

# Parent / Guardian Letter

## Episode 7: What is Antisemitism?

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are excited to share that our class will be participating in an educational video lesson series exploring Jewish history, identity, and the Jewish people's place in the world. This unit is part of our ongoing commitment to culturally responsive, historically grounded education.

Our upcoming lesson focuses on **Episode 7: What is Antisemitism?** — presented by **Noa Tishby**, an Israeli-American actress, author, and advocate. In this video, Noa provides a clear, accessible, and age-appropriate explanation of antisemitism: its definition, its long history, how it has changed shape over centuries, and why understanding it matters for everyone — not just Jewish people.

### What Your Child Will Learn

- The definition and etymology of the word 'antisemitism'
- How antisemitism evolved from ancient times through the Holocaust and into the modern era
- Historical examples including the Greco-Roman period, the Middle Ages, and the Enlightenment
- The 'blood libel' — a historically significant and harmful false accusation against Jews
- Why the Holocaust was not an isolated event but a culmination of centuries of persecution
- The 'canary in the coal mine' metaphor and why antisemitism is a warning sign for all of society

### Standards & Academic Context

This lesson aligns with California History-Social Science Standards and Common Core ELA standards for grades 6–8, including analysis of historical evidence, academic vocabulary development, collaborative discussion, and evidence-based writing. It also aligns with California's AB 715 (the Antisemitism Awareness Act for schools), which requires schools to use the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in enforcement of nondiscrimination policies.

### Content Notes for Parents

This lesson deals with themes of discrimination, prejudice, and historical violence. The content is handled thoughtfully and age-appropriately. Specific topics discussed include the medieval blood libel (a false accusation against Jews), descriptions of violence during pogroms, and reference to the Holocaust. We present these topics with appropriate historical context and in the service of developing critical thinking and ethical awareness — not to distress or overwhelm students.

We encourage you to ask your child what they learned and to continue the conversation at home. Understanding antisemitism — and recognizing it when it appears — is a skill that benefits every student, regardless of background.

### How You Can Support Learning at Home

- ◆ Ask: 'What is antisemitism? How would you explain it to a friend?'

- ◆ Ask: 'What does the canary in the coal mine metaphor mean? Why does it matter?'
- ◆ Ask: 'Why might someone who is NOT Jewish care about antisemitism?'
- ◆ If interested, explore the USC Shoah Foundation's educational resources at [iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)

Thank you for your continued partnership in your child's education. If you have any questions about this lesson or our curriculum, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Warm regards,

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Classroom Teacher

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> **Please return this slip by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

■ I have read and understood the parent letter about Episode 7: What is Antisemitism?

■ I have questions or concerns. Please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_