

2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism
Executive Summary



LIBERATION75

Innovation & Collaboration
in Holocaust Education

Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Alexis Lerner, on behalf of Liberation75.
Data collected in 2024. Executive Summary published in 2025.

For more information about this study, contact:

Alexis M. Lerner, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Political Science
The U.S. Naval Academy
ALerner@usna.edu

The analysis expressed is that of the author and does not reflect any official policy or position of the US Navy, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

For more information about Liberation75, contact:

Marilyn Sinclair
Founder
marilyn@liberation75.org

Suggested Citation

Lerner, Alexis M. (2025). “2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism” *Liberation75*. <https://www.liberation75.org/2024survey>.

Abstract

In 2021, Liberation75’s pre/post-treatment survey of 3,593 teens across North America found that one in three respondents believed that the Holocaust was exaggerated, fabricated, or that they were not sure what to think. In response, the Province of Ontario enacted a Holocaust education mandate — the first in Canada — for its approximately 153,000 Grade 6 students (Ontario Data Catalogue 2023) effective September 2023. Liberation75, in collaboration with other Holocaust organizations, partnered with Ontario’s Ministry of Education to support the implementation of this mandate.

As part of this effort, Liberation75 launched an application process through its “Ernie’s Books” initiative, allowing Ontario Grade 6 teachers from public and Catholic schools to apply for free sets of books for their classrooms. The book chosen for the treatment was *To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis* (2011), written by award-winning Canadian author Kathy Kacer and published by Second Story Press as part of their Holocaust Remembrance Program for Young Readers. Liberation75 received applications from Grade 6 teachers from all 72 school boards across the province and provided 26,000 copies of the book.

To assess the effectiveness of this educational intervention, pre- and post-treatment surveys were administered to participating classrooms. The pre-treatment survey was completed by 11,266 students, and the post-treatment survey was completed by 5,101 students. These surveys aimed to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to the Holocaust, antisemitism, and discrimination.

Key findings demonstrated improvements in students’ understanding of the Holocaust, with the proportion of students affirming the historical accuracy of the Holocaust rising from 67% to 81%. Additionally, students demonstrated substantial empathy, with 87% expressing sadness for those affected by the Holocaust, and many showing a desire to combat antisemitism and hate in contemporary Canada. These results suggest that the Holocaust educational intervention not only enhanced student knowledge but also fostered empathy, social responsibility, and a commitment to moral action.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
List of Figures	5
List of Tables	6
Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	8
Background	8
Topline Results from 2021 Survey	9
Setting the Stage for the 2024 Survey	12
Teacher Registration with Ernie’s Books	14
Pre-Treatment Survey	15
Demographics	16
Ethnic Identity	16
Religious Identity	17
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	18
Pre-Treatment Survey Topline Results	21
Pre-Treatment Survey: Who is a Jew	22
Pre-Treatment Survey: What is Antisemitism	23
Pre-Treatment Survey: Discrimination and Action	23
Pre-Treatment Survey: Beliefs about Antisemitism	26
Pre-Treatment Survey: Understanding about the Holocaust	28
Pre-Treatment Survey: Beliefs about the Holocaust	31
Post-Treatment Survey	33
Assessing Engagement with the Treatment	35
Post-Treatment Survey Topline Results	37
Post-Treatment Survey: Holocaust	37
Post-Treatment Survey: Discrimination and Action	38
Post-Treatment Survey: Antisemitism in Ontario	39
Post-Treatment Survey: Necessary Next Steps (According to Grade 6 Students)	40
Limitations of 2024 Pre/Post-Treatment Surveys	41
Conclusion	43
Appendix A: Pre-Treatment Survey Questions	44
Appendix B: Post-Treatment Survey Questions	50
Sources Cited	53
About the Author	54

List of Figures

Figure One: What level of knowledge about the Holocaust do your students have?

Figure Two: With which ethnic group(s) do you identify?

Figure Three: What is your current religion, if any?

Figure Four: Do you have a parent or caregiver at home that attended college?

Figure Five: If you had to guess, how many books would you say you have in your house?

Figure Six: If you had to guess, how many digital devices do you have at home?

Figure Seven: What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about a Jewish kid on the wall in the bathroom at school [presumably because they were Jewish]?

Figure Eight: What would you do if you saw another student making fun of someone for being Muslim during recess at school?

Figure Nine: If you can remember, where did you see a swastika?

Figure Ten: How often do you think Jewish people experience antisemitism in Ontario?

Figure Eleven: If you can remember, where did you learn about the Holocaust?

Figure Twelve: Word Cloud created from student free responses on where they heard about the Holocaust, other than through the treatment

Figure Thirteen: Word Cloud created from student free responses on how to define the Holocaust

Figure Fourteen: Who were the victims in the Holocaust?

Figure Fifteen: Word Cloud created from student free responses on why they thought other Grade 6 students would enjoy the book

Figure Sixteen: How are you filling this out?

List of Tables

Table One: Do you have any Jewish friends or family members?

Table Two: How did seeing a swastika make you feel?

Table Three: Do you think the Holocaust could happen again?

Table Four: This year, you read *To Hope and Back*. If you can remember, did you do any other learning about the Holocaust this year?

Table Five: Which character in the book do you admire the most?

Table Six: Who were the victims in the Holocaust?

Table Seven: Which of the following is closest to your view on the Holocaust?

Table Eight: How often do you think Jews experience antisemitism in Ontario?

Table Nine: When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?

Table Ten: After learning about the Holocaust this year in Social Studies, I feel...

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support of many organizations and individuals, including: Marilyn Sinclair, Founder of Liberation75; Julia Tomasi, Research Coordinator, and Amy Kohn, Programming Coordinator, at Liberation75; Cindy Kozierok, Education Chair, Liberation75, Doctoral Candidate at Jewish Theological Seminary, and teacher at Toronto District School Board; Corinne Promislow, former Education Co-Chair, Liberation75 and Principal; the research support team at Qualtrics; 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 Grade 6 students understand and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism today. The Ernie's Books initiative would not be possible without the partnership of Margie Wolfe and Second Story Press.

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 Lisa Yost and Kathy Kacer.

Liberation75 is sincerely grateful to Ontario Minister Stephen Lecce for his commitment to bringing mandatory Holocaust and antisemitism education into the Grade 6 curriculum. His efforts have set an important precedent, inspiring other provinces to consider similar initiatives.

We extend our appreciation to the Ontario Government and private donors for supporting our educational initiatives, which empower Grade 6 teachers to effectively bring this important and challenging subject into their classrooms.

Introduction

Background

In the spring of 2021, Liberation75 ran a pre/post-treatment survey on 3,593 students across Canada and the United States.¹ Our goal was to understand what students in Grades 6 through 12 knew and believed about the Holocaust and antisemitism (Lerner 2023). We gained several important insights from this research, which ultimately led to the introduction of province-wide Holocaust education mandates for Ontario students in Grade 6 Social Studies in 2023 and new and expanded mandatory learning about the Holocaust in the compulsory Grade 10 history course in September 2025 (Ontario 2024).

Holocaust education will also become mandatory in most other provinces and territories across Canada, including New Brunswick in 2024, and in British Columbia, Yukon, and Saskatchewan in 2025. Alberta and Manitoba committed to the mandates but are still determining the details.² These mandates are important because they establish continuity for this learning in a time when antisemitism is particularly high (Statistics Canada reported a 71% increase from 2022 to 2023, for a total of 900 crimes reported to the police), and when access to Holocaust survivors and face-to-face secondhand witnessing becomes increasingly impossible.³

Each province and territory will implement these policy measures in different ways. Some focus on younger students in Grades 6 and 7, while others apply to older students in Grade 10. Likewise, some mandates apply to social studies' curriculum, while others are designed for history classrooms. Given this variation, school boards are challenged to identify curricular interventions that can be used to teach this material in an effective and age appropriate way, without placing undue burden on educators to learn an entirely new topic.

Teacher preparation for the Grade 6 Holocaust mandate in Ontario is currently being examined, with a forthcoming study by Kozierok that presents teachers' perceptions of what is needed for successful implementation of the Social Studies expectations. Preliminary findings highlight educators' commitment to teaching about the Holocaust, but underscore the need for their

¹ In the 2021 Executive Summary, we expand upon the relationship between US and Canadian responses, with a specific focus on the large Florida contingent of responses. Florida began its K-12 Holocaust education mandate in 1994. At the time of our 2021 survey, Ontario had not yet announced a mandate. Thus, it was worthwhile to compare the answers from these two groups. That said, in this 2024 Executive Summary, we focus only on the Canadian responses from 2021 and do not discuss those from the United States.

² Quebec, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut have yet to make a commitment or announcement regarding Holocaust education mandates.

³ See JNS 2024 and Statistics Canada 2024.

employers to provide substantial curricular support, including classroom resources and professional development on best practices.⁴

Moreover, even when mandates are created, they are rarely enforced consistently and evenly — with government actors relying on individual teachers and principals to interpret and carry out the mandates. This creates a consequential gap that Holocaust education organizations must step in to address, playing a vital role by providing educators with the resources, professional development, and support needed to teach about the Holocaust in meaningful and age-appropriate ways.

Topline Results from 2021 Survey

The results of the 2021 survey did not only influence policy across Canada, but also shaped the crafting and implementation of the 2024 iteration of the survey (Ontario.ca 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to outline the topline findings from 2021, prior to sharing the trends and outliers from the 2024 pre/post-treatment survey.⁵

On April 7th and 8th, 2021, Liberation75 hosted a two-day online symposium called *Liberation75 Education Days*. 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. An estimated 13,500 students participated in this two-day event.

While Liberation75 sent individualized program invitations to every school board across Canada, as well as to a number of teacher listservs in both Canada and the United States, participation in the event was entirely optional. When teachers registered their classrooms for the event, they were guided to a survey, in which they were asked to self-report on questions such as how long they had been teaching at the grade level where they were currently teaching, whether they had taught the Holocaust or related topics (e.g., genocide, antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, human rights, indigenous/First Nations topics, bullying), and their perception of student exposure to Holocaust education.⁶

⁴ The authors thank Cindy Kozierok for this contribution.

⁵ Select passages from this section can be found in the original Executive Summary, located online at Liberation75.org/Survey.

⁶ The content of the teacher survey can be found in the 2021 Executive Summary (Lerner 2023).

The 2021 pre-treatment survey was then distributed to each classroom teacher, to facilitate completion among their students.⁷ This survey garnered 3,593 individual student responses from a total of 338 classrooms. Of these, 266 came from Canadian classrooms, 64 from American classrooms, and 8 from unspecified classrooms. These students were almost entirely from Grades 6 through 12, with the majority in Grade Six (23.08%), Grade Seven (14.79%), and Grade Eight (28.11%).⁸ This sample population varied substantially in all categories: ethno-racial, religious, linguistic, geographic, and socio-economic.⁹

From the 2021 pre-treatment survey, we learned that 69.3% of respondents could correctly define a ‘Jew’ ($N = 3,593$).¹⁰ This meant not only correctly identifying that being Jewish meant belonging to a particular ethno-religious group, but also the rejection of myopic beliefs about the minority population, for example, that they are always from Poland and Germany (dismissing, for example, Persian Jews, Mountain Jews, or Yemeni Jews), that they always wear *yarmulkes* on their heads (leaving out the majority of Jewish women and non-observant Jews who would not generally wear these ritual items), or that they “don’t like Christmas” (an overgeneralization that inevitably begets both misunderstanding and exclusion). In addition, we determined that just over half of respondents on the pre-treatment survey correctly defined antisemitism as the hatred of Jewish people, just because they are Jews ($N = 2,875$; 53.98%).¹¹

When we asked respondents to share whether they ever saw or heard something that they believed to be antisemitic, 42% responded in the affirmative ($N = 2,709$), providing explicit examples of witnessing jokes about killing Jews, celebrations of terror attacks on Jewish communities, antisemitic remarks by athletes and celebrities, and a general torrent of hate speech online. We found this result surprising because our respondents, who were on average only 13 years old, indicated in their responses that hateful actions and speech were already permeating the minds and attitudes of young people. This result is further notable, given the small

⁷ The text of our anonymity statement, our attention to the protection of student information, and the full survey can be found in the 2021 Executive Summary.

⁸ A much smaller proportion of respondents came from high school classrooms (23.68% from grades 9 through 12), college-level classes (0.59%), and teachers attending without their students (2.66%). An additional 7.10% of teachers surveyed incorrectly specified or declined to specify the grade levels of their classrooms upon registration.

⁹ Each question’s wording as well as the full demographic breakdown of each question’s response can be found in the 2021 Executive Summary.

¹⁰ The letter N in statistical notation represents sample size. This number changes from question to question to reflect when respondents skipped questions or left the survey early. As a result, the percentage provided in the text is related to a certain question and its number of observations.

¹¹ A large portion of respondents (30.05%) conflated the term ‘antisemitism’ with the term ‘semitic’, 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.

percentage of the overall population composed of Jewish people (less than 2% nationally in both the United States and Canada).

We then presented respondents with a hypothetical scenario in which they observed a peer drawing a swastika — widely understood to be a symbol of hate in the North American, 21st century context — in a private space on school grounds, and asked students how they might respond. Students had 4 choices available: (1) To refrain from action altogether; (2) to tell an adult outside of the school setting; (3) to tell an adult inside of the school setting; (4) to confront the person directly and immediately. In the 2021 pre-treatment 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.¹²

Having gathered information on what students knew and believed about antisemitism, as well as how they might respond to antisemitic action in a hypothetical scenario, we turned toward Holocaust knowledge with basic questions about the number of victims, the general timeline, and the scope of the genocide. Student scores varied on these questions, and as expected, correct answers increased across all questions following the educational treatment. That said, it is important to recall that the mean of our distribution was around 13.5 years old for the pre-treatment survey; it should not come as a surprise for a middle school-aged child to have imperfect Holocaust knowledge, as the majority of students in this age bracket have not yet experienced formal learning on the topic. After all, when asked about preexisting Holocaust knowledge on a 2021 teacher survey, 18.4% of respondents stated that the students in their classroom had ‘almost none’ ($N = 338$).

After assessing *what* students seemed to know, on average, about the Holocaust, we concluded the 2021 pre-treatment survey by asking students whether they believed that the Holocaust happened and that the number of Jews who died in it has been fairly described. Of the 2,784 respondents to this question, 67.10% agreed that it happened as reported and that the number has been fairly described. However, 7.33% of respondents reported feeling that the Holocaust was an exaggerated or fabricated event and 2.87% responded that they were not sure if it actually happened at all. An additional 22.70% reported that they did not know how to answer.

The social desirability bias is important in this response, as students are likely to provide an answer that they feel would complement that of their peers and not label them an outsider (Edwards 1957). Therefore, according to the social desirability bias, a student might answer that the Holocaust *did* happen even if they remain uncertain on this matter, to avoid appearing

¹² We chose to ask this prior to asking questions about the Holocaust as to avoid influencing students to provide a particular response, though of course the complete absence of bias in survey design is difficult to achieve.

intolerant. As a result, the number of respondents stating that the Holocaust was exaggerated or fabricated may be larger than what is captured in these results.

After the *Education Days* program, we sent the post-treatment survey to each classroom, for teachers to distribute to their students individually. We assigned unique classroom codes to link pre-and post-treatment responses while ensuring student anonymity. A total of 848 students responded to the post-treatment survey.

While this response rate was small and statistically unremarkable, we found several conclusions that would inspire future research. Namely, in the post-treatment survey, students showed lower rates of Holocaust questioning or overt denial ($N = 681$). In addition, after learning about the Holocaust, the self-reported likelihood that a student would intervene directly went up from 49% to 58%, and the number of students who said they would ‘do nothing’ decreased from 16% to 13%. These results suggest that Holocaust education may be linked to an increased willingness to intervene when students witness intolerance. And, as previously mentioned, student knowledge about the Holocaust increased on all factual questions, following the educational treatment, pointing to the effectiveness of educational interventions.

Setting the Stage for the 2024 Survey

In 2021, we filled a unique gap in how the public was evaluated in regard to the Holocaust and antisemitism. Prior to our study, scholars had already surveyed Jewish adults in Canada (Brym et al 2018), Jewish adults in the United States (PEW 2013’s *Portrait of Jewish Americans*; PEW 2020’s *Portrait of Jewish Americans*), and Jewish teens across both countries (Levites and Sayfan 2018). Other organizations moved beyond the Jewish subgroup, seeking to know more about how a general population of respondents felt about the Holocaust and antisemitism in the United States (Alper et al 2019; Claims Conference 2018) and Canada (Claims Conference 2018). And while Alper et al (2020) published a report on general youth understanding of the Holocaust for 1,811 respondents aged 13-17, this report is limited to respondents in the United States. From among these recent surveys, we identified a scholarly gap; our study — the *2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism* — filled this gap by focusing heavily on a general population of Canadian teens.

Since the publication of our 2021 Executive Summary, new research has been conducted and published. Several studies focused on the impact of war in Gaza on attitudes toward antisemitism and Israel, including Rapoport and Sciupac’s parallel surveys of American Jews and the general public on antisemitism (2023). Manchester ran a similar dual focus-type study in 2024, seeking to assess the general population’s sentiments as well as the needs of local Jewish communities across North America. Also in 2024, the Association for Canadian Studies ran a survey of Holocaust knowledge on the general population in Canada (according to the study, 63% of Ontario respondents believe antisemitism to be a problem). The Anti-Defamation League has run

new iterations of its GLOBAL-100 Survey of antisemitism and the Claims Conference conducted its 8-country Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Index in 2024.

Other scholars have turned their attention to the tense political climate on college and university campuses across North America. For example, Shenhav-Goldberg and Kopstein surveyed UC-Irvine students on their attitudes toward antisemitism and Israel in 2020, and ran a follow-up study of student attitudes on multiple UC campuses in 2024.¹³ Robert Brym ran a similar survey on the attitudes of university students in Canada toward these topics (2024).

Given the promising results of the initial survey and the subsequent introduction of mandates, we sought to evaluate their programmatic impact on student learning and attitudes in 2024. In particular, the *2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism* evaluates whether post-mandate approaches and curricula have proven to be effective in not only teaching factual information but also impacting youth perspectives on discrimination. In the following document, we outline the design and implementation of the 2024 iteration of the pre/post-treatment survey, followed by a discussion of topline results in both the pre-treatment survey and the post-treatment survey. We conclude with a discussion of what Grade 6 students identify as ‘next steps’ in Canada.

¹³ The 2024 iteration of Shen-hav and Kopstein’s study was also authored by Ana Schugurensky. This iteration was sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League.

2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism

Having outlined the background and conditions that inspired this work, we now discuss the application of the treatment as well as the topline results for both the pre- and post-treatment survey.

Teacher Registration with Ernie’s Books

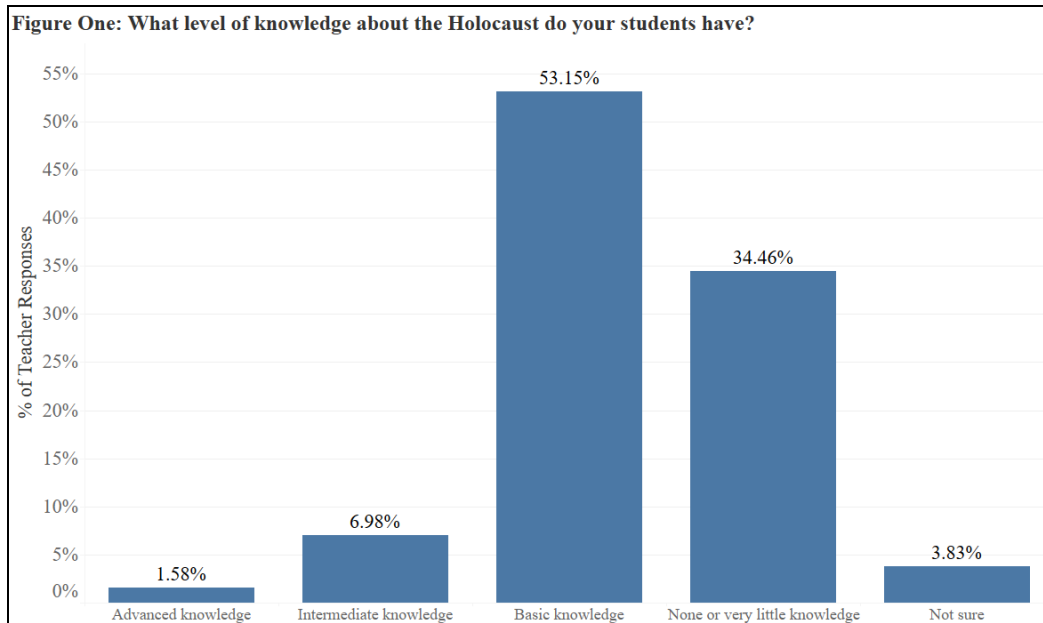
As a part of its 2023 ‘Ernie’s Books Pilot Project’ to support the Grade 6 curriculum, Liberation75 sent 26,000 copies of Kathy Kacer’s book, *To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis*, to 952 grade six classrooms across Ontario.¹⁴ *To Hope and Back* tells the story of the ship St. Louis, which was denied port in Cuba, the United States, and Canada in 1939, and forced to return to Europe with its refugee passengers, many of whom died in the Holocaust (Second Story Press). The story is told from the perspective of two children who were passengers on the ship, and is based on a true story. This book was carefully selected for Grade 6 Ontario educators due to “its ability to provide sensitive, age-appropriate historical context for the new Grade 6 social studies curriculum expectations related to the Holocaust and Jewish history in Canada” (Liberation75.org/Ernie).¹⁵

Teachers received these books in December 2023 by applying to the Ernie’s Books program, which was designed to support classroom teachers with educational resources on the Holocaust, including books, live talks by authors, special events, and lesson plans.¹⁶ Communication about the program was distributed through school boards, superintendents, principals, Liberation75 partners, teacher unions, social media and e-blast newsletters. When teachers applied, they filled out a Google Form with information about their school, how they planned to use the book in the classroom, and their assessment of their students’ pre-existing level of Holocaust knowledge. Teachers were also required to agree to participate in both surveys.

¹⁴ The cost of purchasing these books was significantly discounted by Second Story Press. Additional funds were donated by unnamed donors.

¹⁵ As a side-note of interest, in November 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “delivered a formal apology in the House of Commons for the fate regarding the MS *St. Louis* and its passengers, their families, and Jewish communities in Canada and around the world.” (Prime Minister of Canada, 2018).

¹⁶ According to the Liberation75.org/Ernie website, the Ernie’s Books program was named in loving memory of Ernie Weiss, a Holocaust survivor and educator.



In Figure One, we show the self-reported levels of Holocaust knowledge for these classrooms. Of the 952 classroom educators that filled out the pre-program teacher survey, the majority self-reported a basic or lower level of knowledge about the Holocaust. In particular, 53.15% stated that their students had a basic level of knowledge and 34.46% identified their students' level of knowledge at 'none or very little knowledge'. Only 6.98% of teachers said their students possessed an intermediate level of knowledge and 1.58% of teachers said their students had an advanced level of knowledge. These numbers suggest that Holocaust education is filling an educational gap that students currently have, according to the adults that observe them in the classroom on a day-to-day basis.

Pre-Treatment Survey

A condition for receiving the books was for classrooms to participate in two surveys related to the Holocaust and antisemitism — a pre-treatment and a post-treatment survey. We distributed the pre-treatment survey to teachers on January 25th, 2024 via email. The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics platform. In this email, we made explicit that the purpose of this survey was to evaluate the success of the Ernie's Books program by learning what Grade 6 students knew and thought about the topic before and after the Holocaust unit. We also reminded teachers that students have the right to skip individual questions or withdraw from the survey altogether at any time by closing their browser. Teachers had the period from January 25-February 8 to complete the pre-treatment survey.¹⁷ We received a total of 11,266 completed surveys at the pre-treatment stage.

¹⁷ To accommodate last minute classroom issues shared by teachers, we accepted responses to the pre-treatment survey until February 14th.

We began the pre-treatment survey by asking students to report their teacher's name from a drop-down menu. This way the student was able to remain anonymous while we could link the student responses to their classroom, a school, a school board, and teacher responses in the initial registration survey. This would also allow us to keep identifying information separate while linking pre-treatment and post-treatment responses to each other for comparison.¹⁸

Demographics

We included three demographic categories of questions in the pre-treatment survey: Ethnic Identity, Religion, and Socioeconomic Status (SES). We share those trends in the following paragraphs.

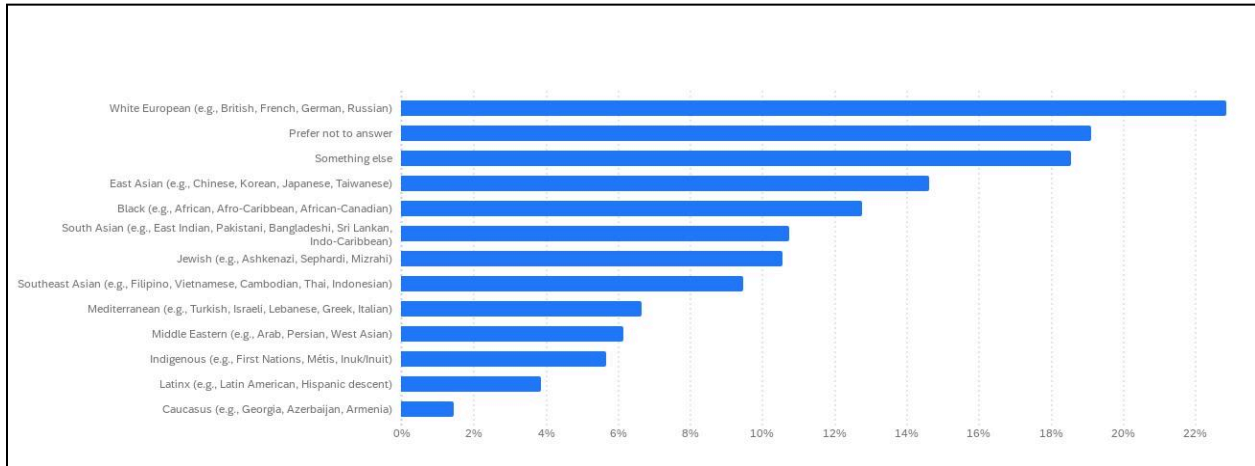
Ethnic Identity

In 2021, we asked students to self-report their ethnic identity. This question type was interesting, as the responses varied so widely from civic identifications (e.g., Canadian) to ethnic (e.g., Persian) and even colors (e.g., White, Black, Brown, or Yellow). Others even commented on the texture of their hair or the food that they ate at home as some indication of their ethnic identity. However, the open-ended nature of that question limited our ability to use those responses in our analyses. Therefore, in 2024, we added structure to this question by offering 11 categories of ethnic identity, as well as an option to fill-in-the-blank with an unlisted ethnic identity.

Many of these categories were developed through conversations with teachers and classrooms, as well as our familiarity with the province and its demographic trends. For example, we knew from informal conversations that those identifying with the Caucasus did not want to be confused with European, Mediterranean, or Middle Eastern identities, despite their geographic proximity to these regions. Respondents were also permitted to choose as many options as they desired. The 11 options are shown in Figure Two below.

¹⁸ See Lerner 2021a and Lerner 2021b on the ethics of conducting methodologically quantitative research on topics related to the Holocaust.

Figure Two: With which ethnic group(s) do you identify? (Select all that apply.) N = 8,758



As shown in Figure Two, of the 8,758 students that responded to this question, the largest category identified as ‘White European’, which included British, French, German, and Russian (23% or 2,003 respondents). Nineteen percent wrote in an unnamed ethnicity and an additional 19% selected the “Prefer not to answer” option. After these, 15% (1,281 respondents) stated that they were East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese); 13% (1,120 respondents) identified as Black (including African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian sub-groups); and 11% (943 respondents) checked the box for South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean). These trends seem in line with 2021 Canadian Census Data results (Stat Can 2021).

A substantial number of respondents identified with smaller ethnic groups. Eleven percent of respondents identified as Jewish (e.g., Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi);¹⁹ nine percent as Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian); seven percent as Mediterranean (e.g., Turkish, Israeli, Lebanese, Greek, Italian); six percent as Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit); six percent as Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian); Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent); and one percent from the Caucasus (e.g., Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia).

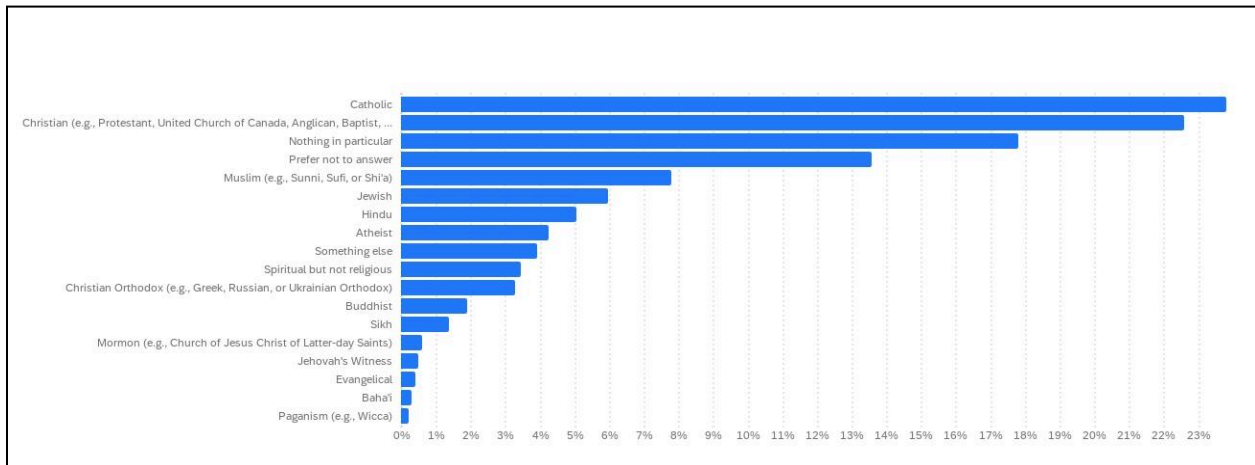
Religious Identity

We also provided respondents with a list of religious identifications to choose from, including 14 preset options (e.g., Christian Orthodox, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Baha’i, Atheist), as well as the options “Nothing in particular,” “Spiritual but not religious,” and “Prefer not to answer,” as

¹⁹ The high percentage of Jewish respondents is also in line with our 2021 results, as the survey includes districts with high percentages of Jewish students, including Toronto and York (Lerner 2021).

shown in Figure Three. Respondents were permitted to select all that apply. We also presented students with the option to write-in their religious affiliation if it was not included on the list.

Figure Three: What is your current religion, if any? (Select all that apply.) $N = 8,822$



Of the 8,822 respondents to this question, about half answered some subgroup of Christianity with 24% identifying as Catholic, 23% answering Christian (e.g., Protestant, United Church of Canada, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Nondenominational), and three percent answering that they practiced Christian Orthodoxy (e.g., Greek, Russian, or Ukrainian Orthodox). Eighteen percent answered “Nothing in particular” and 14% said they “Prefer not to answer.” Eight percent identified as Muslim (e.g., Sunni, Sufi, or Shi’a), five percent answered that they were Hindu, four percent Atheist, two percent Buddhist, and one percent Sikh. Six percent of respondents answered that they were religiously Jewish — five percent lower than those that identify as ethnically Jewish.²⁰

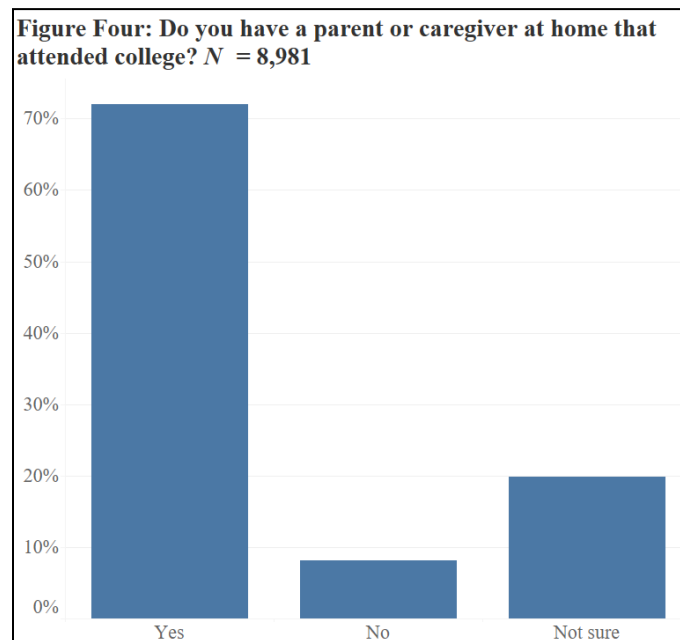
Socioeconomic Status (SES)

We determined the traditional measurement of SES (e.g., asking to report annual income, profession, or highest level of education) to be inappropriate for Grade 6 students as they may not know the answers to this question or may not feel comfortable disclosing the answers. Others, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)’s standardized testing, attempt to measure SES by asking about the number of books in one’s childhood home, with the understanding that literacy correlates with social mobility or cultural capital (Bourdieu

²⁰ A person with a religious Jewish identity is more likely to practice Judaism as a faith, adhering to its teachings, traditions, and rituals. Alternatively, someone that identifies as ethnically Jewish is more likely to connect with other Jews as members of a cultural or ethnic group, regardless of religious belief or practice. It is possible to identify as both ethnically and religiously Jewish, as well as one or the other only. The dual aspect of Jewish identity (both ethnicity and religion) allows for a diverse and inclusive understanding of what it means to be Jewish, though more observant individuals understand Jewish identity to pass through matrilineal descent.

1985). Notably, the technological shift of the 21st century complicates this proxy, as physical books are no longer the only avenue of literacy, and therefore may no longer be an adequate measurement of SES.

In response to these concerns, we measure SES through three proxies. First, we ask if student respondents have a parent or caregiver at home who pursued higher education. A degree typically correlates with a higher paying and more stable job, the capacity to help with homework, and the ability to provide a home setting that supports learning (e.g., access to resources, books, college preparation culture at home). This is different from asking the parent’s highest level of education, which the student might not know. It also acknowledges that not all students live with two parents or even one parent, but instead with a caregiver, and that a variety of caring adult figures in a child’s life can influence their lifestyle and perspective on the world.

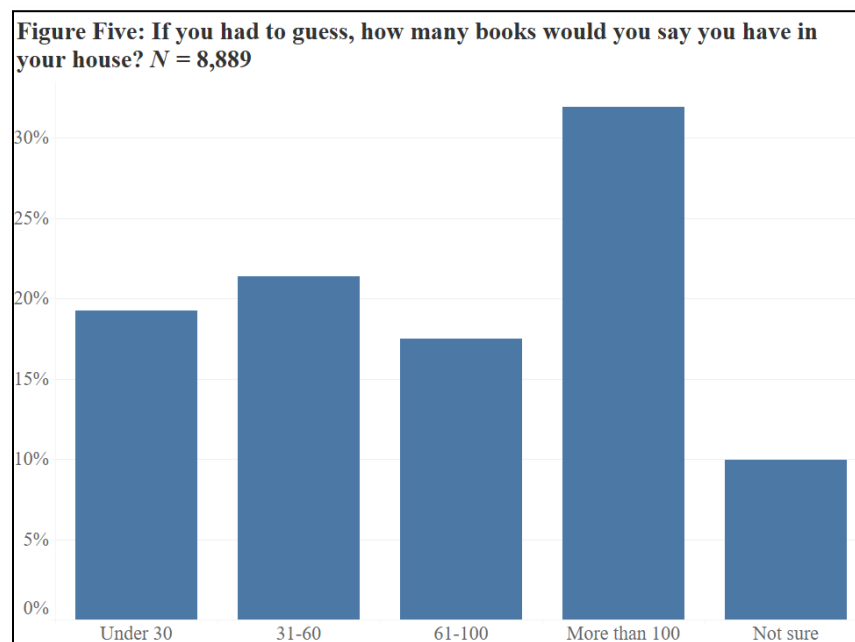


In Figure Four, we show the distribution of responses for 8,981 respondents to this question. Seventy-two percent of respondents answered yes — confirming that they did have a caregiver at home that attended college. Alternatively, 8.16% of respondents answered no, that they did not have a parent at home that attended college. An additional 19.84% of respondents said they were ‘Not Sure’ if they had a parent at home that attended college, a response we expected, given the age of our respondents.

We then wanted to test a new measurement for SES. We asked respondents: “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)?” However, we also wanted to know

how well this variable correlated with the traditional measurement of SES. Therefore, we also asked: “If you had to guess, how many books would you say you have in your house?”

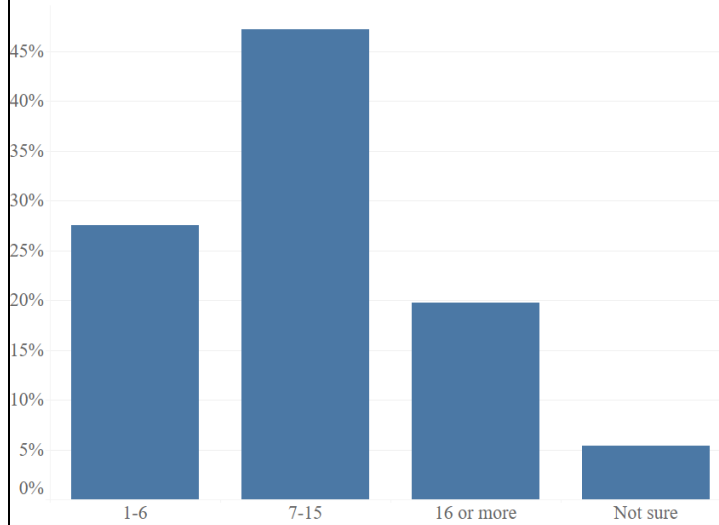
Figure Five shows that nearly one-in-three respondents said that they have ‘Over 100’ books at home ($N = 8,889$). Seventeen percent said they had approximately ‘61-100’ books at home, 21% said they had ‘31-60’ books at home, and 19% said they had ‘Under 30’ books at home.



Alternatively, Figure Six shows the distribution of responses when asked how many devices one estimates that they have at home. Twenty-eight percent of respondents said that they had ‘1-6’ devices at home, 47% said they had between ‘7-15’ devices at home, and 20% said they had ‘16 or more’ devices at home ($N = 8,361$).²¹

²¹ We elected to start this scale at one instead of at zero because, even individuals experiencing homelessness are understood to, on average, have a telephone. In fact, Hunter et al (2020) identified that 94% of unhoused people in the United States were likely to have a telephone (which served as a necessary lifetime).

Figure Six: 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)? *N* = 8,361



We assess that both books and devices measure similar phenomena — access to research tools, a home setting that fosters inquiry, and indication of disposable income to purchase these items. However, some new information may be communicated by the introduction of this new proxy. First, it is plausible that devices indicate some greater flexibility or advancement in our learning, as we live amidst the near-constant development of new technologies. Second, devices, on average, cost a great deal more than books (e.g., a book may cost \$29.99 but an iPad could be \$850 by low estimates for both), indicating a greater amount of disposable income. As a result, devices may be a better proxy for SES as these costly items — iPhones, televisions, gaming systems, iPads, computers, and laptops — are likely to be owned by someone with a stable and well-paying job.

Overall, we determine that our respondents vary widely in ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status. Further, we have respondents from every single School Board — both public and Catholic — in Ontario, which means that we are able to identify trends spatially as well as demographically.

Pre-Treatment Survey Topline Results

Our 2024 pre-treatment survey questions were similar, overall, to those we asked in the pre-treatment survey in 2021. This was largely by design, so we could maximize our comparative potential. We offer such simple comparisons in the following pre-treatment topline section, acknowledging any impediments of this comparison in the ‘Limitations’ section of this document. The thematic categories on the pre-treatment survey may be familiar: Who is a Jew; What is Antisemitism; Discrimination and Action; Beliefs about Antisemitism; Understanding about the Holocaust; Beliefs about the Holocaust.²² These contain many questions with similar themes, improved for clarity, accuracy, and, in select cases, expanded to apply to new scenarios. When questions overlap between the 2021 and 2024 pre-treatment surveys, we compare the results.

Pre-Treatment Survey: Who is a Jew

When asked what qualities make someone Jewish, 87% of student respondents were able to correctly identify that Judaism is an ethno-religious group ($N = 9,450$). This percentage of correct responses is much higher in 2024 than it was in 2021, when only 69.28% of respondents correctly identified that Judaism is an ethno-religious group. One way this question was altered in 2024 was to include the option “They are always from Israel.” While some biblical scholars might say Jewish people were all together in ancient times on Mount Sinai, the contemporary perspective is that Jewish people come from a variety of geographic locations, including Israel, but also Yemen, Nigeria, India, Iraq, France, and Greece, among many other places around the world. In 2024, 9% of respondents incorrectly stated that Jews are always from Israel.

We also sought to identify not only whether someone was Jewish themselves, but also whether they were situated within a Jewish community through their relatives or social networks, with the understanding that *knowing* Jewish people might impact responses on antisemitism and the Holocaust. As shown in Table One, the vast majority of respondents either do not know anyone that is Jewish or are not sure if they know anyone that is Jewish (39% said they know someone that is Jewish and 35% said they were not sure if they know anyone that is Jewish).

Both of these numbers are higher in 2024 than they were in 2021, however this is reasonable as the 2021 survey pulled so heavily from the Greater Toronto Area, whereas the 2024 survey was distributed to each school board across Ontario. Likewise, the percentage of students that reported they were Jewish, had Jewish family members, or had Jewish friends also dropped in the 2024 iteration, likely also due to the survey’s improved sampling.²³ As previously mentioned,

²² We renamed the section ‘Discrimination and Action’ as the 2024 survey asked not only about antisemitism but also discriminatory behavior targeting other minorities.

²³ In 2021, 37.95% of respondents reported having Jewish friends and 16.22% said they had Jewish family members.

it is interesting that only six percent of respondents answered “Yes, I’m Jewish” to this question, while 11% of respondents reported that they were ethnically Jewish.

Table One: Do you have any Jewish friends or family members? (Select all that apply.)
N = 9,494

	Percentage	Count
Yes, I’m Jewish	6%	539
Yes, I have Jewish family members (for example, a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, or a cousin)	7%	703
Yes, some of my friends are Jewish	26%	2,502
Maybe, I’m not sure if I know anyone that is Jewish	35%	3,306
No, I don’t know anyone that is Jewish	39%	3,669

Pre-Treatment Survey: What is Antisemitism

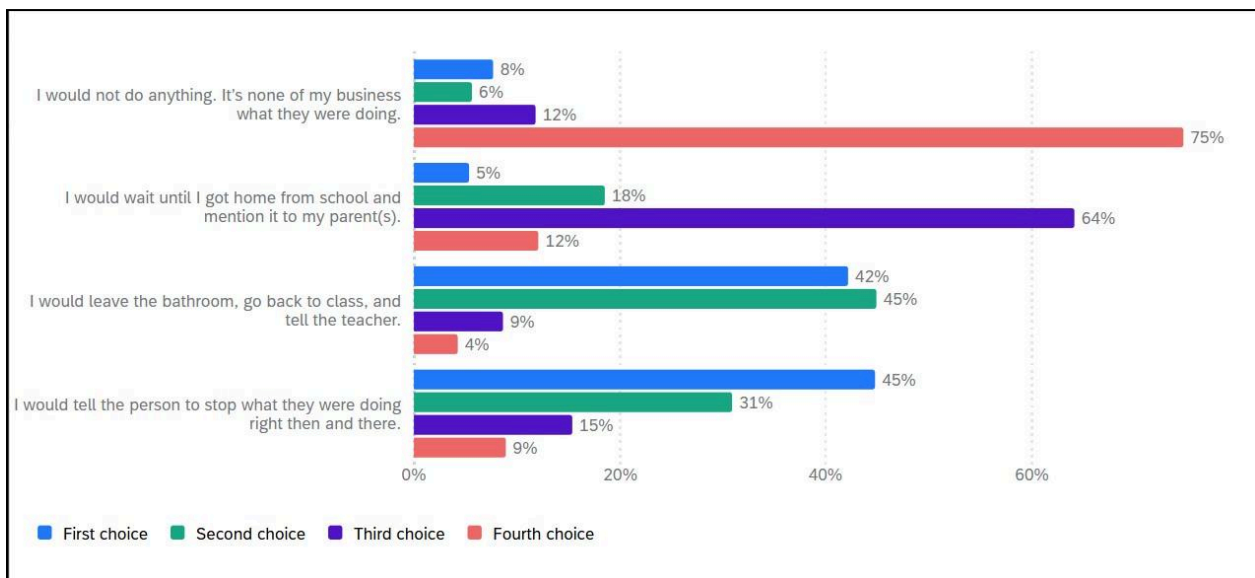
When we asked respondents to define antisemitism, 55% correctly answered, “When someone hates Jewish people, just because they are Jews” (*N* = 9,256). This is nearly exactly the same percentage that was correct in the 2021 pre-treatment survey (53.98%). An inversion of antisemitism and philosemitism occurred, with some students mistakenly defining antisemitism as a preference for Jews. This number increased from 4.49% in 2021, with the same caveat that the improved sample in 2024 is likely responsible. Respondents that believed antisemitism was directed toward all Jews and Muslims, “just because they are minorities,” also decreased substantially, from 30.05% in 2021 to 18% in 2024. That said, a conflation of antisemitism and general xenophobia, bigotry, or intolerance seems to increase from 11.48% in 2021 to 18% in 2024. An inability to define antisemitism correctly likely explains the majority of these incorrect results.

Pre-Treatment Survey: Discrimination and Action

In both the 2021 and 2024 pre-treatment surveys, we asked students how they would respond if they saw a classmate writing something hateful about a Jewish peer on the wall of a private space (e.g., a restroom) at school. Students were asked to rank four alternatives of action: to confront the classmate directly and immediately; to tell an adult at school (e.g., a teacher or an administrator); to tell an adult outside of school (e.g., a parent or caregiver); or to refrain from

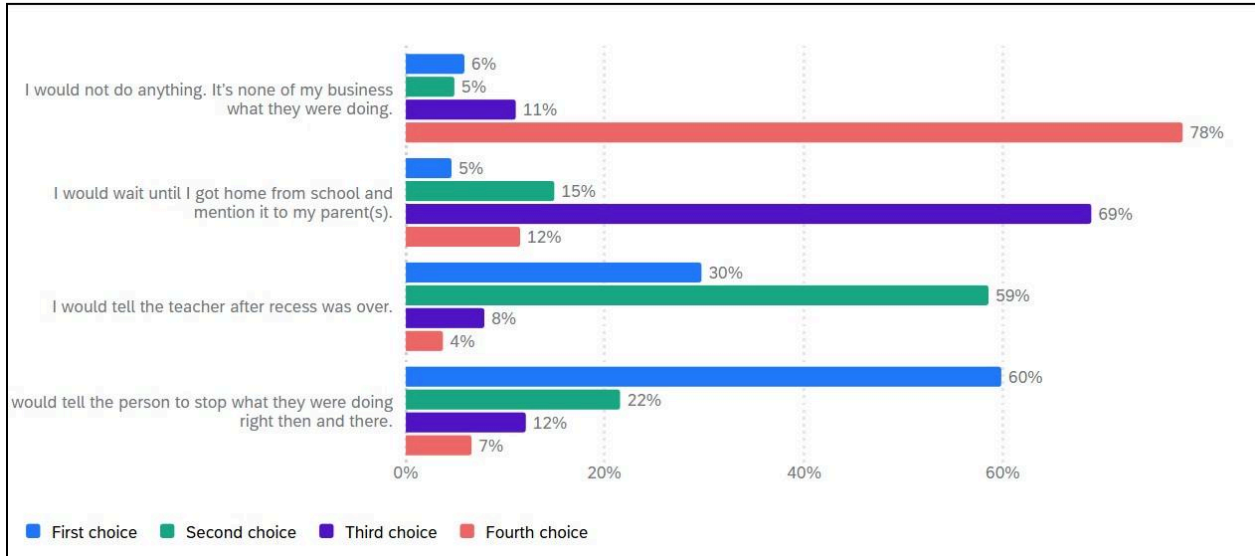
action altogether because it was “none of my business.” In 2021, 49% of students ranked direct confrontation first, 36% said they would prioritize telling an adult either within or outside of the school setting, and 16% stated that their first choice was not to get involved. As shown in Figure Seven, in 2024, 45% of students ranked confrontation first, 42% said they would leave the perpetrator and go find a teacher to tell, only five percent answered that their first choice of action was to tell their parent or caregiver, and eight percent preferred to not get involved ($N = 9,064$). This large decrease in prioritizing inaction indicates that younger students lack tolerance for discrimination, a promising finding even before the treatment of Holocaust education is introduced.

Figure Seven: What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about a Jewish kid on the wall in the bathroom at school [presumably because they were Jewish]? You can drag the four answers below. Please drag them to rank the responses in order from 1-4, with 1 being something you would most likely do and 4 being something you would be least likely to do. $N = 9,064$



We were curious if this result would change if the target’s identity changed. We altered the scenario to a hypothetical recess, where a Muslim student was being bullied for their identity. As shown in Figure Eight, 60% ranked direct confrontation as their first choice of action. Alternatively, 30% of students said they would first tell a teacher after recess was over, five percent of respondents said their first move was to wait until they got home and mentioning it to their parent or caregiver, and six percent said they would prioritize inaction as it was “none of my business what they were doing.” This seems to indicate that a student being actively bullied demands immediate action, or possibly that confronting the swastika writer would possibly result in harm to the third party.

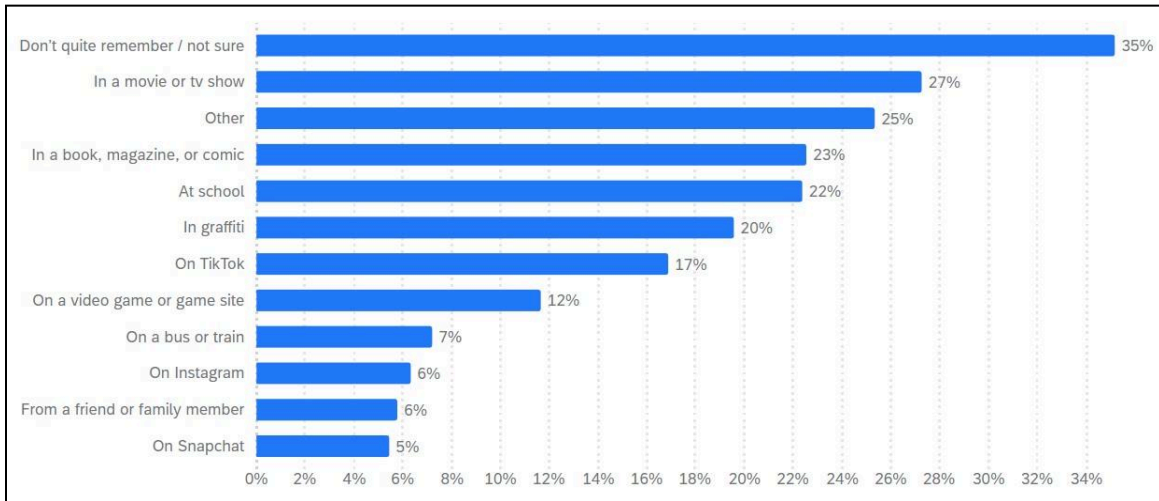
Figure Eight: What would you do if you saw another student making fun of someone for being Muslim during recess at school? You can drag the four answers below. Please drag them to rank the responses in order from 1-4, with 1 being something you would most likely do and 4 being something you would be least likely to do. *N* = 8,845



Another new question in 2024 asked respondents if they had ever seen a swastika (33% said ‘yes’ and 23% said ‘maybe’; *N* = 9,196), and, if so, if they were able to remember where they saw it. Students were able to select all locations that applied. As shown in Figure Nine, the most common places for young people to see a swastika are in a movie or tv show (27%), in a book, magazine, or comic (23%), at school (22%), or in graffiti (20%).²⁴

²⁴ These are the most common options behind ‘Don’t quite remember/ not sure’ and ‘Other.’

Figure Nine: If you can remember, where did you see a swastika? *N* = 5,054



For students that had seen a swastika, we also asked how seeing a swastika made them feel. Table Two shows that forty percent of students that saw a swastika felt sympathetic to Jews, “because it is hurtful to them.” The second most popular result was that of neutrality, with 28% of respondents ambivalent about the implications and targets of the swastika, answering that it “didn’t bother me.” Twenty-four percent stated that the swastika made them feel unsafe and eight percent responded that “people were expressing their opinions.”

Table Two: How did seeing a swastika make you feel? *N* = 2,977

	Percentage	Count
Sympathetic to Jews because it is hurtful to them	40%	1,193
Neutral - it did not bother me	28%	843
Unsafe because there was hate in my school or community	24%	705
Fine because people were just expressing their opinions	8%	236

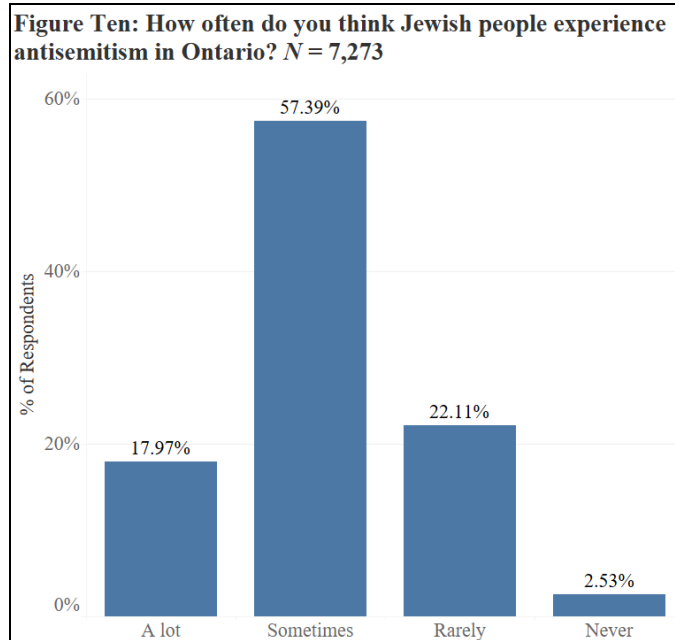
Pre-Treatment Survey: Beliefs about Antisemitism

In this section, we preemptively nodded to the treatment by asking students if “the Canadian government has always welcomed Jews to come to Canada?” Forty-five percent correctly answered ‘no’ (*N* = 9,116), showing that the Canadian government’s role in systemic

antisemitism was worth further study. Using a likert scale, we then asked students how they felt about the following statement: “All Jewish people in Ontario look alike and behave in the same way.”²⁵ The majority of students — 72% — answered that the statement was probably or definitely false, demonstrating that young people know the basics about biases and discrimination ($N = 9,148$). Eleven percent answered that the statement was either definitely true or a little bit true, which could be impacted by antisemitic influences, but could also be shaped by the demographics of Jewish students at their schools or in the media they consume. Seventeen percent of students said they were “Not sure how to answer,” which may be due to the social desirability bias, which prevents them from expressing their true feelings due to the fear of being incorrect (whether factually or politically).

We then asked students how often they thought Jewish people experience antisemitism in Ontario. As shown in Figure Ten, 17.97% of respondents agreed that antisemitism in Ontario occurs ‘A lot’ and 57.39% answered that it happens ‘Sometimes’, while 22.11% said ‘Rarely’ and 2.53% said antisemitism ‘Never’ happens ($N = 7,273$). Compared to the 2021 pre-treatment survey, 2024 respondents were *more likely* to say antisemitism was taking place ‘A lot’ or ‘Sometimes’ (this sum was 57.66% in 2021) and slightly less likely to say that antisemitic acts happened ‘Rarely’ or ‘Never’ (in 2021, this sum was 22.58%; $N = 2,839$).

²⁵ This question was inspired by the Anti-Defamation League’s GLOBAL100 Index of Antisemitism (2015, 2019, 2023). The ADL GLOBAL100 Index of Antisemitism is based on 11 True/False type questions, including statements such as: Jews have too much control over global affairs; Jews are responsible for most of the world’s wars; Jews have too much control over the United States government; and Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust. Respondents that answered “True” to at least six of the 11 questions were coded as harboring antisemitic perspectives. We chose this language to mirror the sentiment presented by the ADL GLOBAL100, but elected not to use their questions verbatim because we found them to be too mature for our demographic of respondents. You can read more about the survey at: global100.adl.org/about.



Students that provided any answer other than “Never” in the 2024 pre-treatment survey were invited to answer a follow-up question — “When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?” Fifty percent of students answered that it is a “big problem that needs urgent attention,” 41% said “it’s kind of a problem but not a major concern,” and ten percent said it is not really a problem, just isolated incidents, if any (*N* = 8,777).

This is particularly poignant as the number and severity of antisemitic acts has increased across Canada substantially since the War in Gaza began in October 2023. Jewish day schools have been targeted by gunfire in Montreal and Toronto (Lofaro 2023; TOI Staff 2024; Starr 2024a). Synagogues from coast to coast have been set ablaze in violent acts of hate (Starr 2024b; CJNI Staff 2024). Jewish organizations have received bomb threats — over 100 received the same threat nationwide in August 2024 (Starr 2024c). Jewish businesses have been defaced and antisemitic graffiti is ubiquitous in urban centers (CJNI Staff 2025; Starr 2024e). And Jewish students have been physically and verbally assaulted by their peers because of their Jewish identity and perceived or real ties to Israel (Green 2024).

Pre-Treatment Survey: Understanding about the Holocaust

In the 2024 pre-treatment survey, 67% of respondents stated that they had heard about the Holocaust before (an additional 11% answered maybe; *N* = 9,049). This percentage is quite a bit lower than it was in 2021, when 80% said they had definitely heard of the Holocaust and seven percent said maybe. We attribute this mainly to the younger age of respondents in 2024, as the 2021 survey was also answered by students in Grades 7-12. For those that said they did hear of the Holocaust before, we asked where they had heard of it. We allowed students to check all options that applied.

Figure Eleven: If you can remember, where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply) $N = 6,920$

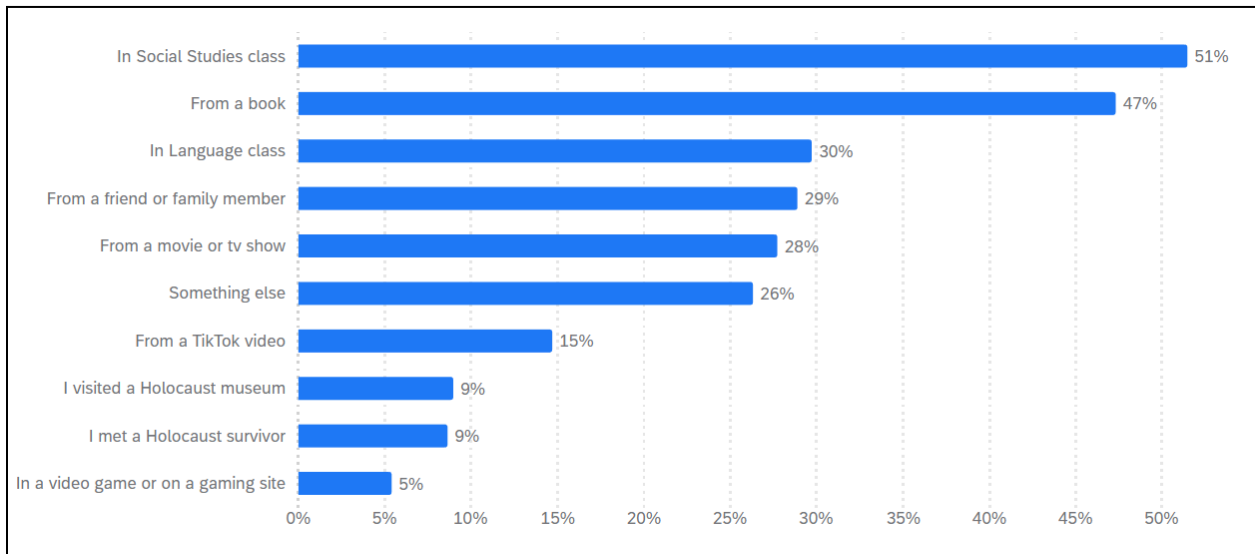
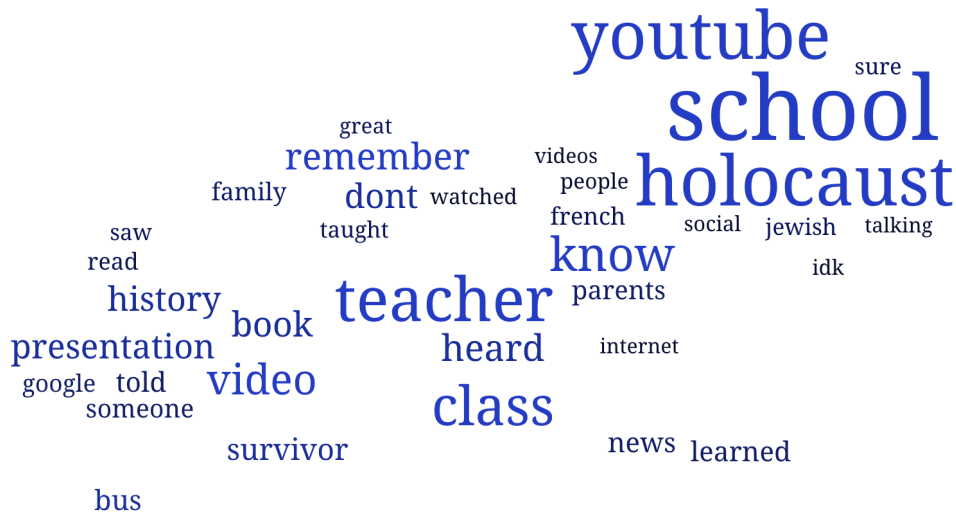


Figure Eleven shows the distribution of these responses, with 47% hearing about the Holocaust in a book, 29% from a friend or family member, 28% in a movie or television show, and 15% from a TikTok video. By comparison, in 2021, 42% of students said they learned about the Holocaust from social media platforms like TikTok. This higher number of 42% in 2021 can likely be explained by differences in the average age of respondents in 2021 and 2024. In 2021, Grade 6 students were the *youngest* respondents in our sample of students in grades 6-12. This would indicate that, as of 2024, Grade 6 students consume information about the Holocaust on social media at a much lower rate. From this, we determine that Grade 6 is an ideal time to introduce this content because it is *before* social media becomes overly influential in their lives.

We also offered students the opportunity to write-in other places where they heard about the Holocaust. In Figure Twelve, we show a word cloud, created from a .csv file of their answers. As shown in the illustration, students frequently learned about the Holocaust at school and from teachers, but also on YouTube (a popular video sharing platform), on the bus, and on the Google search engine.²⁶

²⁶ Only the top 36 terms listed in their answers appear in the word cloud shown in Figure Twelve.

Figure Twelve: Word Cloud created from student free responses on where they heard about the Holocaust, other than through the treatment. N = 1,822



We also asked students to write a definition of the Holocaust and were impressed by the accuracy and thoughtfulness of their responses.²⁷ For example, one student wrote:

the Holocaust was when there was a war against the Jews and Europeans. There was a guy named Hitler who wanted to kill the Jews because he thought Germans were better. So there were these people called nazis, and they killed the Jews. They put them in concentration camps and the Ghetto.

Wrote another student:

The holocaust is a tragedy in ww2 many Jewish people were placed in a concentration camp in many different country even children were placed i there but thats not the worst part they would put them in chamber and put toxic gas in the chamber resulting in many jewish peoples death.

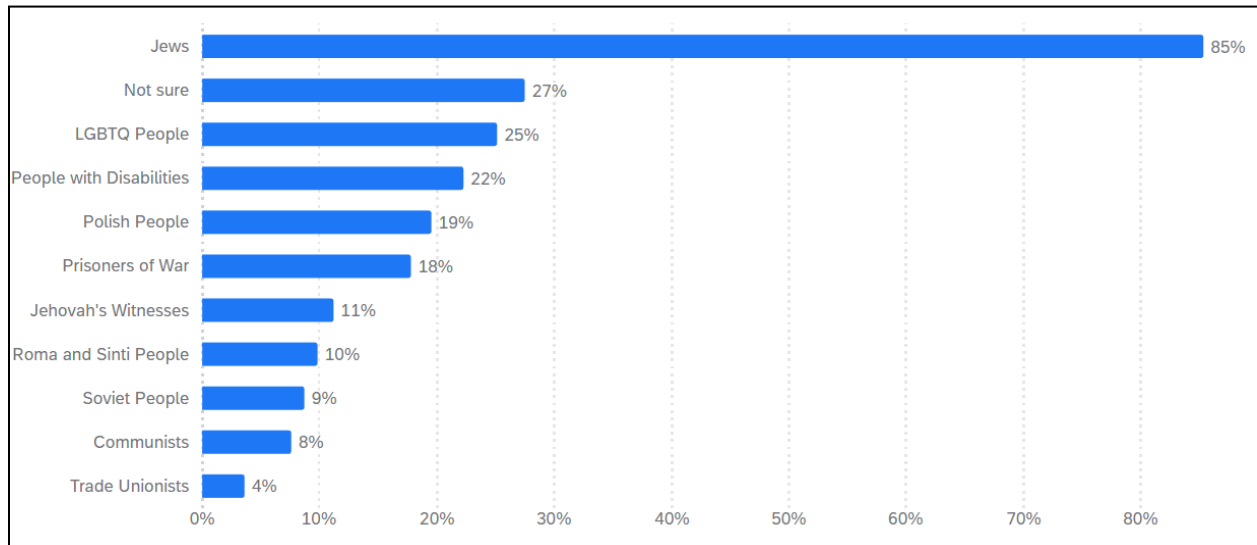
Some respondents knew some details (e.g., it was during a war, Jews were targeted for being Jewish) but missed other key details. For example, one student wrote:

I dont really know much but i think it is when catholic people hunted and killed Jews who refused to become catholic.

²⁷ With the objective of being as accurate as possible, we do not edit the student responses. As a result, you may find some typos and grammatical errors.

people with disabilities were victims of Nazi Germany, 19% mention Poles, and 18% correctly identify prisoners of war (POWs).²⁸

Figure Fourteen: Who were the victims in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply) $N = 9,017$



Pre-Treatment Survey: Beliefs about 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). Holocaust denial is a crime in Belgium, France, Austria, and Germany (Ministry of Justice of Canada, 2022). Concern regarding Holocaust denial is so great that, in June 2022, Canada accepted an amendment to the Criminal Code to identify Holocaust denial as a punishable offense (CTV 2023).

As such, we again asked respondents whether they felt that the Holocaust has been fairly described, exaggerated, or altogether fabricated. In response, in 2024, 67% of students said the Holocaust happened and that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Those that provided any other answer included: six percent that said the Holocaust happened though the number of Jews killed was exaggerated, five percent that said “I’m not sure the Holocaust actually happened,” and 22% that responded that they were “Not sure what to answer” ($N = 8,789$). From the 2021 pre-treatment survey, the number of respondents that agreed that the Holocaust happened as purported remained largely the same (67.10% in 2021); the number that

²⁸ The lowest percentage of correct answers was attributed to trade unionists. Anecdotally, Lerner teaches the Holocaust to university-aged students, who also express surprise and confusion about this category. It seems to be the least understood category of Nazi victims to date, perhaps indicating an opportunity for future research.

said it was exaggerated went down slightly (from 7.33%), and the number that remained uncertain remained almost exactly the same (22.70%). Only the number that said they were not sure if it happened at all went up — from 2.87% in 2021 to five percent in 2024.

We also asked students if they felt that the Holocaust could happen again. As shown in Table Three, 67% said yes or maybe, and 34% answered that it could not happen again ($N = 8,789$). This is almost exactly the same as *Ontario-only* respondents from the 2021 pre-treatment survey (in 2021, 66.55% answered yes/maybe and 33.44% said no).

Table Three: Do you think the Holocaust could happen again? $N = 8,789$

	Percentage	Count
Yes	12%	1,020
Maybe	55%	4,803
No	34%	2,963

When asked why they said the Holocaust *could* happen again, students said things like:

If someone with as terrible ideologies as Hitler rose to power again.

If people can hate someone enough just because they are different, and kill 6 million of them, I think it could definitely happen again if someone hated a group enough, and their country was very weak at the time.

Because anti semitism is on a huge rise right now

Alternatively, students were asked why they said the Holocaust *could not* happen again, to which they provided answers such as:

Because we have learned from the past and it was a horrible thing no one would do after hearing the jewish peoples's perspective

There will be a lot more resistance against the government performing the Holocaust.

Because we wouldn't do something so terrible nowadays and we wouldn't let someone with such terrible intentions be our leader

Now the jews have a land called Israel (promise land)

I dont think the Holocaust could happen again because people know better now and will not fall for any propaganda.

Unfortunately, we know that genocides *do* continue to exist in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as those atrocities against the Rohingya in modern-day Myanmar and against the ethnic Tutsis in 1994 Rwanda. Not only that, in today's digital age, world citizens face the persistent threat of false facts, exacerbated by the rise of artificial intelligence and the rapid, 'viral' spread of content. This flooding of online public spaces with disinformation and misinformation makes it increasingly difficult to engage in fact-based discussions on internet platforms.

Post-Treatment Survey

We sent the post-treatment survey to Ontario Grade 6 teachers on June 4th via email, to distribute to their students. We chose this date because we wanted to give adequate time not only for the students to complete Kacer's *To Hope and Back*, but also before end-of-term activities (e.g., spirit days, plays and musicals, dances, fundraisers, sporting events, Education Quality and Accountability Office Grade 6 assessments, field trips) began to consume more time and energy, as is typical as schools approach the final days before summer vacation. As schools in Ontario closed on the 26th of June, 2024, we left the survey open until the 24th of June. The principal investigator followed up on June 21st, 2024, with all teachers that filled out the pre-treatment survey but not the post-treatment survey, in a last ditch effort to improve the completion rate of the post-treatment survey. We did not include any demographic questions on the post-treatment survey; instead we asked students to, again, report the name of their teacher, which would allow us to link the pre-treatment and post-treatment surveys for one classroom. This would also let us link to the teacher registration survey results and to see the aggregated demographic data for that classroom. We received 5,101 responses on the post-treatment survey, which is a 45% response or retention rate from the pre-treatment survey.

Other Encounters with the Holocaust During the Treatment

Prior to asking factual and opinion-based questions about the Holocaust, antisemitism, and discrimination, we wanted to know what other Holocaust educational interventions they may have experienced. Table Four shows the distribution of ways students learned about the Holocaust in Grade 6, in addition to reading *To Hope and Back* ($N=4,412$). Respondents were invited to select all options that apply. Notable answers included the nine percent that visited a Holocaust museum, the seven percent that participated in a Holocaust Remembrance Day program, and the 21% that encountered Holocaust-related content on social media (five percent on Instagram and 16% on TikTok, high numbers especially given the young age of our respondents). Thirty percent said that they read or watched something about the Holocaust outside of class and 32% noted that they heard a Holocaust survivor speak (remarkable in 2024!). These are tremendous touchpoints for students to encounter Holocaust survivors and the 2G/3G community and to supplement their classroom learning.

Table Four: This year, you read *To Hope and Back*. If you can remember, did you do any other learning about the Holocaust this year? Check any that apply. *N* = 4,412

	Percentage	Count
I learned about it in social studies.	64%	2,803
I heard a Holocaust survivor speak.	32%	1,411
I read or watched something about the Holocaust outside of class.	30%	1,338
My class did a Holocaust learning session on Zoom.	27%	1,118
I saw a TikTok video about the Holocaust.	16%	686
I visited a Holocaust museum.	9%	380
I participated in a Holocaust Remembrance Day program.	7%	325
I saw an Instagram post or reel about the Holocaust.	5%	237

Of course, there are concerns about the quality of Holocaust education content through popular online social media tools like Instagram and TikTok, whether they appear as photo or video posts or reels. In brief, creators can upload information to these platforms with little-to-no oversight, allowing them to post oversimplified, distorted, or trivialized content that lacks proper historical context and may fail to convey the gravity of the events (consider, for example, *Eva Stories*, which recreates scenes from the Holocaust to share on Instagram and SnapChat, another social media platform that allows users to share disappearing photos and short videos with each other). Additionally, the spread of disinformation and misinformation on these platforms — often driven by viral trends and unverified sources — can perpetuate harmful myths, minimize the suffering of victims, and undermine accurate Holocaust education.

Assessing Engagement with the Treatment

Having identified where students were hearing about the Holocaust, aside from in our curriculum, we wanted to know whether they actually *read* the book. Given that we wanted to see how responses might vary before and after a given treatment, we felt these questions were necessary in order to assess a student’s actual engagement with the treatment. To learn more

about this, we began this segment with two factual questions that each had a clearly correct answer. The first — “What was the fate of the Jewish passengers on the St. Louis?” — did not even demand that students read the book, but only that they paid some attention in class or knew something about twentieth century European history. This question was answered correctly by 87% of respondents ($N = 4,402$). We then asked the following question, more closely related to the text: “The ‘What the Captain Knew’ chapters appear often in the book. Whenever you see that chapter title in the book, what kind of information can you expect to learn from it?” The correct answer, “Information about what was happening behind the scenes (things the passengers might not have known),” was correctly identified by 89% of respondents ($N = 4,366$).²⁹

These incorrect answers can be interpreted in a few important ways: first, some Grade 6 students may struggle with reading comprehension, whether in the book or on the survey; second, students may have been tired, confused, or disengaged when taking the survey, leading them to select answers at random, rather than carefully providing answers; third, a small percentage of errors is expected in any survey — even if we were to ask students to write the answer to four plus four in a blank space, inevitably some would provide the wrong answer — therefore this minority of respondents does not pose a major concern; and, last, it is plausible that some of these respondents either skimmed or skipped out on the book.

Table Five: Which character in the book do you admire the most? $N = 4,336$

	Percentage	Count
Captain Schroeder, for doing what was right, even when it meant going against orders or upsetting people.	53%	2,295
Lisa, for working in human rights after the war. Instead of feeling like a victim of Nazi oppression, she used her life to help others.	27%	1,192
Sol’s papa, for remaining hopeful, even when things were hard.	12%	516
Mutti, for building community on board the ship. She knew that they would be stronger together.	8%	333

We also asked students which character in the book they admired the most. Their responses, all of which were intended to be correct equally, are shown below in Table Five. The majority of students answered that they admired Captain Schroeder for his moral integrity, even if it meant upsetting those around him. Following this question, we asked if the respondent believed that other Grade 6 students should read this book, to which 92% said yes ($N = 4,400$). Those that

²⁹ The authors thank Kathy Kacer for her assistance in crafting age appropriate and challenging questions for students, based on the book.

Holocaust, not only as it applies to Jewish victims but for other groups that also challenged Nazi ideals and authority.

Table Six: Who were the victims in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply) *N* = 4,354

	2024 Pre-treatment Survey	2024 Post-treatment Survey
Jewish People	85%	98%
Polish People	19%	30%
Roma and Sinti People	10%	14%
LGBTQ People	25%	37%
Soviet People	9%	12%
Prisoners of War	18%	26%
Communists	8%	12%
Jehovah’s Witnesses	11%	17%
Trade Unionists	4%	7%
People with Disabilities	22%	34%
<i>Number of Observations</i>	8,988	4,317

Not only did students improve their ability to recognize the victims of the Holocaust, but they were also more likely after the treatment to state that the Holocaust existed and that there were six million Jews killed. As shown in Table Seven, this number went from 67% on the 2024 pre-treatment survey to 81% on the post-treatment survey. This is an important result and underscores the effectiveness of this educational intervention. The number of students that questioned whether the Holocaust happened at all also went down from five percent to two percent, and the number of students that said they were not sure of how to answer also went down — from 22% to 10%. These post-treatment survey questions are higher than those answers from 2021, when only 76% answered that the Holocaust happened and that six million Jews were murdered during it.

Table Seven: Which of the following is closest to your view on the Holocaust?

	2024 Pre-treatment Survey	2024 Post-treatment Survey
The Holocaust happened; 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust	67%	81%
The Holocaust happened, but the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated.	6%	7%
I'm not sure the Holocaust actually happened.	5%	2%
I'm not sure what to answer.	22%	10%
<i>Number of Observations</i>	<i>8,934</i>	<i>4,317</i>

Post-Treatment Survey: Discrimination and Action

On the post-treatment survey, students were over twice as likely to tell a parent if they were to observe an antisemitic action at school between students (five percent on the pre-treatment survey and 12% on the post-treatment survey; $N = 4,220$). However, the other three categories demonstrated surprising results regarding a student's preferred top choice: intervening directly went down from 45% to 38%, the option of telling a teacher *during the school day* went from 42 to 36%, and electing not to intervene at all went up from eight percent to 12%. We do not have a clear understanding of why this question begot these results. There was a slight change in language, from the student writing something bad about a "Jewish kid" on the pre-treatment survey to a student writing something about "Jews" on the post-treatment survey. It is always plausible that there was some kind of methodological error at play (though this seems less likely, as we did not observe a similar change in any of the other questions). And we also have to take into account the changes in social climate between the pre-treatment and post-treatment surveys — it is possible that students became afraid of standing up to antisemitism in the spring of 2024, as incidents of antisemitism occurred with greater frequency on university campuses and throughout communities.

Post-Treatment Survey: Antisemitism in Ontario

We conclude the post-treatment survey with two questions about antisemitism in Ontario. Table Eight shown below is included to compare responses on the 2024 pre-treatment and post-treatment surveys. The numbers of respondents that understood that Jewish people are *less*

likely to experience antisemitism after learning about the Holocaust was fascinating. It is plausible that students understand antisemitism through such a maximalist perspective (e.g., denial of entry for the *St. Louis*, concentration camps in Europe) that everyday antisemitism does not register to the same degree.

Table Eight: How often do you think Jews experience antisemitism in Ontario?

	2024 Pre-Treatment Survey	2024 Post-Treatment Survey
A lot	17.97%	18%
Sometimes	57.39%	48%
Rarely	22.11%	29%
Never	2.53%	5%
<i>Number of Observations</i>	<i>7,273</i>	<i>4,300</i>

Students that provided any answer except for “Never” were then asked, “When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?” We show the answers in Table Eight, comparing them to the pre-treatment survey results from 2024.

Table Nine: When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?

	Pre-Treatment (2024)	Post-Treatment (2024)
It’s a big problem that needs urgent attention	50%	56%
It’s kind of a problem but not a major concern	41%	38%
Not really a problem/ Not a problem	10%	6%
<i>Number of Observations</i>	<i>8,777</i>	<i>4,030</i>

Overall, as shown in Table Nine, 94% of student respondents said that antisemitism presented some kind of a problem in Ontario. There was a six percent increase in those that said antisemitism was a big problem that needs urgent attention from the pre-treatment survey to the post-treatment survey. Whether this is the consequence of antisemitism being in the news often

in 2023 and 2024, or the effect of learning about the Holocaust, we understand these numbers to be promising as they demonstrate that the next generation *cares* about intolerance and discrimination in their province. The fact that students became more aware of discrimination and antisemitism in Ontario and expressed increased concern about these issues reflects the broader social impact of Holocaust educational interventions.

Post-Treatment Survey: Necessary Next Steps (According to Grade 6 Students)

We ended the 2024 post-treatment survey by asking students about necessary next steps — what did they feel or want to do after finishing the Grade 6 unit on the Holocaust? In Table Ten, we show these responses — students were welcome to select all that apply to them.

Table Ten: After learning about the Holocaust this year in Social Studies, I feel... (Select all that apply.) *N* = 4,252

	Percentage	Count
Sad for the people that were hurt or killed during the Holocaust	87%	3,718
Like I want to learn more about the Holocaust at school	37%	1,591
Like Canada did not do enough to combat hate in the 1930s	34%	1,426
Like I want to fight antisemitism in Canada	29%	1,233
Like Canada should be doing more to combat hate today	29%	1,229
Like I want to learn more about other genocides at school	25%	1,042
Like I want to fight against Holocaust denial in Canada	19%	809

As shown in Table Ten, 87% of respondents reported that they felt “sad” for the people that were hurt or killed during the Holocaust (*N* = 4,252). This high number of respondents shows that the educational experience, and perhaps the book in particular, resonated for them on a personal level, which is crucial in fostering empathy and key to anti-bias education (Green 2001). Grade 6 students overwhelmingly stated on the 2024 pre-treatment survey that they did not know anyone Jewish, making this empathy doubly important as, for many young people, Holocaust education is their first introduction to Jewish people.

The second most common response was that students want to learn more about the Holocaust at school (37%). This shows that educational interventions are welcome by students, and that the subject matter — when taught in an age-appropriate way — can be impactful in increasing both awareness and understanding. Thirty-four percent stated that Canada did not do enough to

combat hate in the 1930s and 29% said Canada should be doing *more* to combat hate today. These numbers show a growing awareness of historical responsibility and their own government's role in fighting against hate.

Further, 29% of respondents said they wanted to fight antisemitism in Canada. These numbers show a demographic of Canadian youth inspired to *act* against discrimination and hatred, as well as a continued need for awareness and vigilance to prevent ethnic tensions from escalating. The high number of students wanting to learn more about the Holocaust and those who felt inspired to fight antisemitism shows that the lesson did not just impact knowledge but also shaped students' sense of social responsibility and moral action.

Limitations of 2024 Pre/Post-Treatment Surveys

The majority of limitations that we encountered in the administration of this survey were related to classroom organization and differences in school participation. For example, some schools used a team teaching model where students moved during the school day between multiple classrooms. Often one teacher was registered with the survey but the other was not and when students went to complete the survey, they could not find their teacher's name. Other teachers were registered by someone at the administrative level in their school board, so, while they had the books and taught with them, their name was not included on the drop-down list of teachers. We were able to add these teachers as they approached us with this issue but it created some logistic confusion and inevitable delays for students.

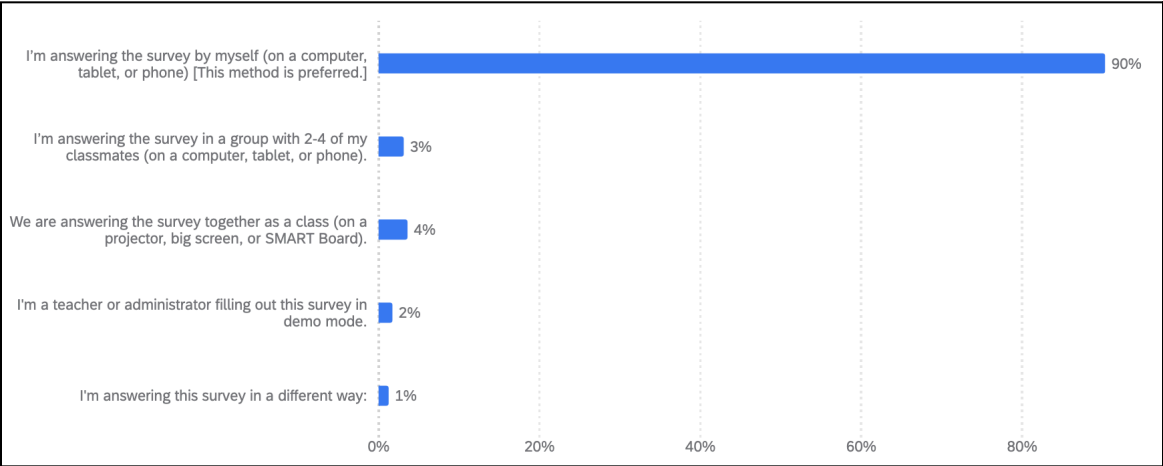
We also ran into other logistical issues that prevented teachers from completing the survey with their students. For example, one teacher used the survey as a pedagogical tool without actually having students fill it out, and others left for parental, medical, or bereavement leave and did not give their substitute's information to us. A handful of teachers did not understand that there were two surveys — a pre-treatment and a post-treatment survey — and only allotted classroom time for the former. Many teachers encountered issues at the school level, for example a few teachers complained that the books were received by the administrators at their school but that they were never distributed to the classrooms. One wrote to us: "The school took my ipads away!! i can ask if they will lend me some and i'll do it this week!! i loved your resources....the book.... absolutely everything! my kids learned so much because of your organization!!!" Finally, two teachers said they were not able to teach the material because at least one classroom parent prohibited their child from learning about the Holocaust.

Another limitation we encountered on the pre-treatment survey that we tried to mitigate with the post-treatment survey was that some teachers completed the survey together as a class, whereas other teachers had individual students fill out the survey on separate devices during the school day. A third category seemed to have students fill out the survey in small groups. The ideal option was for students to complete the survey individually, as it would help them overcome any

social desirability bias, where they would provide the answer seen to be socially acceptable. One consequence of the social desirability bias is that controversial and/or incorrect answers tend to be muted by the ‘morally correct’ answers. Second, we were concerned that completing the survey collectively would result in the loudest and most actively engaged students dominating the discussion and therefore overpowering which answers would be provided on the survey. Third, we were concerned that students’ answers, when completing the survey as a class, would undergo corrective editing by their teachers. For example, if students collectively answered a question incorrectly, it was plausible that the teacher would use this as a ‘teaching moment’, discuss with the class why it was wrong, and then enter the ‘correct’ answer on the survey.

In our post-treatment survey dataset, we added a new question in which we assessed whether students completed the survey individually, in small groups of fewer than six people, or together as a class, so that the results could be weighted accordingly in any statistical evaluation. Further, on the post-treatment survey and in email correspondence regarding it, we specifically requested that teachers make it possible for students to complete the survey individually and then asked them to state explicitly how they facilitated the completion of this iteration. As shown in Figure Sixteen, 90% of participants complied with our request on the post-treatment survey.

Figure Sixteen: How are you filling this [survey] out? N = 4,652



A last limitation is presented by the differences in the respondent group in 2021 and 2024. In 2021, we surveyed students in Grade 6 through Grade 12, whereas in 2024, we surveyed students only in Grade 6. Therefore, we have not only a change in the age of our respondents, but also the maturity level, the average ability to focus, and the ability to navigate difficult emotional material. Further, in 2021, we had a tighter geographic focus (at least within the Province of Ontario) of the Greater Toronto Area, whereas, in 2024, we were able to reach school boards — both public and Catholic — across the provinces, including very rural and underserved areas. As a result, it is difficult to compare our 2021 results to our 2024 results *beyond a cursory level*.

Conclusion

The primary objective of the *2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism* was program evaluation — specifically, assessing the effectiveness of Ontario’s new curriculum on the Holocaust. We also sought to explore whether learning about past atrocities would lead students to care about discrimination *today*.

Our most notable takeaways include:

- **Improved Knowledge and Understanding:** The educational intervention improved student factual knowledge about the Holocaust. Further, students were more likely to agree that the Holocaust *happened* as reported, including the murder of 6 million Jewish civilians (81% affirming its historical accuracy post-treatment, compared to 67% pre-treatment).
- **Fostering Empathy and Social Responsibility:** The intervention enhanced students’ empathy, with 87% expressing sadness for the victims of the Holocaust, 29% of students saying Canada should be doing more to combat hate today, and 29% saying they wanted to fight antisemitism in Canada.
- **Broader Awareness of Discrimination:** After learning about the Holocaust, 66% of students said Jewish people in Ontario experience antisemitism 'a lot or sometimes.' When asked 'how serious do you think it is when antisemitism happens here in Ontario' on that same post-treatment survey, 56% said 'it's a big problem that needs urgent attention'. Additionally, 67% of students on the pre-treatment survey said they felt that the Holocaust could happen again, underscoring the importance of vigilance against hate.

Overall, Kathy Kacer’s *To Hope and Back* and its accompanying curriculum proved to be an age-appropriate and impactful way to introduce Holocaust education to Grade 6 students. The program not only improved factual understanding, but also had a trickle down effect, inspiring moral clarity, empathy, and a sense of civic responsibility.

This study’s results suggest that Holocaust education can help to cultivate a more tolerant society. By equipping young learners with the knowledge and tools to recognize and combat discrimination, we can ensure that future generations are well-informed and empowered to stand against hate in all its forms.

Appendix A: Pre-Treatment Survey Questions

Classroom Code

Please select your teacher's name from this drop-down list.

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.

Do you still want to participate?

Yes

No

Section One: Who is a Jew?

What makes someone Jewish? (Select all that apply.)

They belong to the Jewish ethnic and/or religious group.

They always wear tiny hats called kippahs or yarmulkes on their heads.

They are always from Israel.

They don't celebrate Christmas.

Do you have any Jewish friends or family members? (Select all that apply.)

Yes, I'm Jewish

Yes, I have Jewish family members (for example, a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, or a cousin)

Yes, some of my friends are Jewish

Maybe, I'm not sure if I know anyone that is Jewish

No, I don't know anyone that is Jewish

Section Two: Thinking About Antisemitism

What is antisemitism?

When someone hates Jewish people, just because they are Jews.

When someone hates both Jews and Muslims, just because they are minorities.

When someone hates everyone that looks and acts differently than them. When someone prefers Jews over other ethnic or religious groups.

Have you ever seen or heard anything that you thought was antisemitic (e.g., graffiti, slurs, bullying, property damage, news stories)?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

If you are willing to share, what did you see or hear that you thought was antisemitic?

What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about a Jewish kid on the wall in the bathroom at school [presumably because they were Jewish]? You can drag the four answers below. Please drag them to rank the responses in order from 1-4, with 1 being something you would most likely do to 4 being something you would be least likely to do.

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

What would you do if you saw another student making fun of someone for being Muslim during recess at school? You can drag the four answers below. Please drag them to rank the responses in order from 1-4, with 1 being something you would most likely do to 4 being something you would be least likely to do.

- I would tell the teacher after recess was over.
- I would tell the person to stop what they were doing right then and there.
- I would wait until I got home from school and mention it to my parent(s).
- I would not do anything. It's none of my business what they were doing.

Have you ever seen a swastika?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

If you can remember, where did you see a swastika?

- At school
- On TikTok
- On Instagram
- On Snapchat
- On a video game or game site
- On a bus or train
- In graffiti
- From a friend or family member
- In a movie or tv show
- In a book, magazine, or comic
- Other
- Don't quite remember / not sure

How did seeing a swastika make you feel?

Unsafe - that there is was hate in my school or community

Fine - that people were expressing their opinions

Sympathetic - to Jews because it is hurtful to them

Neutral - didn't bother me

Section Three: Jewish People in Ontario

Do you think the Canadian government has always welcomed Jews to come to Canada?

Yes

Maybe

No

In your opinion is this statement true or false? "All Jewish people in Ontario look alike and behave the same way."

Definitely true

A little bit true

Probably false

Definitely false

Not sure how to answer

How often do you think Jewish people experience antisemitism in Ontario?

A lot

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Not sure how to answer

When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?

It's a big problem that needs urgent attention.

It's kind of a problem; but not a major concern.

It's not really a problem, just isolated incidents.

It's not a problem at all; I haven't noticed any instances.

Section Four: What Do You Know About the Holocaust?

Have you ever heard about the Holocaust before?

Yes

Maybe

No

If you can remember, where did you learn about the Holocaust? (Check all that apply)

- In Language class
- In Social Studies class
- From a movie or tv show
- From a book
- In a video game or on a gaming site
- I met a Holocaust survivor
- I visited a Holocaust museum
- From a TikTok video
- From a friend or family member
- Something else

In your own words, what was 'the Holocaust'?

When did the Holocaust happen?

- In ancient times
- Sometime between 1600-1750
- Sometime between 1750-1900
- Sometime between 1900-2000
- Not sure how to answer

In total, about how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?

- Approximately 100,000
- Approximately 2.5 million
- Approximately 6 million
- More than 12 million
- Not sure how to answer

Who were the victims in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply)

- Jews
- Polish People
- Roma and Sinti People
- LGBTQ People
- Soviet People
- Prisoners of War
- Communists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Trade Unionists
- People with Disabilities
- Not sure

Section Five: Thinking about the Holocaust

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

The Holocaust happened; 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust

The Holocaust happened, but the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated.

I'm not sure the Holocaust actually happened.

I'm not sure what to answer.

Do you think the Holocaust could happen again?

Yes

Maybe

No

Why do you think the Holocaust could happen again? Why do you think the Holocaust could not happen again?

Demographics

With which ethnic group(s) do you identify? (Select all that apply.)

Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian)

East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese)

Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian) Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit)

Jewish (e.g., Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi)

Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent)

Mediterranean (e.g., Turkish, Israeli, Lebanese, Greek, Italian) Caucasus (e.g., Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia)

Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian)

South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo Caribbean)

White European (e.g., British, French, German, Russian)

Something else

Prefer not to answer

What is your current religion, if any? (Select all that apply)

Christian (e.g., Protestant, United Church of Canada, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Nondenominational)

Catholic

Evangelical

Mormon (e.g., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Christian Orthodox (e.g., Greek, Russian, or Ukrainian Orthodox) Jewish

Muslim (e.g., Sunni, Sufi, or Shi'a)

Sikh

Buddhist

Hindu

Jehovah's Witness

Baha'i

Paganism (e.g., Wicca)

Atheist

Something else
Spiritual but not religious
Nothing in particular
Prefer not to answer

Do you have a parent or caregiver at home who went to college?

Yes
No
Not sure

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

Under 30
31-60
61-100
More than 100
Not sure

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)?

1-6
7-15
16 or more
Not sure how to answer

Appendix B: Post-Treatment Survey Questions

Please select your teacher's name from this drop-down list.

We are going to ask you some questions about the Holocaust. Our goal is to know more about the impact of the book *To Hope and Back* by Kathy Kacer on your learning and thinking. Some may be easy for you to answer, but others are meant to be challenging and you may have to guess. That's ok - just make your best guess. Do you still want to participate?

Yes

No

Great! How are you filling this survey out?

I'm answering the survey by myself (on a computer, tablet, or phone) [This method is preferred.]

I'm answering the survey in a group with 2-4 of my classmates (on a computer, tablet, or phone).

We are answering the survey together as a class (on a projector, big screen, or SMART Board).

I'm a teacher or administrator filling out this survey in demo mode.

I'm answering this survey in a different way:

This year, you read *To Hope and Back*. If you can remember, did you do any other learning about the Holocaust this year? Check any that apply.

I heard a Holocaust survivor speak.

My class did a Holocaust learning session on Zoom.

I learned about it in Social Studies.

I visited a Holocaust Museum.

I participated in a Holocaust Remembrance Day program.

I read or watched something about the Holocaust outside of class.

I saw a TikTok video about the Holocaust.

I saw an Instagram post or reel about the Holocaust.

To Hope and Back

In this section, we're going to ask you a couple questions about the book *To Hope and Back* by Kathy Kacer. It's ok to guess if you don't know the answer. Just do your best!

What was the fate of the Jewish passengers on the St. Louis?

Canadian Prime Minister William Mackenzie King insisted they all be allowed to enter Canada despite immigration quota laws.

Most were denied entry to Cuba, the United States, and Canada, and were forced to return to Europe where many would end up killed during the Holocaust.

Canada allowed all of them to enter the country under refugee status.

The “What the Captain Knew” chapters appear often in the book. Whenever you see that chapter title in the book, what kind of information can you expect to learn from it?

Information about sea conditions

Information about the mechanics of driving a ship

Information about what was happening behind the scenes (things the passengers might not have known)

Which character in the book do you admire the most?

Lisa, for working in human rights after the war. Instead of feeling like a victim of Nazi oppression, she used her life to help others.

Sol's papa, for remaining hopeful, even when things were hard.

Mutti, for building community on board the ship. She knew that they would be stronger together.

Captain Schroeder, for doing what was right, even when it meant going against orders or upsetting people.

Do you think other 6th graders should read this book, too?

Yes

No

What do you think other 6th graders might like about this book?

The Holocaust

Now we're going to ask some questions to see what you know and think about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

When did the Holocaust happen?

In ancient times

Sometime between 1600-1750

Sometime between 1750-1900

Sometime between 1900-2000

Who were the victims in the Holocaust? (Select all that apply)

Jewish People

Polish People

Roma and Sinti People

LGBTQ People

Soviet People

Prisoners of War

Communists

Jehovah's Witnesses

Trade Unionists

People with Disabilities

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

The Holocaust happened; 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust

The Holocaust happened, but the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated.

I'm not sure the Holocaust actually happened.

I'm not sure what to answer.

Discrimination and Action

What would you do if you saw another student writing something bad about a Jewish kid on the wall in the bathroom at school [presumably because they were Jewish]? Rank the four options in order from your most likely action (#1) to your least likely action (#4). Click and hold the hashtag on the right of each answer to drag it.

I would leave the bathroom, go back to class, and tell the teacher.

I would wait until I got home from school and mention it to my parent(s).

I would tell the person to stop what they were doing right then and there.

I would not do anything. It's none of my business what they were doing.

Antisemitism in Ontario

How often do you think Jews experience antisemitism in Ontario?

A lot

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

When antisemitism happens here in Ontario, how serious do you think it is?

It's a big problem that needs urgent attention.

It's kind of a problem; but not a major concern.

It's not really a problem, just isolated incidents.

After learning about the Holocaust this year in Social Studies, I feel...(Select all that apply to you).

Sad for the people that were hurt or killed during the Holocaust

Like I want to learn more about the Holocaust at school

Like I want to learn more about other genocides at school

Like I want to fight antisemitism in Canada

Like I want to fight against Holocaust denial in Canada

Like Canada did not do enough to combat hate in the 1930s

Like Canada should be doing more to combat hate today

Sources Cited

- Brym, Robert. (2024). Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions. *Canadian Jewish Studies Études Juives Canadiennes*, 37. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1916-0925.40368>
- Brym, Robert, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton. "2018 Survey of Jews in Canada." (2019). Claims Conference. "National Study of Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness in Canada." January 23, 2019. <https://www.claimscon.org/study-canada/>
- CBC Staff. 2025. "Jewish organizations outraged after kosher restaurant location, office broken into." *CBC News*. January 13. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/police-investigate-two-break-ins-antisemitic-graffiti-1.7430434>
- CJN Staff. 2024. "Congregation Schara Tzedek in Vancouver had an accelerant used to light a fire at its front doors." *Canadian Jewish News*. May 31. <https://thecjn.ca/news/schara-tzedek/>
- CTV Staff. 2023. "Canada criminalized 'condoning, denying, or downplaying the Holocaust: is it working?'" *CTV News*. November 19. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/canada-criminalized-condoning-denying-or-downplaying-the-holocaust-is-it-working/>
- Green, Eyal. 2024. "Toronto community escorts Jewish kids after they receive death threats from fellow schoolmates." *Jerusalem Post*. May 18. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-801642>
- Hunter, Sarah, Rajeev Ramchand, and Benjamin Henwood. 2020. "Access to Mobile Technology Could Help to Alleviate LA's Homelessness Crisis." *RAND*. September 16. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2020/09/access-to-mobile-technology-could-help-to-alleviate.html>
- Kacer, Kathy. 2011. *To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis*. Second Story Press.
- Lerner, Alexis M. 2023. "2021 Survey of North American Teens on the Holocaust and Antisemitism." *Liberation75*. <https://www.liberation75.org/2021survey>.
- . 2021a. "Analyzing Holocaust Archives Through a Quantitative Lens." In eds. Sara E. Brown and Stephen D. Smith's *Routledge Handbook of Religion, Genocide, and Mass Atrocity*. Pp. 443-460.

—. 2021b. “Quantifying the archives: leveraging the norms and tools of data science to conduct ethical research on the Holocaust.” *Holocaust Studies*, 28(3), 358–376.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2021.1979179>

Levites, Arielle, and Liat Sayfan. 2019. “Gen Z now. Understanding and connecting with today’s Jewish teens.” *The Jewish Education Project*.
https://www.jewishedproject.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/TJEP%20GenZNow%20Jewish%20Teen%20Research%20Report%20%28single_pages%29.pdf

JNS Staff. 2024. “Hate crimes against Jews in Canada increased 71% from prior year.” *Jewish News Syndicate*. July 28.
<https://www.jns.org/hate-crimes-against-jews-in-canada-increase-71-from-prior-year/#:~:text=Police%20reported%20900%20hate%20crimes,is%20having%20on%20our%20community.%E2%80%9D>

Government of the Province of Ontario. 2024. “Ontario Expanding Holocaust Learning Resources at School.” *Ontario.ca Newsroom*. November 4.

Green, R. (2001). “Creating an anti-bias environment.” In E. Dau, *The anti-bias approach in early childhood* (2nd ed.) (pp.15-28). Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia.

Lugo, Luis, Alan Cooperman, Gregory A. Smith, Erin O’Connell, and Sandra Stencel. "A portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center survey of US Jews." Pew Research Institute 10 (2013).

Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau. 2018. “Prime Minister delivers apology regarding the fate of the passengers of the MS St. Louis.” *Prime Minister of Canada Press Release*. Nov 7.
<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2018/11/07/prime-minister-delivers-apology-regarding-fate-passengers-ms-st-louis>

Ontario.ca. 2024. “Ontario Expanding Holocaust Learning Resources at School.” *Ontario Newsroom*. November 4.
<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1005267/ontario-expanding-holocaust-learning-resources-at-school>.

Shenhav-Goldberg, Rachel, and Jeff Kopstein. 2020. “Antisemitism on a California Campus: Perceptions and Views Among Students.” *Contemporary Jewry*, 40(2), 237–258.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/45299128>

Shenhav-Goldberg, Rachel, Ana Schugurensky, and Jeff Kopstein. 2024. “Attitudes Toward Jews and Israel on California Campuses: Results from a New Survey.” *Anti-Defamation League*

Report.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/attitudes-toward-jews-and-israel-california-campuses-result-s-new-survey>

Starr, Michael. 2024a. “Shots fired outside Jewish girls elementary school in Toronto, none injured.” *Jerusalem Post*. May 25. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-802625>

—. 2024b. “Ontario synagogue window smashed as attacks on Canadian Jewish sites continue.” *Jerusalem Post*. June 17. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-806349>

—. 2024c. “Canadian Jews, synagogues threatened with bombs.” *Jerusalem Post*. August 25. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-816065>

—. 2024e. “Toronto transit chief appeals to police as antisemitic graffiti skyrockets.” *Jerusalem Post*. December 2. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-831645>

Statistics Canada. 2024. “Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2023.” *Statistics Canada*. July 25.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/240725/dq240725b-eng.pdf?st=anNb9WAD>

TOI Staff. 2024. “Toronto Jewish School Targeted by Gunfire during Yom Kippur, in 2nd Attack in Months.” *Times of Israel*. October 13.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/toronto-jewish-school-targeted-by-gunfire-during-yom-kippur-in-2nd-attack-in-months/>

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. She currently works as an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy, where she teaches courses on international relations, data science, and quantitative methods. She earned her PhD in Political Science and Jewish Studies from the University of Toronto in 2020, and previously worked as a Presidential Data Postdoctoral Fellow at Western University (Ontario). For more information, see: AlexisLerner.com.