Jewish people from antisemitism. Which of the early Zionist thinkers do you think was right or were they both wrong? What do you think Israel's role should be when it comes to antisemitism?

5. Can a Jew, or someone with Jewish heritage, really be antisemitic or can only non-Jews be antisemitic? To what degree does the source matter and to what degree does the content matter?
6. Eric K. Ward, a Black civil rights leader in the United States [wrote](#) "*Antisemitism is an effective conspiracy theory that dehumanizes all of us.*" How does antisemitism dehumanize people who are not Jewish?

Learning Activities

1. Play "spectrum" with your students. Designate one side of the room as **agree** and the other side as **disagree**. Have them stand along the spectrum where they most identify based on the following statements:

- I feel comfortable publicly identifying as Jewish
- Antisemitism will not go away
- I have the power to help end antisemitism
- The situation for Jews today is improving
- Anti-Zionism is always antisemitism
- Criticism of Israel is never antisemitic
- Calling Israel an apartheid state is antisemitic
- The U.N. is antisemitic for focusing disproportionately on Israel

After moving to where they most agree, students should discuss with the other students there why they chose that area and then open the conversation to the whole group to explain their stances. Students may change where they stand based on the conversation. This game can be played virtually as well by using the chat function and breakout rooms.

2. Watch this [video](#) of Bernie Sanders responding to an antisemitic questioner. When showing the video, pause the video after the question is asked. Ask the learner to write up a one paragraph response to the antisemitic questioner and share it with your fellow students. Afterwards, watch how Bernie Sanders responded to the question and discuss his response.
3. Can your students [identify](#) antisemitism? After presenting the following three quotes/clips, use Natan Sharansky's "[3D test](#)" to help your students recognize modern antisemitism.



- *"I think that additional settlement building does not contribute to Israel's security. I think it makes it harder for them to make peace with their neighbors. I think it embitters the Palestinians in a way that could end up being very dangerous."* - President Barack Obama 2009
- [Video clip](#) from MAGA Rally
- [Human Rights Watch calls Israel an Apartheid State](#)

- 4.** Ask your students to write and present a one-minute speech answering the question "What causes antisemitism?"

Reflection Questions

- 1.** Have you ever personally experienced antisemitism? Share your experience with the larger group.
- 2.** Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibovitz has said that "antisemitism is not a Jewish problem, but a non-Jewish problem." Jot down your thoughts and discuss with a peer whether you agree or disagree with this statement.
- 3.** What is an example of something you feel comfortable criticizing Israel about? What is something that when you hear this criticism of Israel you find it to be objectionable but not antisemitic? What is an example of criticism of Israel that you find not just objectionable but also antisemitic?
- 4.** According to the 2018 antisemitism survey (Figure 17) by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 79% of European Jews have felt that they've been blamed for something the Israeli government did. Have you ever felt this way and if so, how did you deal with it? Is this number surprising to you? Why or why not?
- 5.** Have you ever heard somebody Jewish say an antisemitic joke or comment? How do you distinguish between Jewish self-deprecating humor and antisemitic jokes? Where do you draw the line?
- 6.** Why do you think people are so fascinated by conspiracy theories? Are there conspiracy theories that you are intrigued by? What about them captures your imagination?



Further Learning

- 1.** Unpacked for Educators:
 - [When Being Jewish Feels Unsafe](#) (video)
 - [The Origins of Antisemitic Conspiracies](#) (video)
 - [Faces of the Holocaust](#) (video series)
 - [The Rise in Global Anti-Semitism](#) (article)
 - [Antisemitism in America](#) (article)
- 2.** Deborah Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (book)
- 3.** Bari Weiss, *How to Fight Antisemitism* (book)
- 4.** ADL, [Discussing Anti-Semitism](#)
- 5.** United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, [Why the Jews: History of Antisemitism](#)
- 6.** [Antisemitism | Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)
- 7.** Viceland, [Hate Thy Neighbor](#)
- 8.** Rabbi Sacks, [Rabbi Sacks on the connection between, antisemitism, anti-Zionism, Judaism and Israel](#)