

Jewish Americans Video: Teacher Guide

This teacher guide is designed to provide educators with resources and strategies for effectively using [ICS's video about Jewish Americans](#) in the classroom. The goal is to promote understanding, empathy, and appreciation for Jewish American history, culture, and contributions to society. By using this guide, teachers can effectively engage students in learning about Jewish American history and create a more inclusive and culturally responsive classroom.

Pre-viewing Activities

- Set the Stage: Introduce the topic of Jewish Americans and its relevance to students' lives and/or curriculum.
 - By exploring the experiences and contributions of Jewish Americans, students can develop a deeper appreciation for diversity, empathy, and the shared human experience.
- 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 "American Jewish 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 is the future of Jewish American identity and culture?

While Viewing

- Encourage Active Viewing: Ask students to take notes or draw diagrams by using the Jewish Americans: Video Viewing and Discussion Guide
- Pause for Discussion: Stop the video at key moments to discuss important points or answer questions. 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
- Model Critical Thinking: Demonstrate how to analyze the video's content, identify the main points, and evaluate the evidence.

Post-viewing Activities

- Review and Summarize: Have students summarize the main points of the video.
- Discuss Questions: Facilitate a class discussion using the questions posed before viewing, along with the questions and concepts they explored in the viewing guide
- Connect to Prior Knowledge: Help students connect the video's content to their existing knowledge.
- Extend Learning: Assign activities that extend the learning, such as writing a reflection, conducting research, or creating a project. Guidance and support is provided in the [CA Ethnic Studies Repository & Hub: A Collaboration Between the California Regional Ethnic Studies Collaborative \(CRESC\) & California Department of Education \(CDE\)](#).

Assessment

- Informal Assessment: Observe students' participation in class discussions and their completion of activities.
- Formal Assessment: Use quizzes, tests, or essays to assess students' understanding of the video's content.

Jewish Americans: Video Viewing and Discussion Guide

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Directions: Use the following questions to capture your thoughts during and after watching the video on Jewish Americans. Please note that while most of the questions appear chronologically, some of the questions are addressed multiple times throughout the video, so you are encouraged to revisit those questions throughout the viewing of the video.

What makes Jewish Americans an ethnic group?

What are some key aspects of Judaism - the religion of the Jewish people?

- **What historical experience explains the wide range of differences within the Jewish American population?**
- **List examples that highlight Jewish Americans' diversity.**

What binds or unites Jewish Americans together?

Three Major Waves of Jewish Immigration:

Time Period:	Sub-ethnic group/Region:	Key Facts:

Antisemitism is the hatred, discrimination, fear, and prejudice against Jews based on stereotypes and myths that target their ethnicity, culture, religion, traditions, right to self-determination, or connection to the State of Israel.

What are some ways that Jewish Americans have experienced antisemitism?

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How have Jewish Americans experienced assimilation?

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What social movements and advancements have Jewish Americans been involved in?

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What are 1-2 of your personal takeaways after watching the video?

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ICS Jewish Americans: Video Viewing and Discussion Guide (Teacher's Guide - Sample Responses)

What makes Jewish Americans an ethnic group?

- Jewish Americans are an ethnic group with a shared ancestry, history, and cultural traditions.
- Jewish Americans are made up of a variety of sub-groups from many different regions around the world. Some of these subgroups include: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi.
- Jews are part of a single people.

What are some key aspects of Judaism - the religion of the Jewish people?

- Ritual Observances like Shabbat (the weekly day of rest)
- Keeping Kosher (dietary laws)
- Ethical Values (helping those in need; loving your neighbor as yourself)
- Observing holidays to remember or celebrate Jewish history and tradition
- The spread of Jews beyond the Land of Israel resulted in diverse interpretations of Jewish laws and traditions

- What historical experience explains the wide range of differences within the Jewish American population?
- List examples that highlight Jewish Americans' diversity

What binds or unites Jewish Americans together?

Jewish Americans have come to the United States from countries all over the world (at different times throughout history) for different reasons.

- 14% of Jewish Americans identify as people of color
- Jewish Americans can be people who chose to convert to Judaism
- Some Jewish Americans are part of multi-faith families
- About ½ of the Jews in the world live in the United States

- The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people (3,000 years ago)
- Group identity tied to history, culture, ancestry, religion, language, celebrations, communal and family traditions, common values, and a sense of being part of a single
- people
- Growth and evolution but rooted in history

Three Major Waves of Jewish Immigration:

Time Period:	Subgroup/Region:	Key Facts:
1650s-1800s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sephardi• Primarily came from Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and Algeria	Fled persecution (the Spanish Inquisition)
1840s-1880	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashkenazi• Central European - primarily from countries like France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A group trying to separate themselves from Jewish traditions in order to integrate into modern society• Downplayed religious practices (did not keep Kosher)• Spoke English (not Yiddish or the language of the country they immigrated from)• Dressed like other Americans• Founded the American Reform and Conservative movements
1880-1924	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashkenazi• Eastern European• Primarily from the Russian Empire, including regions like Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fled violence and persecution (pogroms)• Sought freedom and opportunities in the U.S.• Were traditionally observant• Lived in tightly-knit communities

Antisemitism is the hatred, discrimination, fear, and prejudice against Jews based on stereotypes and myths that target their ethnicity, culture, religion, traditions, right to self-determination, or connection to the State of Israel.

What are some ways that Jewish Americans have experienced antisemitism?

Before 1942, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization laws categorized Jewish Americans as part of the Hebrew race. This was a FALSE and FAKE scientific belief that Jewish Americans were inferior to white Americans.

- Jewish Americans were unable to buy homes in certain neighborhoods
- Some colleges limited the number of Jewish Americans who could attend
- Jewish Americans had difficulty finding jobs in certain industries

Antisemitism is still present today:

- Often expressed by Nazi symbols and sentiments (graffiti)
- Exclusion of Jewish students from diversity discussions
- Discriminated against for having a positive connection to Israel
- Jewish institutions are targets of anti-Jewish hate through bomb threats, vandalism, and assaults

How have Jewish Americans experienced assimilation?

- After the Holocaust, overt anti-Jew hate and discrimination in America began to decrease.
- Gradually, light-skinned Jewish Americans (Ashkenazi Jews) were given more opportunities (entertainment and other industries, education, housing, politics, etc.) thus changing the way they thought about themselves and their Jewish identity.
- They increasingly felt a sense of belonging in America.

What social movements or advancements have Jewish Americans been involved in?

- Jewish Americans fought for social justice and equality
- Labor Rights
- Immigrant Aid Society
- Civil Rights (nearly half of the Civil Rights lawyers were Jewish)
- Feminist Movement
- Scientific/Medical breakthroughs (polio vaccine, chlorination of cities water supplies)
- Arts

What are 1-2 of your personal takeaways after watching the video?