

Museum of Jewish Montreal

Course: Introduction to Yiddish: Winter 2026

Dates: Wednesday January 14th 2026- Tuesday March 31st 2026*

Time: 5:45-7:15

Instructors: Zoë Belk (10 classes), Eli Benedict (2 classes)

Class will be held on Wednesdays, except the final class which will take place on Tuesday, March 31st to accommodate Passover

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to hold basic conversations in Yiddish, talk about the past and plan for the future. They will be able to read and write simple sentences in the Yiddish alef-beys. They will also gain an understanding of where and how Yiddish is spoken today, and some familiarity with traditional and contemporary Yiddish culture.

Week 1: Nice to meet you!

- Alef-beys intro
- א, ב, ג, ד
- Introductions
- How are you?
- Hasidic vs. “classical Yiddish”

Week 2: It’s snowing!

- ה, ו, ז, ח
- Question words
- The weather
- Past and present of the verb “to be”

Week 3: All in the family

- ט, י, כ, ל
- Numbers
- Family terms
- Past and present of the verb “to have”
- “There is/there are”

Week 4: The time of our lives

- מ, נ, ס, ע, פ
- Time and date
- Around the house
- Negation
- Review so far

Week 5: The daily grind

- צ, ק, ר, ש, ת
- Regular verbs
- Daily routines

- Case and gender in Hasidic Yiddish

Week 6: An itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny yellow polka dot bikini

- Alef-beys review
- Describing people and things
- Clothing
- What did you do last weekend?

Week 7: My little treasure

- Yes/no questions
- At the grocery store
- Diminutives
- Possessives

Week 8: Ouch!

- Objective pronouns (accusative vs dative in Classical Yiddish)
- At the doctor
- What are you doing this summer?
- Review so far

Week 9: You can do it!

- Modals
- Keeping fit in Yiddish
- Jewish holidays

Week 10: Over the river and through the woods

- Separable prefix and phrasal verbs
- Comparatives
- Getting around town
- Yiddish in Montreal

Week 11 (with Eli Benedict): Sweeter than tzimmes

- Yiddish pop culture
- Traditional lifecycle events

Week 12 (with Eli Benedict):

- Ashkenazi foods
- Passover
- How to continue speaking and reading Yiddish
- Review

