

REEL HISTORY: THE JEWISH AMERICAN STORY ON FILM -A 30 MINUTE LESSON-

Pop some popcorn and get ready to explore the dynamic story of Jewish Americans with your students. This video lesson is an interactive journey paired with a viewing guide to uncover the layers of Jewish American identity, including the community's history, culture, challenges, triumphs, and contributions to American society.

Students will be thinking about: What unites this diverse community? How does their story connect to the broader American narrative? Click play and let them discover the answers to these important questions.

Essential Questions

- How are Jewish Americans an ethnic group?
- What visible and invisible components make up each person's unique identity?
- How do the multiple components that make up identity help us understand the diversity of Jewish Americans?
- What are key positive and negative experiences of Jewish Americans both historically and today?

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Understand what makes Jewish Americans an ethnic group
- Identify at least three ways in which Jews are diverse
- Understand challenging and empowering historical and contemporary experiences of Jewish Americans in the United States
- Explain the concept of Jewish identity and how it can be expressed in various ways
- Learn about the contributions of Jewish Americans to American society.
- Develop empathy and perspective-taking skills

Materials Needed

- [Pre-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#) (you will be instructed to make a copy)
- [ICS Video: Jewish Americans](#)
- [ICS Video and Discussion Guide](#) (Teacher and Student versions)
- [Formative Assessment Example](#)
- [Post-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#) (you will be instructed to make a copy)

Lesson Plan

1. PRE-LEARNING STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Have students complete the [Pre-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#).

2. PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- **Set the Stage:** Introduce the topic and emphasize that this video examines what unites the Jewish American community, as well as its diversity. While individual identity is personal, Jewish American group identity is based on ties of history, culture, ancestry, religion, language, celebrations, communal and familial traditions, common values, and a sense of a common ethnic peoplehood.

Further explain that this video explains some of the challenges Jewish Americans faced historically and continue to face today, including prejudice, discrimination, and antisemitism. It also explains experiences of acculturation and assimilation, and it highlights the diverse fields in which Jewish Americans have made contributions.

Ultimately, students will be introduced to Jewish American history to deepen their understanding of Jewish American identity, experiences over time, and Jewish American contributions to American society.

- **Create Questions:** Guide students in creating thought-provoking questions that they are interested in learning about when watching the video.

Sample questions:

- How have historical events shaped the experiences of Jewish Americans?
 - What were the challenges and opportunities faced by Jewish immigrants to the United States?
 - How has the concept of "Jewish American identity" evolved over time?
 - What challenges and opportunities do Jewish Americans face in today's society?
 - How do Jewish Americans navigate issues of antisemitism and discrimination?
 - What unites Jewish Americans across differences?
 - What is the future of Jewish American identity and culture?
- **Access the Video:** [ICS Video: Jewish Americans](#)

3. WHILE VIEWING

- **Encourage Active Viewing:** Ask students to take notes or draw diagrams by using the [Jewish Americans: Video Viewing and Discussion Guide](#) (access on page 3)
- **Pause for Discussion:** Stop the video at key moments to discuss important points or answer questions. Model critical thinking for students and demonstrate how to analyze the video's content, identify the main points, and evaluate the evidence.
 - All of the following timestamps are possible moments in the video where you can pause for discussion:
 - **1:10** - important points about aspects of Judaism
 - **2:40** - discussion around the major waves of immigration
 - **3:16** - discussion around experiences with antisemitism
 - **4:40** - discussion around assimilation and contributions to American society

- **5:18** - discussion around Jewish American diversity, identity, and experiences
- **End** - additional points around the Jewish American experience

NOTE: The Teacher's Guide section of the [Jewish Americans: Video Viewing and Discussion Guide](#) offers suggested responses.

4. LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

- Informal Assessments:
 - a. Have students complete the [Post-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#).
 - b. Observe students' participation in class discussions and their completion of activities.
- Formative Assessments: Use quizzes, tests, or essays to assess students' understanding of the video's content.
 - a. [Formative Assessment Example](#)