

What you need to know:

Antisemitism and Ethnic Studies in K-12 Education

What is ethnic studies?

Ethnic studies—specifically “liberated” or “critical” ethnic studies, which is the common model taught in schools today—is divisive race ideology by another name. It is an interdisciplinary study rooted in post-modernism and critical race theory that purports to explore race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, and gender through the lens of power structures and oppression. It promotes a narrow, polarizing, anti-Western and anti-American worldview. Ethnic studies often asks students to assess their own or others’ “oppressed” or “victim” status based on race or ethnicity.

How does ethnic studies fuel antisemitism in K-12 classrooms?

Ethnic studies programs have peddled false, antisemitic, and anti-Israel narratives to children. A draft of California’s model ethnic studies curriculum claimed that Jews experience “conditional whiteness and privilege.” Some claim Israel, the world’s only Jewish state, is an apartheid state that commits genocide against Palestinians. Such claims are overtly antisemitic and ignore very basic facts about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately, these narratives are part and parcel of ethnic studies because it fundamentally relies on “coding” individuals as oppressors or victims based on their race and ethnicity.

When they say...	You can say...
Why don't you want students to learn about other cultures?	Some forms of ethnic studies do simply teach about other cultures—and that’s a good thing. Where it goes wrong is when schools asks students to code themselves or others as “oppressors” or “oppressed.” That type of thinking not only ignores basic historical facts, but it’s also immoral.
Why don't you want to teach students an accurate telling of history?	Teaching students different viewpoints about history is important. Often times, though, ethnic studies imposes a political ideology on children.
But kids should learn about white supremacy, racism, and exploitative capitalist systems.	Learning about past and present injustice can be done without imposing an ideology upon children. Teach them the facts and let them decide for themselves what they think.
We must connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on both local and global levels to ensure a truer democracy.	Students should not be taught to be activists. Time inside of a classroom is limited, and it should be spent teaching kids the facts about history. Recent test results show that just a small fraction of eighth graders meet or exceed proficiency in history and civics. Part of the reason for this decline is because schools are prioritizing politics and activism over education. It’s important to teach students about the times in American history that we’ve failed to live up to our principles, but it is neither factually accurate or morally correct to teach that the United States is a fundamentally racist or unjust country.

For more information, check out Parents Defending Education’s [map](#).

