

WHAT IS THE HOLOCAUST?

Episode 4 • Noa Tishby Video Series • Middle School Edition

Subject:	World History / ELA	Grade Level:	6–8
Duration:	45 minutes	Presenter:	Noa Tishby (actress/advocate)
Unit:	Jewish History & Identity	Format:	Video + Activities

CALIFORNIA LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS INSTRUCTION

Why this matters: This lesson fulfills mandatory legal obligations under California law. It satisfies EC § 51220's Holocaust education requirement, aligns with EC § 51226.3, and is consistent with SB 1277, SB 472 (2025), and AB 715 (2025). Document this lesson in your records as evidence of standards-aligned Holocaust instruction.

Education Code § 51220 — Mandatory Curriculum: History & Human Rights

Cal. Ed. Code § 51220(b)(1) | Active since 1985 | Applies to All CA Schools Grades 7–12

Status: Active Law — Mandatory for All California Public & Private Schools

What It Requires:

- Requires grades 7–12 social sciences to include 'human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust.'
- This is a mandate — not optional enrichment — for all California school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and private schools.
- Genocide may include the Armenian Genocide; the Holocaust is specifically and explicitly named.

Classroom Impact:

- This lesson directly fulfills EC § 51220's Holocaust education requirement.
- Keep this lesson plan in your documentation as evidence of standards-aligned Holocaust instruction.
- Middle school (grades 6–8) instruction previews and reinforces what students will study in depth in high school — continuity matters.

Education Code § 51226.3 — Holocaust & Genocide Education Resources

Cal. Ed. Code § 51226.3 | Multiple amendments through 2023

Status: Active Law — Instructional Resource & Professional Development Support

What It Requires:

- Requires CDE to incorporate age-appropriate Holocaust and genocide materials into curriculum resource publications.
- Encourages incorporation of survivor, rescuer, liberator, and witness oral and video testimony into Holocaust teaching. (§ 51226.3(b))
- Encourages professional development for teachers on Holocaust, genocide, and civil rights. (§ 51226.3(c))

Classroom Impact:

- Noa Tishby's video serves as a video testimony resource — directly fulfilling the Legislature's encouragement of multimedia testimony in Holocaust instruction.
- Access the CDE's free Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide at cde.ca.gov.
- Middle school is the recommended entry point for genocide education — age-appropriate foundations established here carry into high school.

SB 1277 — California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education

Cal. Ed. Code § 51221.1 | Chaptered 2024 | Senator Henry Stern (D-Los Angeles)

Status: Active Law — Statewide Teacher Professional Development Codified

What It Requires:

- Codified the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education under CDE direction.
- Mission: ensure Holocaust and genocide education is taught consistently with state standards, in interdisciplinary and age-appropriate ways for grades 6–12.
- Covers: the Holocaust, Indigenous American, Guatemalan, Rwandan, Armenian, Bosnian, Cambodian, and Uyghur genocides, and antisemitism identification.
- As of 2024 the Collaborative had reached 1,164 teachers in 155 California school districts and dozens of private schools.

Classroom Impact:

- Free teacher professional development is available through the Collaborative — apply for training at cde.ca.gov.
- 87% of Collaborative-trained teachers reported increased knowledge and confidence in Holocaust instruction.
- The Collaborative provides grade 6–8 specific lesson resources you can use alongside this video series.

SB 472 (2025) — Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program

Cal. Ed. Code § 51221.2 | Signed October 13, 2025 — Chapter 761, Statutes of 2025

Status: ★ NEW LAW — In Effect 2025 | Applies to All LEAs Serving Grades 7–12

NEW LAW

What It Requires:

- Establishes the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program providing direct funding to school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools.
- Grant funds may be used for: instructional materials, professional development, curriculum planning, substitute teacher costs, and transportation to educational events.
- ALL LEAs must submit an annual report to the CDE documenting Holocaust and genocide education, whether or not they receive funding.
- CDE must issue a formal notice to all LEAs serving grades 7–12 clarifying that Holocaust and genocide education is part of the mandated History-Social Science curriculum.

Classroom Impact:

- Your school may be eligible for grant funding to purchase Holocaust curriculum materials, including this video series and supporting handouts.
- Annual reporting is now required — keep detailed records of all Holocaust instruction, including this lesson.
- Share this lesson plan with your department head and administration so it can be included in the LEA's annual CDE report.

AB 715 (2025) — Antisemitism Prevention in California K–12 Schools

Assembly Bill 715 (Zbur & Addis) | Signed October 7, 2025 | Effective January 1, 2026

NEW LAW

Status: ★ NEW LAW — In Effect January 1, 2026 | Passed Assembly 71–0, Senate 35–0

What It Requires:

- Creates California's first-ever Office of Civil Rights and a statewide Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator (governor-appointed, Senate-confirmed).
- Prohibits LEAs from adopting instructional materials or professional development that would lead to teaching antisemitic content or unlawful discrimination.
- Requires investigation when LEAs know, or have reason to know, that discriminatory instructional or professional development materials were used.
- Requires annual CDE management bulletin to all LEAs on protections, requirements, and responsibilities.
- Operates with companion SB 48, which creates additional civil rights coordinator roles (religious, racial, gender, LGBTQ).

Classroom Impact:

- This lesson is exactly the kind of affirmative antisemitism education AB 715 envisions — document it thoroughly.
- If your school uses any instructional materials containing antisemitic themes or discriminatory viewpoints about Jews, AB 715 now requires investigation and corrective action.
- The Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator is a resource for teachers seeking guidance on responding to antisemitism in schools.
- Note: AB 715 has faced legal challenges. The law is currently in effect while litigation proceeds — consult administration for guidance on ambiguous cases.

Compliance Summary for This Lesson

Law / Code	What This Lesson Satisfies	Documentation Tip
EC § 51220	Mandatory Holocaust instruction in Social Sciences, grades 6–12	File as 'Holocaust unit instruction per EC 51220'

EC § 51226.3	Video testimony (Noa Tishby) fulfills oral/video testimony encouragement	Note video title, presenter, and date shown
SB 1277	Lesson aligns with Collaborative's interdisciplinary, age-appropriate Holocaust education mission for grades 6–12	Access Collaborative resources to supplement
SB 472 (2025) ★	Counts toward LEA's annual Holocaust education report; materials eligible for grant reimbursement	Keep for annual LEA report; share with administration
AB 715 (2025) ★	Demonstrates affirmative antisemitism education per AB 715's prevention mandate	File as evidence of proactive antisemitism education

CALIFORNIA & COMMON CORE STANDARDS — GRADES 6–8

California History-Social Science Content Standards:

- 7.1.1 — Analyze the causes and effects of the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire, including the spread of Christianity; note the parallel with the study of oppression and survival.
- 8.11 / 10.8 — Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II, including the systematic persecution and genocide of Jews and other groups.
- HSS Analysis Skills (Grades 6–8): Chronological and Spatial Thinking; Research, Evidence, and Point of View; Historical Interpretation.
- EC § 51220(b)(1) — Mandates instruction in 'human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust' for all grades 7–12.

Common Core ELA Standards (Grades 6–8):

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 — Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 — Determine the central ideas of a source; provide an accurate summary distinct from prior knowledge.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4 — Determine the meaning of vocabulary specific to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 — Integrate visual information with information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1 — Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1 — Engage in collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6–8 topics.

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: USC Shoah Foundation video testimony clips (sfi.usc.edu)
- Optional: Holocaust-themed picture book or short poem for warm-up extension

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Define the Holocaust and explain what the word *genocide* means and where it comes from.
2. Describe how the Holocaust began — with words, laws, and propaganda — not just violence.
3. Identify key events in the progression of Nazi persecution: Nuremberg Laws, ghettos, death squads, death camps.
4. Explain the connection between the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel (Zionism).
5. Reflect on what 'Never Again' means and what personal responsibility looks like.
6. Use context clues and prior knowledge to understand grade-level historical vocabulary.

STEP-BY-STEP LESSON PROCEDURE (45 Minutes)

Step 1: WARM-UP: Think-Pair-Share

5 min

- Display the word HOLOCAUST on the board. Ask students to silently think for 30 seconds: 'What do you already know or think you know about this word?'
- Students turn and talk with a partner for 1 minute, then 3–4 pairs share with the class.
- Record responses on the board in 2 columns: KNOW and WONDER. Leave space to revisit at end of class.
- Teacher validates all responses — including 'I don't know anything' — and sets a tone of shared learning.

■ *Teacher Note: Middle schoolers may have heard the word but have little context. This activity surfaces and respects what they bring. Avoid corrections at this stage — gather the data. Return to this chart at the end of class to celebrate what students learned.*

Step 2: DIRECT INSTRUCTION: Watch Episode 4

12 min

- Distribute the Student Viewing Handout. Briefly preview Section A (note-taking questions).
- Introduce Noa Tishby: 'She is an Israeli-American actress and advocate who makes Jewish history clear and accessible for all ages.'
- Preview 5 vocabulary words on the board before playing: genocide, Nuremberg Laws, ghetto, Final Solution, Zionism.
- Play Episode 4. Students complete Section A while watching.
- Optional pause after the Nuremberg Laws segment: 'What do you notice about how discrimination became law?'

■ *Teacher Note: Middle schoolers benefit from a clear vocabulary preview. For ELL students: distribute the vocabulary worksheet BEFORE viewing so they can reference it. Keep a simple timeline on the board as events are mentioned — this supports visual and sequential learners.*

Step 3: MAP ACTIVITY: The Holocaust Across Europe

8 min

- Students work in pairs using the map on their handout (Section B).

Task 1 (BLUE pencil): Label and shade 5 countries under Nazi occupation — Germany, Poland, France, Hungary, Netherlands.**

Task 2 (RED pencil): Mark Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka with a star (◆). Add label.**

Task 3 (ORANGE pencil): Mark the Warsaw Ghetto with a circle.**

Task 4 (GREEN arrows): Draw arrows showing where survivors went after the war — toward Israel and the Americas.**

- Debrief: 'When you see it on a map, what does it tell you about the scale of the Holocaust?'

■ *Teacher Note: Provide a pre-labeled map for students needing support. Advanced students add pre-war Jewish population numbers for each country they label. For movement: let pairs walk to a large class map posted on the wall to verify their work.*

Step 4: GROUP WORK: Jewish Identity & Traditions

10 min

- Divide into groups of 3–4. Assign each group ONE lens to explore:

Group A — What made someone 'Jewish' under Nazi law? How was that different from how Jewish people define themselves? Why does that matter?**

Group B — What happened to Jewish communities? What parts of community life — Shabbat, families, schools, holidays — were destroyed? What is lost when a community disappears?**

Group C — Why did survivors want to go to Israel? What is Zionism? Why does Noa Tishby call it a 'progressive movement'?**

Group D — Who else was targeted, and why should non-Jews care? Noa says this was 'a human tragedy.' What does that mean for all of us?**

- Groups write 2–3 key ideas on sticky notes and prepare to share one idea with the class.

■ *Teacher Note: Middle schoolers do well with concrete, assigned roles. Assign: Reader (reads the group's prompt aloud), Recorder (writes key ideas), Reporter (shares with the class), Timekeeper. For students who need movement: let groups stand and post sticky notes on the board during share-out.*

Step 5: GUIDED DISCUSSION: Never Again

6 min

- Each group shares their one key idea (45–60 seconds each). Teacher writes key words on the board.
- Closing question: 'Noa ends by saying "Never Again" must truly mean never again. What would that actually look like in your school, your community, your life?'
- Accept 3–5 responses. Validate emotional answers as much as factual ones.
- Optional connection: 'California just passed new laws — AB 715 and SB 472 — that require schools to teach this history and protect Jewish students. What does that tell us about why this still matters today?'

■ *Teacher Note: Don't rush this. Middle schoolers often have more to say than they let on — a well-placed silence after a powerful response goes a long way. If time allows, return to the KNOW/WONDER chart from the warm-up and celebrate what the class learned.*

Step 6: INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: Exit Ticket

4 min

- Students complete Section C of the handout independently before leaving.

Prompt 1 (Knowledge):** Fill in the timeline — place 4 events in the correct order: Nuremberg Laws, ghettos, death camps, survivors go to Israel.

Prompt 2 (Reflection):** 'The Holocaust was a human tragedy because _____.'

Prompt 3 (Vocabulary):** 'In my own words, genocide means _____.'

- Collect as students leave. Review to identify misconceptions before the next lesson.

■ *Teacher Note: For ELL students: allow bullet points or drawings with labels instead of full sentences. Advanced extension: add Prompt 4 — 'What is one thing YOU can do to make sure this history is never forgotten?'*

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

For ELL Students

- Pre-teach vocabulary with picture support before viewing
- Distribute vocabulary worksheet BEFORE the video
- Provide sentence frames on the handout
- Allow responses in home language; pair with bilingual partner
- Provide a pre-labeled map for the map activity
- Accept verbal or illustrated exit tickets

For Advanced Students

- Add pre-war Jewish population data to map countries
- Compare Nuremberg Laws to Jim Crow laws
- Read a short excerpt from Elie Wiesel's Night
- Research California AB 715 and SB 472: what do they do and why?
- Write a diary entry from a 13-year-old Jewish child in Warsaw, 1940
- Create a cause-and-effect chart: words → laws → violence → genocide

For Students Who Need Movement

- Assign 'Reporter' role — stands and presents for group
- Use the sticky-note warm-up as wall-posting movement
- Allow standing at desk during map activity
- Gallery walk: groups rotate to read each other's sticky notes
- Offer a 2-minute stretch break between video and group work

ENRICHMENT EXTENSIONS

■ Music

Listen to "Ani Ma'amin", a song sung by Jewish prisoners on their way to death camps. Ask: 'What does this song tell you about faith and hope under impossible conditions?' Optional: compare to a spiritual or protest song from another human rights struggle.

■ Math / Science

Calculate: If 9.5 million Jews lived in Europe in 1939 and 6 million were murdered, what percentage was that? Graph losses by country (Poland lost 90% of its Jewish population). Science tie-in: discuss the ethical responsibility of scientists — Zyklon B was originally a pesticide.

■ Art

View artwork created by children in the Theresienstadt concentration camp (available through the Jewish Museum Prague). Create your own artwork that expresses what 'Never Again' means to you personally. Display in the hallway as a statement.

OPTIONAL LEARNING EXTENSION

- **USC Shoah Foundation:** Visit sfi.usc.edu and watch a short survivor testimony. Write: 'What did you learn that a number or date could never tell you?'
- **Picture Book Connection (Grades 6–7):** Read a chapter from *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry or *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. How does fiction make history feel real?
- **Yad Vashem Online:** Find one name in the Hall of Names database (yadvashem.org). Write a 3-sentence paragraph about that person.
- **Current Events:** Find a recent news story about antisemitism. Write: 'This connects to what I learned about the Holocaust because...'
- **California Law:** Read a plain-language summary of AB 715 (2025). Write: 'I think this law is/isn't needed because... (use evidence from today's lesson).'