How Lies Spread

Jewish life and the changing forms of antisemitism

SS24.HOS.2 "Explain the origins and history of antisemitism.* 2a Identify core practices and tenets within historical and modern Judaism and analyze the historical and modern antisemitic beliefs about Jewish life and religion..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts about Jewish life, circle two false claims about Jews, and number three examples of antisemitism being spread or enforced in chronological order.

Old Claims, New Channels

1. Jewish communities have practiced Judaism in many ways across centuries and countries. The Torah is central to Jewish religious life, and many Jews observe Shabbat, a weekly day of rest that begins Friday evening. Not all Jews observe the same traditions. In medieval Christian Europe, some leaders wrongly taught that Jews were collectively responsible for Jesus's death. Others spread the blood libel, the false claim that Jews used Christian children's blood in religious rituals. These accusations distorted Jewish beliefs and sometimes fueled attacks.

2. Long before the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, antisemites falsely blamed Jews for economic crises and claimed they secretly controlled governments. Nazi propaganda recycled these conspiracy theories but presented Jewish identity as a fixed racial category, not simply a religion. Conversion to Christianity could not protect someone the Nazis defined as Jewish. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of citizenship and banned marriages between Jews and people classified as German. Propaganda helped justify these measures by depicting Jews as a common enemy.

3. In the United States, antisemitism intensified in the early twentieth century even as Jewish communities grew and built institutions. A mob lynched Jewish factory manager Leo Frank in Georgia in 1915 after a trial shaped by antisemitic prejudice. In the 1920s, Henry Ford's newspaper published conspiracy theories about Jews. Colleges and employers also used quotas or other barriers to exclude Jews. In the 1930s, radio priest Charles Coughlin broadcast antisemitic claims to large audiences. Violence, print, exclusion, and radio carried old prejudice into new settings.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the passage separate a fact about Jewish religious life from a medieval false claim?

2. Which older false claim did Nazi propaganda reuse, and how did the Nazis change the way Jewish identity was defined?

3. How did Nazi propaganda help justify the Nuremberg Laws?

4. How did the ways antisemitism spread in the United States change from the 1910s to the 1930s? Use two examples.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word label for an exhibit called "A Rumor Across Borders." Link an older false claim to Nazi propaganda and a U.S. example, distinguish the claim from an actual Jewish practice, and explain why these links matter.

ANSWER KEY

How Lies Spread

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts about Jewish life, circle two false claims about Jews, and number three examples of antisemitism being spread or enforced in chronological order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the passage separate a fact about Jewish religious life from a medieval false claim?	**Many Jews observe Shabbat, while the blood libel falsely claimed that Jews used Christian children's blood in rituals.**
2	Which older false claim did Nazi propaganda reuse, and how did the Nazis change the way Jewish identity was defined?	**The Nazis reused claims that Jews caused economic crises or secretly controlled governments. They defined Jewish identity as a fixed racial category rather than simply a religion.**
3	How did Nazi propaganda help justify the Nuremberg Laws?	**It depicted Jews as a common enemy, helping justify laws that stripped Jews of citizenship and banned certain marriages.**
4	How did the ways antisemitism spread in the United States change from the 1910s to the 1930s? Use two examples.	**A mob lynched Leo Frank in 1915 after a trial shaped by prejudice. In the 1930s, Charles Coughlin spread antisemitic claims by radio.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Rumor Across Borders: Many Jews observe Shabbat, a weekly day of rest, though Jewish observance varies. That practice is distinct from the false claim that Jews secretly control governments. Antisemites circulated this conspiracy before the Nazi era, and Nazi propaganda reused it to portray Jews as a common enemy. In the United States, Henry Ford's newspaper spread conspiracy theories about Jews in the 1920s. Displaying these links shows how an old lie can reach new audiences and help justify exclusion.

Accept other accurate links among the passage's examples. Responses should identify antisemitic claims as false and avoid presenting one Jewish practice as universal.