

# Germany: Abbie Resists Antisemitism | Lesson Plan

How does Abbie's story reveal the importance of courage and resistance in the face of antisemitism?

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Students will understand that Holocaust remembrance is a moral safeguard against antisemitism today, and that tolerance without moral clarity and courage is insufficient to protect human dignity.

### Learning Objectives:

- **Locate** Germany and Berlin on a map and identify key city landmarks.
- **Describe** how Berlin's history (World War II and the Cold War) shapes the city's identity today.
- **Explain** what the Holocaust was and describe its lasting impact on Jewish communities.
- **Analyze** how antisemitism appears in modern life and how societies respond through laws and cultural norms (for example, debates about hate speech and public safety).
- **Analyze** Abbie and Sarah's challenges and connect them to antisemitism, freedom of speech, and institutional responses.
- **Reflect** on how moral clarity and courage—supported by family and community—help people resist hatred and defend human dignity.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Antisemitism:** Hatred, prejudice, and unfair treatment targeted against Jewish people just because they are Jewish.
- **Holocaust:** The Nazi program of state-sponsored persecution and mass murder during World War II, carried out to eliminate Jews and other groups the regime defined as enemies or "inferior."
- **Genocide:** The deliberate and systematic killing of a large group of people, targeting a particular ethnic group, nation, or religion.
- **Tolerance:** Accepting and respecting people's differences, even if they are different from your own beliefs or culture.
- **Hate Crime:** A crime committed against someone because of their race, religion, or identity.
- **Memorial:** A structure built to help people remember a historical person or tragic event.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6

**Academic Subject Areas:** Civics, U.S. History, Western Civilization, Social Studies, Geography, Culture, Global Awareness

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Around the World: Germany – Abbie Resists Antisemitism* ([Watch Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Around the World: Germany – Abbie Resists Antisemitism* ([Click Here](#))
- Optional: Globe or blank world map; construction paper or poster supplies



## Lesson Plan (Two 45-minute Class Periods)

### Part 1: Reading the Story (20–25 minutes)

Note to Teachers:

- We recommend beginning this lesson with a sustained, uninterrupted read-aloud of *Around the World: Abbie Resists Antisemitism* while students follow along on their devices or printed copies. This will take 20-25 minutes.
- This method is intentional—it rebuilds attention spans, immerses students in meaningful narrative, and restores a lost tradition: attentive listening. If possible, resist the temptation to break up the reading into smaller sessions.
- Encourage students to follow along with a pencil in hand and mark moments they find surprising, confusing, or important. After reading, allow a few moments for quiet reflection or discussion before beginning Part 2 of the lesson plan.

### Part 2: Geography Focus (10 - 15 minutes)

- Activity: Use the **Geography Focus** section of the worksheets—*Map of Germany and Europe* and *Map of Central Berlin*—to guide students through a hands-on mapping activity. Students will locate and label Germany and the surrounding European countries, and work with a city map to learn navigation skills.
- Discuss the following questions:
  - Why is Berlin considered an important cultural and political city in Europe?
  - How has World War II shaped Germany’s people, culture, and identity?

### Part 3: Vocabulary Focus and Writing Practice (5 - 7 minutes)

- Word Bank and Term Matching: Introduce the vocabulary and sentence practice portion of the worksheet. Explain that students can find the definitions in the book. Teacher note: This is a flexible section that allows for differentiation and scaffolding for students.
- Sentence Writing and Comprehension: Have students write sentences using these terms to connect them back to Abbie’s story.

### Part 4: Cause and Effect (15 - 20 minutes)

- Use the **Cause & Effect Chart** in the worksheet to help students connect events in Abbie and Sarah’s story to the broader social forces, cultural beliefs, and public policies that shape their experience. These ideas are the core focus of *Abbie Resists Antisemitism* and can be introduced before reading or used as a guide if students get stuck:
  - Antisemitism
    - How it shows up: Graffiti, slurs, and violence directed at Abbie in Berlin; Sarah experiences bias in her classroom and antisemitic protests in New York.  
Result: Fear, isolation, and threats to safety.
  - Free Speech vs. Hate Speech
    - How it shows up: U.S. and German laws handle speech differently; Germany bans Nazi symbols and hate speech; America’s Bill of Rights

protects freedom of speech, but American laws punish “hate crimes.” Sarah’s professor in New York promotes bias in class and encourages students to adopt her personal antisemitic views by offering extra credit for protesting. Sarah and her friend Julian use free speech to push back and call out the professor’s falsehoods; Abbie and her parents march in public support of Jews in Germany.

- Result: Speech can be hateful or helpful; a double-edged sword. Freedom of speech is optimal; protecting it is a way to let populations police themselves against hate and intolerance. Societies like America that protect freedom of speech do so with limits (i.e. calling ‘fire’ in a crowded theater is illegal) because speech can lead to action. Freedom of speech does come with responsibilities as well as liberty.
- Intolerance Leading to Genocide in WWII
  - How it shows up: Nazi Germany falsely blamed Jews for social problems, cut them off from the population by stripping their rights and property, physically moved them into ghettos and then forced them on trains to concentration camps.
  - Result: German Jews became powerless and without any legal or physical means of stopping Hitler’s plan to murder them.
- The Holocaust’s Legacy
  - How it shows up: Abbie’s astonishment over what happened to Jews like her (first part of the story) Grandpa’s letter recounting the train ride to a concentration camp and his narrow escape, memorials in Berlin.
  - Result: A reminder to remember the Holocaust without shying away from what happened, and to recognize when initial patterns (dehumanizing Jews, intimidating them on college campuses and in public) are occurring again. Remembering the Holocaust compels us to resist antisemitism and all forms of racial hatred and ensure “Never Again.”
- Small Group Work: Students identify 2-3 struggles Abbie or Sarah faced and connect them to systems or policies by filling in the chart.
- Whole-Class Debrief: Guide a discussion using these questions:
  - What system or belief caused the biggest challenge in Abbie’s story?
  - How was the challenge Abbie faced from men on the street different from the challenge Sarah faced in her college classroom?
  - What values, relationships, and personal choices gave them the courage to resist peaceably?
  - The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and assembly, but the story shows these freedoms can be used well or poorly. What role does personal virtue play in determining whether these freedoms protect society or harm it?

#### **Part 5: Personal Reflection / Writing Activity (10 - 15 minutes)**

- Activity: Have students complete the **Reading Comprehension and Personal Reflection** section of the worksheet. This portion reinforces key plot points and encourages students to think critically about free speech.

- Teacher Guidance:
  - Review the comprehension questions aloud or in small groups to check understanding before students begin writing.
  - Encourage students to refer to specific moments from the story in their answers.
  - For the reflection prompt, give students quiet time to think before writing. Emphasize honesty and effort over length.
  - Optional: Invite volunteers to share their reflections with the class to build connection and discussion.

### **Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (20 minutes)**

- Step 1: Watch the Around the World: Germany – Abbie Resists Antisemitism video.
- Step 2: Lead a focused discussion:
  - What challenges did Abbie and Sarah face in Germany and the U.S.?
  - How did those challenges reflect developments from 1930's Germany that ultimately led to the Holocaust? What parallels do you see?
  - What role do family values and personal courage play in resisting hatred?
- Optional Extension: Distribute the worksheet and invite students to complete one or two sections independently—such as the Vocabulary Focus & Sentence Writing or the Cause & Effect Chart—as a follow-up or homework assignment.