

WHAT IS THE HOLOCAUST?

Episode 4 • Noa Tishby Video Series

Subject:	World History / English (ELA)	Grade Level:	9–12
Duration:	45 minutes	Presenter:	Noa Tishby (actress/advocate)
Unit:	Jewish History & Identity	Format:	Video + Activities

CALIFORNIA & COMMON CORE STANDARDS

California History-Social Science Content Standards:

- 10.8 — Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II, including the systematic persecution and genocide of Jews and other groups.
- 11.7.5 — Analyze the rise of fascism, Nazi ideology, and the Holocaust and its impact on world events.
- HSS Analysis Skills: Chronological and Spatial Thinking, Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View.

Common Core ELA Standards (Grades 9–12):

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 / 11-12.1 — Cite strong textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 / 11-12.2 — Determine central ideas of a source; provide accurate summaries.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 / 11-12.4 — Determine the meaning of vocabulary specific to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7 / 11-12.7 — Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information in diverse formats.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1 / 11-12.1 — Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 / 11-12.1 — Initiate and participate in collaborative discussions.

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- Episode 4 video (Noa Tishby)
- Projector / screen / speakers
- Student Viewing & Activity Handout (1 per student)
- Vocabulary Worksheet (1 per student)
- Map of Europe (1 per student or group)
- Colored pencils or markers
- Sticky notes (2 colors per student)
- Exit Ticket slips (pre-cut)
- Timer / bell signal
- Optional: Holocaust primary source images (curated, age-appropriate)
- Optional: Holocaust survivor testimony clips (USC Shoah Foundation)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define the Holocaust and explain the etymology of the word *genocide*.

2. Trace the historical roots of European antisemitism and explain how Nazi ideology weaponized it.
3. Identify key events in the progression of the Holocaust: Nuremberg Laws, ghettos, death squads, death camps.
4. Analyze the connection between the Holocaust and the urgency of establishing the State of Israel (Zionism).
5. Reflect on personal responsibility to remember, bear witness, and act against hatred.
6. Apply historical thinking skills: causation, continuity and change, perspective-taking.

STEP-BY-STEP LESSON PROCEDURE (45 Minutes)

Step 1: WARM-UP: Know / Wonder / Feel

5 min

- Post 3 sentence starters on the board: (1) When I hear 'Holocaust,' I know... (2) When I hear 'Holocaust,' I wonder... (3) When I hear 'Holocaust,' I feel...
- Students write on two sticky notes (1 color for 'know/wonder,' 1 color for 'feel') and post them on a class anchor chart.
- Quick share-out: 3–4 students read their sticky notes aloud. Do not correct or over-explain — this surfaces prior knowledge and emotional readiness.

■ *Teacher Note: This is a trauma-informed opening. Acknowledge that this topic can be heavy. Tell students their feelings are valid. Set a classroom norm: we discuss with respect and responsibility.*

Step 2: DIRECT INSTRUCTION: Watch Episode 4

12 min

- Distribute the Student Viewing Handout. Briefly preview the 3 sections students will complete while watching.
- Introduce presenter: 'Noa Tishby is an Israeli-American actress and advocate who is passionate about sharing Jewish history clearly and accessibly.'
- Play Episode 4. Instruct students to complete Section A of the handout (key facts, vocabulary) while viewing.
- Pause at 2 key moments (if technology allows): (1) After the Nuremberg Laws explanation — 'What do you notice about how this escalated?' (2) After the death camps segment — brief silent moment before continuing.

■ *Teacher Note: Preview vocabulary on the board before playing: genocide, Aryan, Nuremberg Laws, ghetto, Final Solution, Zionism. For ELL students, provide the vocabulary worksheet in advance.*

Step 3: MAP ACTIVITY: Holocaust Geography

8 min

- Students work in pairs. Using the map of Europe on their handout (Section B), they:
 - Task 1: Label 4–5 countries most heavily impacted by Nazi occupation (Poland, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands).**
 - Task 2: Mark the locations of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka (death camps) and the Warsaw Ghetto.**
 - Task 3: Draw arrows showing pre-war Jewish population centers vs. post-war displacement toward Israel and other continents.**
- Debrief: 'What does geography tell us about the scale and reach of the Holocaust?'

■ *Teacher Note: Provide a labeled map for students who need additional support. Advanced students should add pre-war Jewish population statistics to each country.*

Step 4: GROUP WORK: Jewish Identity & Traditions Under Threat

10 min

- Divide into groups of 3–4. Assign each group one of the following lenses:

Group A — Language & Law: How did the Nuremberg Laws redefine Jewish identity legally? What did it mean to be 'Jewish' under Nazi law vs. under Jewish tradition?

Group B — Community & Memory: The video mentions 'entire families and communities were wiped out.' What Jewish traditions of community (Shabbat, lifecycle events, learning) were targeted and why?

Group C — Land & Belonging: Why did so many survivors seek to go to Israel? What is Zionism and why does the video describe it as a 'progressive movement'?

Group D — Witness & Responsibility: 'The Holocaust wasn't just a Jewish tragedy — it was a human tragedy.' What does this mean? Who else was targeted and why does it matter?

- Groups prepare a 90-second share-out using evidence from the video.

■ *Teacher Note: For movement break: groups can stand and present from wherever they are in the room. Allow students who need movement to be group 'reporters' who walk the handout to the document camera.*

Step 5: GUIDED DISCUSSION: Never Again

6 min

- Bring the class back together. Ask each group to share their key insight (90 seconds each).
- Closing discussion prompt (teacher-led): 'Noa ends by saying, "Never Again" must truly mean never again. What would that require from each of us — as students, as citizens, as human beings?'
- Accept 3–5 student responses. Validate both emotional and analytical answers.
- Connect to current events briefly, if appropriate: 'We are living at a time when Holocaust survivors are still alive — and Holocaust denial is also rising. Why does it matter to keep telling this story?'

■ *Teacher Note: If the class needs more processing time, skip or shorten Group D's share-out. This discussion is the emotional heart of the lesson — don't rush it.*

Step 6: INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: Exit Ticket

4 min

- Students complete the Exit Ticket (Section C of handout) independently:

Prompt 1 (Knowledge): Name two specific laws, events, or places from Episode 4 and explain their significance in 1–2 sentences each.

Prompt 2 (Reflection): Complete this sentence: 'The most important thing I will remember from this lesson is _____ because _____.'

- Collect exit tickets as students leave. Use as formative assessment for the next lesson.

■ *Teacher Note: ELL Differentiation: Allow sentence frames or bullet points instead of full sentences on the exit ticket. Advanced: Add a third prompt — 'How does what you learned today connect to something happening in the world right now?'*

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

<p>For ELL Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach vocabulary with visuals before viewing (vocabulary worksheet) • Provide a graphic organizer with sentence frames • Allow responses in home language first, then English • Pair with a bilingual partner during group work • Provide a labeled map for the map activity • Accept verbal exit tickets (record or scribe) 	<p>For Advanced Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research: compare the 1935 Nuremberg Laws to Jim Crow laws or apartheid • Read a primary source: Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize acceptance speech excerpt • Analyze the question: Is Zionism a human rights movement? Construct an argument • Create a timeline from 1933–1948 connecting Holocaust to Israel's founding • Write a diary entry from the perspective of a survivor • Map: add pre-war Jewish population data by country 	<p>For Students Who Need Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign the role of 'reporter' who stands and presents for the group • Permit standing at desk or using a clipboard during map activity • Use the sticky-note warm-up as a physical movement (post on wall) • Allow gallery walk format for group share-out (groups rotate to read each other's work) • Offer a 2-minute movement break between the video and group work
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ENRICHMENT EXTENSIONS

■ Music	■ Math / Science	■ Art
<p>Listen to "<i>Ani Ma'amin</i>" (I Believe), a song sung by Jewish prisoners on their way to death camps. Analyze the lyrics: What does this song reveal about faith, hope, and human dignity under impossible circumstances?</p> <p>Optional extension: Compare to Viktor Frankl's concept of meaning-making in <i>Man's Search for Meaning</i>.</p>	<p>Population statistics: In 1939, ~9.5 million Jews lived in Europe. By 1945, ~6 million were murdered. Calculate the percentage loss by country using pre/post-war population data. Graph results and analyze patterns.</p> <p>Science connection: Research how Zyklon B (a pesticide) was weaponized in gas chambers — and discuss the ethical responsibilities of scientists and engineers.</p>	<p>Study the art created in ghettos and concentration camps — drawings, paintings, and poetry by prisoners like Friedl Dicker-Brandeis in Theresienstadt. Create a response artwork: 'What does bearing witness look like?'</p> <p>Design a memorial: Sketch a concept for a Holocaust memorial at your school or in your community. What elements would you include and why?</p>

OPTIONAL LEARNING EXTENSION

- **Survivor Testimony:** Visit USC Shoah Foundation (sfi.usc.edu) and watch a 10-minute survivor testimony. Write a 1-page response: What did you learn that you couldn't learn from statistics?
- **Yad Vashem Online:** Explore the Yad Vashem digital collections (yadvashem.org). Find one name in the Hall of Names database and research that person's story.
- **Literary Connection:** Begin reading Elie Wiesel's *Night* or Art Spiegelman's *Maus* as a companion text. Compare the narrator's account to the framework presented in the video.
- **Current Events:** Research one example of Holocaust denial or antisemitism in today's news. Write a brief analysis: How does learning about the Holocaust help us respond to these events?
- **Israel Connection:** Research the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the role of displaced Holocaust survivors. How does the video's framing of Zionism as 'urgently necessary' reflect in the historical record?