

LESSON PLAN

Pseudoscience

Students will learn the history of antisemitism and how it was transformed into Nazi racial antisemitism through the years.

 30-60 min  Grades 9-12

DOMAIN
Intolerance

SUBJECT
Antisemitism

TOPIC
Racism

Enduring Understanding

Antisemitism was not invented with the rise of the Nazi party. It had deep roots that were transformed to fit the racist ideology of the time.

Essential Questions

1. How can we be sure that what we're learning is accurate?

Readiness

 5 min

Begin by prompting your students to think about forms of intolerance. What kind of 'isms' can they think of that separate one group from another in a detrimental way?

Do they believe that certain 'isms' are more powerful than others? Why might this be?

Input

 25 min

This lesson can be found in an expanded form [here](#).

Divide students into groups or pairs.

Distribute the first definition card within [this three page bundle](#), which defines the terms ideology, racists and ethnicity.

In groups, pairs, or individually students work to define the yellow highlighted words. After the group defines the word, they use dictionaries to check their definitions.

After 5 minutes come together and have students briefly share:

1. How their definitions of highlighted words were similar/different to the dictionary.
2. If defining the highlighted words increased their understanding of the definitions of ideology, racists, and race.

Pivot toward the question of pseudoscience: Now that we have definitions of racists and race, let's examine the pseudo science behind beliefs that human behavior is biologically determined. See if they know what pseudo means.

Distribute and read definition cards two and three which defines pseudo, science and racial antisemitism.

--> Students can repeat the definitional activity used with the first definition cards for the second and third cards as well..

Check for understanding of the concept of pseudoscience and racial antisemitism.

Answer questions or clear misconceptions before proceeding.

Output

 20 min

Watch [this short clip from USHMM](#) about racism in the Nazi party. Then ask students to respond to the following questions either in writing or small groups before opening up for a large group discussion. You may also assign certain questions to groups or individuals to reduce the time for responses.

1. At the beginning of the video, the narrator remarks that the Nazis “wanted to create a racially pure Germany”. What about this statement is already a red flag, given what you know about race?
2. During the Nazi era, racial science was taught in schools, and this helped create a youth that was complicit with the racism that Nazi’s were promoting. Why were such violent biases taught to young people in school?
3. Sometimes people claim something as “scientific” to make it sound legitimate, even if it is patently false. Why is the legitimizing stamp of science so important?
4. How can racism help keep a party or political group in power?
5. Despite overwhelming scientific data to the contrary, many people still believe in the superiority of certain races. Why might individuals hold onto a belief that has been discredited because it’s not factually true? How might they change their minds?
6. What information do racists use to justify their beliefs? How can radical beliefs, like these, be challenged and countered?