



THE MAKOR TEACHING GUIDES

Teaching English Language Arts

One lesson, one book, or the year · Free, ready to teach · Literature, memoir, poetry, rhetoric, and media literacy

Start at your size. One lesson tomorrow: *The Years Before the Killing*, the history behind the memoirs, planned on page three, beat by beat. One book: the chart on page two sets a chapter beside the titles already on your syllabus, from *The Merchant of Venice* to *Night*. The year: keep the chart at hand, and each major text picks up the history it carries as your course reaches it.

Three facts

Your state likely requires it. Roughly twenty-nine states now mandate Holocaust education. The requirement usually arrives without a curriculum. Building one is left to you.

Your students have already met the subject. Antisemitism reaches them online before any teacher reaches them with the history.

It fits the course you already teach. Shakespeare wrote Shylock for an England that had expelled its Jews three centuries earlier. The dystopias rehearse a lie becoming official truth, and the real forgery is documented, page by page. *Night* and *The Diary of a Young Girl* begin after the trap has closed. The chart sets each book beside the history it carries.

AM I QUALIFIED TO TEACH THE HISTORY BEHIND THE BOOKS?

If you teach English in grades 6 to 12, in a public, private, or religious school, yes. You do not need to be a historian. Teaching a text in its context is already your work, and every page assumes the reader starts from zero: terms are defined, events are dated, people are introduced. If you can assign a reading and lead a discussion, you can teach this.

OPEN EVERY LESSON WITH THE STORY SO FAR

Five sentences, spoken aloud, ground any lesson from this guide. Each has a chapter behind it if the class wants more.

1. The Jews are a people, with a faith, a language, and a calendar, three thousand years old. [/topic-who-are-the-jews](#)
2. Their homeland is the Land of Israel, where their two Temples stood in Jerusalem. [/topic-land-of-israel](#) · [/topic-temples](#)
3. The diaspora spread Jewish communities across the world, before and after the Second Temple fell in the year 70, and some always remained in the land. [/topic-diaspora](#) · [/topic-continuous-presence](#)
4. Wherever they lived, they kept the same book, the same calendar, and the same hope of return. [/topic-sacred-texts](#) · [/topic-calendar](#)
5. The hatred they met kept changing its reasons, faith, then money, then race, but the target never changed. [/topic-adversus-judaeos](#) · [/topic-nazi-synthesis](#)

Where Makor fits what you already teach

The chart walks the English classroom shelf. Each row is a book or unit you already teach, and the chapter that carries its history, each a single lesson. The chart lists the strongest fits, not all of them: every chapter names its courses and standards codes in its Classroom Connections section.

IF YOUR CLASS IS
READING

ADD THIS CHAPTER

<i>Night, The Diary of a Young Girl, Maus, or The Book Thief</i>	The Years Before the Killing · The Camp System · Jewish Resistance & Rescue · the history the memoirs assume: the six legal years that closed the doors, the camps in precise terms, and the resistance · /topic-1933-1939 · /topic-camp-system · /topic-resistance , or all of Unit 4 at /section-4
<i>Refugee, Number the Stars, or The Devil's Arithmetic</i>	The Years Before the Killing · Jewish Resistance & Rescue · The Camp System · the middle-school novels beside the record: the voyage of the St. Louis, the Danish rescue of October 1943, and the camps · /topic-1933-1939 · /topic-resistance · /topic-camp-system
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	The Expulsions · The Ghetto System · Shakespeare wrote Shylock for an England that had expelled its Jews in 1290, and set him in a city whose ghetto had stood since 1516 · /topic-expulsions · /topic-ghetto-system
<i>The Crucible</i>	The Blood Libel · a town convicts its neighbors on a rumor: the machinery of accusation, documented case by case, centuries before Salem · /topic-blood-libel
<i>1984, Animal Farm, or Fahrenheit 451</i>	The Protocols of the Elders of Zion · The Years Before the Killing · a lie becomes official truth and books burn: the real forgery, and the real book burnings of May 10, 1933 · /topic-protocols · /topic-1933-1939
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird or Lord of the Flies</i>	The Racial Turn · both books turn on a group deciding who counts as an outsider: the making of modern antisemitism traces how that same logic was written into law · /topic-racial-turn
<i>Persepolis or The Kite Runner</i>	The Jews of Iran · a minority living under an ideological regime has a long history of its own: more than 2,500 years in Persia · /topic-iran
Poetry units	Emma Lazarus · The Memory Architecture · Jewish Resistance & Rescue · “The New Colossus” as a sonnet from the poet’s own life, the Niemöller confession with its history behind it, and the Terezín children’s poems · /topic-lazarus · /topic-memory-architecture · /topic-resistance
Essays, speeches, and argument	Hannah Arendt · Liberation & the Displaced Persons · <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> and the controversy that followed, and Elie Wiesel’s speeches beside the liberation he survived · /topic-arendt · /topic-liberation-dp
Journalism and media literacy	The Protocols of the Elders of Zion · Holocaust Denial & the Response · Hate Symbols · how a lie is built, how denial works, and the symbols that carry hate today · /topic-protocols · /topic-holocaust-denial · /hate-symbols

WHERE DOES THE CHAPTER FIT INSIDE A BOOK UNIT?

Before the book, one lesson gives the history the text assumes. During the book, a single section answers a question the text raises. After the book, the chapter carries the class from the story to the record. One lesson in any of the three places is enough.

IN AP COURSES

In AP English Language, the Protocols chapter and the source-literacy lessons are rhetorical analysis from primary documents, and Hannah Arendt pairs with argument writing. In AP English Literature, *The Merchant of Venice* and the poetry rows above teach with their chapters beside them. Every chapter names its standards in Classroom Connections.

One lesson, fully planned

Teach this one first: **The Years Before the Killing**, the chapter that stands behind the memoirs. *Night* and *The Diary of a Young Girl* begin after the trap has closed. This chapter is the six years that closed it, 1933 to 1939, told law by law, and it reads at middle-school level. It fits before a memoir unit, inside a dystopia unit, or on its own. The plan is a floor, not a script: teach it as written, or take the chapter your own way. The chapter page carries the full set of discussion questions, its sources, and key takeaways: the plan below uses the first question, and the rest are there when you want them. makorproject.org/topic-1933-1939.

Before class. Open the chapter. Read it once. Press Open PDF if you want handouts. That is the whole prep.

Opening, 5 min. Ask each student to write one sentence: how does a country of laws arrive at the events of the book you are reading? Keep the answers. They revise them at the close.

Reading, 15 min. Read two sections together: “The legal machinery, built in eleven months” and “Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass.” Students list what each law or decree took away.

Discussion, 15 min. Discussion question 1, straight from the page: the machinery of persecution was built step by step for six and a half years before the war began. Choose two steps and explain what each one took away from Jewish Germans, and why the order of the steps mattered. *Listen for: the steps were laws, passed in public. Work went first, then citizenship in 1935, then property and safety in 1938, and each step made the next one easier.*

Close, 5 min. Students revise their opening sentences, then set the chapter beside the book: the memoir begins where these six years end. Leave the class with the chapter’s first sentence: none of it was hidden.

NEW TO THE SUBJECT ENTIRELY?

Give it one full period: **Who Are the Jews?**, the site’s front door: a people, not only a religion. The right first chapter when the subject is new to your class. [/topic-who-are-the-jews](http://topic-who-are-the-jews)

WHEN STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR OWN BOOKS

The site’s For Students page carries the same connections written to the student: from *Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Crucible*, and the dystopias to the chapters behind them. For independent reading, assign the book and point to the page.

The anatomy of a chapter

Every chapter page holds a readable history, written to be taught or assigned. Primary sources and images, each credited to its holding institution. Discussion questions that ask students to reason from the documents. Classroom Connections: the courses it fits and the standards it supports. Key takeaways, for review and exit tickets. A printable PDF: one button, the whole chapter.

CAN MY STUDENTS READ THE CHAPTERS?

Most chapters sit at high-school level. *The Years Before the Killing* reads at middle-school level, and every chapter’s print-ready PDF makes excerpting easy for younger classes. A full chapter is a half hour’s read: the lesson plans assign sections, not chapters.

DO I NEED APPROVAL TO USE MAKOR?

That depends on your district’s materials policy. In many districts, supplemental materials for a course you already teach sit within a teacher’s discretion. In others, a principal or department signs off. Either way, the material is built to pass review: every claim sourced, standards named, editorial rules published.

If a parent or your principal asks

The real fear is usually not the material. It is being accused of teaching a side. Here is why this material holds, and what to say if someone challenges you.

- **Every claim carries its source, on the page.** Dates, laws, and figures link to the archive or museum that holds the record. You are not asking anyone to trust you, or us. You are showing them a document.
- **The site documents. It does not argue.** Its standing rule is that the reader draws the conclusion.
- **Contested questions are labeled contested.** Where scholars disagree, the page says so and names them. No political side is taken, and on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the site says plainly that it is a subject with legitimate arguments on both sides, and does not adjudicate it.
- **Hate texts are cited, never linked.** Students learn what a forgery like the Protocols did without the site ever sending anyone to read it.
- **Teaching about religion as history and culture is settled ground** in public schools, drawn in 1963 in *Abington v. Schempp*: the chapters study a tradition and never practice one.
- **The standards are public.** Every editorial rule the site follows is published at makorproject.org/editorial-standards, and the chapters in this guide name the state standards they support.

WHAT MAKOR ADDS TO YOUR ENGLISH COURSE

In the English classroom the gap shows on the syllabus: students meet Shylock without the expulsion that shaped him, the dystopias without the documented lie beside them, and the memoirs without the six years that closed the doors. The chart sets each book beside its history, one lesson at a time: the play and the edict of 1290, the sonnet and the pogroms that reached New York, the diary and the laws that came first. The books were already carrying the history. The chapters set it beside the page.

WHAT MAKOR IS

It's ready. Every chapter is a lesson: planned, one class period, teachable tomorrow.

It fits. Chapters drop into the units you already teach, with no new course to add.

It's solid ground. Primary sources and verified standards, so the documents do the talking.

It's free, with no logins and no ads.

The classroom toolkit

- **The Timeline.** Project it as a warm-up, or have students place the day's lesson on it. makorproject.org/timeline
- **The Museum.** Manuscripts, coins, and objects, each credited to the institution that holds it. One object, projected, opens a class. makorproject.org/museum
- **Virtual Field Trips.** Archaeological sites, memorials, and historic Jewish quarters, from the projector. makorproject.org/field-trips
- **Films.** Curated film and video by unit, grade bands marked. makorproject.org/films
- **The Incident Record.** Documented antisemitic incidents of the contemporary era, each entry ending with its record: a verdict, a plea, or an official finding. makorproject.org/incident-record
- **The Legal Record.** Judgments, treaties, and statutes, each linked to its primary document. makorproject.org/legal-record
- **Misconceptions and the Glossary.** The beliefs students bring to class, set beside the documents, and every term defined. makorproject.org/misconceptions · makorproject.org/glossary
- **The source-literacy lessons.** Reading documents against headlines, and recognizing propaganda, with printable handouts. makorproject.org/for-teachers
- **Standards & Mandates.** The state requirements, on one page: find your state's. makorproject.org/state-mandates
- **Sample Syllabi.** The full elective plan, plus a college survey. makorproject.org/sample-syllabi

Find your way on the site

Home · makorproject.org

The Curriculum Gap, why the site exists · </curriculum-gap>

Table of Contents, the whole site on one page · </table-of-contents>

For Teachers, the guides, a self-paced course, and registration for updates · </for-teachers>

For Students · </for-students>

K–5, the early-grades program · </k5>

EVERY CHAPTER IS A LESSON

One class period of material each, with discussion questions, sources, a print-ready PDF, and a Where-this-Chapter-fits note naming the courses it supports, all on the chapter page. The shelf is a menu, not a syllabus: take the chapter your book calls for, and leave the rest where they are. The lessons planned in this guide come from this shelf, and any other chapter teaches the same way.

Unit 1 • The Jewish World · </section-1>

[Who Are the Jews?](#) · [The Land of Israel](#) · [The Continuous Jewish Presence](#) · [The First & Second Temples](#) · [The Synagogue](#) · [The Sacred Texts](#) · [The Calendar & the Cycle of the Year](#) · [Ritual Objects & Material Culture](#) · [The Jewish Life Cycle](#) · [The Diaspora as a Phenomenon](#)

Unit 2 • Communities Across the World · </section-2>

[A Connected People](#) · [The Jews of Iraq](#) · [The Jews of North Africa](#) · [The Jews of Iran](#) · [The Departure from MENA](#) · [Soviet Jewry](#) · [American Jewry](#) · [Ethiopian Jewry](#), [Beta Israel](#) · [The Modern State of Israel](#)

Unit 3 • The Evolution of Antisemitism · </section-3>

[Adversus Judaeos](#) · [The Blood Libel](#) · [The Ghetto System](#) · [The Expulsions](#) · [The Racial Turn](#) · [The Russian Pogroms](#) · [The Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#) · [The Nazi Synthesis](#) · [The Dhimma](#) · [The Eastward Turn](#) · [The Terror Record](#) · [Contemporary Antisemitism](#)

Unit 4 • The Holocaust Era · </section-4>

[The Years Before the Killing](#) · [Aktion T-4](#) · [The Nazi Ghettos](#) · [The Camp System](#) · [The Einsatzgruppen](#) · [The Holocaust in North Africa & the Middle East](#) · [Jewish Resistance & Rescue](#)

Unit 5 • Jewish Contributions · </section-5>

[Across the Fields](#) · [Rashi](#) · [Maimonides](#) · [Joseph Karo](#) · [Moses Mendelssohn](#) · [Emma Lazarus](#) · [Theodor Herzl](#) · [Albert Einstein](#) · [The Founders of Hollywood](#) · [Jonas Salk](#)

Unit 6 • Memory, Responsibility, and Today · </section-6>

[Liberation & the Displaced Persons](#) · [The Postwar Trials](#) · [Hannah Arendt](#) · [Postwar Restitution](#) · [The Memory Architecture](#) · [Nostra Aetate](#) · [Holocaust Denial & the Response](#) · [The Afterlife of the Image](#) · [It Didn't End](#)

The Makor Project (makorproject.org) is a free online textbook of Jewish history and the history of antisemitism, built from primary sources. It was built to close a gap: in standard textbooks, the Jewish people appear in the ancient world, then reappear two thousand years later as victims of the Holocaust, a history with no in-between. Read in order, its six units and 57 chapters form a full course. Taken singly, each chapter drops into lessons teachers already teach. Every chapter names the standards it supports in its Classroom Connections section, so the alignment work is already done.

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