



Ethnic Studies Lesson 6D: Jewish American Civil Rights Effectiveness

TOPIC:

JEWISH AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

1. Identity
2. History and Movement
4. Social Movements and Equity

Values and Principles:

1. Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
6. Connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice and an equitable and democratic society, and conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic-racism society that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**Reading**—Informational Text (RI.11-12)

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence. (RI.11-12.6)

Writing—(W.11-12)

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W.11-12.2)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)

Analyze the impact of social movements and reforms on changing societal norms and policies. (11.10)

Analyze the impact of landmark Supreme Court cases and legislation on the advancement of civil rights and liberties. (12.5)

Lesson Purpose

Students will investigate the history of Jewish American involvement in civil rights and determine the effectiveness of these efforts on lessening anti-Semitism in the United States.

Essential Questions

How have Jewish Americans been involved in the civil rights movement, and how effective have their efforts been in lessening anti-Semitism in the United States?

How has life changed for Jewish Americans in the United States over the last 350 years?

Materials

[Miami Jewish Film Festival: Shared Legacies: The African American Jewish Civil Rights Alliance Movie Trailer](#)

[Office of Public Affairs: US Department of Justice: Justice Department Recognizes Jewish American Heritage Month](#)

[ADL Our History](#)

[ADL: Six Facts About Threats to the Jewish Community](#)

[Anti-Defamation League: Who We Are](#)

[Anti-Defamation League: Our Mission and History](#)

[Anti-Defamation League: Six Facts About Threats to the Jewish Community](#)

[Unit 6 KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

Rabbi Abraham Joshua
Heschel

Anti-Defamation League

Arthur J. Goldberg
Freedom Riders (Rabbi Israel
Dresner, Rabbi Allen Secher)

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they know about Jewish involvement in the American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Have students watch [Miami Jewish Film Festival: Shared Legacies:](#)

[The African American Jewish Civil Rights Alliance Movie Trailer](#) (video 3 minutes, 38 seconds).

As students watch, have them take notes on what the motivators were for Jewish involvement in the African American civil rights movement.

- When students have finished watching, have them pair with another student to discuss their notes. Have the pairs of students read [Office of Public Affairs: US Department of Justice: Justice Department Recognizes Jewish American Heritage Month](#). As students read, they should look for at least six facts from the article that provide additional evidence of Jewish involvement in racial as well as religious civil rights. When students have completed their notes, have the pairs meet with another pair to discuss their video facts as well as their reading notes.
- As a class, have the groups share their facts and discussion. Have students add what was learned to this unit's KWL chart along with the proper citations.
 - [ADL Our History](#)
 - [ADL: Six Facts About Threats to the Jewish Community](#)

Step 2:

- As a class, ask students if they read in the previous article about organizations that work against anti-Semitism in the United States. Did they read about the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the National Council for Jewish Women, and the Muslim-Jewish Advisory? As a class, use a group reading strategy such as round robin or popcorn to read [Anti-Defamation League: Who We Are](#). As students listen, have them take bullet point notes on the role of the ADL. When the reading is complete, as a class, have students share their notes.
- Break the students into seven groups. Let students know they will be researching the ADL's major actions during different periods of its history. Have students read [Anti-Defamation League: Our Mission and History](#). As students read, they should take notes in order to create a large chart paper that showcases six to seven highlights of ADL actions during each time period. The seven groups should include:
 - 1910-1940s
 - 1950-1970s
 - 1980s
 - 1990s
 - 2000s
 - 2010s
 - 2020s
- When students have completed their posters, have the class walk through the classroom gallery style and put questions or comments they have on sticky notes and place them on the posters. Have groups present their posters to the class and answer the class questions.

Step 3:

- As a class, ask students if they believe anti-Semitism is still a problem in the United States. As a class, use a group reading strategy such as round robin or popcorn to read [Anti-Defamation League: Six Facts About Threats to the Jewish Community](#). For points 5 and 6, students can take a few minutes to read a sampling of those instances to themselves. As students read, they should take notes on facts that are new or surprising to them. When students have completed their reading, have them share their insights with the class. Ask students what can be done to keep cycles of anti-Semitic violence down. What role does education play?

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this lesson's questions, "How have Jewish Americans been involved in the civil rights movement, and how effective have their efforts been in lessening anti-Semitism in the United States?" Also ask this unit's question, "How has life changed for Jewish Americans over the last 350 years?" Make note of what was learned on this unit's KWL chart—along with additional questions.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

Ask students to complete an essay (five paragraphs or longer) summarizing their learning regarding the question "How has life changed for Jewish Americans over the last 350 years?" All students should have access to the KWL chart for this unit, and all students should cite the sources of their information accurately.

Additional Readings and Resources

Bernstein, David E. *Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classification in America*. Bombardier, 2022.

[CBS News: The rabbi who spoke out for civil rights in American](#) (video 2 minutes, 31 seconds)

Marks, Gary, and Seymour Martin Lipset. *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*, chap. 4, "Immigrants and Socialism: Double-Edged Effects."

[PBS: The Freedom Riders](#) (video 4 minutes, 48 seconds)

[PBS: Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel](#) (video 9 minutes, 37 seconds)

[Penn Today: Then and Now: Black-Jewish Relations in the Civil Rights Movement](#)

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 69-99.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 6A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

What do we think we already know about this topic?

What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.

After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.

<i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i>	<i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i>	<i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i>