THE TEACHING GUIDES

Teaching U.S. History & Civics

One lesson, one unit, or the year · Free, ready to teach · U.S. History, government, civics, media literacy, and ELA

Start at your size. Fifteen minutes: add one chapter's story, source, and question to the unit you are teaching, at teachjewishhistory.org/for-tomorrow. One lesson tomorrow: Emma Lazarus, planned on page three, beat by beat. One unit: the chart on page two drops a chapter into the units you already teach. The year: taught in order, the chapters walk the American story from 1654 to today.

Two facts

It fits the course you already teach. The American Jewry chapter opens with its own rule: American Jewish history is an immigration story. Five waves of one people run inside the units already on your calendar, the colonial era, immigration, the world wars, the Cold War, and the chart shows where.

Your state likely requires it. A 2026 federal review found that 42 of the 50 states and D.C. require Holocaust education through academic standards or state law. The requirement usually arrives without a curriculum. Building one is left to you.

AM I QUALIFIED TO TEACH THIS HISTORY?

If you teach U.S. history, government, civics, or ELA in grades 6 to 12, in a public, private, or religious school, yes. You do not need to be a specialist. The pages are written for readers new to the subject: 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, more than 3,000 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 the site fits what you already teach

The chart walks the American survey in its own order. Each row is a unit you already teach, and the chapters that belong inside it, 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 YOU ARE TEACHING	ADD THIS CHAPTER
Colonial America and the early republic	American Jewry · twenty-three refugees landing at New Amsterdam in 1654, a governor who wanted them gone, and the oldest congregation in North America · /topic-american-jewry
Immigration and the industrial era	Emma Lazarus · American Jewry · The Russian Pogroms · Samuel Gompers · Levi Strauss · the poet who renamed the statue, the wave of 1881 to 1924, and the violence that pushed it here, with the women who built Jewish community institutions, from Rebecca Gratz's Sunday school of 1838 to Hadassah, the labor movement through one organizer's arc, and the Gold Rush through one merchant's · /topic-lazarus · /topic-american-jewry · /topic-russian-empire-pogroms · /topic-gompers · /topic-strauss
The 1920s and the interwar years	The Protocols Forgery · The Founders of Hollywood · the forgery Henry Ford's newspaper carried to a mass audience, and the immigrants who built the studios · /topic-protocols · /topic-hollywood
WWII and the Holocaust	The five-lesson unit in Teaching the Holocaust, this series' companion guide, or any of Unit 4's seven chapters at full depth · /section-4
The postwar years	Liberation and the Displaced Persons · Albert Einstein · Jonas Salk · what the American army found and what America answered, the physicist the Nazis drove out, and the first effective polio vaccine · /topic-liberation-dp · /topic-einstein · /topic-salk
The Cold War	Soviet Jewry · the movement that made Jewish emigration an American cause · /topic-soviet-jewry
Government and civics	The Postwar Trials · Postwar Restitution · The Legal Record · how law and public memory answered, from Nuremberg to this quarter · /topic-postwar-trials · /topic-restitution · /legal-record
Media literacy	The Protocols Forgery · Holocaust Denial and 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
Current events	The Terror Record · Contemporary Antisemitism · The Hatred That Outlived the War · the present, documented as it occurs · /topic-terror-record · /topic-contemporary-antisemitism · /topic-it-didnt-end

IN AP COURSES

AP U.S. History takes the rows above in period order, and AP U.S. Government's civil-liberties unit pairs with the Government and civics row. Every chapter is document-based, the skill the AP history exams test in the DBQ, and each names its standards in Classroom Connections.

IN ELA

Every chapter is document-based reading practice: primary sources, discussion questions, and close reading, aligned to the Common Core literacy-in-history standards, the RH strand. Emma Lazarus pairs with poetry units, and Hannah Arendt with essays.

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

One lesson, fully planned

The planned lesson: **Emma Lazarus**, the poet whose sonnet has been on a plaque in the Statue of Liberty's pedestal since 1903. It fits an immigration unit, a Gilded Age unit, or an ELA poetry block, and it carries a question about language and power that works at every grade. 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. teachjewishhistory.org/topic-lazarus

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: what does the Statue of Liberty stand for? Keep the answers. They revise them at the close.

Reading, 15 min. Read two sections together: "The pogroms reach New York" and "Fourteen lines for an auction." Students note what Lazarus was doing in the months before she wrote the sonnet.

Discussion, 15 min. Discussion question 1, straight from the page: "The Statue of Liberty was given as a monument to liberty, not immigration. What does it tell you about the power of language that fourteen lines, mounted inside the pedestal in 1903, helped change what the monument means?" *Listen for: a monument to liberty came to be read as a welcome, through a sonnet by a poet who had taught English to pogrom refugees.*

Close, 5 min. Students revise their opening sentences. Leave the class with the chapter's own phrase: a statue renamed by a sonnet.

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 THE SITE?

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.

If a parent or your principal asks

Here is what to point to.

- **Each Chapter cites its sources on the page.** Documents, laws, and figures are credited, most with a link to the archive or museum that holds the record.
- **For the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, start with the dates.** The Modern State of Israel sets out the main events since 1967 in order, with its sources listed at the end of the Chapter.
- **Hate texts are cited, never linked.**
- **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 teachjewishhistory.org/editorial-standards, and the chapters in this guide name the state standards they support.

What the site adds TO YOUR U.S. HISTORY COURSE

In the American survey, students meet the statue without the poet, the Model T without the newspaper that carried the forgery, the war without the displaced, the Cold War without the movement. The chart restores the American thread one lesson at a time. Its rows hold the twenty-three refugees of 1654, the poet who renamed the statue, the law that closed the door, the army that liberated the camps, and the movement for the right to leave.

What Teach Jewish History is

It's ready. Every chapter can anchor a lesson, with questions, sources, and a print-ready PDF.

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.

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. teachjewishhistory.org/timeline
- **The Museum.** Manuscripts, coins, and objects, each credited to the institution that holds it. One object, projected, opens a class. teachjewishhistory.org/museum
- **Virtual Field Trips.** Archaeological sites, memorials, and historic Jewish quarters, from the projector. teachjewishhistory.org/field-trips
- **Films.** Curated film and video by unit, grade bands marked. teachjewishhistory.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. teachjewishhistory.org/incident-record
- **The Legal Record.** Judgments, treaties, and statutes, each linked to its primary document. Built for civics. teachjewishhistory.org/legal-record
- **Misconceptions and the Glossary.** The beliefs students bring to class, set beside the documents, and every term defined. teachjewishhistory.org/misconceptions · teachjewishhistory.org/glossary
- **The source-literacy lessons.** Reading documents against headlines, and recognizing propaganda, with printable handouts. teachjewishhistory.org/for-teachers
- **Standards & Mandates.** The state requirements, on one page: find your state's. teachjewishhistory.org/state-mandates
- **Sample Syllabi.** The full elective plan, plus a college survey. teachjewishhistory.org/sample-syllabi

Find your way on the site

Home · teachjewishhistory.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 CAN ANCHOR A LESSON

Each one can anchor a lesson, 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 unit 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 in the Land · The First and Second Temples · The Synagogue · The Sacred Texts · The Calendar & the Cycle of the Year · Ritual Objects and Material Culture · The Jewish Life Cycle · The Diaspora

Unit 2 · Communities Across the World · /section-2
A Connected People · The Jews of Iraq · The Jews of Iran · The Jews of North Africa · The Departure from MENA · The Jews of Spain and the Sephardic World · The Jews of Poland and Lithuania · 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 of 1879 · The Russian Pogroms · The Protocols Forgery · 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 the Middle East and North Africa · Jewish Resistance & Rescue

Unit 5 · Jewish Contributions · /section-5
Across the Fields · Rashi · Maimonides · Joseph Karo · Moses Mendelssohn · Levi Strauss · Emma Lazarus · Samuel Gompers · Theodor Herzl · Albert Einstein · The Founders of Hollywood · Jonas Salk

Unit 6 · Memory, Responsibility, and Today · /section-6
Liberation and the Displaced Persons · The Postwar Trials · Hannah Arendt · Postwar Restitution · The Memory Architecture · Nostra Aetate · Holocaust Denial and the Response · The Afterlife of the Image · The Hatred That Outlived the War

Teach Jewish History (teachjewishhistory.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 many standard textbooks, the Jewish people appear in the ancient world, then reappear more than two thousand years later as victims of the Holocaust, a history with no in-between. Read in order, its six units and more than 60 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.

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