

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Use these materials to begin a conversation with elementary grade students about Jewish American culture and history and the contributions made to our state and country.



GUIDING QUESTION

How have Jewish Americans contributed to the history and culture of our state and country, and what can we learn from their customs, history, and experiences?



EXPLORE

- Celebrate the legacy of **Stan Lee**, a Jewish American visionary who revolutionized pop culture. This tribute explores how his storytelling and **superhero creations** shaped generations and reflected themes of **justice, identity and resilience**.
"Remembering Stan Lee," founder of Marvel Comics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQGKjITbIWg>
- Judy Blume, a **trailblazing Jewish American author**, shares her reflections on receiving one of **literature's highest honors**. Her candid stories have empowered young readers for decades, breaking taboos and opening hearts. **Listen to Judy Blume** discuss winning a national book award:
<https://www.npr.org/2004/09/15/3919695/judy-blume-discusses-winning-national-book-award>
- Though not an American, **Anne Frank's story** resonates deeply during Jewish American Heritage Month. Her **diary** offers a poignant glimpse into the Holocaust and reminds us of the importance of **preserving Jewish history** and fighting intolerance.
<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/history/general-history/anne-frank-facts/>
- Jewish American Heritage Month is also a time to **confront prejudice**. This kid-friendly article explains **antisemitism**- its origins, impact, and why education is key to building a more inclusive future.
Read this entry from Britannica kids: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/antisemitism/399340>



EXPLAIN

- As you explored Jewish American history and culture, what did you discover about how these individuals are similar yet different from each other and you?
(*Social Justice Standard* DI.3-5.7; JU.3-5.11)
- Despite hardships, how have Jewish Americans contributed to the history of our state and country?



ENGAGE FURTHER

- **Why Do We Celebrate** Jewish American Heritage Month?
<https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/why-do-we-celebrate-jewish-american-heritage-month>
- Explore the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay. What kinds of **programs and events** are available?
<https://jcceastbay.org/>
- Pond Farm Pottery, located outside of Guerneville, CA, is a **National Historic Landmark** for Marguerite Wildenhain's role in the American Studio Potter Movement
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/pond-farm-pottery-nhl.htm>
- Additional Resources from the Jewish Community Education Form can be found here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11tJRSg3Tz07A-vNVuLComxt6MZKbhfdg/view>



SECONDARY LEVEL

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Use these materials to begin a conversation with secondary grade students about Jewish American culture and history and the contributions made to our state and country.



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How have Jewish Americans shaped the social, political, and cultural development of California and the United States, and what aspects of their heritage and lived experiences deepen our understanding of identity and justice?



EXPLORE

- **Watch: The History of Jewish Life in America** Explore the rich and complex journey of Jewish Americans in this short video from Jewish American Heritage Month. It highlights the diversity within the community, the values that unite it, and the profound ways Jewish life has shaped—and been shaped by—American society. <https://jewishamericanheritage.org/who-are-american-jews/>
- **Read about being Jewish in the United States** (also available in Spanish). This powerful resource from Facing History shares personal reflections from Jewish teens and adults on what it means to be Jewish in America. Available in English and Spanish, it offers an honest look at identity, tradition, and the challenges of balancing faith and modern life. <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/being-jewish-united-states>
- **Read: “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus** Written by Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus, this iconic sonnet redefined the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of welcome and refuge. Its famous lines—“Give me your tired, your poor...”—continue to echo the values of inclusion and compassion central to Jewish American heritage. Read the poem “New Colossus,” written by Emma Lazarus and enscripted on the Statue of Liberty: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/144956/emma-lazarus-the-new-colossus>
- **Learn about 10 Jewish Americans Who Changed History:** From Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Leonard Bernstein, this article celebrates ten trailblazing Jewish Americans whose achievements transformed culture, science, law, and civil rights. A perfect spotlight for Jewish American Heritage Month, honoring those who dared to dream big. https://thinktv.org/10-jewish-americans-who-changed-history/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=10-jewish-americans-who-changed-history



EXPLAIN

- As you explored Jewish American history and culture, what did you discover about how these individuals are similar yet different from each other and you? How about some common stereotypes? (*Social Justice Standard* DI.6-8.7; JU.6-8.11)
- Despite hardships, how have Jewish Americans contributed to the history of our state and country?



ENGAGE FURTHER

- Jewish American Diversity Fact Sheet: **Jewish Americans come from a wide range of backgrounds**—racially, ethnically, and culturally. This fact sheet from ICS highlights the diversity within the community, including Jews of Color, Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews, and interfaith families. It's a reminder that Jewish identity is complex and multifaceted. [ICS's Jewish American Diversity Fact Sheet](#)
- After directing *Schindler's List*, **Steven Spielberg** founded the USC Shoah Foundation to preserve Holocaust survivor testimonies. The Foundation now holds tens of thousands of stories, using them to educate about genocide and combat antisemitism worldwide. Watch this video about Steven Spielberg and learn about the Shoah Foundation <https://sfi.usc.edu/> <https://jewishamericanheritage.org/who-are-american-jews/#steven-spielberg>
- Read about **Immigration to the United States 1933-1944**: This article from the Holocaust Encyclopedia details the obstacles Jewish refugees faced when trying to enter the U.S. during the rise of Nazi Germany. With strict quotas and public resistance, many were turned away, offering an insight into **immigration policy** during a critical time. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/immigration-to-the-united-states-1933-41>
- Additional Resources from the Jewish Community Education Form can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11tjRSg3Tz07A-vNVuLComxt6MZKbhfdg/view>

