

11th Grade History Summer Reading
Summer 2010

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This summer, all 11th graders should read Noah Gordon's *The Last Jew*, a historical novel set in Spain during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. The novel traces the attempts of a young Jewish man, Yonah Toledano, to preserve both his life and his Jewish identity as he attempts to solve the murder of his brother. Take detailed notes on the questions below using active reading. It may be helpful to note page numbers for when you reference the book during discussion. You will use these notes for an in-class writing assignment on the book during the first week of school.

1. Describe the Jewish community prior to the expulsion. Who were its leaders? What positions did Jews have in Spanish society?
2. In order to assess Spanish society's interactions with the Jewish community, list key Catholic characters and their perception of Jews
3. Describe the transformation of the Converso community during Yonah Toledano's lifetime. Highlight these changes as you read.
4. How did the Catholic Church exert its power in the following areas:
 - Government
 - Economy
 - Social structure
5. Identify groups or individuals that challenged the religious authorities.
 - How did they challenge religious authorities?
 - Why did they do so?