

Understanding Modern Genocide

A Comparative Genocide Studies Syllabus

Introductory Note for Teachers: Teaching About Genocide

Below you will find a sample course for educators interested in teaching about modern genocide. It employs a comparative approach and the resources are offered “buffet style,” meaning each case study offers sufficient resources to teach it as a stand alone unit should you choose not to teach the entire course.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce learners to genocide studies. It is designed to create space to connect readings and class discussions to current events, as genocide unfortunately continues to occur today.

The course is designed with the following goals:

- **Evaluate prominent theories** about why genocide happens, as well as theories regarding actors and actions during genocide.
- Identify major 20th century genocides and **analyze their impacts on citizens (and non-citizens) and communities** through engagement with survivor memoirs, testimonies, and artistic works.
- Understand how peoples and communities **rebuild** after genocide.
- Develop **analytical skills that help you process and respond to current events** in pursuit of being an informed, active, and engaged global citizen.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10, 1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9
HSS-10.4, 1,2, and 3	HSS-11.9.1
HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
HSS-10.9.8	HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Genocide Prevention

If you are new to teaching genocide studies, welcome! We have developed the [Understanding Genocide Primer](#) | [Twige Project](#) to support genocide educators as they navigate this important but challenging topic in the classroom. Teaching about genocide can be incredibly difficult for many reasons, ranging from the heart wrenching content and risk of secondary trauma to the fact that there is an ever-evolving body of scholarship that often does not get translated into resources for educational purposes. We created this primer (using lesson plans and content from the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda as the case study) to hopefully make this task a little bit less daunting by synthesizing current knowledge about genocide. Specifically, this primer contains summaries of core questions about genocide, grounded in cutting-edge peer-reviewed research and with a focus on the human story of genocide. Our hope is that high school educators can benefit from this primer as they prepare to teach about genocide and feel secure, both in their background knowledge and in their pedagogical approach. This primer is appropriate for middle school educators as well, though the accompanying lesson plans were created with older learners in mind and would need to be adapted.



Recommendation

The course will explore emotionally challenging and sensitive material. It is important to begin by fostering a classroom culture rooted in mutual respect and civility. If time allows, consider using one of the following two Facing History and Ourselves activities or a similar activity to create a reflective and engaged learning environment:

1. [Identifying and Affirming Core Values | Facing History & Ourselves](#) While this activity is for middle school students, it may be adapted to allow older students to identify and share their personal values. It may be paired with the activity below or used alone.
2. [Classroom Contract Teaching Strategy | Facing History & Ourselves](#) This activity supports the creation of class norms that promote a thoughtful and reflective community.

We recommend signing up for a free USC Shoah iWitness Account and FHAO account to facilitate teaching certain activities.

Final Note

Genocide education is necessary, but educators must tread carefully. We need to be cognizant of not inducing emotional exhaustion among learners of all ages. With our 24-hour news cycle, the globalization of mass communications, and the advent of social media, we can access all the news from all over the world and all times of the day. So, when students come into the classroom to learn about and engage with these difficult topics, they are likely also being barraged by the world's problems (and from multiple access points) outside of the classroom. We thus run the increasing risk of inducing emotional exhaustion and with it, a numbing effect, which can prompt learners to shut down. Much in the same way that adults can experience burnout, so, too, can youth. And with burnout can come a reduction in empathy and caring. At the risk of further piling on to a growing checklist of to dos, educators should be proactive in protecting learners from burnout. For example, when we are teaching these topics, we also incorporate lessons of hope, resilience, and opportunities for engaged activism. Thus, the classroom becomes a space not just for beleaguering young minds with problems, but also for brainstorming and workshopping solutions and creative problem-solving opportunities, too. We need to be careful to not push students to a tipping point where they instead become hardened or stop caring as a coping mechanism. This is also a healthy exercise for educators, too, as we benefit from these messages and lessons as well. Sometimes the best way to teach this is to model that behavior, acknowledging and ensuring that we all have a right to go out and experience play and joy not only as a preventive practice, designed to prevent exhaustion, shore up our reserves, and help us tackle those problems tomorrow, but also for the sake of joy itself.

Understanding Modern Genocide

Course Description

Genocide killed more people during the 20th century than all the wars or homicide combined, and genocides have also impacted hundreds of millions of others who have been victimized by violence, displacement, and deliberate efforts to destroy a culture. This course is geared toward addressing six major questions about this grave crime, including:

- 1) What is genocide?
- 2) Why and how does genocide happen?
- 3) Why do people perpetrate genocide?
- 4) Why and how do people resist genocide?
- 5) How do citizens, communities, and countries rebuild after genocide?
- 6) How can we prevent genocide?

The class will address these questions via five major case studies, including the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Guatemala, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda, though it will consider current genocides as well.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Engage in **advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration** of genocide.
- **Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner** through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.
- Describe and analyze a **range of perspectives on genocide** and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.
- Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for **intercultural competence as a global citizen**.
- **Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts** of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.

Suggested Assignments

Motivations Statement

What: Everyone will write one-page statements reflecting on one of two options: 1) their motivations for studying genocide or 2) the importance of studying genocide. Then students will reflect on what they can do as an individual learning about and responding to this grave crime.

Why: When it comes to preventing atrocities, no single person or project can stop a genocide. However, everyone can make some kind of difference in their own community (or beyond) that helps to further tolerance, peacebuilding, intergroup dialogue, commemorations, or other efforts that support genocide prevention. In order to better discern how everyone can make a difference, students should think through their specific relationships, opportunities, skills, or resources that they have.

Testimony Engagement Journal

What: Everyone will write a series of short responses—either tied to specific prompts or as free writes—regarding the testimonies, stories, and artistic works that learners engage with throughout the semester.

Why: Throughout this course, students will engage with heavy material, and it is important to have an outlet to interact with and think about this material. Beyond this, however, a goal of this course involves engaging with primary source materials from survivors, and this assignment provides a structured way to do so.

Engagement Journal Tips to Provide to Students

Take time to think before you start writing

- Your journal is a place to share your thoughts, feelings and questions regarding course content and typically a testimony that you listen to as part of class or as homework
- Your audience is yourself and your teacher, though sometimes it may be your peers

If you feel stuck, try free writing. You can also use creative writing and try a poem or a story. You will also be graded on: your effort, thoughtfulness, completion, creativity and curiosity.

Suggested Assignments

Op-Ed

What: An op-ed originally appeared opposite the editorial page in a newspaper. Today, the term op-ed is used more widely and typically includes a column that represents the strong, informed, and focused opinion of the writer on an issue of relevance to a targeted audience. For this course, everyone will be writing an op-ed.

Why: 1) Students can use the op-ed to connect course material to current events that interest them.. 2) Learning to write for multiple audiences is important, and op-eds can be influential.

Common Characteristics of an Op-Ed^[1] to Share with Students

- Typically less than 750 words (and often around 600)
- Clearly defined point
- Written for a general, educated audience
- Contains the strong, unique voice of the writer

Questions to Ask Yourself When Writing an Op-Ed

- Am I making a clear point?
- Why should someone care?
- Do I have a specific audience?

Topic and Theme

A successful op-ed piece should have a clearly defined topic and theme.

- Topic: the person, place, issue, incident, or thing that is the primary focus of the piece. The topic is usually stated in the first paragraph.
- Theme: another level of meaning to the topic. What is the big, overarching idea of the op-ed? What is your broader point? Why is your point important?

¹ Adapted from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's handout on op-eds

Research

While op-ed pieces allow writers to include their own voice and express an opinion, op-eds should typically involve a degree of research. Research involves acquiring facts, quotations, citations, or data from sources and personal observation.

Openings

The first line of an op-ed is crucial. The opening “hook” may grab the reader’s attention with a strong claim, a surprising fact, a metaphor, a mystery, or a counter-intuitive observation that entices the reader into reading more. The opening also briefly lays the foundation for the piece.

Endings

Every good op-ed piece includes a strong ending. The ending:

- Echoes or answers introduction.
- Has been foreshadowed by preceding thematic statements.
- Is the last and often most memorable detail.
- Contains a final epiphany or calls the reader to action.

Capstone Project

Framework: GRASPS Performance Tasks

What **Goal** is to be met?

What **Role** is the learner playing?

Who is the **Audience**?

What is the specific challenging **Situation**?

What is the required Performance or **Product**?

By what **Standards/Criteria** will the work be evaluated?

Performance Task Option #1: Design a Museum Exhibit

GRASPS

Goal	<p>To design a museum exhibit which educates the public about one of the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and themes across genocides (for example attacks on victims or resistance) • A focus on survivors and their experiences for one or multiple genocides <p>The exhibit should explore how the genocide affected citizens, non-citizens, and entire communities, as well as the lasting legacy it left on survivors.</p>
Role	<p>You are a historical curator working for a human rights museum or a museum dedicated to a single genocide. Your job is to create an exhibit which is engaging, thought provoking, historically accurate, and informative.</p>
Audience	<p>Museum visitors, including students, educators and members of the general public who likely know little about the genocide(s) you are presenting. Your exhibit should inform, engage, and encourage reflection.</p>
Situation	<p>Given growing national and international interest in your topic, the museum has decided to create a new wing. This exhibit space will focus on the human experiences of genocide, not only on the atrocities but on their long lasting impact, including the way communities have rebuilt. Your charge is to design an exhibit that is historically accurate, deeply moving and thought provoking.</p>
Product	<p>Your exhibit must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A main written panel introducing the historical context of the genocide • A featured story about survivors, resistance or your chosen theme including primary and secondary sources • At least two visual components: maps, photographs, artifacts or artwork • An interactive or reflective component: A space for visitor reflection or to answer a thought provoking question, or some other way for visitors to share their feelings about their experience • A digital or hand drawn layout of the exhibit space • A title for the exhibit • A 1-2 paragraph curator's statement in which you explain to your museum supervisor the reason for your choice
Standards/ Criteria	<p>You exhibit will be evaluated on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical accuracy and depth of research • Clarity of communication of ideas • Appropriate approach to the sensitivity of the materials • Creativity and thoughtfulness • Level of detail in curator statement

Performance Task Option #2: Artifacts

GRASPS

Goal	To represent time periods of genocide through the careful selection, interpretation and explanation of artifacts. These artifacts should represent both loss and endurance and help your audience understand the lived experiences of genocide survivors and victims.
Role	You are a student historian working to better understand the impact of genocide on citizens, non-citizens and communities. Your work will contribute to a student created archive or display of artifacts which represent the genocide(s) you have studied.
Audience	Your audience are fellow students, educators and others in your learning community who want to learn more about how genocide impacted real people across time.
Situation	Your class is participating in a learning initiative to help people better understand genocide through personal stories and meaningful artifacts. As a student historian, you've been asked to identify, analyze and explain four artifacts which illustrate the impact of the genocide across four time periods. Your work will contribute to an archive of artifacts telling the story of the individuals and communities impacted.
Product	<p>You will research and create a product that presents four artifacts, each representing a time period of genocide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life before the genocide • Life at Risk (when groups become targeted) • Genocide • Recreating Life (how survivors and communities rebuilt) <p>For each artifact, identify the time period, who would have used the artifact and how, and what it tells you about the time period or the individuals/communities involved in the genocide in 150-250 words</p> <p>Write a 200+ word introduction to the genocide that establishes the historical context for your artifacts and why it is important to learn about today</p> <p>Write a personal reflection about the project tying your learning to a theme you studied, for example memory, identity, resilience or justice. Include citations for artifacts, historical research, display your artifacts or photos of them, along with the text you created, in a slide deck or another type of digital presentation to be added to an archive.</p>
Standards/ Criteria	<p>Your project will be evaluated on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical accuracy and relevance of the artifacts • Clarity and thoughtfulness of your explanations • Overall storytelling and emotional/educational impact • Quality of written expression

Important Class Note

This course covers emotional content and very sensitive topics. In light of this, please aim to disagree without becoming disagreeable, and **with respect and civility** for everyone in our course. The activities in this course will expose you to some of the greatest moral and ethical dilemmas in modern history. Questions and student directed discussions are encouraged. But also remember that these topics tend to generate more questions than answers. We will wrestle with this history together. It is essential that you agree to participate in a classroom which welcomes disagreement and honors each individual's personal journey to understanding.

Unit 1: Setting the Stage

What is Genocide and Why Care About Genocide?

Essential Questions:

- What is genocide?
- Why learn about genocide?
- What is testimony?
- Why learn with testimony?

Guiding Questions:

- What are the historical origins of the term “genocide”?
- How is genocide different from other types of global crimes?
- Why do survivors and others choose to share their stories via testimony?
- What does it mean to respect people’s stories and lived experiences?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- understand the international legal definition of genocide.
- analyze the concept of genocide.
- compare and contrast definitions of genocide.
- understand the value of testimony for learning about genocide.
- analyze firsthand accounts about historical events.
- critique primary sources.

Note:

Why study genocide? After millions were killed during the Holocaust, the international community vowed to prevent genocide from occurring in the future. “Never Again” became a common refrain, and the United Nations established a convention against genocide. Despite the criminalization of genocide and this global vow to prevent it, genocide has happened again. More people were killed in genocide over the course of the last century than in all homicides, manslaughters, and related crimes, and many of those deaths occurred in the past fifty years. Genocide has also resulted in mass displacement and widespread violence, and it has impacted families and cultures in incredibly harmful ways.

To study genocide, it is vital to center the human story. Placing the human story at the core of analytical and educational efforts offers tremendous value.. And for students around the globe, a combined educational approach that incorporates testimony and a variety of primary sources, locating and learning the history of an instance of mass atrocity with particular focus on the human story of genocide, can engage learned at the cognitive, moral, and affective levels. The impact is measurable not only through an increased interest in historical topics (which is great!), but also through increased capacity for critical thinking, being able to differentiate different forms of information and its sources and offer informed valuations, and an enhanced capacity to feel, think, and emote. This approach can thus provide students with necessary tools to resist the “us vs. them” paradigm identified by genocide scholars as necessary to bring about the social death of a group and other dehumanizing tactics often employed by extremists.

Background Readings for Educators

Chapters 1&3 of Understanding Genocide A Primer | Twige Project



Understanding Genocide A Primer

Created by The Twige Project
Hollie Nyseth Nzitira, Sara E. Brown & Jamie D. Wise

How to Use Testimony

LESSON: Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

HANDOUT: Guidelines for Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL MEMORY IN HISTORY

One of the most powerful ways of remembering the Holocaust and honoring its victims is to bring the voices of survivors to your students.¹ Oral history interviews provide glimpses into the history of the Holocaust that cannot be obtained from documents or written records. While textual documents are essential for the study of the Holocaust, an individual's testimony can supplement those documents by providing a detailed and personal look at a historical event that may be underrepresented or even absent from written works.

Survivor testimonies (and eyewitness testimonies in general) provide a window into the thoughts, feelings, motivations, and fears of people who experienced history. Testimonies reflect an individual's memory of events - often recalled decades after the events themselves. And although oral testimony interviews are typically structured systematically with questions chosen by the interviewer, the interviewee decides how they will deliver their narrative - including or omitting details either purposefully or unconsciously.

All human-constructed narratives are fallible reconstructions of reality - each with unique strengths and weaknesses. Photographers choose what to include in a photograph, as well as what to leave outside the frame. Government documents reflect what one official thought would be important information to convey to another official or to the public. In this sense, eyewitness testimonies are no less or more reliable than other sources. However, they provide a valuable window into the impact that the Holocaust had on individuals and how, after many years, survivors make meaning of their experiences.

TRANSLATING STATISTICS INTO INDIVIDUALS

For educators, survivor testimony offers an opportunity to place a human face on an overwhelming and far away piece of history. The numbers of victims and the complexity of the events and scope of geography and destruction is vast, and survivor testimony allows students to learn from an individual who tells the story of what happened to them and their family. Telling the story in the first person, survivors speak of things that students can comprehend - the love of a parent, their friends at school, the pain of separation from a loved one, the humiliation of exclusion, and even the fear of losing a parent or sibling. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of statistics. In the words of the political theorist Hannah Arendt, "the story reveals the meaning of what otherwise would remain an unbearable sequence of sheer happenings" (*Men in Dark Times*).

¹ For additional guidance, see: *Using Testimony in Holocaust Education*, Yad Vashem, <http://www.yad.org.il/en/education/using-testimony>, *Using Testimony in the Classroom*, USC Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education, http://www.uscshoah.org/education/sites/default/files/USCSF_Teaching_Guidelines.pdf

Readings for Students

UN Guidance on When to Use the Term Genocide | United Nations



Overview of What Genocide Is and Its Causes | Hollie Nzitatira

What Genocide Is and Its Causes



Videos for Students

Why Learn About Genocide



Dr. Paul Parks (Parks was a Black veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces who was part of the liberation Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany and later, after returning to the United States and returning to civilian life, joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. He once joked that as a result of his efforts to promote civil rights in America (utilizing non-violent strategies), he'd been in a jail in every state in the south. Parks recounted a time when Dr. King asked him why he had joined the Civil Rights Movement. Parks spoke to Dr. King of the legacy of the Holocaust and the horrors he had witnessed at Dachau Concentration Camp. He told Dr. King, "I know what the end of bigotry looks like, the solution to bigotry looks like, from the standpoint of the bigot...I've seen that, and I don't want that to ever happen again." Parks took the lessons he learned fighting racism and hatred on the European continent under Nazi occupation and applied them to his lived reality in the United States, harnessing them to catalyze and inform his civil rights activism) talks about teaching respect through testimony.

Difference Between Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity with Dr. James Waller | Choices Program



Defining Genocide Lesson | Twige Project (asynchronous or in class)

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Defining Genocide

Overview

The crime of genocide is formally defined through a global treaty, which is a written agreement between governments. The definition was widely contested when it was created, and the international definition continues to be debated today. The definition includes protection for certain groups and considers specific acts to be genocidal, while excluding others. In response to issues with the definition, many researchers and scholars have created their own definitions. In this activity, students will compare and contrast well-known definitions of genocide and reflect on the power of words and definitions to shape the world.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the international legal definition of genocide.
2. Students will analyze the concept of genocide.
3. Students will compare and contrast definitions of genocide.


Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-10.9.8
HSS-10.4.1	HSS-11.9.1
HSS-10.4.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Defining Genocide

In the wake of the Holocaust, a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin lobbied the United Nations to create an international treaty defining and outlawing the crime of genocide. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (known as the Genocide Convention).

International law is created through a political process. In this case, people representing different countries had to collaborate and reach a compromise regarding the definition outlined in the treaty. Because of this, some international lawyers and researchers argue that the international definition of genocide has flaws. Still, the definition continues to be used around the world. It was also adopted in the International Criminal Court, meaning that it is still the current global legal definition of genocide.



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FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION
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Power of Propaganda | 1

Learning Through Testimony Lesson | Twige Project (asynchronous or in class)

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Learning Through Testimony

Overview

Testimonies are the narratives, oral histories, and personal stories shared by people—in this case, people who experienced the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. For instance, someone who survived the genocide may provide a testimony regarding their experience, and someone who perpetrated violence or rescued people may also share their testimony. The giving of testimony is central to societies around the world and throughout history. Students will analyze an example of firsthand testimony.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the value of testimony for learning about genocide.
2. Students will be able to analyze firsthand accounts about historical events.
3. Students will be able to critique primary sources.


Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9.1
HSS-10.4.1	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
HSS-10.4.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.8
HSS-7.4.5	

Why Learn With Testimony?

When those who experienced the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda give their testimony, they offer a way to understand past and current events. They guide us through the darkness of humanity, and they also shed light on the possibilities for every individual to counter hatred. The act of giving testimony is a brave one. In having the courage to share their testimony, those who experienced the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda allow us to learn from them.

When analyzing a piece of testimony, consider the following: When and where is the interview taking place? Who is the interviewer and under what circumstances is the interview taking place? What is the tone of the speaker? How do the interview questions frame the conversation?



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Learning Through Testimony | 1

Unit 2: Applying A Comparative Lens (6 Case Studies)

Unit Essential Questions:

- How can we understand genocide not as an isolated event, but as a recurring repression of human rights?
- What can cause a community to split apart along racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural lines?
- What is the impact of dehumanization on individuals or communities?

Case Study Guiding Questions:

- What commonalities amongst genocides emerge from identifying the causes and methods used in multiple case studies?
- What common warning signs appear in multiple case studies?
- What evidence best helps identify the criteria to meet the definition of genocide?
- What themes emerge from survivor testimony?
- What does survivor testimony teach about human resilience or the cost of inaction?

Suggested Framework for each Case Study:

Head, Hand, Heart Activity: [Head, Heart, Conscience Teaching Strategy](#) | [Facing History & Ourselves](#) If in groups, students will choose one category and answer at least one question in the category. If independent, teachers can determine how many categories/questions students will answer.

For each case study, there are additional activities you may choose to include.

Objectives for each Case Study: SWDAT...

- Analyze primary and secondary sources to identify the key events, perpetrators, victims, and motivations behind a specific genocide, demonstrating understanding through a visual graphic organizer
- Map the geographical location of the genocide
- Explain how the selected event meets the criteria of genocide as defined by international law, using evidence from research
- Respond to survivor testimony on intellectual, emotional and ethical levels by reflecting on their own beliefs and the choices made during genocide

Framework/Directions for Students

Day 1 Activities: Historical Context and Overview of the Genocide

Directions: Use the resources provided and conduct additional research to identify

- What happened during the genocide (who were the victims and what happened to them?)
- Why the genocide took place (who were the perpetrators and collaborators and what were their beliefs?)
- Why it is considered a genocide (what key elements of genocide are present?)

Use the information to create a graphic organizer (timeline, chart, storyboard, etc) to explain the genocide and how it happened. You may use paper or Google Drawing. Include a geographic map so classmates know where the genocide took place.

Day 2 Activities: Survivor Testimony

Part I: After watching/reading survivor testimony, complete [Head, Heart, Conscience Teaching Strategy | Facing History & Ourselves](#) independently or in small groups.

Head:

- What information from the video did you already know about the genocide?
- What information is confirmed? What remains uncertain? Are there any facts that are contested?
- What additional information would you like to have to help you understand the genocide better?

Heart:

- What emotions does this event raise for you?
- Are there particular moments, images, or stories that stand out to you? If so, why?

Conscience:

- What questions about fairness, equity, or justice does this event raise for you?
- What choices did key figures make, and what values may have guided those choices?
- How were people impacted by this event? Are there people who should be held accountable? If so, how?

Part 2: Using the chart you created in Part I, place at least one piece of information from each survivor you watched in the graphic organizer from last class. Make the connection - explain where you are putting the information and why.

Case Study #1: Armenian Genocide

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of Armenian Genocide victims?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Armenian Genocide?
- How were individuals impacted by the Armenian Genocide?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- gain an understanding of the Armenian Genocide, including significant events, people, places, and times
- apply the concepts of resistance, agency, and empowerment to the actions of Armenians during the Armenian Genocide
- humanize those who experienced the Armenian Genocide through watching survivor accounts
- apply the concepts of resistance, agency, and empowerment to the actions of Armenians during the Armenian Genocide
- identify and explain the different ways Armenians used resistance, agency, and empowerment, over time

Readings for Students

The Armenians | Genocide Education

Day 3

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Armenians

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text, including vocabulary using political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will research who the Armenians are from ancient times to 1914.
- Students will apply the concepts of resistance, agency, and empowerment to Armenians through 1909.

Materials

- Student handouts of *A Brief History of the Armenian Genocide*
- *A Road Less Traveled: The Handjian Story*

Differentiation
Excerpt from *A Brief History of the Armenian Genocide* can be read as a whole group, in pairs, or independently as needed.

Lesson Plan: 50 minutes
Review concepts from Day 2, specifically the terms resistance, agency, and empowerment.

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Brief History of the Armenian Genocide | Genocide Education

Day 4

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Armenian Genocide: Background

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will gain an understanding of the Armenian Genocide, including significant events, people, places, and times.
- Students will make connections with previously learned materials.

Materials

- Excerpt from *A Brief History of the Armenian Genocide* reading selection from The Genocide Education Project and/or *Armenian Genocide 1915-1922*
- [Armenian Genocide](#) CLIC video about the Armenian Genocide (If Needed)
- Copies of *A Brief History of the Armenian Genocide* from Day 3, as needed

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Videos for Students

Armenian Genocide: A Brief Overview for High School Students | CLIC Project



The Armenian Genocide: Fight for Recognition | Into The Shadows



Lessons Using Video (The Promise or a Series of Youtube Clips) | Genocide Education

Day 7

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Promise

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA Literacy: RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will identify and explain the different ways Armenians used resistance, agency, and empowerment, over time.

Materials (attached)

- Viewing access to the film, *The Promise* (2017, [YouTube Movies](#), \$3.99 rent)
- The *Promise* Film Note Sheet Student Handout
- [The Promise Film Study Guide](#) (background information for teachers)

If you don't have the time to watch the entire film, Have students read through the summary in [The Promise Exploring Resistance: Concepts of Revenge and Nonviolent Protest](#) and use these clips:

- [I'm Armenian](#) (2:09)
- [Where Were You](#) (4:45)
- [No One is Safe](#) (3:4)
- [We Have to Help Them](#) (5:7)
- [French Navy Saving Armenians](#) (3:50)
- [The Last Scene](#) (1:36)

GenocideEducation.org

Activities

Slide Deck for Use in Class | Genocide Education

(Note: feel free to use these slides at your own pace - no need to follow recommended Days listed on the top right corner of the slides)



Constructing a Timeline of the Armenian Genocide | Genocide Education

(Note: feel free to use these slides at your own pace - no need to use the corresponding lesson plan "Day 5" to complete this lesson)

Day 5

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Armenian Genocide: A Timeline

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST 11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will gain an understanding of the Armenian Genocide, including significant events, people, places, and times.
- Students will apply the concepts of resistance, agency, and empowerment to the actions of Armenians during the Armenian Genocide.

Materials

- Notes from Day 4
- Poster board or large pieces of paper
- Markers, colored pencils, etc.

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Lesson Using Survivor Testimony | Genocide Education

Day 6

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Survivors

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CA CCSS ELA/Literacy: RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will be able to humanize the Armenian Genocide through survivor accounts.
- Students will apply the concepts of resistance, agency, and empowerment to the actions of Armenians during the Armenian Genocide.

Materials

- Internet access
- Personal listening devices
- Survivor Testimonies Notes handout

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Lesson on Resistance | Genocide Education

Days 8 & 9

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

The Armenian Experience

Standards:
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST.9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: WHST.11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

- Students will identify and explain the different ways Armenians used resistance, agency, and empowerment, over time.

Materials (attached)

- A device to connect to the internet
- Resistance Stations handout

Differentiation
This activity includes video clips and readings to help reach all learners

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The Legacy of a Witness | Facing History & Ourselves



(Note: Effective genocide education is at its best when it offers not solely cautionary tales, but also positive moral messages to students. Language – its use, its symbols, the very process of its acquisition – also include embedded world views. It offers a “medium for the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.” (see Elinor Ochs “Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity”) Hearing not only from survivors of genocide but also rescuers and other upstanders offers students an opportunity not just to study rescuers, but also acts of rescue. Armen T. Wegner was a German national who first smuggled photographic evidence of the Armenian Genocide in his belt buckle during World War I and was later incarcerated in multiple German Concentration Camps for writing Hitler to oppose the persecution of the Jews. Wegner was later awarded the Righteous Among the Nations designation by Yad Vashem for being the only German writer to publicly oppose the persecution of the Jews. He is but one example of an ordinary person who decided to speak out when he witnessed wrongdoing. When possible, weaving together the typologies of rescuer actions with the typologies of people who rescue, or studying the acts that comprise rescue and upstanderism alongside the rescuer, is extremely valuable. When we study the story of Armen T. Wegner, we must blend into that study learning not only about the rescuers but also about his specific actions. By examining the lives, choices, and actions of individuals who played a role in preventing or addressing the harms of genocide, students are provided with role models they can emulate and positive examples of who they could become and the actions they could undertake. Such examples may later buttress student resolve to take action not if, but likely when they witness wrongdoing during the course of their own lives, thus creating opportunities to develop a generation more likely to eschew the norms of bystanderism and take action.)

Case Study #2: The Holocaust

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of Holocaust victims?
- What are the costs of injustice, hatred and bigotry?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Holocaust?
- How were individuals impacted by the Holocaust?

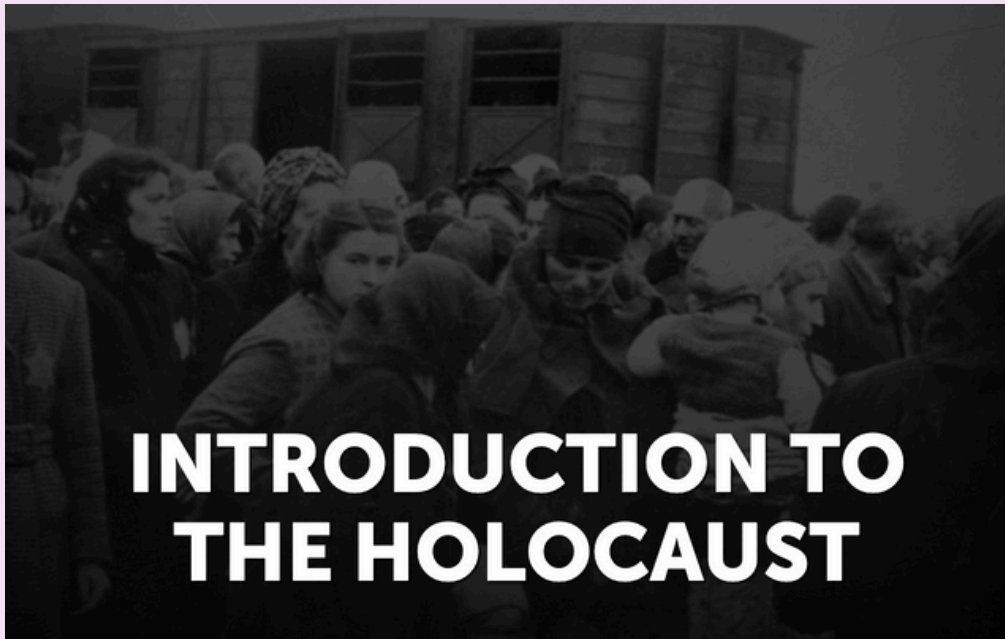
Objectives: SWBAT...

- explain why Jews were the central target of the Holocaust
- analyze the propaganda techniques used by the Nazis to demonize their victims
- define resistance within the context of the Holocaust.
- describe the various forms of resistance that some Jewish people engaged in during the Holocaust, including spiritual, cultural, and armed resistance.
- investigate the range of resistance efforts that took place in the Warsaw ghetto.
- interpret primary source materials—including clips of visual history testimony—that represent a range of resistance efforts against the Nazi regime in Europe.
- conduct independent research on an example of resistance during the Holocaust.
- understand the complexities of wartime France and the threat to non-citizens
- learn how and why children hid their identity
- analyze the choices people made to survive and help others survive
- use a graphic memoir to expand our understanding of how the larger history impacts an individual's life

Readings for Students

Introduction to the Holocaust | USHMM

(Note: This is Part 1 of a 9-Part Series on The Holocaust - time permitting, encourage students to read the entire series)



Videos for Students

[Who are Jews? | American Jewish Committee](#)



[European Antisemitism from Its Origins to the Holocaust | USHMM](#)



[The Path to Nazi Germany | USHMM](#)


FULL FILM

The Path to Nazi Genocide

Activities

To give students a more directed overview of the events and impact of the Holocaust, use the activities and testimony from the story of Gerda Weissman Klein as told in the Academy Award winning film *One Survivor Remembers*. It would be helpful to follow at least some of the activities from Learning for Justice [One Survivor Remembers](#). The full film can be found here: [One Survivor Remembers Film - USHMM](#)

Media Literacy: Analyzing Propaganda The Holocaust as a Case Study | Echoes & Reflections



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS
HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

**MEDIA LITERACY: ANALYZING PROPAGANDA
THE HOLOCAUST AS A CASE STUDY**

TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12
ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is (and is not) propaganda?
- What is the connection between ideology and propaganda?
- What did it look like in media form in Nazi Germany?
- What was the Nazi-controlled media's role in fomenting antisemitism in pre-war Europe?
- Why were the Nazis so successful in their propaganda efforts in general?
- What were the antisemitic tropes and stereotypes used in their propaganda? What images were used to "other" Jews? What messages were communicated?
- What was the impact of the anti-Jewish propaganda on Jewish and non-Jewish Germans?
- What is media literacy and what skills are used to critically analyze propaganda?

CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED - [CLICK HERE](#)

OBJECTIVES
Students will:

- Define propaganda.
- Identify the connection between ideology and propaganda.
- List forms of media available in Nazi Germany/Nazi-occupied Europe and how the Nazis utilized these forms to foment antisemitism in pre-war Europe.
- Analyze the techniques and power of propaganda to better understand how it contributes to creating extreme marginalization of a group.
- Recognize antisemitic tropes and stereotypes and how they were manifested in Nazi propaganda.
- Reflect on the human impact of propaganda during the Holocaust.
- Evaluate why it is important to be media literate.

MATERIALS

- "Jews in Germany" Photo from *The Führer Gives the Jews a City*
- Map of Theresienstadt/Terezin's Location
- Appendix A: About Theresienstadt/Terezin

1 | MEDIA LITERACY: ANALYZING PROPAGANDA © Echoes & Reflections Partnership

This curriculum is a product of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JCCS Holocaust Center, with support from the California Department of Education, Western Group Office of Education, and State of California.

Why Did Some Choose to Rescue? | USC Shoah Foundation



Activities

Rescue and Survival in Hiding | USHMM

(NOTE: This lesson is particularly beneficial if you are choosing to assign the Capstone Artifact Activity)

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM
WILLIAM LEVINE FAMILY INSTITUTE
FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Rescue and Survival in Hiding: Online Lesson

Grade Level: Appropriate for grades 6-12
Subject: Multidisciplinary
Time Required: 45-60 minutes

Note: It is appropriate for in-class or remote instruction.

Overview: This lesson focuses on the role that everyday objects play in our understanding of historical events. Using short videos about artifacts and photographs in the Museum's collections, students learn about the experiences of children and families who survived in hiding during the Holocaust, and they reflect upon how everyday objects may reveal aspects of their own experiences to future historians.

Educational Outcomes:
Students learn how artifacts tell stories in history and in their personal lives by:

- Watching USHMM Curator's Corner episodes
- Selecting their own personal "artifact" and sharing the relevant story
- Classifying artifacts as either ordinary objects with special significance or as special objects created to fill a unique need

Instructional sequence:

Teacher Note
There is additional information about the Curators Corner episodes on Page 3.

1. Students watch two or more of the following Curators Corner episodes:

- a. [From Image to Rescue: The Gypsy Mandil Collection](#)
- b. [A Symbol of Hope: Louise Lawrence-Israel's Chair](#)
- c. [A Cherished Object: Kristine Keren's Green Sweater](#)

1

Teaching About Resistance During the Holocaust With Primary Sources | Echoes & Reflections

ECHOES & REFLECTIONS
TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH THE LENS OF RESISTANCE

TEACHING ABOUT RESISTANCE DURING THE HOLOCAUST WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

TARGET AUDIENCE: GRADES 8-12
ESTIMATED TIME OF LESSON: 150 MINUTES

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did some Jewish people resist Nazi oppression?
- What forms did resistance take during the Holocaust?
- What is the relationship between resistance and human dignity?
- Why did many choose to resist even when defeat or death was certain?

CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED - [CLICK HERE](#)

OBJECTIVES
Students will:

- Define resistance within the context of the Holocaust.
- Describe the various forms of resistance that some Jewish people engaged in during the Holocaust, including spiritual, cultural, and armed resistance.
- Investigate the range of resistance efforts that took place in the Warsaw ghettos. Interpret primary source materials—including clips of visual history testimony—that represent a range of resistance efforts against the Nazi regime in Europe.
- Conduct independent research on an example of resistance during the Holocaust.

MATERIALS

- [Artifacts of Resistance](#)
- [Chain of Resistance](#)
- [Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto](#)
- [Cultural and Spiritual Resistance](#)
- Helen Fagin [Testimony and Biography](#)
- Ruth Brand [Testimony and Biography](#)
- Ika Zigmuntowicz [Testimony and Biography](#)
- Roman Kent [Testimony and Biography](#)
- [Testimony Reflection Student Handout](#)
- [Video Toolbox on Resistance](#)
- [Transcript of Helen Fagin's Testimony](#)
- [Artifact Reflection Handout](#)

1 | TEACHING ABOUT RESISTANCE © Echoes & Reflections Partnership

This curriculum is a project of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JFCS Holocaust Center, with support from the California Department of Education, Merced County Office of Education, and State of California.

Using Graphic Novels to Teach About the Holocaust: A Case Study of Nazi-Occupied France | JFCS



Using Graphic Novels to Teach About the Holocaust: A Case Study of Nazi-Occupied France

Time: 2-3 Class Periods

Audience: 9-12th Grade. May be adapted for 8th Grade

Acknowledgment: *This curriculum is a project of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JFCS Holocaust Center, with support from the California Department of Education, the Marin County Office of Education, and the State of California.*

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Understand the complexities of wartime France and the threat to non-citizens
- Learn how and why children hid their identity
- Analyze the choices people made to survive and help others survive
- Use a graphic memoir to expand our understanding of how the larger history impacts an individual's life

Aligned Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Context

This lesson focuses on the Holocaust in occupied France through a child's perspective. A basic introduction to the Holocaust is helpful. For students with little background, [this 38-minute video](#) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will provide context. For middle school, please preview the video before showing. Additional resources are at the end of the lesson. For a list of common terms used within this lesson, refer to the glossary at the end of the lesson.

Materials Needed

- [Google Slides](#)
- Handout 1- The Journey Begins: A Question of Identity ([A Bag of Marbles, Pages 23-27](#))

Case Study #3: The Cambodian Genocide

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of Cambodian Genocide victims?
- What are the costs of injustice, hatred and bigotry?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

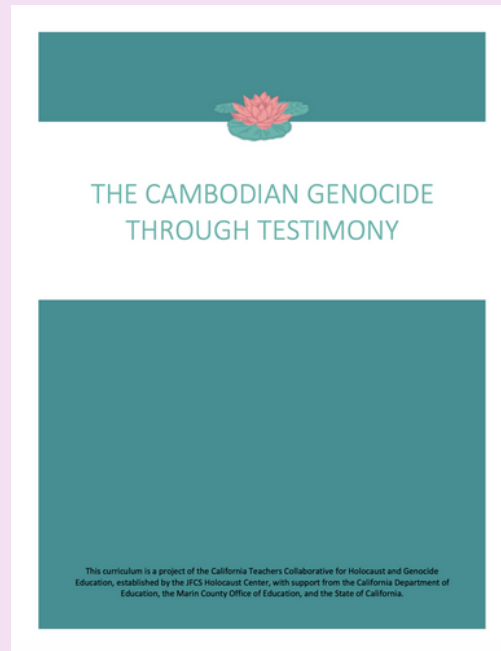
- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Cambodian Genocide?
- How were individuals impacted by the Cambodian Genocide?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- understand how US involvement in the Vietnam War informed the Cambodian Genocide.
- analyze how a Cambodian girl experienced the US bombing during the Vietnam War, and how it impacted her life in Cambodia.
- identify the ways internal conflict (Civil War) and external conflict (Vietnam War) created conditions that allowed for the rise of a genocidal regime in Cambodia.
- understand how the Khmer Rouge rearranged traditional family units to best serve the aims of the communist regime.
- analyze how a Cambodian girl experienced the destruction of family life in Cambodia.
- determine the ways that genocidal regimes destroy more than lives.
- analyze the societal conditions that encouraged violence, criminality, and betrayal.
- use survivor testimony to identify how communist principles destroyed the fabric of Cambodian society and turned neighbors against each other.

Readings for Students

The Cambodian Genocide Through Testimony | Cambodian Genocide Resource Center (Pages 4-7)



Cambodia 1975-1979 | USHMM



Readings for Students

Chronology of Cambodian Events Since 1950 | MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale

Chronology of Cambodian Events Since 1950

Interview with Keith Chee | Contexts



Cambodia | Holocaust and Genocide Studies | UMN College of Liberal Arts



Videos for Students

FRONTLINE/WORLD Coping with Genocide in Cambodia | PBS



Timothy Williams: Ugly History: Cambodian Genocide | TED Talk



Everyone Has A Story - Arn Chorn-Pond | Facing History & Ourselves



Digital Archives for Students

Survivor Stories | The Digital Archive of Cambodian Holocaust Survivors

<https://cybercambodia.com/dachs/stories.html>

Photos from Pol Pot's Secret Prison | Tuol Sleng

<https://www.tuolsleng.com/history.php>



The Cambodian Genocide Through Testimony | Cambodian Genocide Resource Center

(Choice of 3 Lesson Plans: 1. “Setting the Scene for Genocide: The Vietnam War and the Cambodian Civil War” 2. “Cambodian Genocide and the Destruction of Family Life under the Khmer Rouge” and 3. “Cambodian Genocide: A Communist Genocide”)

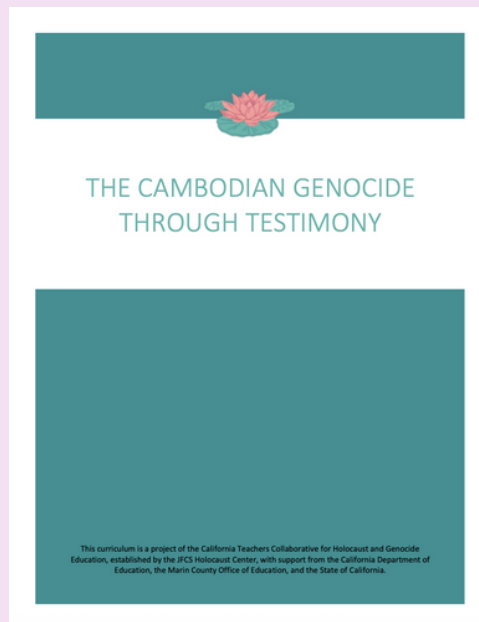


Photo Essay: Remembering Genocide in Cambodia | Jamie Wise

From the article: *“The memories we make by engaging with others’ stories form our own identities and shape the world we share. Memorials challenge and inspire their visitors with an enduring question: After you have seen this, who will you be?”* **Note to educators:** If you’ve taught the Holocaust Case Study, you may want to consider using the activity [Why Do We Remember? | USC Shoah Foundation](#) to introduce the concept of memorials before using this photo essay.

Sage Journals

Journal Prompt

Use the [Image Analysis Activity](#) | [Global Oneness Project](#) to analyze the photos. Have students share their reflections in a group discussion or in journals (Reflection Prompt: Select one of the images that has the biggest impact on your thinking. Evaluate the effectiveness of the memorial found in the image. What emotions does it convey? Does the memorial itself successfully communicate a message about justice and memory? How would you answer the question “After you have seen this, who will you be?”)

Image Analysis Activity

Use the Visible Thinking Routine “See, Think, Wonder” from Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Case Study #4: Guatemala Genocide

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of Guatemalan Genocide victims?
- What are the costs of injustice, hatred and bigotry?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Guatemalan Genocide?
- How were individuals impacted by the Guatemalan Genocide?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- identify the historical events that led to the Guatemalan Genocide
- understand how international corporations and US involvement informed the Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide.
- determine the ways that dictatorships destroy more than lives.
- analyze the societal conditions that encouraged violence, criminality, and betrayal.
- use survivor testimony to identify how communist principles destroyed the fabric of Cambodian society and turned neighbors against each other.
- explain why indigenous communities were targeted during the Guatemalan Civil War
- interpret primary source materials—including clips of visual history testimony—that represent a range of experiences during the Guatemalan genocide.
- analyze the choices people made to survive and help others survive
- conduct research into role and impact of transitional justice in post-genocide Guatemala

Readings for Students

Genocide in Guatemala | Holocaust Museum Houston

<https://hmh.org/library/research/genocide-in-guatemala-guide/>



Was There Genocide in Guatemala? | BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-22649355>



Guatemalan Genocide | USC Shoah Foundation

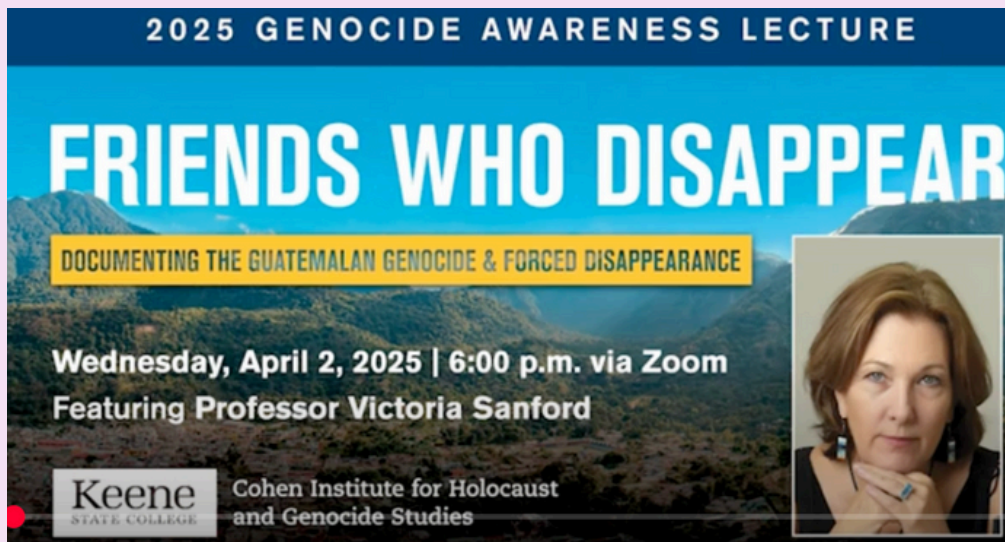
<https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/guatemalan>

USC Shoah Foundation
The Institute for Visual History and Education

Videos for Students

2025 Genocide Awareness Lecture featuring Victoria Sanford | Cohen Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-g0a3Rb4bI>



Timeline of the Guatemala Genocide | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

Timeline of the Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide

[Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade]

Overview

Genocides do not happen overnight. Instead, they are the result of years of decisions, events, and policies that coalesce into risk factors that eventually shape what unfolds. In this activity, students will work collaboratively to construct a timeline of the key events tied to the civil war and genocide in Guatemala. Each group will research a specific event, evaluate its significance, and contribute to a collective class timeline.

Learning Objectives

- Students will research key historical events related to the war and genocide in Guatemala.
- Students will analyze how processes of war and genocide unfold in relation to risk factors.
- Students will assess how some events that transpired in Guatemala meet the criteria for the definition of the term genocide, while other events are better classified as other atrocity crimes.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9
HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.1
HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
HSS-10.9.8	HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Guatemala's Civil War and Genocide

Guatemala, a country located in the heart of Central America, was once home to the thriving Mayan civilization known for its incredible achievements in art, science, and architecture. Despite their enduring influence, the indigenous Mayan population faced significant discrimination following colonialism, which eventually led to growing conflicts with the government and contributed to the violence of the Guatemalan genocide.

The Guatemalan genocide took place during the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996), with violence peaking during the late 1970s and 1980s. This violence involved the deliberate and systemic targeting of indigenous Mayan communities by government forces and death squads. With over 200,000 civilians (mostly of Mayan origin) killed, this genocide was not an isolated eruption of violence, but the culmination of deep-rooted inequalities and struggles for power over many decades.

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION
Developed by Twige Project

Timeline | 1

The Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

The Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide

[Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade]

Overview

Known by many Guatemalans as La Violencia (or "The Violence"), mass atrocities emerged in Guatemala during a decades-long civil war that began in 1960 and ended with the signing of Peace Accords in 1996.

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze the history of the Guatemalan Civil War and when instances of genocide occurred.
- Students will explore the context of civil war as a primary risk factor of genocide.
- Students will synthesize historical information with primary resource testimony from survivors of the Guatemalan Genocide.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9	HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3	11.9.1	HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
10.9.8					HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Growing Tensions

The military dictatorship led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas was established by the United States government in 1954 to ensure a pro-business, anti-Communist government ruled Guatemala. Quickly, the newly installed government established a reputation for violent repression of Guatemalans who were attempting to advocate for land reforms and social change. The government also targeted political rivals to stifle any opposition. In 1957, Castillo Armas was assassinated by a left-leaning member of his Presidential Guard and the ensuing battle for power led to further instability and fear of an insurgency. A growing number of left-leaning insurgent groups formed and began battling the government, and the government created paramilitary groups and PACs (in English: Civil Defense Patrols) to fight the rebels.

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Developed by Twige Project

Guatemalan Genocide | 1

The Role of Land and Resources in Guatemala's Conflicts | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

The Role of Land and Resources in Guatemala's Conflicts

[Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade]

Overview

To understand the significance of Guatemala's natural resources and the role it played in the civil war and genocide, it is beneficial to first examine the role of resources during colonialism and the early years of independence. We will then look at the case study of United Fruit Company and its role in Guatemala's violent history.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the role of land and resources in Guatemala before the Civil War and Genocide.
- Students will analyze the case study of United Fruit Company and the role of outside corporations and interests on Guatemala's history.
- Students will compare primary source materials, including art and propaganda posters, and its place in Guatemalan history.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9	HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3	11.9.1	HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
10.9.8					HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

History of Exploitation

Guatemala is in the heart of Central America and was once home to the Mayan civilization. The Mayan civilization is known for its advanced architecture and massive cities, as well as its vital impacts on calendar, astronomy, and writing. Different Mayan city states battled for dominance, and agriculture played a determining role in the civilization's success. Hundreds of years later, Spain conquered the region of Guatemala and controlled it for nearly 300 years, from 1524 to 1821. Prior to colonization by Spain, approximately 90 percent of Guatemala was Mayan, but many Mayans died from diseases brought by the Spaniards. The Spaniards enslaved and marginalized Mayans, establishing systems like *encomienda* that allowed Spaniards to tax indigenous people and use them for labor. Some Mayans converted to Christianity and abandoned the Mayan Cosmovision belief system and practice to avoid these discriminatory practices. Throughout this almost 300-year period, the Spaniards plundered Guatemala and abused its rich natural resources, land, and people.

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION
Developed by Twige Project

Role of Land and Resources | 1

The Disappeared | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

The Disappeared

[Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade]

Overview

This activity will introduce students to the concept of *desaparecidos*, or the disappeared. Many genocides, including the Guatemalan genocide, have involved police and other agents of the state kidnapping targeted individuals who were never seen again and often are presumed to have been murdered in unknown locations. The secretive nature of such disappearances often causes immense grief and distress for the families and loved ones of disappeared people and creates a sense of fear and uncertainty within communities. These crimes of enforced disappearances have now been recognized in international law, and this activity encourages students to reflect on why they happen and on their lasting impacts.

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze the history of the crime of enforced disappearances, generally and in Guatemala.
- Students will consider the causes and consequences of enforced disappearances.
- Students will analyze testimony and assess the impacts of enforced disappearances on Guatemalans.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3	HSS-11.9	HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3	11.9.1	HSS-10.9.3	HSS-PoAD.12.9.5
10.9.8					HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Before Beginning the Activity

Before students begin the activity, ask students to reflect upon and journal responses to these two questions.

- Think about the term "the disappeared." What does this phrase make you wonder?
- Why would a government want to make certain people disappear?
- What do you think is the connection between enforced disappearances and genocide?

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION
Developed by Twige Project

The Disappeared | 1

Activities

Forensic Anthropology as Transitional Justice | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

Forensic Anthropology as Transitional Justice

Overview | Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade |

During genocide, targeted individuals are often forcibly separated from their families and loved ones or even kidnapped from their communities. In the aftermath, organizations and communities try to find the remains of individuals to honor or memorialize them. To do so, they draw upon forensic anthropology, which is a science that involves the examination of the physical remains of people or exhumation of mass graves. This assignment analyzes forensic anthropology as a transitional justice tool, which helps communities and people come to terms with violent pasts and transition to a more just future.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the definition and pillars of transitional justice.
- Students will understand how forensic anthropology addresses the pillars of transitional justice.
- Students will analyze transitional justice forensic anthropology efforts in Guatemala.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9 HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3 11.9.1 HSS-10.9.3 HSS-10.9.5 HSS-10.9.8 HSS-PoAd.12.9.8

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE
FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION
Developed by Twige Project

Forensic Anthropology | I

Transitional Justice

Transitional justice refers to a wide range of tools used to help people reconcile with violent or repressive pasts. For example, courts have increasingly held those responsible for genocide and other human rights abuses legally or criminally accountable for their actions. Many other transitional justice tools are found outside of courts. These may include community-based dialogues, memorials, and other peacebuilding or reconciliation efforts that provide alternative forms of justice and healing. Overall, transitional justice relies on four pillars:

- 1) truth, or uncovering and documenting crimes and victim experiences;
- 2) justice, or holding perpetrators accountable, either through punishment or reconciliation;
- 3) reparations, or providing material and symbolic compensation to victims, and
- 4) prevention, which often involves reforming institutions to protect civilians and prevent future violence.

A Visit to Comalapa Memorial | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

A Visit to Comalapa Memorial

Overview | Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade |

For much of history, when episodes of mass violence occurred, they were left to be forgotten. No formal processes or efforts were made to help survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, or document the atrocities. This shifted significantly after the Holocaust, and since then, many communities that have experienced violence will seek **transitional justice**. Today, the term transitional justice refers to a wide range of tools used to help people reconcile with violent or repressive pasts. While courts often play a key role in these efforts, holding those responsible for genocide and other human rights abuses accountable, there are other forms of transitional justice. These may include truth commissions, community-based dialogues, and memorialization. In Guatemala, the Comalapa Memorial is an example of memorialization.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the concept of transitional justice.
2. Students will analyze the Comalapa Memorial as a form of transitional justice in Guatemala.
3. Students will explore primary source imagery and testimony about Comalapa.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9 HSS-10.4.1, 2, and 3 11.9.1 HSS-10.9.3 HSS-10.9.5 HSS-PoAd.12.9.8

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Visit to Comalapa | I

What is Memorialization?

Memorialization initiatives, such as the construction of memorials, museums, and commemorative events, play a crucial role in preserving the memory of past atrocities and ensuring that future generations remember the lessons learned. Memorials serve to construct a collective memory of the genocidal event, provide a grieving space for loved ones and survivors, and often support education for prevention of future atrocities.

Transitional justice can be driven by national or international leadership, which would make it a top-down initiative. It can also be a bottom-up process driven by community members and survivor groups. Comalapa Memorial is an example of bottom-up transitional justice, as the creation of the memorial was undertaken entirely by civil society groups, most prominently CONAVIEGA (in English: National Coordinator of Widows of Guatemala) and FAFG (Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala).

The Genocide in Guatemala | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

The Genocide in Guatemala

Overview

Guatemala, located in the heart of Central America, was once home to the thriving Mayan civilization known for its incredible achievements in art, science, and architecture. The Mayans built grand cities and developed a rich cultural legacy. Despite their enduring influence, the indigenous Mayan population faced significant discrimination, which eventually led to growing conflicts with the government and contributed to the violence of the Guatemalan genocide.

The Guatemalan genocide took place during the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996)—with violence peaking during the late 1970s and 1980s—and represents one of the darkest chapters in Latin American history. At its heart was the deliberate and systemic targeting of indigenous Mayan communities, caught in a deadly cycle of conflict that gripped the nation from 1960 to 1996 ("Genocide in Guatemala" 2025). This violence escalated to unimaginable heights between 1981 and 1983 under the ruthless military rule of General Efraín Ríos Montt (Higonet 2009, 8). The United Nations-backed Historical Clarification Commission (CEH) identified these atrocities as acts of genocide, a tragic acknowledgement of the scale of atrocities. With over 200,000 civilians of Mayan origin killed ("Genocide in Guatemala" 2025), this genocide was not an isolated eruption of violence, but the culmination of deep-rooted political, economic, and social inequalities, further inflamed by Cold War dynamics and state-sponsored counterinsurgency campaigns.

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The Genocide | I

La Violencia - Genocide in Guatemala | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

La Violencia- Genocide in Guatemala

Background

Known by many Guatemalans as La Violencia (or "The Violence"), mass atrocities emerged in Guatemala during a decades-long civil war, which is one of the primary risk factors of genocide. Amidst broader geopolitical competition during the Cold War and in defense of the interests of the United Fruit Company (UFCo), the United States supported a coup that ousted Guatemala's president in 1954. The newly installed government was extremely hostile to Guatemalans' organized efforts to attain land reforms and social change and utilized repressive policies and even violence to combat its political opponents. As a result, numerous left-leaning insurgent groups formed with the hopes of revolution, eventually uniting under the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, URNG) in 1982. Within the context of this prolonged war, civilians caught in-between the struggles of the Guatemalan armed forces and the guerrilla insurgents faced extreme atrocities. In particular, indigenous Mayan civilians were deliberately targeted by the Guatemalan state as "internal enemies," who were suspected of supporting the political and economic agenda of insurgents. The armed forces eventually enacted a genocidal policy of extermination, which was implemented systematically against over 600 Mayan villages and claimed thousands of lives.

Statistics uncovered in the aftermath of the war provide stark evidence of the genocidal nature and patterning of government-led violence in Guatemala. It is estimated that over 200,000 civilians, mostly indigenous Mayan civilians, were killed during the war, and between 500,000 to 1.5 million Guatemalans were forcibly displaced. Further, 95 percent of human rights violations—including rapes, disappearances, and murders—were committed by government forces. Many of the victims had no substantial affiliation with insurgent groups; they were innocent people, whom the Guatemalan government falsely claimed posed a threat to their rule. Today, efforts at pursuing justice and accountability in Guatemala are ongoing, pursued with determination by numerous civil society and activist groups.

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La Violencia | I

Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG) | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the Guatemalan Genocide

**Forensic Anthropology Foundation of
Guatemala (FAFG)**


[Time: 60 minutes | Audience: 10-12th grade]

Overview
One of the main organizations driving efforts to locate, recover, and identify the remains of victims and disappeared persons during the Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide is FAFG (in Spanish, Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala). Founded in 1997, the "FAFG" has developed a locally-based, family centered approach that is grounded in the trust of the families and values their active participation throughout the forensic process."

Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the basics of forensic anthropology.
2. Students will examine how FAFG contributes to post-civil war and genocide peace and society.
3. Students will evaluate the role of forensic anthropology in transitional justice efforts.

What is Forensic Anthropology?
Forensic Anthropology is a subfield of physical anthropology, which is the study of human remains. Forensic anthropology involves analyzing skeletal remains to solve criminal cases. To do so, forensic anthropologists establish a biological profile of the victim – age, sex, stature, and any other individualizing features present on the remains – and the cause of death, if possible.
For FAFG staff, the goal is to locate and identify the victims of the Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide and to return their remains to their family members. The surviving family can consequently learn the truth of what happened to their loved ones, bury them with dignity and according to their cultural and ceremonial protocols, and open potential avenues for justice and reparations. Sometimes, FAFG staff are named as forensic experts by Guatemala's Prosecutor's Office. That enables FAFG to conduct the investigation, exhumation, analysis, and identification of remains. Other times, FAFG conducts investigations and then submits their findings to the Prosecutor's Office to initiate a court case or contribute to an ongoing court case, with FAFG staff often serving as technical witnesses at the trials. These efforts in turn help contribute to local justice and accountability processes in Guatemala.

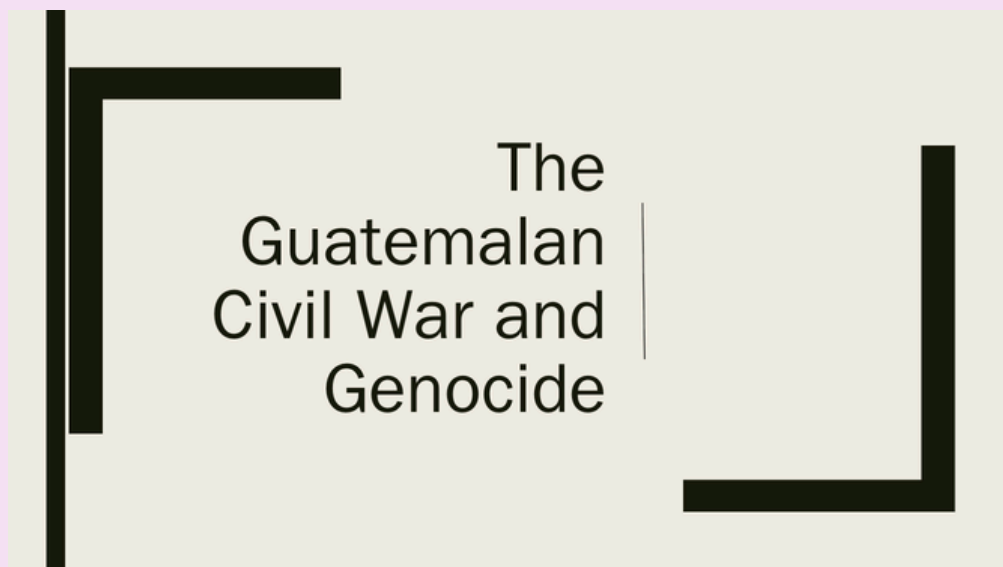


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FAFG | 1

The Guatemalan Civil War and Genocide | Twige Project



Case Study #5: Bosnia-Herzegovina Genocide

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of Bosnia-Herzegovina Genocide victims?
- What are the costs of injustice, hatred and bigotry?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Genocide?
- How were individuals impacted by the Bosnia-Herzegovina Genocide?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- Identify the historical events that led to the Bosnia-Herzegovina genocide
- Describe the history of the Siege of Sarajevo and the various influences from outside sources to bring it to an end.
- Explain the key elements that led to the Siege of Sarajevo.
- Analyze how the siege affected various groups within Sarajevo
- Interpret primary source materials—including clips of visual history testimony—that represent a range of experiences and observations during the Bosnia-Herzegovina Genocide.
- Analyze the choices people made to survive and help others survive.

Readings for Students

Bosnia and Herzegovina - USHMM

Start on first page and click through each prompt

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/bosnia-herzegovina>



War and Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina | USC Shoah Foundation

<https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/bosnia-herzegovina>

USC Shoah Foundation
The Institute for Visual History and Education

Yugoslavia (Former) | Genocide Studies Program at Yale

<https://macmillan.yale.edu/gsp>

MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at
Yale
Genocide Studies Program

Readings for Students

MASSACRE IN BOSNIA; Srebrenica: The Days of Slaughter - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/29/world/massacre-in-bosnia-srebrenica-the-days-of-slaughter.html?pagewanted=all>



Yugoslavia & The Balkans | 1990-1998 | BBC NEWS

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/map/yugoslavia/>



Videos for Students

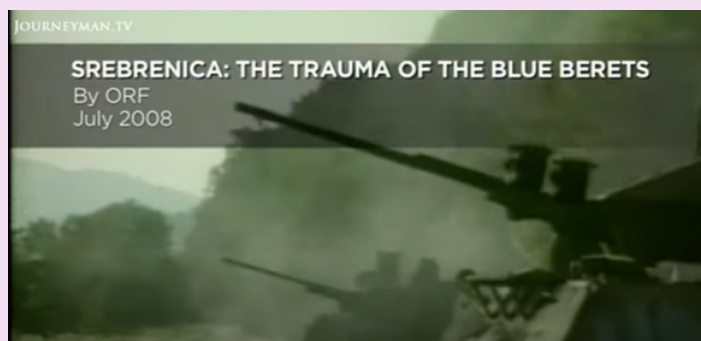
Nadija Halilbegovich's Winter Commencement Speech 2013 | Butler University (Start at 06:30)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Chtiqs9_lgY



Srebrenica: The Trauma of the Blue Berets (2008) | ORF

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lcj3I6Gi14



Eyewitness Testimony | USHMM

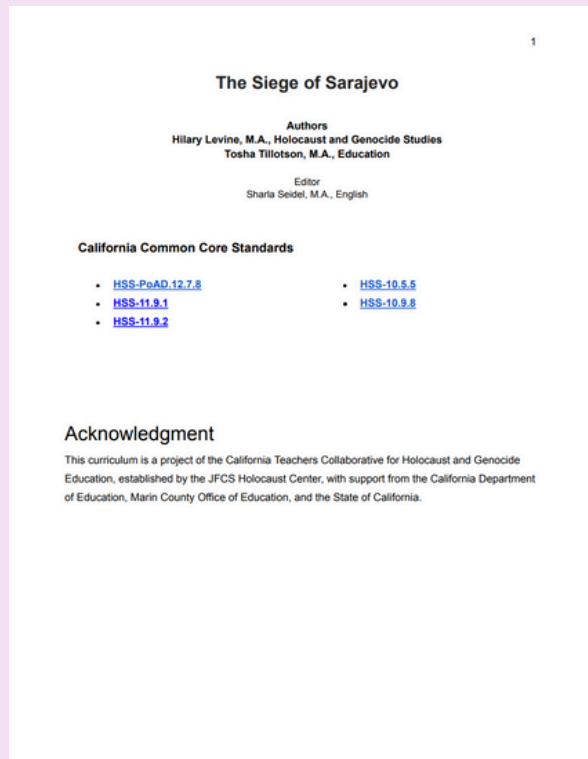
<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/bosnia-herzegovina/eyewitness-testimony>



Activities

The Siege of Sarajevo | CA Teachers Collaborative on Holocaust and Genocide Education

https://cateacherscollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Curriculum_The-Siege-of-Sarajevo_Lesson-Plan_Avenues-for-Change.pdf



Truth and Consequences | PBS

<https://illinois.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/wwp11.socst.global.conn.lptruthcon/truth-and-consequences/>



Case Study #6: The Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Essential Questions:

- What was the experience of victims of the Genocide in Rwanda?
- What are the costs of injustice, hatred and bigotry?
- What choices do people make in the face of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- How is the historical context essential to understanding the events of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda?
- How were individuals impacted by the Genocide in Rwanda?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- Have a basic understanding of why the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi happened.
- Apply what they learned from the case study toward a more holistic view of the risk factors of genocide.
- become familiar with contemporary research findings in genocide studies.
- recognize how exclusionary ideologies and discriminatory policies are risk factors for genocide.
- assess how identity cards solidified ethnic boundaries before the genocide, as well as the impacts of these cards on individual Rwandans.
- understand the impact of propaganda in the context of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.
- understand the “Hutu Ten Commandments” as an example of propaganda in the context of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.
- analyze the relationship between propaganda and genocide, and the impact of propaganda on survivors.
- analyze and critique primary sources and different forms of propaganda.
- understand common forms of rescue during genocide.
- analyze why someone would choose to rescue someone else during genocide.
- analyze and critique rescuer testimony as a primary source.

Readings for Students

Timeline and Explanations | United Nations Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

<https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/historical-background.shtml>



Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations

Rwanda 1990-1994 | USHMM (Start on first image and click through each prompt)

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/rwanda/divided-by-ethnicity>

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM

Readings and Video: Frontline “Ghosts of Rwanda” | PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/>



PBS

WOSU



Videos for Students

Immaculee Ilibagiza Survivor Testimony

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcWRfxttOlk>



1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda | USC Shoah Foundation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWI8ASQqz9Y>



Risk Factors of Genocide | Twige Project & Accompanying Slidedeck | Twige Project

https://cateacherscollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Lesson-3A_Risk-Factors-of-Genocide_Twige-Project.pdf

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Risk Factors of Genocide

Overview
In the lead up to the outbreak of genocide, societies often exhibit certain risk factors that signal the likelihood of identity-based violence. This activity is aimed at providing learners with an overview of the risk factors of genocide, including broader structural factors that impact the onset of genocide. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda is used as a historical case study for understanding these risk factors in context.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will have a basic understanding of why the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi happened.
2. Students will be able to apply what they learned from the case study toward a more holistic view of the risk factors of genocide.
3. Students will become familiar with contemporary research findings in genocide studies.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9.1 HSS-10.4.1 HSS-12.9.5
10.4.3 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

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Risk Factors of Genocide | 1

https://cateacherscollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Slidedeck_Rwanda-Overview-and-Risk-Factors-of-Genocide_Twige-Project.pptx



Activities

Ethnic Identity Cards | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Ethnic Identity Cards

Overview

In the lead up to the outbreak of genocide, societies often exhibit certain risk factors that signal the likelihood of genocide. One prominent risk factor is the presence of exclusionary ideologies, or ways of thinking that marginalize or "other" people of a certain identity. These ideologies can be codified into discriminatory laws and policies. In this activity, students explore how identity cards in Rwanda solidified ethnic boundaries before genocide.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn to recognize how exclusionary ideologies and discriminatory policies are risk factors for genocide.
- Students will assess how identity cards solidified ethnic boundaries before the genocide, as well as the impacts of these cards on individual Rwandans.
- Students will be able to analyze and compare different forms of propaganda.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9.1 HSS-10.4.1 HSS-10.4.3 HSS-PoAD.12.9.5 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Identity Cards in Rwanda

European colonization had a devastating impact across central Africa, and in Rwanda, the colonial rule of first Germany and later Belgium deeply shaped notions of identity and power in the country. After Germany lost World War I, Belgium took over colonial control of Rwanda and began to implement changes. One lasting change was the introduction of ethnicity-based identity cards. In 1953–54, the Belgian colonizers conducted a population census, counting and classifying all Rwandans according to ethnic identity. Every Rwandan was labeled Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, or Naturalized. Foreigners on their identity cards. Historically to Rwandans, these group labels had been somewhat fluid, but after the Belgians issued identity cards, it became almost impossible to switch from one group to another. Even after independence, the identity cards continued to be used by the Rwandan government and were a tool to discriminate against Tutsi, denying them access to employment, education, and power. During the genocide, the identity cards were used to identify and murder Tutsi.

California Teachers Collaborative
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Ethnic Identity Cards | 1

Power of Propaganda | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Power of Propaganda

Overview

Propaganda is often used in the lead up to and during genocide to spread fear, divide people, or even justify violence against members of a particular group. In this activity, students will analyze anti-Tutsi propaganda and its relationship to genocidal violence in Rwanda.

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to understand the impact of propaganda in the context of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.
- Students will be able to analyze the relationship between propaganda and genocide, and the impact of propaganda on survivors.
- Students will be able to analyze and critique primary sources.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9.1 HSS-10.4.1 HSS-10.4.3 HSS-PoAD.12.9.5 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Propaganda in Rwanda

Extremist print periodicals, radio stations, and even staff at the Ministère du Sport et de la Jeunesse (Ministry of Sport and Youth) would regularly share out content meant to create conflict between Hutus and Tutsis throughout Rwanda. Using images, text, music, and words, they sowed panic across Rwanda. Media would print articles, publish cartoons, tell stories, and even create new songs that were all designed to make Hutus fear Tutsis and hate them.

By the time the genocide began in April 1994, the media's campaign of hatred had taken root, indoctrinating Hutu men and women against their Tutsi neighbors, friends, even family members. As you review examples of propaganda, consider: Why did the creator want to spread this message? How might it influence the reader or viewer's thinking or action?

California Teachers Collaborative
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Power of Propaganda | 1

Hutu Ten Commandments | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Hutu Ten Commandments

Overview

Propaganda is often used in the lead up to and during genocide to spread fear, divide people, or even justify violence against members of a particular group. In Rwanda, the "Hutu Ten Commandments" was a crucial piece of propaganda published by an extremist magazine called Kangura before the 1994 genocide. In this activity, students will analyze this example of propaganda and its relationship to genocidal violence in Rwanda.

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to understand the "Hutu Ten Commandments" as an example of propaganda in the context of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.
- Students will be able to analyze the relationship between propaganda and genocide.
- Students will be able to analyze and critique primary sources.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9.1 HSS-10.4.1 HSS-10.4.3 HSS-PoAD.12.9.5 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

"The Hutu Ten Commandments"

Published in 1990, the "Hutu Ten Commandments" offered a list of dos and don'ts for Hutus that pitted the Hutu population against the Tutsis who they had lived alongside for generations. People shared hard copies of the "Hutu Ten Commandments" all over Rwanda, and for those who could not read, the "Hutu Ten Commandments" were read out by community leaders in public meetings and over the radio repeatedly. They were very popular. The commandments were designed to shape Hutu behaviors and interactions with the Tutsi population. The "Hutu Ten Commandments" pushed for Hutu unity and painted the Tutsi population as inhuman and threats to society.

California Teachers Collaborative
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Hutu Ten Commandments | 1

"Rescue" Story of Josephine | Twige Project

Teaching the Human Story of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

Josephine's Story

Overview

During genocide, some people are willing to face consequences—even the threat of death—to rescue the people being targeted. "Rescue" refers to actions by people who are not being targeted to assist others who are being targeted during genocide. This activity explores the story of one of these individuals and encourages students to consider why people rescue.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand common forms of rescue during genocide.
- Students will analyze why someone would choose to rescue someone else during genocide.
- Students will analyze and critique rescuer testimony as a primary source.

Content Standards

HSS-10.10.1, 2, and 3 HSS-11.9.1 HSS-10.4.1 HSS-10.4.3 HSS-PoAD.12.9.5 HSS-PoAD.12.9.8

Rescue During Genocide

Rescue during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi involved Hutu individuals rescuing Tutsi who were being targeted. Many Rwandans chose not to participate in the genocide and instead risked their lives to rescue others. Rescue efforts during genocide can involve many different types of actions, not just actions intended to literally save someone from imminent death. Some of the most common forms of rescue during genocide include helping people escape from areas where perpetrators are active; providing resources like food, clothes, money, or weapons to help targeted people survive dangerous conditions; sheltering and hiding targeted people in or around homes, churches, or other properties; and bribing, convincing, or compelling perpetrators to abandon plans to kill targeted individuals. There are many reasons people rescue. The motivation to rescue may come from someone's personality characteristics, such as compassion, courage, or love. Some people choose to take risks to help others because they want to or feel the need to. People also rescue because they have the opportunity to do so; for instance, someone showed up at their door to ask for help. Still others learned to rescue from examples set by others.

California Teachers Collaborative
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Josephine's Story | 1

Unit 3: Responding to Genocide

Essential Questions:

- What is justice?
- What are our responsibilities to individuals and groups outside our borders?
- What decisions do individuals make in a time of injustice?

Guiding Questions:

- What would have to happen for there to be justice after the Holocaust and other genocides?
- Was justice achieved at the Nuremberg Trials?
- Why did genocides still occur after the Holocaust?

Unit Guiding Questions:

- What is the role of the international community, including governments, NGOs, the media, and individuals in promoting or stopping genocide?
- What can responsible people do when confronted with powerful evidence of acts against humanity and civilization?
- What is the role of government in curtailing genocide denial, constructing commemorations and or allowing individuals to forget difficult histories?
- Has the Genocide Convention been effective or ineffective in preventing and punishing genocide?

Readings for Students

What is the ICC and What Does it Do? | ICC

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/lesson1.pdf>



International Criminal Justice - The Society Pages

<https://thesocietypages.org/roundtables/international-criminal-justice/>



Accountability after Genocide - Hollie Nyseth Brehm, 2017

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1536504217742390?icid=int.sj-abstract.similar-articles.4>

Sage Journals

Videos for Students

Desmond Tutu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission | 60 Minutes Archive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=YY-ee1hhghQ>



Ben Ferencz - Dimensions in testimony | IWitness

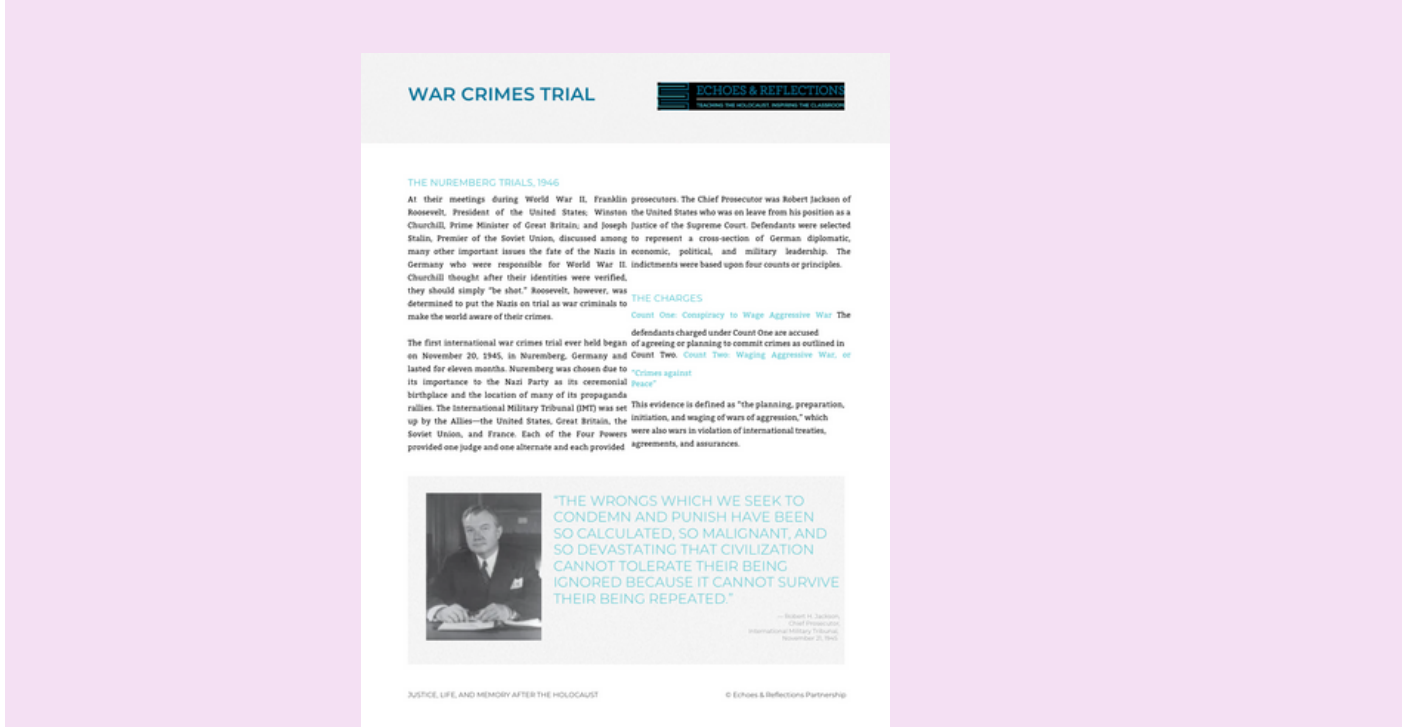
(This is an interactive website through which students can ask questions and hear answers from Nuremberg Prosecutor Ferencz)

<https://iwatch.usc.edu/dit/benferencz>

USC Shoah Foundation
The Institute for Visual History and Education

War Crimes Trials | Echoes & Reflections

https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/10-01-03_Student_Handout_War_Crimes_Trial.pdf



Justice and Judgement after the Holocaust | Facing History & Ourselves

https://www.facinghistory.org/en-gb/resource-library/justice-judgement-after-holocaust-uk?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Activities

High School Students and the ICC - 5 Lesson Module | ICC

https://www.icc-cpi.int/get-involved/teachers-high-school-students?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Long Night's Journey into Day: South Africa's Search for Truth and Reconciliation | Facing History & Ourselves

https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/long-nights-journey-day-south-africans-search-truth-reconciliation?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Analyzing and Creating Memorials - Lesson Plan | Facing History & Ourselves

https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/analyzing-creating-memorials?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Potential Add On

Listen to Segments from [“We Share the Same Sky”](#) & analyze the legacy of the Holocaust.

Journal Prompt

Ask students to reflect on the different forms of post-genocide justice responses and identify the one that speaks to them. Have students share their preferred response. Ask them to explain and evaluate why their chosen response and align it to one of the three statements below:

- Punishing perpetrators for wrongdoing is necessary to achieve justice. Offenders should suffer for the crimes they have committed.
- Justice is best achieved when the perpetrators repair the harm they have caused.
- After a community has been through a time of conflict or violence, it is better for everyone to move on and forget the crimes or hardships of the past.