# **2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism**

**Executive Summary** 





This study was conducted by Dr. Alexis Lerner, on behalf of Liberation 75.

For more information about this study, contact:

Alexis M. Lerner, Ph. D.
Presidential Data Postdoctoral Fellow
The University of Western Ontario
ALerner3@UWO.ca

This study was made possible in part through the generous financial support of the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, a Government of Ontario initiative designed to build a more inclusive society, where communities are protected against racism, discrimination, and hate.

#### **Suggested Citation**

Lerner, Alexis M. (2021). "2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism." *Liberation75*. <a href="https://www.liberation75.org/2021survey">https://www.liberation75.org/2021survey</a>.

#### **Abstract**

Across Canada and in the majority of U.S. states, genocide education is not yet a curricular requirement. While some teachers introduce Holocaust education through history or literature, many students first encounter the Holocaust and other state-sanctioned and systematic mass murders through nontraditional sources, such as though comic books, social media accounts, video games, and television shows. We use a pre/post-treatment survey design to assess what 3,593 teens across Canada and the United States know and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism. Our treatment was a two-day virtual conference called *Education Days*, organized by the Holocaust education not-for-profit organization Liberation75. We conclude that while students have a basic understanding of antisemitism and the Holocaust, they have nevertheless been impacted by Holocaust denial and would benefit from educational mandates. We propose that Holocaust educational mandates are adopted in the Province of Ontario.

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## Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support of many organizations and individuals, including: Marilyn Sinclair, Founder of Liberation75; Sumaiya Zahoor, Senior Project Coordinator, Liberation75; Chelsea Sinclair, Senior Research Coordinator, Liberation75; Jessica Sinclair, Senior Education and Program Coordinator, Liberation75, for design and programming of Student Days; the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate for their generous funding; the research support team at Qualtrics; Shari Schwartz-Maltz for her educational support and partnership; and the survey participants and their teachers who took the time to share their backgrounds, experiences, and opinions which collectively informed our understanding of what teens understand and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism today.

The principal investigator also assembled an informal advisory group of community members to provide input for the development of survey themes and questions. This included: Dr. Matt Lebo (The University of Western Ontario), Dr. Dave Armstrong (The University of Western Ontario), Dr. Laura Stephenson (The University of Western Ontario), Dr. Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz (The Berman Databank), Dr. Samara Klar (University of Arizona), Dr. Robert Brym (the University of Toronto), Dr. John Holbein (The University of Virginia), Dr. Michael Tesler (The University of California-Irvine), Colleen Wood (Columbia University), and Josh Tapper (Stanford University). In addition, Rachel Luke, educator (Glenforest Secondary School, Peel District School Board), and Dean Haddad, educator (Our Lady of Mount Carmel Secondary School, Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board) provided valuable input.

The Liberation 75 team would like to thank Dr. Alexis Lerner for her expertise and commitment to this research project; and Dr. Doris Bergen for recommending her.

## **2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism**

## **Background**

Between the years of 1939 and 1945, in the series of events now known as the Holocaust or the Shoah, Nazis and their collaborators committed what we unequivocally understand to be a genocide. In concentration camps, killing fields, gas vans, manufactured ghettos, and town squares across Europe, they enslaved, imprisoned, abused, displaced, and systematically murdered those they believed to be racially inferior or politically subversive. This included over 6 million Jews, as well as 5.7 million Soviet civilians, 1.8 million Polish civilians, 312,000 Serb civilians, and hundreds of thousands of individuals from other identity groups, including Roma, people with disabilities, Freemasons, Slovenes, Jehovah's Witnesses, and those with gay and lesbian sexual preferences.<sup>1</sup>

The reverberations of the Holocaust echo across the world. Many families were completely erased; individuals that survived were left with grief and trauma over the loss of their former lives and loved ones. Nations grappled with the political crisis of where and how to place post-war refugees that had escaped the genocide. In both the United States and Canada, popular opposition to the local resettlement of refugees ensured that these nations only accepted a small percentage of those that applied for asylum. In all, approximately 200,000 Jewish refugees came to the United States between 1933 and 1945,<sup>2</sup> and, displaying the poorest admission record among western countries, Canada admitted 5,000 refugees between the years of 1933 and 1947.<sup>3</sup>

In the post-war era, national leaders worldwide embarked upon a perpetual campaign to 'Never Forget' the horrors, the suffering, and the indifference associated with the Holocaust. Museums dedicated to Holocaust education and memory were established by survivors across Canada, in locations such as Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. In the United States, 85 unique museums and monuments were designed to facilitate Holocaust memorialization and memory; and as recently as 2017, the National Holocaust Monument was installed in Ottawa, as a visual reminder to remain vigilant against antisemitism and bigotry. As time passes, and as fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors are alive to share their testimonies in person, organizations such as the USC Shoah Foundation turn to digital and computational solutions so that students, museum visitors, and users of the iWitness platform can continue to interact with pre-recorded survivor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "How Many Jewish Refugees Came to the United States from 1933-1945?" *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Goldberg, Adara. "Canada and the Holocaust." The Canadian Encyclopedia.

holograms that can retrieve appropriate responses from an archive in response to each question in real time.<sup>4</sup>

The lessons of the Holocaust are clear: first, that we must always stand up to hatred, intolerance, and dehumanization of all people, and, second, that indifference to prejudice communicates consent for that prejudice. These takeaways can be applied universally.

Early in their schooling years, children learn about the dangers of bullying and the importance of kindness. However, in Canada and in the majority of U.S. states, genocide education is not yet a curricular requirement. While some teachers introduce Holocaust education through history or literature, many students first encounter the Holocaust and other state-sanctioned and systematic mass murders through nontraditional sources, such as though comic books, social media accounts, video games, and television shows. We use a pre/post-treatment survey design to assess knowledge and thoughts about the Holocaust and antisemitism among North American students in grades 8-12. This research facilitates our understanding of *what* students across Canada and the United States know about the Holocaust and how their knowledge relates to their understanding and thinking about antisemitism.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For more on the (ethical) computational study of the Holocaust, see: Lerner (2022), Lerner (2021), Lerner and Gelman (2020), Henig and Ebbrecht-Hartmann (2020), Presner (2016), Smith (2016), Knowles et al. (2015), Einwohner (2011), and Reading (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Where Holocaust Education is Required in the United States." *Fundamentals of Teaching the Holocaust.* 

## **About the Survey**

Several surveys seeking to assess knowledge on Jews, the Holocaust, and antisemitism have been conducted in recent years. In 2018, Robert Brym, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton published their *Survey of Jews in Canada*, which reports on the identity, practice, views, and perceived connectedness of 2,335 Jewish Canadians from Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. The Brym et al survey built upon the Pew Research Center's 2013 *Portrait of Jewish Americans* Survey, which reached 3,475 Jewish respondents across the United States. Pew published the results of a follow-up survey with the same aims in 2020. While both surveys produce useful knowledge about Jewish life in the 21st century, they focus on *Jewish, adult respondents*. In their 2018 study *Gen Z Now: Understanding and Connecting with Jewish Teens Today,* Arielle Levites and Liat Sayfan conducted a similar survey of Jewish youth in the United States and Canada, however their findings cannot be generalized to a wider population in which Jews only comprise 1-2%.

Our survey differs from the aforementioned as we seek to learn about a general population's understanding of the Holocaust and antisemitism, rather than one informed only by Jewish respondents. Other surveys that target a general population on the Holocaust are the 2018 Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) national surveys of Holocaust knowledge and awareness in the United States and Canada,<sup>7</sup> as well as Becka Alper, Alan Cooperman, and Anna Schiller's 2019 survey for the Pew Research Center on "What Americans Know About the Holocaust."

While these surveys effectively measure a *general population*'s perspective on the Holocaust and antisemitism, *our survey focuses exclusively on teenage respondents*. In 2020, Alper, Cooperman, and Schiller also published a report on general youth understanding of the Holocaust for 1,811 respondents aged 13-17, however this report is limited to respondents in the United States.

To fill this gap, we introduce the 2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism. Our objective in this survey is to assess what Canadian teens know and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism, and how this varies across demographic populations. This survey focuses on four key themes: Who is a Jew?, Thoughts on and Experiences with Antisemitism, Knowledge about the Holocaust, and Thoughts about the Holocaust (such as whether it actually happened and whether it could happen again).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> While the 2013 and 2020 Pew surveys produced similar results, they varied methodologically, as the former reached respondents by phone, whereas the latter conducted the survey online and by mail.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The Claims Conference conducted similar surveys in Austria and France in 2019.

This survey was conducted in partnership with Liberation 75. Founded by Marilyn Sinclair in 2018, Liberation 75 is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to commemorating the 75th anniversary of liberation from the Holocaust through a series of public talks, educational events, and film screenings which showcase best practices in Holocaust programming from around the world. In partnership with the USC Shoah Foundation, Liberation 75 is also involved in the collection of testimonies of Holocaust survivors that immigrated to Canada after the war.

A key component of Liberation 75 is to use education as a tool to counteract antisemitism and Holocaust denial while promoting acceptance of diversity in all forms. To fulfill this objective, Liberation 75 hosted two free *Education Days* programs: a professional development symposium only for educators on March 7th-9th, 2021, and one for students in grades 6 through 12 on April 7th and 8th, 2021. This global virtual gathering included educational programming about the Holocaust, antisemitism, and tolerance through a number of different pedagogical avenues, from survivor lounges where students could speak directly with a Holocaust survivor, to virtual tours of the Anne Frank House and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, and to workshops led by organizations such as Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center, the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.<sup>8</sup>

Education Days were opt-in. In order to promote the event and to mitigate the selection bias associated with an opt-in survey, Chelsea Sinclair, of Liberation75, sent individualized emails to every school board superintendent across Canada. Some administrators of school districts or school boards, such as the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), offered the learning to many schools in their jurisdiction. Other schools promoted the events to their individual teachers and permitted their teachers to determine whether the programming would fit into their classroom schedules or not. Still, other teachers learned about the event through colleagues, listservs, or other informal networks of educators, and signed up their classrooms entirely on their own. Approximately 13,500 students attended student Education Days. In the 'Pre-Program Survey' section of this report, we outline the descriptive characteristics of the teachers and students that participated in both student Education Days and in the Pre-Program and Post-Program surveys.

## **Survey Methodology**

### **Focus Group Sessions**

The principal investigator populated survey questions using the Qualtrics survey platform. Prior to the distribution of the survey, the principal investigator conducted 7 one-on-one focus group sessions with grade 8 students (UWO REB #116868). The principal investigator selected this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> For a full schedule, see: https://events.eply.com/EDUCATIONDAY

target audience for the focus groups because 13 year olds represented the youngest demographic that would need to read and maneuver the general survey.

These one-on-one discussions were conducted on the Zoom video-conferencing platform from February 16th to March 12th and lasted approximately 30-60 minutes each. The Zoom calls were not recorded and participants were welcome to keep their cameras turned off to maintain their privacy. The principal investigator conducted the pilot study alone and took notes on participant answers to questions, such as "What did you think about the wording of this question?" and "What did you think about the buttons [referring to the Qualtrics buttons] on this question?" No data was kept on Qualtrics or Zoom. Participants were able to end their sessions at any time and were welcome to skip any questions that they preferred not to answer.

These conversations resulted in small changes to survey questions that benefited the readability and maneuverability of the survey. For example, in the pilot survey, one question asked respondents to define the Holocaust, choosing from a pre-populated list of both correct and incorrect options. Students in the focus group expressed concern that incorrect answers might cause problems for Holocaust education as, without an appropriate debrief for the survey, students might believe that the wrong answers to the question were the correct answers. Further, discussions from the focus groups helped to refine demographic questions in which respondents self-identified according to categories of age, race, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economics..

## **Program Registration**

Liberation 75 opened *Education Days* to registrants from March 7th through April 6th, using the ePly online event platform. Potential registrants were sent communications through their boards/districts, principals, and directly from Liberation 75 (in the case of those teachers that had signed up for previous Liberation 75 educational programming). Some teachers learned about the event through word-of-mouth and social media. Teachers were responsible for registering their entire classes. Upon registering, teachers were asked to answer the following categories of questions:

- A. Basic information about the school (e.g., Name of School, School Board/District, City, State/Province, Country)
- B. Basic information about the classroom (e.g., Grade level, Subject)
- C. Basic information about the educator (e.g., Length of time teaching the grade level mentioned in B, Other grades taught in the past)
- D. Topic engagement in the classroom: Educators could choose from a list of topics that they felt were covered in the classroom for the group mentioned in B. They could select as many topics as needed. This list included:
  - a. The Holocaust
  - b. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- c. Genocide
- d. Antisemitism
- e. Racism
- f. Xenophobia
- g. World War II
- h. Human Rights
- i. Indigenous/First Nations Topics
- j. Bullying
- k. None of the above
- E. Reason for topic education: Educators were asked why they taught the topics mentioned in D. They could select as many answers as needed. The options available were:
  - a. A government mandate
  - b. A provincial mandate
  - c. District-wide curricular mandate
  - d. School-wide curricular mandate
  - e. Student interest
  - f. Parent interest
  - g. Personal interest
  - h. Something else (Fill-in-the-blank)
- F. Educators could specify the tools they used to teach the topics discussed in Question D. They could select as many tools as needed. The options available were:
  - a. Texts and books
  - b. Media
  - c. Websites
  - d. Prefabricated lesson plans
  - e. Something else (Fill-in-the-blank)

Last, educators could indicate interest for particular types of *Education Days* sessions (e.g., survivor talks, educational sessions on the Holocaust, tours of Holocaust museums). This question helped Liberation75 to arrange the program schedule to accommodate more or less popular session types.

In Table One, we show the breakdown of registrants by country, as reported by teachers in the teacher registration questionnaire. The majority of those registered represent Canadian classrooms. As shown in Table One, Canadian classrooms account for 266 of the 338 registered schools, and American classrooms account for 64 of the registered schools. Of these, 71.6% of registered classrooms come from Ontario schools. The remaining distribution is composed of 13.6% Florida (U.S.) classrooms, 4.1% Manitoba classrooms, 1.8% Saskatchewan classrooms, and outlier classrooms from nineteen other states and provinces.

Country	Number of Classrooms	
Canadian Classrooms	266	
American Classrooms	64	
Unspecified	8	

Table One: Breakdown of Registered Classrooms by Geographic Location, According to the Teacher Registration Questionnaire. (N = 338)

Students from these 338 classrooms were almost entirely from grades 6 through 12. Figure One shows the distribution of grade levels across registered classrooms. The majority of students were middle-school aged, with eighth grade representing the largest percentage of registered classrooms at 28.11%. Sixth grade classrooms represented 23.08% and seventh grade represented 14.79% of those registered. A small number of educators attended without students (2.66%) or with university-age students (0.59%). An additional 7.10% of teachers incorrectly specified or declined to specify the grade levels of their classrooms upon registration.

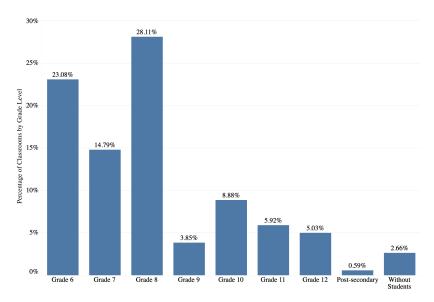


Figure One: Distribution of Grade Levels across all Registered Classrooms (N = 338)

Teachers were asked to self-report their students' levels of knowledge prior to the event, according to four categories: Almost None, Little, Moderate, Advanced. As shown in Figure Two, teachers generally believed their students to have little-to-moderate pre-existing knowledge of the Holocaust. Nearly half of teachers (40.65%) reported that students had little knowledge of the Holocaust, while 28.78% reported moderate knowledge. Almost one in five classrooms came to Liberation75's *Education Days*, self-reporting almost no previous knowledge about the

Holocaust (18.40%). An additional 6.53% of teachers did not report on the believed pre-existing knowledge of their students.

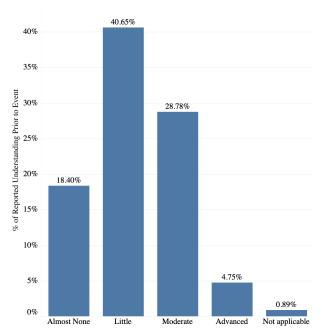


Figure Two: Distribution of Self-Reported Pre-Existing Knowledge about the Holocaust (N = 338)

Торіс	Percentage of All Classrooms Reporting	
Holocaust	58.28%	
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	75.44%	
Genocide	37.57%	
Antisemitism	44.38%	
Racism	74.85%	
Xenophobia	28.99%	
World War II	34.91%	
Human Rights	66.86%	
Indigenous/First Nations Topics	65.38%	
Bullying	67.75%	

Table Two: Percentage of Teachers Reporting Various Curriculum Topics Taught Prior to *Education Days* (N = 338)

To provide greater clarity on pre-existing knowledge related to the Holocaust and genocide, teachers were invited to self-report about the types of lessons taught in their classrooms, and were able to select all that applied. In Table Two, we show the list of topics that we presented, as well as the number of teachers that reported including lessons on this topic.

#### **Pre-Program Survey**

After registering for *Education Days* via ePly, educators would receive the Pre-Program survey by email for distribution to their students. This survey remained available via Qualtrics from March 24th to April 6th. Some educators made time during class to complete the Pre-Program survey, while others assigned the survey as homework. After completion, the survey could also serve as a pedagogical tool for educators to use as they prepared their students to attend *Education Days*. <sup>9</sup>

In this email, each teacher received an automatically assigned 'Classroom Code'. All students in the class would use the same Classroom Code and each student needed to type in their teacher's Classroom Code in order to access the Pre-Program survey. This ensured that each student's Pre-Program survey would be connected to their classmates' surveys, as well as to their teacher's registration surveys. Using the Classroom Codes, we could track levels of preexisting knowledge on the topics, diversity in the schools, and so on. The Classroom Codes also link Pre-Program survey responses to Post-Program survey responses.

We encouraged completion of the Pre-Program survey with two reminders, sent on March 30th and on April 5th/6th (depending on when the educator signed up for the program). The first reminder was automated through the ePly platform; the second was a reminder sent personally from the principal investigator. The principal investigator sent targeted appeals to six specific sub-demographic groups that had registered for student *Education Days* but had not yet responded to the Pre-Program survey:

- 1. Targeted batch to non-responders in Florida (U.S.), as our response rate from Florida schools was surprisingly high
- 2. Individual emails to non-responders from all other states in the United States
- 3. Targeted batch to non-responders in Essex County (Canada)
- 4. Targeted batch to non-responders in Peel Region (Canada)
- 5. Individual emails to other non-Greater Toronto Area (GTA) non-respondents (e.g., Dufferin County) (Canada)
- 6. Targeted batch to non-responders from GTA school boards (Canada)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The cover page and full list of questions are available in the Appendix of this Executive Summary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In the case that one teacher registered two different classes (e.g., they taught both 7th and 8th grade classes and registered both groups), they received a separate Classroom Code for each class.

Following these targeted appeals in the days immediately prior to *Education Days*, the number of respondents increased by over 200%. Liberation75 also encouraged completion of the Pre- and Post-Program surveys by offering educators the opportunity to win one of two available Apple iPads. Educators with *any* student engagement in both the Pre- and Post-Program surveys were entered into a draw to win these products. The winners of the draw were announced on May 11th, 2021.

#### **Demographics**

A total of 3,593 respondents completed the Pre-Program survey. Below, we share the demographic breakdown of respondents according to characteristics of age, race, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economics.

#### Age

While we know what *grades* students are in from their teacher's responses to the registration survey, we also asked students to self-report their *ages*. This was important as school birthdate cut-offs can vary between different provinces and states. As we expected, a small number of students reported being as young as 10 and as old as 19, however the majority of respondents reported their ages as 13 years old (23.48%). The breakdown of age is indicated in Figure Three.

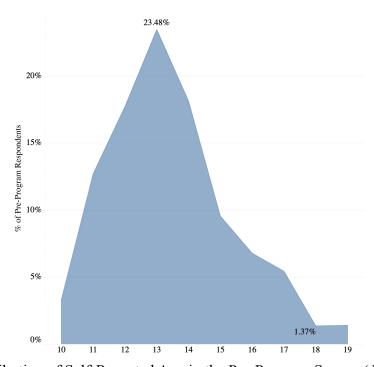


Figure Three: Distribution of Self-Reported Age in the Pre-Program Survey (N = 2,705)

#### Racial, Ethnic, and National Identity

Students were invited to self-report their racial and/or ethnic identities however they chose to self-identify. The word-cloud shown in Figure Four illustrates the variation of racial and ethnic identities that students self-reported in the Pre-Program survey. Given that students were invited to self-report on their heritages without guidance, we found that some chose to indicate their racial identities, while others wrote about ethnicity or religious identity. While the majority of respondents self-identified as 'white' (514), this was closely followed with those that wrote 'black' (159), 'asian' (159), 'hispanic' (158), 'canadian' (120), and 'chinese' (108). These responses are promising for the validity of our study as they illustrate substantial variation in the demographics of student respondents.



Figure Four: Word-Cloud of Self-Reported Heritage. Students wrote-in their racial, ethnic, or religious identities. Larger and bolder terms appeared more frequently in the data (N = 2,476)

We further assessed identity by inviting respondents to self-report whether they spoke a second (or third) language at home *over 50% of the time* and, if so, to identify that language. Figure Five shows that, of the 1,383 students who reported speaking another language at home the majority of the time, the largest numbers of students speak 'spanish' (262), 'mandarin' (89), 'chinese' (85), 'punjabi' (62), 'tamil' (55), and 'urdu' (52). Other commonly-spoken languages were 'cantonese' (49), 'arabic' (44), 'hindi' (42), 'tagalog' (39), and 'russian' (38). We asked this

<sup>12</sup> Students classified as 'other' often provided unrevealing answers that could not be clearly coded in the data cleaning process (e.g., 'We are a small community that believes in g-d," "Really cool and well cultured," "Light skin," "A proud race that was enslaved," or some variation of "I don't know/Not sure."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> A word-cloud is a visual illustration of a collection of words, where those words that appear more frequently are displayed as both larger and in a bolder font.

question in an effort to capture the identity and heritage of the student from another perspective, as language can help to add further nuance to categories of race or ethnicity.



Figure Five: Word-Cloud of Second Language Spoken at Home More than 50% of the Time. Students were asked whether they speak another language at home *over 50% of the time* and, if so, to share what that language is. Larger and bolder languages appeared more frequently in the data (N = 1,383)

#### **Religious Identity**

Students were invited to self-report their religious identities, as well as those of the adults in their homes. In Figure Six, we show the breakdown of reported religion, with the largest percentage of respondents practicing the Christian, Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish faiths. There was a notable discrepancy between the number of students reporting any particular religion and the number of adults reported as practicing that religion, indicating that students are less observant within traditional organized religions than they observe their parents to be. As an exception, students are more likely to state their religious identity as 'atheist', 'agnostic', 'spiritual but not religious' or 'nothing in particular' than their parents (12.85% of students self-reported their religious identity as 'nothing in particular' while selecting this category for only 10.38% of the adults in their homes).

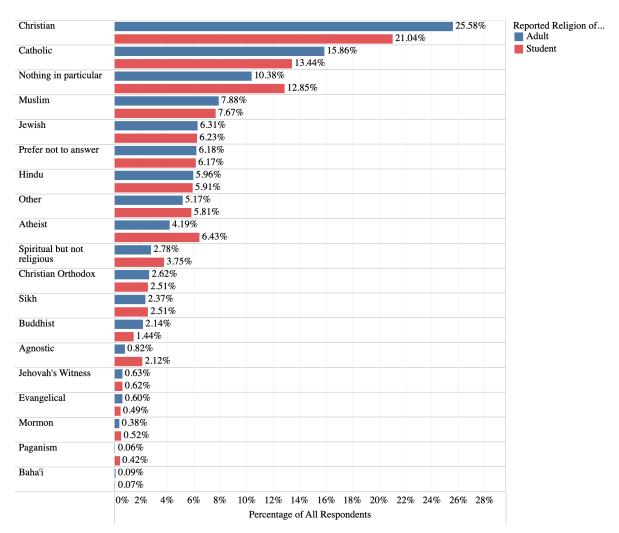


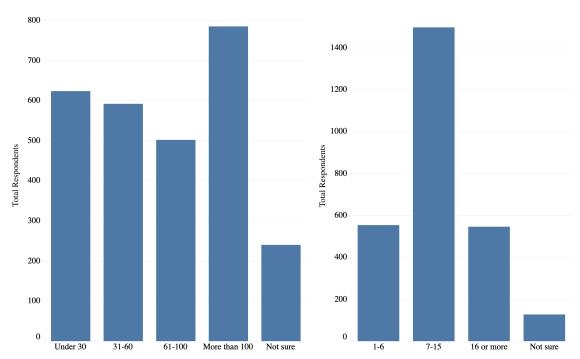
Figure Six: Distribution of Self-Reported Religious Identity for Student Respondents (Shown in Red) and the Adults in their Homes (Shown in Blue). (*N* of students = 3,065. *N* of adults = 3,171)

#### **Socio-Economic Status**

We used several metrics to assess socio-economic status. First, we asked respondents to self-report whether they had a parent or caregiver that went to college. Of those that answered this question, 75.81% reported having a parent or caregiver that went to college (11.62% said that no parent or caregiver went to college and 12.57% were not sure; N = 2,737).

After asking whether a parent or caregiver went to college, we assessed socio-economic identification with the traditional survey question designed to capture this status: "If you had to guess, how many books would you say you have at home?" In addition, we included a similar question with revised contemporary phrasing: "If you had to guess, how many digital devices would you say you have at home?" Figure Seven shows a self-reported estimate of the number of books in a respondent's house and Figure Eight represents the estimated number of digital

devices in a respondent's house (including tablets, laptops, desktop computers, smart televisions, gaming devices, and cell phones). Given that these two illustrations represent the same respondents, there is variation in how one might measure socio-economic status using these metrics; in brief, a smaller number of digital devices (7-15) may adequately correspond to a larger number of books (100+).



Figures Seven and Eight: Measurements of Socio-Economic Status. On the left is an illustration of responses regarding the estimated number of books in one's home (N = 2,744). On the right is an illustration of the estimated number of digital devices in one's home (N = 2,728)

## Student Education Days

Student *Education Days* took place on April 7th and 8th, 2021. This entirely virtual program was hosted on the Hopin event management platform. Approximately 13,500 students from grades 6 through 12 attended from across Canada, the United States, and from select international locations (e.g., India, Israel, South Africa). During the two-day event, Liberation75 hosted 40 unique sessions about the Holocaust and antisemitism. These 60-minute, age-appropriate sessions were presented or facilitated by best-practice organizations from across Canada and around the world, such as the Montreal Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, the USC Shoah Foundation, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Liberation75 also provided multiple opportunities for students to engage directly with Holocaust survivors, whether in a lecture format or in a discussion format, where students could ask questions to survivors in real-time. Instead of allowing the students to navigate the programs independently, almost every teacher broadcasted their programs of choice to their classes via their internal educational systems.

#### **COVID-19 Impact Statement**

Student *Education Days* were initially intended to occur in tandem with "Liberation75: The Global Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, Descendants, Educators and Friends," an event which was to be held in Toronto from May 31st-June 2nd, 2020, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of liberation from the Holocaust. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, this event was first postponed to occur in-person in Spring 2021. Ultimately, it was moved online in regulation with public health mandates. While the in-person program would be ideal for potential attendees from the Greater Toronto Area and southeast Ontario, the virtual format ensured that attendees from across Canada, the United States, and select international locations could also participate as attendees or speakers. This positively impacted our study as it increased the population and geographic distribution of respondents.

In addition to these changes in the dates and format of the event, COVID-19 also impacted the consistency with which the surveys were administered. If the event took place in person, our intent was to meet students at the entrance and exit of the event with tablets for them to complete the survey. As the event took place online, there was variation in not only the amount of time between the end of the program and when the student completed the survey, but also in how a student completed the survey. Some completed the survey on their phones while others completed it on a laptop. Some students completed the survey in class while others completed it at home. As a result, we could not control the degree to which students were susceptible to the influence of their peers, their teachers, and/or the adults in their homes, or whether students encountered technological issues when accessing the program or surveys online. Given these unique challenges, 27% of attendees from grades 6 through 12 completed the Pre-Program survey and 6% of attendees completed the Post-Program survey.

## **Post-Program Survey**

Following the conclusion of *Education Days* on April 8th, teachers received a Post-Program survey to distribute to their students for completion. Teachers received a reminder via the ePly platform to complete the survey on April 23rd. Post-Program surveys were connected to Pre-Program surveys, as well as to teacher registration data, through each Classroom Code. The questions about the Holocaust and antisemitism were identical on the Pre-Program and Post-Program surveys, but the sections on 'Who is a Jew?' and demographics were removed from the Post-Program survey. Instead, the Post-Program survey included program evaluation questions about particular sessions and what could be improved about *Education Days* in future years. Again, teachers were incentivized to encourage Post-Program survey participation by being entered into a draw to win one of two iPads if their students participated in both iterations of the survey. In total, 848 students completed the Post-Program survey.

## **Topline Survey Results**

This study provides the first empirically-based portrait of teen knowledge about, and attitudes toward, the Holocaust and antisemitism in Canada. It also contributes to existing studies about this topic and demographic group in the United States. Four themes emerge from the survey:

- 1. Who is a Jew?
- 2. Perspectives on Antisemitism
- 3. Holocaust Knowledge
- 4. Perspectives on the Holocaust

#### Theme One: Who is a Jew?

After entering their Classroom Codes, respondents were brought to Section One: Who is a Jew? In this section, our objective was to identify whether the respondent *understood what it means to be a Jew*. We also used this section to determine whether the respondent had Jewish friends or family members. As shown in Figure Nine, 69.28% correctly identified that Jews belong to the Jewish ethno-religious group, nearly one in five respondents on the Pre-Program survey stated that they were not sure what it meant to be a Jew, and an additional 12.58% of respondents answered the question incorrectly.

The wrong answers were designed to identify a number of biases about Jews. First, one wrong answer suggested that Jews are *always* from Poland, Belarus, or Germany, so that we could identify a so-called *ashkenormative* bias about the homogeneity of Jews as ashkenazi, or Jews whose ancestry is located in Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, Jews come from all over the world, from Yemen and Iran to Uzbekistan and Ethiopia. A second wrong answer suggested that Jews always wear yarmulkes on their heads, alienating women, secular Jews, and Jews that wear alternate head coverings (e.g., knitted caps, fedoras, shtreimels, or baseball hats). Finally, we provided a third wrong answer that Jews can be identified by their dislike of Christmas, which simultaneously alienates Jews from the religiously pluralistic communities in which they live while negating the experiences of Jews that live in religiously-mixed homes. This question was not asked on the Post-Program survey.

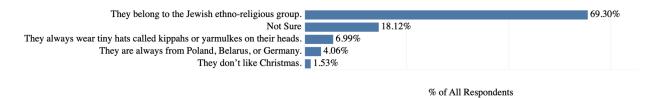


Figure Nine: What Does it Mean to Be a Jew? (N = 3,593)

When asked whether respondents had any Jewish friends, 31.59% said they did not and 30.46% said they were unsure (N = 2,938). Of the 37.95% of respondents that reported *having* Jewish friends, 58.38% said that they had 1-3 Jewish friends, 21.62% estimated that they had 4-9 Jewish friends, and 20.00% stated that they had 10 or more Jewish friends (N = 1,965). Further, only 16.22% of respondents reported having any Jewish family members, with the vast majority (85%) stating that these were members of their extended family (for example, a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, or a cousin) (N = 1,961). Of the 16.22% of the population that reported having Jewish family members, only 39% stated that they, themselves, identified as being Jewish.

These preliminary results indicate that the population of respondents is generally knowledgeable about what it means to be a Jew. According to the demographics shared previously in this executive summary, we also believe that this sample is, in general, ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse. That said, we also recognize that Jewish respondents, or respondents that live in areas where Jews make up a greater proportion than the national average, may be overrepresented in our sample. This is especially true when subsetting the data for respondents in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). While Jews generally comprise approximately 2% of the North American population, they are estimated to comprise a larger percentage of the population in select wards of the GTA (e.g., Jews are estimated to comprise 15-17.3% of Ward 10 - York Centre, according to the Canadian Census).

This level of pre-existing knowledge bodes well for our exploration of what young people know and think about antisemitism and the Holocaust, as we would not be able to study their thoughts about discrimination against Jews if they did not know what it means to be a Jew in the first place.

## Theme Two: Perspectives on Antisemitism

We also asked respondents to define antisemitism, according to a pre-populated selection of options. As shown in Figure Ten, the majority of respondents (53.98%) stated correctly that antisemitism is the hatred of Jewish people, just because they are Jews. A large portion of respondents (30.05%) perhaps reasonably conflated the term 'antisemitism' with the term 'semite', which relates to speakers of all semitic languages, including both Jews and Arabs. Slightly over 1-in-10 respondents misunderstood antisemitism as a synonym for xenophobia, or the hatred of all those that look and act differently than a person, and approximately 1-in-20 respondents incorrectly stated that antisemitism was a form of *philosemitism*, in which a person *prefers* Jews over other ethnic or religious groups.

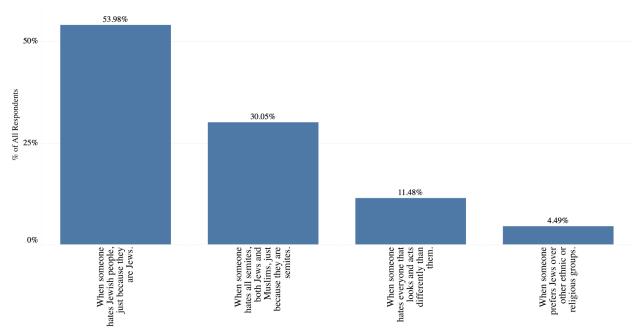


Figure Ten: What is Antisemitism? (N = 2,875)

Having defined antisemitism, we asked respondents to share whether they ever saw or heard something that they believed to be antisemitic, such as graffiti, slurs, bullying, property damage, or news stories. In response, 42% stated unequivocally that they *had* observed something of this nature, and 27% stated that they were uncertain whether what they had observed was antisemitic (N = 2,709). This number is especially striking, given that Jews make up, on average, under 2% of the American or Canadian population. Students had the opportunity, if they were willing, to share what they saw or heard that they thought was antisemitic. In addition to the traditional antisemitic tropes, such as seeing a swastika carved into a wall or hearing a Jew being called a derogatory term like a 'kike', students also commented about: hearing jokes about Jewish people being put into ovens, the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, athletes and celebrities making public antisemitic remarks, classmates bullying Jewish students for being Jewish, and reading hateful comments on social media or gaming platforms (e.g., slander such as 'Jesus killer' or 'baby killer', the latter reference to the libelous claim that Jews eat the blood of Christian babies).

In order to capture perceptions of antisemitism, we asked how often students believed that Jews experience antisemitism in the country where they currently live. Of the students that answered this question, 18.10% suggested that antisemitic incidents occurred frequently, 39.56% stated that they occurred occasionally, and 22.58% answered that antisemitic acts occurred rarely or never (N = 2,839). Again, given the small population of Jews in America and Canada, the number of respondents that believed antisemitic events occur frequently or occasionally is noteworthy. In addition, the majority of respondents (76%) stated that antisemitism is a serious

problem when it happens. Less than 2% of respondents said that it is not really a problem or not a problem at all (N = 2839). <sup>13</sup>

We asked students to rank how they might respond to an incident where they walked into a bathroom at school to find another student writing something bad about Jews on the wall. As shown in Figure Eleven, students had 4 choices available: To refrain from action altogether, to tell an adult outside of the school setting, to tell an adult inside of the school setting, or to confront the person directly and immediately. On the Pre-Program survey, 49% of students said they would confront the person immediately, 36% said they would tell an adult either within or outside of the school setting, and 16% stated that they would refrain from getting involved.

On the Post-Program survey, we observed that the number of students that would confront their classmate directly and immediately went up from 49% to 58%, the number of students that said they would tell an adult decreased from 36% to 30%, and the number of students that claimed they would do nothing also decreased from 16% to 13%. Further, while 66% of students ranked 'do nothing' last on the Pre-Program survey, this number increased to 71% on the Post-Program survey, **indicating that Holocaust education correlates with an increased likelihood that students will act to protect minority communities when confronted with hatred or intolerance.** 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Here, there was a notable change from the AJC's 2020 Survey of the General Public on Antisemitism, in which only 19% of adult respondents in the United States stated that antisemitism is 'a very serious problem', illustrating a potential shift between the adult population and the rising generation.

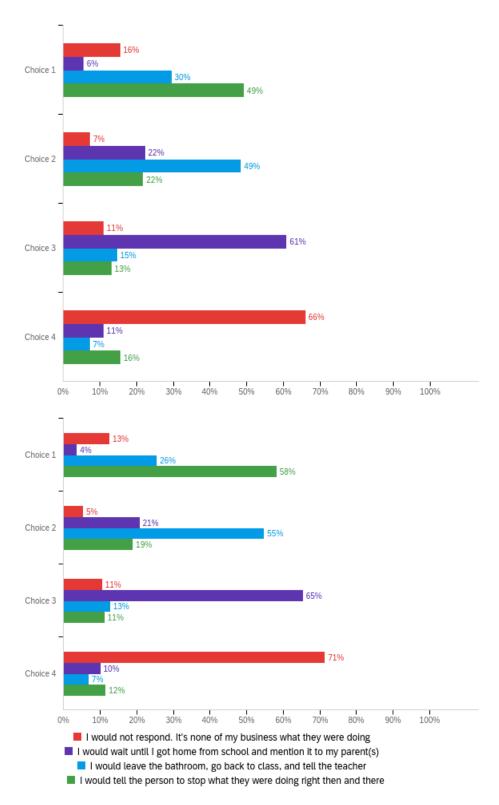


Figure Eleven: What Would You Do if You Saw Another Student Writing Something Bad About Jews on the Wall in the Bathroom at School? (N = 2,600 on Pre-Program survey. N = 596 on Post-Program survey)

## Theme Three: Holocaust Knowledge

Prior to measuring student perspectives on the Holocaust, we sought to assess *what students know* about the Holocaust. To increase the comparative capacity of our study, we designed this section to reflect the questions asked on other surveys on the Holocaust. First, we invited students to share whether they had ever heard of the Holocaust. Among all respondents, 80% stated that they had definitely heard about the Holocaust and an additional 7% said that they might have heard of it but were uncertain (N = 2,874). Students who stated they *had* heard about the Holocaust were then asked to share *where* they had heard about the Holocaust. The list of options is shown in Figure Twelve; students were able to select all the answers that apply. The breakdown of their answers in Figure Twelve communicates both where students *are* learning about the Holocaust (e.g., 40% on social media) as well as where they *are not* learning about the Holocaust (nearly 1-in-3 stated that they had not learned about the Holocaust in History class and 1-in-2 stated they had not learned about the Holocaust in English Literature class).

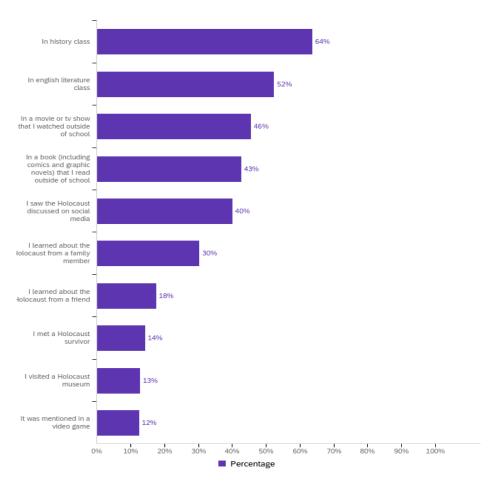


Figure Twelve: Where Did You Learn About the Holocaust? (Check all that apply) (N = 2,466)



Figure Thirteen: In Your Own Words, Define the Holocaust. Larger and bolder terms in the word-cloud appeared more frequently in the data (N = 3,594)

Students were asked to define the Holocaust in an open-ended question. Their answers, illustrated in the word-cloud shown in Figure Thirteen, indicate that their understanding is both factual (e.g., 6 million, Adolf Hitler, Europe, Germany, murder, torture) as well as emotional (e.g., terrible, horrible, bad). Students were then asked six fact-based questions about the timing, perpetrators, and victims of the Holocaust.<sup>14</sup>

In Table Three, we compare the percentage of respondents that selected the correct answer for the first four of these six questions: When did the Holocaust happen; How many Jews were killed; How did Hitler come to power; and How many concentration, death, labor, and transit camps were there? In regard to all four questions, the percentage of confirmed correct responses went up by at least six percentage points, indicating that some learning took place, whether during the formal *Education Days* program or as a result of taking the survey and becoming curious about the information on it.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The disaggregated results of these survey questions can be found in the data repository associated with this paper.

Question	Correct Answer	Pre-Program Survey Percentage Correct	Post-Program Survey Percentage Correct
When did the Holocaust happen? Between	1930 and 1950	62.87% (N = 2,836)	80% ( <i>N</i> = 721)
In total, about how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?	Approximately 6 Million	54.27% (N = 2,825)	73% (N = 715)
How did Adolf Hitler become Chancellor of Germany?	He was elected	38.64% (N = 2,821)	57% (N = 699)
How many Nazi concentration, death, labour, and transit camps were there?	More than 2,500	18.38% (N = 2,785)	25% (N = 683)

Table Three: Comparing Factual Knowledge of the Holocaust on the Pre-Program and Post-Program Surveys

We also asked students to outline the targets of Nazi genocide. In Figure Fourteen, we show the Pre-Program survey results in the upper panel and the Post-Program survey results in the lower panel. All possible answers were correct and students were invited to select all answers that they believed to apply. Nevertheless, while most students were able to identify Jews as a target of the Holocaust, less than half correctly identified other targets of Nazi violence, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Communists, and Trade Unionists.

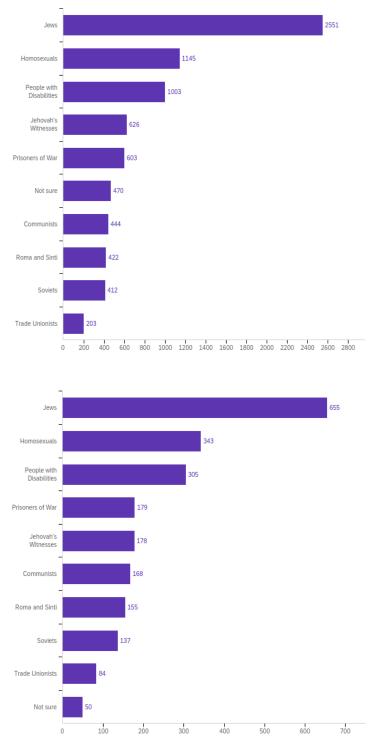


Figure Fourteen: Who Were the Targets in the Holocaust? (N = 2,551 on Pre-Program survey. N = 651 on Post-Program survey)

Finally, in response to media headlines from 2018 that stated that young people know nothing about Auschwitz, we also asked respondents to identify what the term Auschwitz refers to: a concentration, labour, and/or death camp, a town in Poland, the location of Nazi headquarters, the site of a military conflict between the Jewish and Nazi armies, and/or a museum about the Holocaust. Students were able to select any answers that they felt to be correct. On the Pre-Program survey, and prior to the educational treatment, 65% of student respondents reported correctly that Auschwitz is a Nazi concentration, labour, and/or death camp (N = 2,792). In the Post-Program survey, this number increased to 76% of respondents (N = 691). In

## **Theme Four: Perspectives on the Holocaust**

One form of antisemitism is Holocaust denial, or "any attempt to claim that the Holocaust/Shoah did not take place ... including denying or calling into doubt the mechanisms of destruction or the intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance). As such, we asked respondents whether they felt that the Holocaust has been fairly described, exaggerated, or altogether fabricated. As shown in Figure Fifteen, 67.10% of Pre-Program survey respondents agreed that the Holocaust happened and that the number of Jews who died in it has been fairly described. However, 32.90% of respondents reported feeling that the Holocaust was an exaggerated or fabricated event, or that they were not sure if it actually happened. On the Post-Program survey, these numbers showed lower rates of Holocaust questioning or overt denial. On the Post-Program survey, 76% of respondents reported that the Holocaust happened and has been fairly described, and 23% reported feeling that it was exaggerated, fabricated, or that its truth was unconvincing (N = 681).

Social desirability bias may encourage student respondents to answer that the Holocaust *did* happen when they remain, in fact, uncertain about its credibility. Not all those that hold antisemitic attitudes, whether consciously or subconsciously, are willing to share these attitudes with a surveyor. Therefore, we might assume that the number of respondents who stated that the Holocaust was exaggerated or fabricated may be larger than what is captured in these results.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> That this contradicts existing results speaks less about whether or not young people *know* about Auschwitz and more about how these questions are asked on surveys.

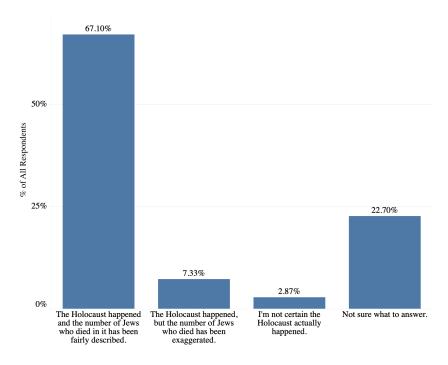


Figure Fifteen: Did the Holocaust Happen? (N = 2,784)

Students further commented on whether they believed that the Holocaust could happen again. Among all Pre-Program survey respondents, 33.53% stated a disbelief that the Holocaust could be repeated, 21.26% stated unequivocally that it *could* happen again, and 45.22% said that they were uncertain (N = 2,780). Those that said the Holocaust could happen again wrote about ongoing discrimination, genocide, and racism around the world; those that believed it could not happen again said that society would never allow systemic violence or the creation of concentration camps. And yet, we know that genocide has occured after the end of the Holocaust in 1945: 400,000 have been killed and 2.5 million have been displaced in the Darfur region of Sudan; 800,000 were killed — over 1/10 of the population — in Rwanda; 200,000 Muslims were systematically murdered and 2 million were displaced in former Yugoslavia; and millions died in Cambodia, Nanking, Armenia, Namibia, and Ukraine during the Holodomor. Surely, society has allowed for systemic violence and the creation of concentration camps since the end of the Holocaust; greater knowledge about how fear and discrimination can escalate into hate-fueled mass violence is vital for preventing these events in the future.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> "Modern Era Genocides." The Genocide Education Project.

## The Impact of Holocaust and Genocide Education: Comparing Florida and Ontario Responses

Some jurisdictions mandate Holocaust and genocide education. For example, in 1994, the Florida Legislature passed the Holocaust Education Bill (SB 660), which requires school districts across the state to incorporate Holocaust and genocide literacy into the K-12 curriculum. As of 2021, while some individual teachers and/or schools offer Holocaust programming at various grade levels at the discretion of the teachers and principals, the Province of Ontario has yet to mandate a province-wide requirement that schools teach Holocaust and genocide literacy. Given this inverse policy and a sizable number of Pre-Program survey respondents from both Ontario and Florida, we use this section to compare some topline results from students across these two groups of respondents.

As shown in Figure Sixteen, when asked how often respondents believe Jews experience antisemitism in the place where they live, respondents from Florida responded 'a lot' 17% more often than Ontario respondents. They were also less likely to state that antisemitism occurs either rarely or never. This is surprising because annual audits by the Anti-Defamation League in the United States (2021)<sup>18</sup> and B'nai Brith Canada (2020)<sup>19</sup> indicate that the number of antisemitic incidents reported was higher in Ontario than it was in Florida in 2020.<sup>20</sup> This indicates that there is more concern about antisemitism where there is less antisemitic action, and less concern about antisemitism where there is more antisemitic action.

https://florida.adl.org/news/antisemitic-incidents-rose-by-40-in-florida-in-2020/

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IqrqxVoO0tCXxMxvC0 12rsSn5xPgMpu/view

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The Toronto District School Board's Call for the Province of Ontario to initiate a genocide education mandate can be found here:

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/News/Article-Details/ArtMID/474/ArticleID/1487/Incorporating-Genocide-Education-as-Compulsory-Learning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Anti-Defamation League Audit of Antisemitic Events, Florida.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> B'nai Brith Canada Audit of Antisemitic Events.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Further, both reports stated a 40-44% increase in reports of antisemitic harrassment and/or violence in 2020, in conjunction with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Ontario Human Rights Commission. http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\_centre/ohrc-statement-national-summit-antisemitism

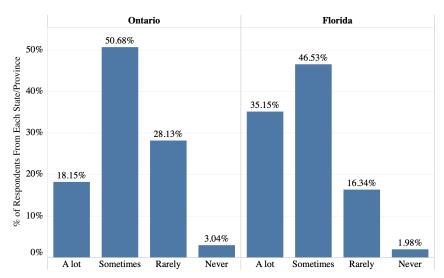


Figure Sixteen: How Often Do You Believe Antisemitism Happens Where You Live? (N = 2,200)

As shown in Figure Seventeen, Florida students were also slightly more likely (+3.93%) to agree that the Holocaust occurred, and less likely to express questioning or denial than students from Ontario schools. Further, as shown in Figure Eighteen, Florida students were more likely to state that the Holocaust could happen again (+11.75%) and less likely to state that it could not (-4.46%).

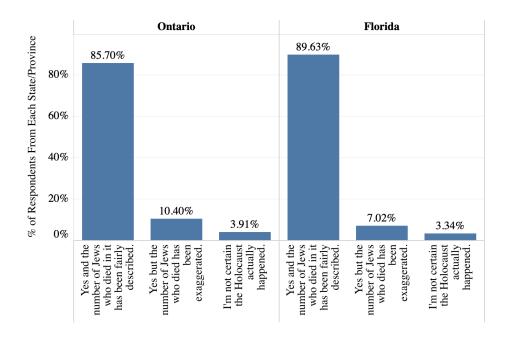


Figure Seventeen: Did the Holocaust Happen? Comparison of Ontario and Florida Respondents (N = 2.200)

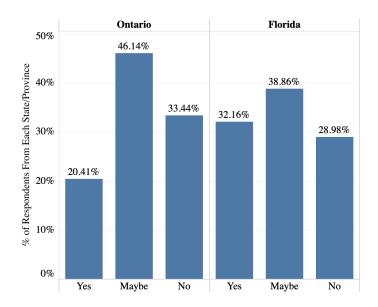


Figure Eighteen: Could the Holocaust Happen Again? (N = 2,200)

Finally, Ontario students demonstrated a clear interest in improving Holocaust and genocide literacy at school. As shown in Figure Nineteen, 92.64% of Ontario students said they wanted to learn more about the Holocaust and 87.19% reported interested in learning about other genocides.

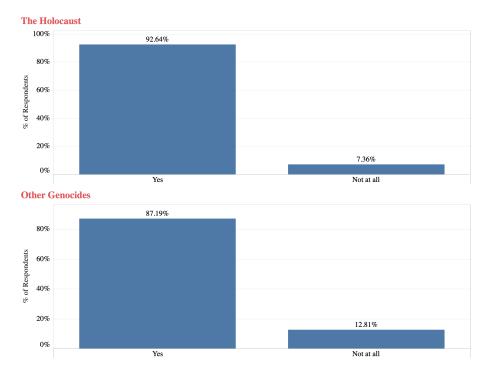


Figure Nineteen: Interest in Holocaust and Genocide Education. "In school, I want to learn more about..." (N = 1,614)

Given these results, especially when compared with the Anti-Defamation League and B'nai Brith Canada annual audits of antisemitic activity, we suggest that the Government of Ontario initiates a province-wide mandate for the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide. We suggest that this would be well-placed within the existing civics curriculum. Many Canadian and international organizations have developed and organized curricular resources that Ontario teachers can use to implement this policy. We strongly believe that Holocaust and genocide literacy results in a student body more likely to prevent bullying, discrimination, and other intergroup conflicts at early, nonviolent stages, as well as a generation of future leaders positioned to prevent and mitigate conflict at late, violent stages.

# **Conclusion**

In this research, we used a pre/post-treatment survey design to assess knowledge and thoughts about the Holocaust and antisemitism among North American students in grades 8-12. This population of respondents varied substantially based on ethnic, racial, religious, socio-economic, and geographical variables. Our treatment was a two-day virtual conference called *Liberation75 Education Days*, organized by the Holocaust education organization Liberation75. Based on the data we collected, we came to the following conclusions:

- Students generally understand that Jews are defined as belonging to an ethno-religious group (69.28% of respondents on the Pre-Program survey).
- **Slightly more than half of students understand that antisemitism** is hatred that is directed toward the Jewish people (53.98% on the Pre-Program survey).
- Many students have seen or heard antisemitic acts (42% said they unequivocally witnessed an antisemitic event and an additional 27% stated that they were uncertain if what they saw was antisemitic). The anecdotes students shared about these events were disturbing and occasionally violent.
- After experiencing the educational treatment, students were **more likely to act** if they observed an antisemitic event occuring (49% on the Pre-Program survey and 58% on the Post-Program survey). Inversely, students were **less likely to refrain from action** (+5% more likely to be ranked last on the Post-Program survey than the Pre-Program survey).
- Students have an **adequate baseline understanding** of the Holocaust.
  - 80% of Pre-Program respondents reported that they had heard of the Holocaust, whether in the classroom or in non-traditional settings, such as through books, television shows, and on social media.
  - 62.87% could state the general timeline of the Holocaust (e.g., which decades).
  - 54.27% knew how many Jews were killed.
  - 38.64% knew that Adolf Hitler was elected to a position of power.
  - 18.38% knew that there were over 2,500 Nazi concentration, death, labour, and transit camps.
  - Each of these numbers increased by 6-18% after the educational treatment.
  - 65% of student respondents reported correctly knowing that Auschwitz is a Nazi concentration, labour, and/or death camp. On the Post-Program survey, this number increased to 76% of respondents.

#### - Holocaust denial is a real and concerning phenomenon.

- 67.10% of respondents agreed that the Holocaust happened and that the number of Jews that died in it has been fairly described.
- However, 32.90% of respondents reported feeling that the Holocaust was an exaggerated or fabricated event, or that they were not sure if it actually happened.
- On the Post-Program survey, 76% of respondents reported that the Holocaust happened and has been fairly described, and 23% reported feeling that it was exaggerated, fabricated, or that its truth was unconvincing.
- Holocaust and genocide educational mandates are effective.
  - When asked how often respondents believe Jews experience antisemitism in the place where they live, respondents from Florida responded 'a lot' 17% more often than respondents from Ontario (where no such mandate exists). Florida students were also less likely than Ontario students to state that antisemitism occurs both rarely and never.

- Florida students were also slightly more likely (+3.93%) to agree that the Holocaust occurred and less likely to express questioning or denial than students from Ontario schools.
- Florida students were more likely to state that the Holocaust could happen again (+11.75%) and less likely to state that it could not (-4.46%).
- Students want to become more literate in Holocaust and genocide studies.
  - 92.64% of Ontario students said they wanted to learn more about the Holocaust and 87.19% reported interest in learning about other genocides.

Overall, these findings suggest that students benefit substantially from Holocaust literacy. Not only does learning about the Holocaust improve understanding about the history of discrimination and violence in the 20th century, but it also seems to correspond with an increased likelihood that students will take necessary action to protect minority communities when confronted with hatred or intolerance, especially when that learning is implemented during one's formative youth. We strongly believe that knowledgeable students will become better citizens by being more likely to prevent antisemitism, bullying, discrimination, and other intergroup conflicts at early, nonviolent stages. It is even plausible that this formative education will motivate today's youth to lead tomorrow's efforts to prevent and mitigate the deleterious effects of genocide and war.

#### **Appendix A: Pre-Program Survey Questions**

Survey Flow

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1385 , 1386 , 1387 , 1388 , 1389 , 1390 , 1391 , 1392 , 1393 , 1394 , 1395 , 1396 , 1397 , 1398 , 1399 , 1400

Block: Password (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If CODE Contains ${Q58/ChoiceTextEntryValue}

Standard: Introduction (3 Questions)

Standard: Directions (1 Question)

Standard: Section One: Who is a Jew? (5 Questions)

Standard: Section Two: Thinking About Antisemitism (6 Questions)

Standard: Section Three: What Do You Know About the Holocaust? (10 Questions)

Standard: Section Four: Thoughts on the Holocaust (5 Questions)
```

Start of Block: Password

Q52 Please type in the classroom code:

Standard: Demographics (10 Questions)

End of Block: Password

Start of Block: Introduction

#### Q17 Letter of Information and Consent

Liberation 75 is a Holocaust remembrance organization. With partial funding from the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, Liberation 75 is interested in gathering data on what students know about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

You are being invited to take this survey because your teacher has registered your class for Liberation75's Education Days, which will take place in April 2021.

This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with responding to this survey. Respondents may not directly benefit from participating, but information gathered could help Liberation75 and its partner organizations gain a better understanding of how young adults learn, understand, and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

Responding to this survey is voluntary. Even if you consent to participate, you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the survey at any time by closing your browser. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on you.

All answers will be stored by Liberation75 and used to evaluate the effectiveness of its Education Day programming. Liberation75 does not collect individual names, birthdates, or home addresses in this survey. We do collect email addresses so that we can send follow-up emails one year after Liberation75's Education Day concludes.

Liberation75 will have access to the survey responses so that we can conduct and analyze the survey. Liberation75 may share its findings in publications or presentations. If we do, the results will be discussed in the aggregate (as grouped data). Any quotes used from short-answer responses will remain anonymous. A de-identified version of this dataset may be put forth by Liberation75 for use in future academic studies.

Survey respondents will not be compensated for their participation, but teachers of classrooms that participate in the before-and-after surveys will be entered to win one of two Apple iPads! Do you consent to participate in Liberation75's pre-Education Day survey?

o Yes, I consent to participate in this survey.

o It is correct.

o No, I do not wish to participate in this survey.

Skip To: End of Survey If Letter of Information and Consent = No, I do not wish to participate in this survey.


End of Block: Introduction Start of Block: Directions O12 Directions We are going to ask you several questions. Some may be easy for you to answer, but others are meant to be challenging and you may have to guess. That's okay — we are interested in the guesses people make when they do not know the answer to a question. Please don't look up answers you do not know. Instead, please just make your best guess. End of Block: Directions Start of Block: Section One: Who is a Jew? Q5 What makes someone Jewish? o They don't like Christmas. o They always wear tiny hats called kippahs or yarmulkes on their heads. o They belong to the Jewish ethno-religious group. o They are always from Poland, Belarus, or Germany. Page Break Q6 Do you have any Jewish friends?

o Yes

o No

o Not Sure

# Display This Question: If Do you have any Jewish friends? = Yes Or Do you have any Jewish friends? = Not Sure Q7 If you had to guess, how many Jewish friends do you have? o 1-3 0 4-9 o 10 or more Page Break Q8 Are there any Jewish people in your family? o Yes o No o Not Sure Display This Question: If Are there any Jewish people in your family? = Yes Or Are there any Jewish people in your family? = Not Sure Q49 Who in your family is Jewish? (Select all that apply.) Me Someone, alive or dead, within my immediate family (for example, a parent or

step-parent, a guardian, or a sibling/ half-sibling/ step-sibling)

an aunt, an uncle, or a cousin)

Someone, alive or dead, within my extended family (for example, a grandparent,

Page Break

End of Block: Section One: Who is a Jew? Start of Block: Section Two: Thinking About Antisemitism Q13 What is antisemitism? o When someone hates Jewish people, just because they are Jews. o When someone prefers Jews over other ethnic or religious groups. o When someone hates all semites, both Jews and Muslims, just because they are semites. o When someone hates everyone that looks and acts differently than them. Page Break Q14 Have you ever seen or heard anything that you thought was antisemitic (e.g., graffiti, slurs, bullying, property damage, news stories)? o Yes o No o Maybe or Not Sure Display This Question: If Have you ever seen or heard anything that you thought was antisemitic (e.g., graffiti, slurs, bul... = YesOr Have you ever seen or heard anything that you thought was antisemitic (e.g., graffiti, slurs, bul... = Maybe or Not Sure Q15 If you are willing to share, what did you see or hear that you thought was antisemitic?

Q16 What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about Jews on the wall in the bathroom at school? Drag the answers below to rank the responses.  I would not respond. It's none of my business what they were doing  I would wait until I got home from school and mention it to my parent(s)  I would leave the bathroom, go back to class, and tell the teacher  I would tell the person to stop what they were doing right then and there		
Page Break		
Q19 When antisemitism happens, how serious do you think it is? o It's a big problem.		
o It's kind of a problem.		
o It's not really a problem.		
o It's not a problem at all.		
o Not sure		
Page Break		
Q20 How often do you think Jews experience antisemitism in the country where you currently live?		
o A lot		
o Sometimes		
o Rarely		
o Never		
o Not sure		
End of Block: Section Two: Thinking About Antisemitism		
Start of Block: Section Three: What Do You Know About the Holocaust?		

Q23 Have	e you ever heard anything about the Holocaust before?
o Yes	
o May	ybe
o No	

#### Display This Question:

If Have you ever heard anything about the Holocaust before? = Yes

Or Have you ever heard anything about the Holocaust before? = Maybe

Q24 Where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply)

0	In english literature class
0	In history class
	In a movie or tv show that I watched outside of school
0	In a book (including comics and graphic novels) that I read outside of school
	It was mentioned in a video game
	I met a Holocaust survivor
	I visited a Holocaust museum
0	I saw the Holocaust discussed on social media
0	I learned about the Holocaust from a friend
0	I learned about the Holocaust from a family member

#### Display This Question:

If Where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply) = In a movie or tv show that I watched outside of school

Or Where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply) = In a book (including comics and graphic novels) that I read outside of school

Or Where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply) = It was mentioned in a video game

Q25 What is the name of the movie, tv show, book, graphic novel, comic, or video-game where you saw the Holocaust mentioned? (If you don't remember the exact name, you can describe it.
Page Break
Q26 In your own words, please define 'the Holocaust'.
Page Break
Q27 When did the Holocaust happen? Between
o 1890 and 1910
o 1910 and 1930
o 1930 and 1950
o 1950 and 1970
o Not sure
Page Break
Q28 In total, about how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?
o Approximately 750,000
o Approximately 3 million
o Approximately 6 million
o More than 12 million
o Not sure

Q29 How	did Adolf Hitler become Chancellor of Germany?
o He v	was elected.
o He v	violently overthrew the German government.
o He i	nherited the position.
o He g	got the position through agreements with nearby countries.
o Not	sure
Page Brea	ak
1 450 210	
Q31 Wha	t do you think the word Auschwitz refers to? (Select all that apply)
0	A town in Poland.
0	The site of a military conflict between the Jewish and Nazi army.
0	A Nazi concentration, labour, and/or death camp.
0	A museum about the Holocaust.
0	The location of Nazi headquarters, including Hitler's office.
0	Not sure
Page Brea	ak
1 4.80 210.	
Q30 How	many Nazi concentration, death, labour, and transit camps were there?
o 4	
o Mor	re than 4 but less than 250
o Mor	re than 250 but less than 500
o Mor	re than 500 but less than 2500
o Mor	e than 2500

o Not sure	
Page Break	
Q32 Who wer	re the targets in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply)
	Jews
	Roma and Sinti
0	Homosexuals
О	Soviets
0	Prisoners of War
0	Communists
0	Jehovah's Witnesses
0	Trade Unionists
0	People with Disabilities
0	Not sure
End of Block:	Section Three: What Do You Know About the Holocaust?
Start of Block	:: Section Four: Thoughts on the Holocaust
Q33 Which o	f the following is closest to your view on the Holocaust?
o The Hol	ocaust happened and the number of Jews who died in it has been fairly described.
o The Hol	ocaust happened, but the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated.
o I'm not	certain the Holocaust actually happened.
o Not sure	e what to answer.
Page Break	

Q34 How much does learning about the Holocaust make you...

	Not at all	A little	A lot
Feel sad for the people that were hurt or killed?	O	0	0
Want to learn more about the Holocaust in school?	0	0	0
Want to learn about other genocides in school?	o	0	0
Want to challenge Holocaust denial in society?	o	o	0
Want to fight against antisemitism in society?	O	O	O
Want to fight injustice in society?	o	o	o

Q35 Do you think the Holocaust could happen again?

- o Yes
- o Maybe
- o No

## Display This Question:

If Do you think the Holocaust could happen again? = Yes

Or Do you think the Holocaust could happen again? = Maybe

Q36 Why do you think the Holocaust could happen again?		
Display This Question:		
If Do you think the Holocaust could happen again? = No		
Q37 Why do you think the Holocaust could not happen again?		
End of Block: Section Four: Thoughts on the Holocaust		
Start of Block: Demographics		
Q35 How old are you?		
o 10		
o 11		
o 12		
o 13		
o 14		
o 15		
o 16		
o 17		
o 18		
o 19		

Q36 What are your pronouns?
o She/her/hers
o He/him/his
o They/their/theirs
o Neopronouns
o Prefer not to answer.
o None of these options.
o Other:
Page Break
Q37 How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity?
Page Break
Q50 Does your family speak a language other than English more than 50% of the time?
o Yes
o No
o Not sure
Display This Question:
If Does your family speak a language other than English more than 50% of the time? = Yes
Q39 What language(s) other than English does your family speak more than 50% of the time?

Q40 V	What is your current religion, if any? (Select all that apply)
0	Christian (e.g., Protestant, United Church of Canada, Anglican, Baptist, Lutherar
	Episcopal, Presbyterian, Nondenominational)
	Catholic
	Evangelical
	Mormon (e.g., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
0	Christian Orthodox (e.g., Greek, Russian, or Ukrainian Orthodox)
	Jewish
0	Muslim (e.g., Sunni, Sufi, or Shi'a)
0	Sikh
0	Buddhish
0	Hindu
0	Jehovah's Witness
0	Baha'i
0	Paganism (e.g., Wicca)
0	Atheist
0	Agnostic
0	Spiritual but not religious
0	Nothing in particular
0	Prefer not to answer
0	Other:

Q41 What is t	he current religion of the adults in your home, if any? (Select all that apply)
0	Christian (e.g., Protestant, United Church of Canada, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran,
	Episcopal, Presbyterian, Nondenominational)
0	Catholic
0	Evangelical
0	Mormon (e.g., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
0	Christian Orthodox (e.g., Greek, Russian, or Ukrainian Orthodox)
0	Jewish
0	Muslim (e.g., Sunni, Sufi, or Shi'a)
0	Sikh
0	Buddhist
0	Hindu
0	Jehovah's Witness
0	Baha'i
0	Paganism (e.g., Wicca)
0	Atheist
0	Agnostic
0	Spiritual but not religious
0	Nothing in particular
0	Prefer not to answer
0	Other:
Page Break	
C	
Q45 Do you h	have a parent or caregiver at home who went to college?
o Yes	
o No	
o Not sure	

Q42 If you had to guess, how many books would you say you have in your house? o Under 30

o 31-60

o 61-100

o More than 100

o Not sure

#### Page Break

Q43 If you had to guess, how many digital devices do you have at home (e.g., cell phones, smartphones, tablets, e-readers, laptops, desktop computers, gaming consoles, smart TVs)?

o 1-6

o 7-15

o 16 or more

o Not sure

End of Block: Demographics

#### **Appendix B: Post-Program Survey Questions**

Survey Flow

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1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384,
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1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1390, 1391, 1392, 1393, 1394, 1395, 1396, 1397, 1398, 1399, 1400

Block: Password (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If
```

If CODE Contains \${Q58/ChoiceTextEntryValue}

Standard: Introduction (1 Question) Standard: Directions (1 Question)

Standard: Section One: What do you know about the Holocaust? (6 Questions)

Standard: Section Two: Thoughts on the Holocaust (3 Questions) Standard: Section Three: Program Evaluation (5 Questions)

Page Break

Start of Block: Password

Q52 Please type in the classroom code:

\_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Password

Start of Block: Introduction

#### Q17 Letter of Information and Consent

Liberation 75 is a Holocaust remembrance organization. With partial funding from the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, Liberation 75 is interested in gathering data on what students know about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

You are being invited to take this survey because you participated in Liberation 75's Education Days, which took place on April 7th and 8th.

This survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with responding to this survey. Respondents may not directly benefit from participating, but information gathered could help Liberation75 and its partner organizations gain a better understanding of how young adults learn, understand, and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

Responding to this survey is voluntary. Even if you consent to participate, you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the survey at any time by closing your browser. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on you.

All answers will be stored by Liberation75 and used to evaluate the effectiveness of its Education Day programming. Liberation75 does not collect emails or identifying demographic information in the post-conference survey.

Liberation 75 will have access to the survey responses so that we can conduct and analyze the survey. Liberation 75 may share its findings in publications or presentations. If we do, the results will be discussed in the aggregate (as grouped data). Any quotes used from short-answer responses will remain anonymous. A de-identified version of this dataset may be put forth by Liberation 75 for use in future academic studies.

Survey respondents will not be compensated for their participation, but teachers of classrooms that participate in the before-and-after surveys will be entered to win one of two Apple iPads! Do you consent to participate in Liberation75's pre-Education Day survey?

o Yes, I consent to participate in this survey.

o No, I do not wish to participate in this survey.

Skip To: End of Survey If Letter of Information and Consent = No, I do not wish to participate in this survey.

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Directions

O12

Directions

Now that you have attended Education Days, we are going to ask you a couple of questions. Some may be easy for you to answer, but others are meant to be challenging and you may have to guess. That's okay — we are interested in the guesses people make when they do not know the answer to a question. Please don't look up answers you do not know. Instead, please just make your best guess.

We will start with a few questions about the Holocaust.

End of Block: Directions

Start of Block: Section One: What do you know about the Holocaust?
Q27 When did the Holocaust happen? Between
o 1890 and 1910
o 1910 and 1930
o 1930 and 1950
o 1950 and 1970
o Not sure
Page Break
Q28 In total, about how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?
o Approximately 750,000
o Approximately 3 million
o Approximately 6 million
o More than 12 million
o Not sure
Page Break
Q29 How did Adolf Hitler become Chancellor of Germany?
o He was elected.
o He violently overthrew the German government.
o He inherited the position.
o He got the position through agreements with nearby countries.
o Not sure

Q31 What do	you think the word Auschwitz refers to? (Select all that apply)
0	A town in Poland.
0	The site of a military conflict between the Jewish and Nazi army.
0	A Nazi concentration, labour, and/or death camp.
0	A museum about the Holocaust.
0	The location of Nazi headquarters, including Hitler's office.
О	Not sure
Page Break	
Q30 How ma	any Nazi concentration, death, labour, and transit camps were there?
	nan 4 but less than 250
o More th	nan 250 but less than 500
o More th	nan 500 but less than 2500
o More th	nan 2500
o Not sur	e
Page Break	
Q32 Who we	re the targets in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply)
0	Jews
	Roma and Sinti
0	Homosexuals
	Soviets
	Prisoners of War

- Communists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Trade Unionists
- People with Disabilities
- Not sure

End of Block: Section One: What do you know about the Holocaust?

Start of Block: Section Two: Thoughts on the Holocaust

Q33 Which of the following is closest to your view on the Holocaust?

- o The Holocaust happened and the number of Jews who died in it has been fairly described.
- o The Holocaust happened, but the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated.
- o I'm not certain the Holocaust actually happened.
- o Not sure what to answer.

Page Break

Q34 How much does learning about the Holocaust make you...

	Not at all	A little	A lot
Feel sad for the people that were hurt or killed?	0	0	0
Want to learn more about the Holocaust in school?	o	O	o
Want other students to learn about the Holocaust in school?	O	O	o

Want to learn about other genocides in school?	O	0	o
Want to challenge Holocaust denial in society?	O	0	0
Want to fight against antisemitism in society?	O	0	0
Want to fight injustice in society?	o	o	o
Think the Holocaust could happen again?	o	o	o

Q16 What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about Jews on the wall in the bathroom at school? Drag the answers below to rank the responses.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would not respond. It's none of my business what they were doing
\_\_\_\_\_ I would wait until I got home from school and mention it to my parent(s)
\_\_\_\_\_ I would leave the bathroom, go back to class, and tell the teacher
\_\_\_\_\_ I would tell the person to stop what they were doing right then and there

End of Block: Section Two: Thoughts on the Holocaust

Start of Block: Section Three: Program Evaluation

Q65 Now we'll ask you three questions about Liberation75's Education Days program.

0	Heroes of the Holocaust: Celebrating Rescuers Unpacking Hana's Suitcase: Journey through the Brady Family Collection ASK MAX: Join the world premiere beta test of "Dimensions in Testimony" with
0	
	ASK MAX: Join the world premiere beta test of "Dimensions in Testimony" with
0	
	Holocaust Survivor, Max Eisen
0	Cultivating Resilience: Mindful explorations with testimony
0	Q&A with Holocaust Survivor Rina Quint
0	Who is a Jew? Judaism 101 for Holocaust education
0	Lessons and Legacy of the Holocaust
0	Children's Art During the Holocaust
0	Antisemitism and Discrimination Today: How to Respond
0	Virtual Tour of the Anne Frank House
0	One Person Can Make a Difference: The Righteous Among the Nations
0	Reflecting on Resilience and Perseverance through Testimony
0	Antisemitism: Here and Now
0	Past and Present: The Impact of Holocaust Art and Literature
0	Dignity & Rights Virtual Field Trip (Canadian Museum for Human Rights)
0	White Supremacy & Hate in Social Media
0	Antisemitism: You Can Make a Difference
0	Virtual Holocaust tour of the Montreal Holocaust Museum
0	Finding Your Power, Using Your Voice, and Healing the World
0	Survivor Lounges
•	d Selected Choices from "If you can remember, please check the boxes next to the you attended. (Check All That Apply)"
favourite. You Heroe	essions you attended, please rank them in order from your favourite to your least ar favourite should appear at the top. es of the Holocaust: Celebrating Rescuers cking Hana's Suitcase: Journey through the Brady Family Collection

ASK MAX: Join the world premiere beta test of "Dimensions in Testimony" with
Holocaust Survivor, Max Eisen
Cultivating Resilience: Mindful explorations with testimony
Q&A with Holocaust Survivor Rina Quint
Who is a Jew? Judaism 101 for Holocaust education
Lessons and Legacy of the Holocaust
Children's Art During the Holocaust
Antisemitism and Discrimination Today: How to Respond
Virtual Tour of the Anne Frank House
One Person Can Make a Difference: The Righteous Among the Nations
Reflecting on Resilience and Perseverance through Testimony
Antisemitism: Here and Now
Past and Present: The Impact of Holocaust Art and Literature
Dignity & Rights Virtual Field Trip (Canadian Museum for Human Rights)
White Supremacy & Hate in Social Media
Antisemitism: You Can Make a Difference
Virtual Holocaust tour of the Montreal Holocaust Museum
Finding Your Power, Using Your Voice, and Healing the World
Survivor Lounges

Q62 If Education Days happen again in the future, would you attend?

	Yes	No	Not sure
In person	o	O	0
Online	o	o	o

Q61 In your opinion, what would make Education Days even b	etter in the future?
End of Block: Section Three: Program Evaluation	

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## **About the Author**

Dr. Alexis M. Lerner is a political and data scientist who has published several works on the Holocaust, antisemitism, and comparative authoritarianism, particularly in postcommunist Europe and in the post-Soviet region. She currently works as a Presidential Data Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Western Ontario, where she teaches courses on data science and machine learning in support of the university president's cross-campus data literacy initiative. She earned her PhD in Political Science and Jewish Studies from the University of Toronto in 2020. In December 2021, Dr. Lerner will join the United States Naval Academy as an Assistant Professor of Political Science. For more information, see: AlexisLerner.com.