



The Genocide Education Project

Commemoration and Memorialization: The Long Lost Armenian Tulip

Rationale:

The allegorical story of Armenian botanist J.J. Manissadjian, who studied and collected a rare, wild tulip found in the Armenian homeland in the Ottoman Empire, serves as a basis for understanding the resilience of the Armenian people following the genocide perpetrated against them by the Turkish Ottoman rulers. The tulip became extinct in the wild, but was cultivated later from seeds Manissadjian had sent to Europe.



After learning about the Armenian Genocide (using resources in the “Process” section below), students will design and create a memorial to honor the victims, survivors, and descendants of the Armenian Genocide, which is commemorated annually on April 24th. Using either real tulip bulbs to create a memorial garden or fashioning paper tulips, students honor the victims and survivors.

Sequence:

Unit conclusion of the Armenian Genocide

Grades 4-12

Social Studies

English Language Arts

Art

50-90 Minutes required

Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Investigate the meaning and purpose behind the creation of memorials
- Create a living or artistic memorial commemorating genocide survivors
- Deepen their understanding of resilience by reading the true story of an Armenian genocide survivor

California State Standards:

HSS 4.4 / 5.5 Students understand how individuals and groups have shaped significant historical events.

HSS Analysis Skills (K–5):

- Historical Interpretation
- Identify different points of view
- Understand cause and effect

HSS 7.8 Decline of the Ottoman Empire

HSS Analysis Skills (6–8): Construct interpretations based on evidence; analyze historical significance

HSS 8.12 Principles of American democracy & civic participation

HSS 10.5 Students analyze the causes and course of World War I.

HSS 10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building and genocide in the 20th century.

HSS Historical Analysis Skills (9–12):

- Evaluate historical events from multiple perspectives
- Use evidence to support interpretations
- Analyze ethical dimensions of history

RI.4–12.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis

RI.4–12.2 Determine central ideas/themes

RI.6–12.6 Determine author’s purpose and point of view



Materials:

[Examples of Memorials Slidedeck](#)

[Investigate a Memorial in your Community](#)

[Vocabulary](#)

[The Rare and Magical Tulip of Mr. Manissadjian](#)

[Brainstorming and planning to create your memorial](#)

[Guided Questions to create your memorial](#)

[Sketch out your memorial design](#)

Process (50-90 minutes):

Prior Knowledge:

Students should already be familiar with the basic events of the Armenian Genocide. To establish this, please explore the various lessons and resources from [The Genocide Education Project](#).

Step 1:

Students brainstorm their understanding of memorials and why communities create memorials to commemorate events. Using the [Examples of Memorials Slidedeck](#), or a slidedeck you create using memorials in your community, students then complete the [Investigate a Memorial in your Community](#) questions. The provided [Vocabulary](#) may also be used to deepen student understanding.

Step 2:

Read [The Long Lost Tulip of Mr. Manissadjian](#) as a group, in pairs, or independently, and use the questions provided with the reading to guide the discussion.

Step 3:

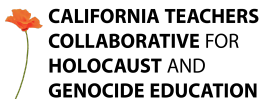
Using the [Brainstorming and planning to create your memorial](#) or the [Guided Questions to create your memorial](#) worksheets, students consider how they want to memorialize the Armenian Genocide. They can use the [Sketch out your memorial](#) design to bring their memorial to life.

Teachers can choose to have students physically create the memorial, as time permits

Differentiation / Enrichment:

- Introduce this lesson in the autumn and plant red tulips to create a living memorial. Return to the memorial site in the spring (ideally, April 24th to commemorate the Armenian Genocide) to revisit key ideas, to reinforce key points around genocide, and to celebrate life by visiting the tulips.
- Use the tulip drawing page template to create a “tulip garden” by transferring the design onto colored construction paper (or using the paper as-is and coloring it), writing a message of hope or commemoration, cutting it out, attaching it to a popsicle stick, and displaying them for members of the school and community.
- Explore the [Spiral of Injustice from the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights](#). Help students feel empowered by encouraging the practice of saying “STOP.” Guide students to write STOP statements in response to the Pyramid of Hate on their tulip art. Have students choose a behavior that they want to see end now, thus helping them understand that they can play a role in preventing discrimination and hate.





**CALIFORNIA TEACHERS
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Investigate a Memorial in your Community

Question	Response
Brainstorm: What is a memorial? What purpose(s) might it serve?	
1. What is the name of a memorial in your community, and where is it located?	
2. How does its location add meaning to the memorial?	
3. Who/What is represented in the memorial? Why?	
4. When you look/touch the memorial, what do you think about? How does it make you feel?	
5. Who designed it? What was the artist's motivation behind the design and chosen materials?	
6. How does the memorial reflect the people in the community?	



Vocabulary:

Armenian Highlands: Also referred to as part of Historic Armenia or Western Armenia, it is a peninsula that forms the western edge of Asia, in an area sometimes called Asia Minor or Anatolia. It falls between the Black Sea to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the south, the Aegean Sea to the west, and the Taurus Mountains to the east. Today, most of the Armenian Highlands fall within Turkey.

Armenian Genocide: The systematic removal and murder of indigenous Armenians from their homelands in the Armenian Highlands by the Turkish Ottoman Empire during World War I. This action killed 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children, and dispossessed the remaining population of all their belongings, including land, homes, businesses, and community institutions, causing a large migration and establishment of diasporan populations throughout the world.

Armenian Genocide Denial:

Diaspora: The dispersion or “breaking up” of a group of people, causing them to settle far from their ancestral home or lands they have inhabited for a period of time.

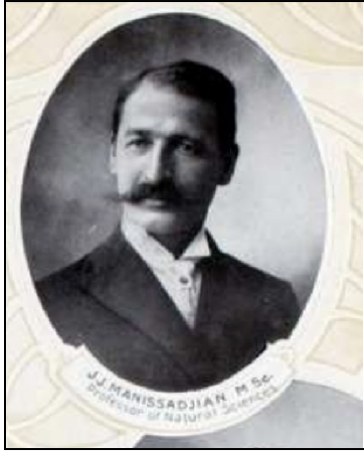
Genocide: As defined by the United Nations, "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, such as: 1. Killing members of the group; 2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; 4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; 5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Living memorial: A tribute to a person or event that involves living things, such as plants and other natural elements.

Memorial: Something created to remind people of a person or event

Resilience: The ability to withstand or recover from difficulties

The Long Lost Tulip of Mr. Manissadjian



J.J. Manissadjian was a highly esteemed professor of physical science at Anatolia College in the city of Merzifon, in Turkey. He was born in Turkey, to a German mother and Armenian father. He was a good student who knew many languages and studied in Berlin, where he taught the Turkish language to Germans. In 1890, he returned to Merzifon to be with his family and joined Anatolia College, which was founded by Americans. Manissadjian first set up a weather station that collected information about the climate of Merzifon. He combined this with his knowledge of geography so that he could fully understand the nature of his homeland. He also

helped establish the college's natural science museum, collecting thousands of examples of plants, animals, insects, and minerals.

When the Turks began arresting and deporting Armenians, Manissadjian's colleagues at Anatolia College bribed the Turks to release him, noting that his mother was German, and Germany and Turkey were allies during World War I. Manissadjian and his family were able to live on a German friend's farm in the city of Amasya. To save their lives, Manissadjian and his family converted from Christianity to Islam. After World War I, they immigrated to the United States, settling in Detroit, Michigan. Manissadjian spent the rest of his days there; his work was lost, and he was unable to return to his homeland.

Among Manissadjian's botanical collections from Armenia was the newly identified tulip, *Tulipa sprengeri*. This tulip has an unusually interesting history. A single bulb was found in a shipment to the Dutch tulip bulb firm of Van Tubergen, sent from Manissadjian before the Armenian Genocide. Now the tulip is extinct in the wild but thriving in cultivation. It is rather symbolic that one can no longer find either this tulip or Armenians in the countryside of Amasya, and yet both have persevered in the diaspora.

1. Why is Mr. Manissadjian such an ideal example of resilience? In turn, why are the red tulips he saved an ideal example of resilience?
2. The *Tulipa sprengeri* becomes very symbolic in this reading. Why is the "saving" of a particular species of flower so powerful?

Brainstorming and planning to create your memorial

Inner:

Middle:

Outer:

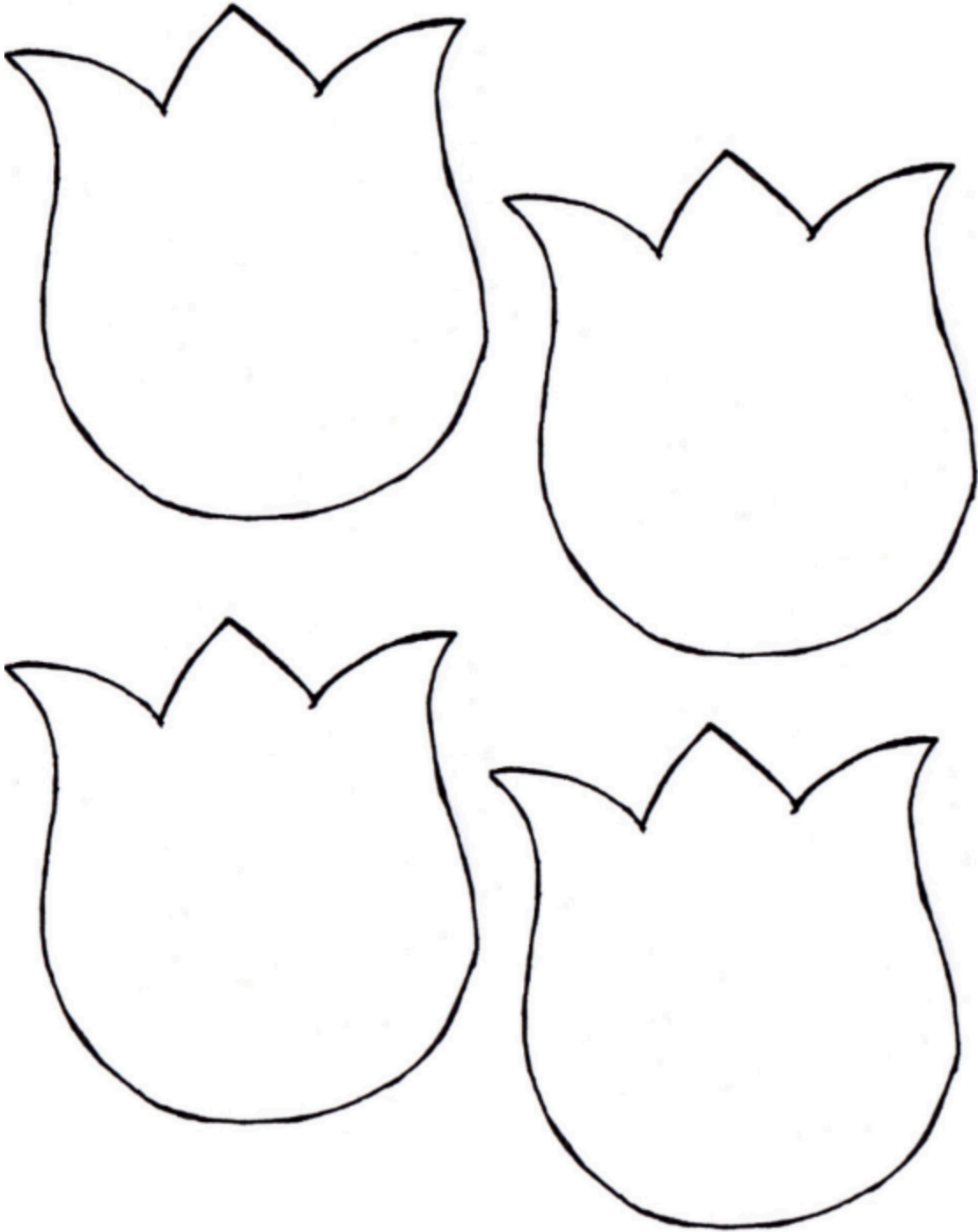
Materials needed:



Guided questions to create your memorial

1. After studying the Armenian Genocide and memorialization, why do you think it is important to memorialize such events? Include individual, historical, and societal reasons in your response.
2. What aspect of the history of the Armenian Genocide do you want to memorialize? Provide historical details to support your choice.
3. Who do you want to reach with your memorial? The descendants? Inform others?
4. What type of memorial will you create? A statue? A mural? A museum?
5. What will it look like and why?
6. Where will you put the memorial (if it is a physical object)? Identify the city and place within that city. Explain your choices.
7. How would creating a LIVING memorial in comparison to another type of memorial be exceptionally powerful?

Sketch your memorial design:



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