

10214 **Sample Lesson 40: Antisemitism and Jewish Middle Eastern-Americans**

10215 Theme: Identity

10216 Disciplinary Area: Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

10217 Ethnic Studies Values and Principles Alignment: 1, 3, 4, 6

10218 Standards Alignment:

10219 CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Chronological and Spatial Thinking 1; Historical

10220 Interpretation 1, 3, 4

10221 CCSS ELA/Literacy: W.9–10.7 10.4; CCSS ELA/Literacy: W.11–12.7;

10222 CCSS ELA/Literacy: W.11–12.8; CCSS ELA/Literacy: W.11–12.9

10223 Lesson Purpose and Overview:

10224 This lesson introduces students to antisemitism and its manifestations through the lens
10225 of Jewish Middle Eastern Americans, also known as Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews,
10226 whose contemporary history is defined by recent struggles as targets of discrimination,
10227 prejudice and hate crimes in the United States and globally. Students will analyze and
10228 research narratives, primary, and secondary sources about Mizrahi Jews. The source
10229 analysis contextualizes the experience of Jewish Middle Eastern Americans within the
10230 larger framework of systems of power (economic, political, social).

10231 Key Terms and Concepts: Mizrahi, antisemitism, indigeneity, ethnicity, prejudice,
10232 refugees, diaspora, immigration, intersectionality

10233 Lesson Objective (Students will be able to...):

- 10234 1. develop an understanding of Jewish Middle Eastern Americans (who are also
10235 referred to as Arab Jews, Mizrahi Jews, Sephardic Jews, and Persian Jews) and
10236 differentiate the various identities, nationalities, and subethnicities that make up
10237 the Jewish American community;

10238 2. develop an understanding of contemporary antisemitism and identify how the
10239 Jewish Middle Eastern American community today is impacted by prejudice and
10240 discrimination against them, as intersectional refugees, immigrants, and
10241 racialized Jewish Americans; and

10242 3. students will construct a visual, written, and oral summary of antisemitism in the
10243 United States using multiple written and digital texts.

10244 Essential Questions:

- 10245 • Who are Jewish Americans? Who are Jews of Middle Eastern descent?
- 10246 • What is antisemitism? What are the manifestations of antisemitism as
10247 experienced by intersectional, Jewish Middle Eastern Americans?
- 10248 • What new possibilities can students imagine and actions can they take to
10249 address antisemitism?

10250 Lesson Steps/Activities

10251 Day One: Antisemitism and Jewish Ethnic Diversity

10252 Introduce the lesson by posting the words “Antisemitism” and “Jewish Americans” to
10253 engage students in a discussion of who Jewish Americans are and about the
10254 discrimination that they face.

- 10255 1. Begin by asking students what is antisemitism and who are Jewish Americans?
10256 Write their responses on the board under the columns of *Antisemitism* and
10257 *Jewish Americans*. After responses have been written on the board list the
10258 various subethnic groups under the *Jewish American* column such as
10259 Ashkenazi/Eastern European, Mizrahi & Sephardic/Middle Eastern and North
10260 African, Iranian/Persian, Israeli, Ethiopian, Russian, and Latinx.
- 10261 2. Tell students “that following expulsions by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the
10262 Romans in 70 CE from the land of Israel, many indigenous Jews established new

10263 homes in the Middle East and beyond forming the Jewish diaspora. In a Jewish
10264 historical context, the term *diaspora* refers to Jews living outside of Israel. More
10265 broadly, the term diaspora refers to ethnic or religious populations that are
10266 dispersed from modern-day Israel. Today, Jews are a racially and ethnically
10267 diverse group that continues to face antisemitism in the United States and in
10268 countries around the world.

10269 Tell the students that today “they are going to delve deeper into the experience of
10270 discrimination, hate, and violence against Jewish Middle Eastern Americans at
10271 present while imagining a response to it. Explain to students that since the
10272 1940s, one-million Jewish refugees from the Middle East, who are also known as
10273 Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews, fled antisemitic persecution to countries around the
10274 world.

10275 Today, the US has a population of an estimated 900,000 Jews who descend
10276 from Mizrahi and Sephardic Jewish refugees from the Middle East including an
10277 estimated 250,000 – 300,000 in California. Individuals in these communities have
10278 intersectional identities as a result of experiencing prejudice and discrimination
10279 as Jewish Americans, as Middle Eastern refugees and immigrants, and some as
10280 people of color.”

10281 Today and for homework, the students will explore primary and secondary
10282 sources to understand antisemitism as it is experienced by Jewish Middle
10283 Eastern Americans in the US.

10284 3. Provide Handout A and read it together.

10285 4. Distribute Handout B to each student in groups of six. These graphic organizers
10286 have hyperlinks for all the sources but students will need to take notes in a
10287 notebook. If computers are available, students can use them to read material and
10288 watch videos. Within groups, students can work in elbow pairs to complete one
10289 or two sources on the graphic organizer.

10290 5. Explain the columns of the graphic organizer and provide a small amount of
10291 context for the sources (e.g., highlighting primary or secondary sources,
10292 identifying narratives, and including a review of secondary sources like credible
10293 news articles, scholarly research, interviews, statistics, informational videos,
10294 etc.).

10295 6. Provide students with class time to work on the assignment. They should also
10296 work on the assignment as homework.

10297 a. For individual student assessments, each student is required to hand in
10298 their graphic organizer notes in the form of an essay.

10299 7. As follow up, teachers should facilitate a discussion about antisemitism
10300 experienced by Jewish Middle Eastern Americans utilizing the following
10301 questions:

10302 a. How have the intersectional identities of Jewish Middle Eastern Americans
10303 resulted in multiple experiences of discrimination? How have other ethnic
10304 groups experienced similar forms of discrimination?

10305 b. What is the effect of hateful images and speech? Do images and words
10306 reflect existing attitudes or create them?

10307 c. How is antisemitism similar to or different from other forms of group
10308 hatred?

10309 d. What can we do to make a difference?

10310 Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection:

10311 1. Students will conduct research on antisemitism (past and present) of Mizrahi
10312 Jews in the United States through primary and secondary sources.

10313 2. Students will write a five-paragraph essay detailing the impacts of antisemitism
10314 and linking them to past and present events. Students are encouraged to

- 10315 imagine new possibilities to combat antisemitism by developing potential
10316 responses to it.
- 10317 Materials and Resources:
- 10318 Day One:
- 10319 HANDOUT A—Definition of antisemitism
- 10320 HANDOUT B—Graphic Organizer (note all sources are also hyperlinked)
- 10321 • Naar, Devin. “The Myth of Jewish Immigration.” Jewish in Seattle Magazine, 29
10322 Aug. 2018 [https://mag.jewishinseattle.org/community/2018/08/the-myth-of-
jewish-immigration](https://mag.jewishinseattle.org/community/2018/08/the-myth-of-
10323 jewish-immigration)
 - 10324 • Samuel, Sigal. “For Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews, Whiteness Was a Fragile
10325 Identity Long Before Trump.” Forward, 6 Dec. 2016
10326 [https://forward.com/opinion/356271/for-sephardic-and-mizrahi-jews-whiteness-
was-a-fragile-identity-long-before/](https://forward.com/opinion/356271/for-sephardic-and-mizrahi-jews-whiteness-
10327 was-a-fragile-identity-long-before/)
 - 10328 • Melamed, Karmel. “We survived Khomeini, we’ll survive this attack on Nessah.”
10329 The Times of Israel, 16 Dec. 2019. [https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/we-survived-
khomeini-well-survive-this-attack-on-nessah-synagogue/](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/we-survived-
10330 khomeini-well-survive-this-attack-on-nessah-synagogue/)
 - 10331 • Ellis, Emma Grey. “The Internet Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” Wired, 12 Mar.
10332 2017 <https://www.wired.com/2017/03/internet-protocols-elders-zion/>
 - 10333 • Facing History and Ourselves, Antisemitism on UC College Campuses
10334 [https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/antisemitism-us-
campuses](https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/antisemitism-us-
10335 campuses)
 - 10336 • Los Angeles County Commission on Human Rights, 2018 Hate Crime Report,
10337 [https://hrc.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018-Hate-Crime-
Report.pdf](https://hrc.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018-Hate-Crime-
10338 Report.pdf). Please note that this resource contains explicit language that will
10339 need to be redacted or contextualized for students.

10340 Videos Options to Screen

10341 • CNN, Has antisemitism returned with a vengeance?

10342 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJQ3x9YDiYE>

10343 Podcast

10344 • UCLA, Then and Now. Are Jews White? A Conversation on Race, Erasure, and
10345 Sephardic History with Devin Naar

10346 <https://www.buzzsprout.com/952522/5280526-are-jews-white-a-conversation-on->

10347 [race-erasure-and-sephardic-history-with-devin-naar](https://www.buzzsprout.com/952522/5280526-are-jews-white-a-conversation-on-race-erasure-and-sephardic-history-with-devin-naar)

10348 HANDBOOK A: Defining Antisemitism

10349 History: Antisemitism as a form of racism

10350 In the late 1800s, many European and American scientists continued to divide
10351 humankind into smaller and smaller “races.” One of these was the “Semitic race,” which
10352 they used to categorize Jews. The term antisemitism was coined by German Wilhelm
10353 Marr, who published a pamphlet in 1878 titled “The Victory of Judaism over
10354 Germandom.” Filled with lies and myths about Jews, Marr’s pamphlet argued that Jews
10355 were more than a distinct “race.” They were dangerous and alien, intent on maliciously
10356 destroying German society.

10357 Historian Deborah Dwork explains that, “The move from anti-Judaism—against the
10358 religion—to antisemitism with this notion of ‘race’ was only possible when Europeans
10359 conceived of the idea of race. And once they had conceived of the idea of race in the
10360 19th century, Wilhelm Marr had the notion that Jews constituted a ‘race.’ And thus,
10361 antisemitism can be seen as a form of racism.” [https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/roots-and-impact-antisemitis)
10362 [library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/roots-and-impact-antisemitis](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/roots-and-impact-antisemitis)

10363 Modern Definitions of Antisemitism

10364 According to the **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**, the world’s leading organization
10365 committed to stopping the defamation of the Jewish people antisemitism is, “*The belief*
10366 *or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of*
10367 *religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to*
10368 *isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped*
10369 *views about Jews.*”

10370 According to the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)**, the only
10371 intergovernmental organization mandated to focus solely on Holocaust-related issues,
10372 “*Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred*
10373 *toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward*
10374 *Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community*
10375 *institutions and religious facilities.*”

10376 HANDOUT B: Graphic Organizer

10377 Use the graphic organizer below to gather pertinent information from the articles. Each
 10378 student is required to take notes and write a five-paragraph essay. Your essay could
 10379 provide information on the historical background, factors that led to antisemitism, impact
 10380 of antisemitism, and what resolutions/responses have been or could be created to
 10381 combat antisemitism. Use your binders to take notes!

Article	Source (primary or secondary)	Historical Background, Summary	Factors Leading to antisemitism	Effects/ Impact of antisemitism	Response, Advocacy, Resolution
https://mag.jewishinseattle.org/community/2018/08/the-myth-of-jewish-immigration	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]
https://forward.com/opinion/356271/for-sephardic-and-mizrahi-jews-whiteness-was-a-fragile-identity-long-before/	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]
https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/we-survived-khomeini-well-survive-this-attack-on-nessah-synagogue/	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]
https://www.wired.com/2017/03/internet-protocols-elders-zion/	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]

Article	Source (primary or secondary)	Historical Background, Summary	Factors Leading to antisemitism	Effects/ Impact of antisemitism	Response, Advocacy, Resolution
https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/antisemitism-us-campuses	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]
2018 LA Hate Crimes (Read pages 34–37)	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]	[fill in]

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