

6th Grade Jewish American History Curriculum

This American Jewish History Curriculum covers Jewish American History from 1492 through the present. It uses “Let Freedom Ring “(Behrman House, Inc) and is supplemented by the P.B.S. miniseries Jews in America, presented on 3 DVD’s. Each unit is designed for classroom reading and discussion, with additional time programmed for computer lab research, power point presentations, group work, art projects and study of primary sources found within the text.

Goals and Objectives

- Students will understand that Jews were in America as early as 1492
- Students will understand that Jews were influenced by the American experience
- Students will understand that Jews contributed to the American experience
- Students will consider whether they see themselves as Jewish Americans or American Jews

Unit 1: The First Jews in America, pages 9-14, 1 session, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will gain an understanding of the events that led to the Jews coming to the new world
- Students will gain an understanding of the conditions in the new world
- Students will be able to plot the course on a map of the travels of the first Jews

Focal Points

- The arrival of the first Jews in the new world
- The establishment of the first settlement
- The beginning of the first Jewish community in the new world

Key People

- Luis de Torres
- Luis de Santangel
- Isaac Aboab de Fonseca
- Asser Levy

Key Terms

- Inquisition
- Converso
- Crypto Jews (Marranos)

Special Activities:

- Trace Diaspora on class map
- Each student will research a key person listed in the first three chapters for research

Assessment:

- Successful completion of research project

Unit 2: A New World of Old Values, pages 15-20, 1 session, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will gain an understanding of life in early colonial times
- Students will learn about the Jews who played a part in Revolutionary War
- Students will identify the differences between Sephardim and Ashkenazim

Focal Points

- The founding of Rhode Island
- The American Revolution
- The building of synagogues
- The Bible as the foundation of the establishment of colonial values (Christian and Jewish)

Key People

- Roger Williams
- George Washington
- Haym Solomon
- Aaron Lopez
- Rebecca Gratz
- Gershom Mendes Seixas

Terms

- Sephardim
- Ashkenazim
- Broker

Special Activities:

- Students report on the people they have researched
- Write a letter to a friend and convince him to join your cause

Unit 1-2A Jews in America DVD#1, 1 session:1 hour, research: 3 sessions, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- View DVD containing pictures and commentary
- Select a key figure for research

Assessments:

- Write 10 facts to discuss in class

Unit 3: Religion, Slavery, and War Issues, pages 21-27, 1 session, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will gain an understanding of the large immigration influx in the 1800's

- Students will understand differences between Conservative, Reform, and Orthodox Judaism
- Students will gain an understanding of the part Jews played in the Civil War

Focal Points

- Large scale immigration to the U.S., 1840-1869
- The founding of Hebrew Union College
- Jews divide on the issues of the Civil War
- Jews are part of the westward movement in America

Key People

- Isaac Mayer Wise
- Isaac Leeser
- Judah P. Benjamin
- Rabbi Jacob Frankel
- Ernestine Rose

Terms

- Chaplain
- Suffrage

Assessments:

- compare US slavery to Exodus story

Unit 4: Jewish Life in the 1800's, pages 28-35, 1 session 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will learn of the western pioneers
- Students will learn about the German Jewish peddlers who moved west and became merchants and store owners
- Students will learn of the Jews who became the great philanthropists

Focal Points

- Jews enter “mainstream” America
- The Louisiana Purchase opened land West
- The California Gold Rush (1848) prompted thousands to travel West

Key People

- Levi Straus
- Josephine Sarah Marcus
- Mordechai Manuel Noah
- Uriah Phillips Levi
- The Straus Family

Special Activities:

Look at pictures and discuss how they are reflections of the era

Unit 3-4A: Jews in America, DVD #1, 1 session, 1 hour, Research and: 3 sessions, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will view pictures and commentaries on Civil War and Westward expansion
- Students will select a key figure or business to research

Assessment:

- Successful completion of Wax Museum Project

Unit 5: The Eastern European Jews Arrive, pages 36-44, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will understand the events that led up to the immigration of Eastern European Jews
- Students will understand life in America for the newly arriving Jews

Activity:

- Write a letter home about your immigration experience

Focal Points

- Pogroms of 1800's led to the immigration of eastern European Jews
- Eastern European Jews crowded in to the Lower East Side of New York City
- Some immigrants found paths to fame and fortune through sports and the entertainment industry

Key People

- Emma Lazarus
- Sholem Aleichem
- Henrietta Szold
- Sports and entertainment figures found with in chapter

Terms

- Pogroms
- Migration

Assessments

- Class discussions

Unit 5A: DVD #2, Jews in America, 4 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives

- View pictures and listen to commentary
- Prepare for research on a key figure or historical event

Unit 6: Organizing Jewish Life, pages 45-52, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will learn about the rise of Jewish organizations
- Students will learn about the rise in anti-Semitism on the U.S.

Focal Points

- The founding of the Conservative Movement of Judaism
- The Founding of the American Jewish Committee
- The Rise of anti-Semitism in America

Key People

- Solomon Schechter
- Henry Ford
- Louis Marshall
- Mordechai M. Kaplan

Terms

- Genizah
- Hoax
- Federation
- Righteousness

Unit 7: The Labor Movement, pages 53-60, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will learn about working in a “sweatshop”
- Students will gain an understanding of the efforts that led up to the rise in the Labor Movement

Focal Points

- Abuses perpetuated on workers in “sweatshops”
- The tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory
- The Jewish Daily Forward serves the Jewish community

Key People

- Samuel Gompers
- Morris Hellquist
- Clara Lemlich
- Louis Brandeis
- Abraham Cahan

- Stephen Wise

Terms

- Strike
- Negotiate
- Yiddish

Activity:

- create the first page of a newspaper about the labor movement

Assessments:

- List 5 important facts about the Labor Movement

Unit 8: Coming of Age, pages 61-67, 1 session, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will learn about the Jews who helped change the face of modern science and medicine
- Students will learn of the events that led to the restrictions on Jewish immigration
- Students will gain an understanding of why those interested in the labor movement were attracted to the American Communist Party

Focal Points

- Inventions and discoveries in medicine and science
- Laws limit immigration
- Anti-Semitism rises as the Great Depression worsens

Key People

- Albert Abraham Michelson
- Joseph Goldberger
- Albert Einstein
- Louis D Brandeis
- Father Charles E. Coughlin
- Hank Greenberg

Terms

- Anti-Semitism
- Nobel Prize
- Communism

Activity:

- Research a Jewish Nobel prize winner

Assessments:

- List 5 important facts about this unit of study

Unit 6-8A; Jews in America DVD #2, 3 sessions, 45 minutes each**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will view footage and listen to commentary on material relating to the chapters they have studied
- Students will select a key figure, idea, or event to research

Unit 9: The Holocaust Years, pages 68-74, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will gain an understanding of the events that led to Hitler's rise to power
- Students will gain an understanding of the immigration laws

Focal Points

- Pre-War Germany
- Jewish attempts to intervene on behalf of the Jews of Europe
- 6 million Jews murdered

Key People

- Adolph Hitler
- Felix Frankfurter
- Anne Frank
- Elie Weisel
- Adolph Eichmann

Terms

- Genocide
- Holocaust
- Kristallnacht

Assessments:

- Oral Quiz
- Class discussions

Unit 10: Opportunities and Challenges, pages 75-79, 3 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will gain an understanding of post-W.W.II life
- Students will gain an understanding of the Jewish move to the suburbs
- Students will research a key person

Focal Points

- Anti-Semitism continues to decline after W.W.II
- Jews play an important role in shaping the film and T.V. industries
- Jews feel free to leave densely populated Jewish neighborhoods for the suburbs

Key People

- David Sarnoff
- Entertainers, artists, writers, lawyers: listed page 78

Activities:

- Students research on line important Jewish figures in the film and TV industries

Assessments:

- Class discussions

Unit 11: A New State and A New Agenda, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives**

- Students will understand the events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel
- Students will gain an understanding of the Civil Rights Movement

Focal Points

- American Jews were supportive of the State of Israel
- Jews were in the forefront as supporters of the Civil Rights Movement
- African-American and Jewish Relations become strained

Key People

- Chaim Weitzman
- Golda Meir
- Martin Luther King Junior
- John F. Kennedy

Terms

- Displaced persons camp
- Detention camps

Activities:

- Students create a newspaper tabloid announcing the creation of the State of Israel and the War for Independence

Assessments:

- List 5 important facts relating to the founding of the State of Israel

Unit 12: Jewish Life in America Today, 1 session, 45 minutes

Goals and Objectives

- Students will learn about the challenges that face Jews in the coming years

Focal points

- A shift to an aging population
- More Jews are living in poverty today
- Divorce is rising
- Issues of identity and the roles women play in Judaism are changing
- New immigrants arrive in both the U.S. and in Israel
- The Peace process in the Middle East

Key People

- Prime Minister Rabin
- King Hussein
- President Clinton

Activity:

- What will Jewish life be like 10 years from now; 20 years from now?

Assessments:

- Class discussions
- Oral quiz