

A free online textbook of Jewish history and the roots of antisemitism, from antiquity through the Holocaust to the present day. It can anchor a high-school elective or a college course. Sample syllabi are at makorproject.org/sample-syllabi.

START HERE

What Makor is

The Makor Project is a free, independent educational resource. Its six units and 57 Chapters carry the story from the ancient world to the present, and every claim is anchored in a primary document, scholarship, or an institutional archive. No claim asks to be taken on faith. Students work from the record itself. *Makor* is the Hebrew word for *source*.

Why the “before” matters. Most curricula introduce Jews for the first time as victims, at the edge of the Holocaust. Makor teaches the people before the persecution: a living civilization with texts, communities, and contributions across three thousand years. When students first meet that civilization, the catastrophe reads as the culmination of a long history rather than the whole of it, and the mechanism of hatred becomes recognizable.

A small people, a long reach. There are roughly 15 to 16 million Jews today, about **0.2 percent of humanity**. That a people so few in number recurs across the whole of world history is not, by itself, a claim about importance. It is the reason context matters. You cannot understand either the contribution or the persecution without first seeing the arc that produced them.

THE MATERIAL

How Makor is organized

- 1 The Jewish World.** Origins, sacred texts, and the continuous record of a civilization. section-1
- 2 Communities Across the World.** The diaspora: how Jewish life took root on nearly every continent. section-2
- 3 The Evolution of Antisemitism.** A single hatred remade across time: religious, then racial, then political. section-3
- 4 The Holocaust Era.** Genocide met as the culmination of that history, not its origin. section-4
- 5 Jewish Contributions.** A people few in number, present across science, law, scholarship, and the arts. section-5
- 6 Memory, Responsibility, and Today.** Reckoning, remembrance, and what the record asks of us now. section-6

Alongside the units: The Curriculum Gap (why context matters), Standards & Mandates, the Museum and Virtual Field Trips, the Sources directory, and a Glossary, the eight Makor Teaching Guides, and the Legal and Incident Records that keep the story current. Each Chapter ends with **Classroom Connections**: discussion questions, teaching notes, and verified standards.

HOW TO TEACH IT

Ten principles

Aligned with the guidelines of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the IHRA. In brief:

1. **Teach Jewish life, not only Jewish death.** Students meet a living civilization first, so Jewish identity is never encountered only through victimization.
2. **Context, not inevitability.** Nothing was bound to happen. Teach the long build-up so hatred is seen as constructed, and recognizable.
3. **Precision of language.** Define *antisemitism*, *Holocaust*, *genocide*. Avoid euphemism and “the Jews” as a monolith. Name perpetrators as people who chose.
4. **From statistics to people.** Six million is a number students cannot feel. Individual stories and survivor testimony restore human scale.
5. **No simulations of victim experience.** Never have students role-play victims or reenact a camp. Analyze sources. Do not reenact trauma.
6. **Imagery with restraint.** Graphic images shock without teaching. Choose images that inform and prepare students.
7. **Respect for the dead.** The victims were individuals, not statistics, spectacle, or entertainment. Treat names, images, and testimony with dignity.
8. **Teach through inquiry.** Give students the source and the question, not just the conclusion. Resist tidy morals and single villains.
9. **A safe, age-appropriate space.** Set norms, anticipate strong emotion, match depth to grade, and provide follow-up.
10. **Connect to the present, carefully.** Help students recognize antisemitism today without false equivalence or ranking suffering.

THIS WEEK

Getting started

1. **Read the frame.** Start with [The Curriculum Gap](#), ten minutes on why the “before” belongs in the lesson.
2. **Pick one Chapter** that fits a unit you already teach. Open it and read its **Classroom Connections** at the bottom.
3. **Teach from one source.** Put a single primary document in front of students with one question. Let them draw the conclusion.
4. **Place it on your map.** Check [Standards & Mandates](#) to see where it satisfies your requirements, then build out from there.

FIT & CERTIFICATION

Bringing Makor into your course

Where it fits. Makor is built to fold into courses you already teach: world and modern history, ELA (primary-source close reading and argument), civics and the required Holocaust/genocide instruction, and advisory or values programming. It is designed for K–12 and for college survey courses alike. Use a single Chapter or a full unit. **Mapped to your standards.** Every Chapter names its verified standards codes in Classroom Connections. State-mapped editions of this companion, the way the Texas edition carries TEKS codes, are at makorproject.org/for-teachers, and new state mappings follow the teachers who register and name their standards.

The self-paced course & certificate. The [For Teachers: guides & course](#) For Students · the [Makor Club](#) page offers a free, self-paced course: six short parts that walk the whole arc, from the curriculum gap through Units 5–6 and the primary-source method. Work through it at your own pace and request a certificate of completion (self-directed professional development. Check your local policy on credit).

KEEP CLOSE

Quick links

Home · [makorproject.org](#)

The Curriculum Gap

Unit 1 · [The Jewish World](#)

Unit 2 · [Communities](#)

Unit 3 · [Antisemitism](#)

Unit 4 · [The Holocaust Era](#)

Unit 5 · [Contributions](#)

Unit 6 · [Memory & Responsibility](#)

Standards & Mandates

For Teachers: guides & course

Museum

Virtual Field Trips

Sources [directory](#)

Glossary

The Makor Project · education@makorproject.org

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