

WORLD HISTORY & ENGLISH

Grades 6–8 • Middle School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to let you know about an important lesson your child will be experiencing in our class. We will be viewing and discussing **Episode 4: "What is the Holocaust?"** from a video series presented by Israeli-American actress and advocate **Noa Tishby**. This lesson is part of our unit on Jewish history and identity and is aligned with California state curriculum requirements.

What California law requires:

California Education Code § 51220 has required Holocaust and genocide education in grades 7–12 since 1985. In 2025, Governor Newsom signed two new laws — **SB 472** and **AB 715** — that strengthen Holocaust education and antisemitism prevention in all California schools. This lesson fulfills those requirements.

What will students learn?

- What the Holocaust was, and the meaning of the word *genocide*
- How the Holocaust began — not with violence, but with words, laws, and propaganda
- Key events: the Nuremberg Laws (1935), the ghettos, the death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau
- What happened to survivors after the war — and why so many sought to go to Israel
- What Zionism is and why it became urgent after the Holocaust
- What 'Never Again' means and why it is our shared responsibility to remember

About Noa Tishby and the video:

Noa Tishby is an Israeli-American actress, producer, and author who has become a passionate advocate for Jewish history education. Her video series is designed to present complex Jewish history in an engaging, clear, and historically accurate format. The video is age-appropriate and does not include graphic imagery. It is approximately 10–12 minutes long.

How we approach this sensitive topic with middle schoolers:

Middle school is a developmentally important time to introduce Holocaust education — students are old enough to understand injustice and begin asking moral questions about history. Our classroom approach is trauma-informed: we create space for students to express their feelings, ask questions, and process difficult information in community. We focus on human stories, not just numbers. We also connect this history to the present — including why California passed new laws in 2025 to protect Jewish students and require Holocaust education.

How you can support your child at home:

- Ask: 'What did you learn in school today? What surprised you?' — and listen without interrupting.
- Share your family's own history or connection to this topic, if applicable.
- Watch the video together at home: search for 'Noa Tishby What is the Holocaust?'
- Visit the USC Shoah Foundation website (sfi.usc.edu) for age-appropriate resources.
- If your child seems upset or overwhelmed, that is normal — it means they are engaging with history. Validate their feelings.

As a Jewish school community, we carry the obligation of Zachor — to remember. Giving our students the knowledge, vocabulary, and moral framework to understand the Holocaust is one of the most important things we can do — for them, for the Jewish people, and for the world. Thank you for your partnership in this sacred work.

Sincerely,

World History / ELA Teacher

Grades 6–8

OPTIONAL PARENT RESPONSE — Please return this portion if you wish to be in touch.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian name: _____

■ I would like to speak with the teacher about this lesson.

■ My child has specific needs I would like you to be aware of (please describe below):

