

Photography & Historical Witnessing

Photography & Historical Witnessing Lesson 2

Time: 60 minutes

Audience: 8th-10th grade

Student Outcomes

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

- Students will utilize artistic vocabulary to analyze historical photographs through written response, peer-to-peer discussion and whole-class discussion.
- Using a compare-and-contrast method of critique, students will draw conclusions about the role of photojournalists in constructing history.
- Students will formulate conclusions about the evidence used to construct historical narratives.
- Students will synthesize information about photojournalism and the documentation of events during the Bosnian Genocide.
- Students will create an original project about a historical or current event.

Aligned Standards (California Common Core)

- **Standards:**
- *Essential Question: How do photographs capture historical events? *California History-Social Science Standards / Framework
- **CA.HSS.10.1** Students analyze the integration of countries into the world economy and the information, technological, and communications revolutions (e.g., television, satellites, computers).
- **Social Science Framework: Economic Integration and Contemporary Revolutions in Information, Technology, and Communications**
How has the post-Cold War world and globalization facilitated extremist and terrorist organizations?
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

- **ELD.10.PI.A.1-4** 1. Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics 2. Interacting with others in written English in various communicative forms (print, communicative technology and multimedia) 3. Offering and justifying opinions, negotiating with and persuading others in communicative exchanges 4. Adapting language choices to various contexts (based on task, purpose, audience, and text type)
- **ELD.10.PI.B.1-4** 5. Listening actively to spoken English in a range of social and academic contexts 6. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language 7. Evaluating how well writers and speakers use language to support ideas and arguments with details or evidence depending on modality, text type, purpose, audience, topic, and content area 8. Analyzing how writers and speakers use vocabulary and other language resources for specific purposes (to explain, persuade, entertain, etc.) depending on modality, text type, purpose, audience, topic, and content area.
- **CA ARTS STANDARDS 8.MA:Re7** a. Compare, contrast, and analyze the qualities of and relationships between the components, content, and intentions in media artworks.b. Compare, contrast, and analyze how various forms, methods, and styles in media artworks manage audience experience and create intention.
- **Acc.MA:Re8** Analyze the intent, meanings, and influence of a variety of media artworks, based on personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts.
- **VA:Pr6** – Analyze how visual media and journalistic images communicate cultural, historical, and social narratives.
- **VA:Re7.1** – Interpret images as reflections of human experience, connecting photojournalism to real-world events and perspectives.
- **VA:Re7.2** – Analyze how visual elements and context influence meaning, emotional impact, and viewer interpretation.
- **MA:Re7** – Analyze how meaning and message are constructed in media, including photojournalism and news imagery.
- **MA:Re8** – Interpret media by examining intent, form, and context, using evidence to support conclusions.
- **MA:Re9** – Evaluate media sources for reliability, effectiveness, and audience impact.

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, Marin County Office of Education, the State of California, and the Diane & Guilford Glazer Foundation.

Main Learning Objective: Analyze historic photographs on Bosnian Genocide using formal vocabulary in the form of discussion, written response and whole class dialogue.

Glossary:

Bosnia: Country in southeastern Europe

Genocide: Acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.

Photojournalist: A photographer who contributes images to create a narrative about a current event in the world.

Primary Source: A form of evidence about the past from a person who witnessed the event.

Witness: A person who observes something. This can be a legal term when applied to a case.

Materials: Chromebook, photographs, [Google Slides presentation](#), notebook or blank paper, video, graphic organizer

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Graphic Organizer: Lesson 2](#)
- Video: [The Story Behind the Photo](#): 0:00-13:07
- When Neighbors Become Enemies Movie: <https://youtu.be/IDQnVCx4Ch0>

Differentiation:

SDAIE strategies support instruction, while Kagan strategies foster collaboration and build a cohesive classroom environment. Materials are designed to be accessible for English learners, including simplified Spanish support when appropriate. Key terms and concepts are highlighted on graphic organizers, and visual supports are incorporated to strengthen comprehension and guide instruction. Students are encouraged to use outside resources to support learning. The lesson includes elements that encourage independence, along with instruction that is more closely guided by the instructor.

Visual, Auditory, and Verbal resources: Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visual supports are incorporated to promote inquiry-based learning and support a variety of learning styles. Information and instructions are reinforced both verbally and in writing, and visual cues on worksheets help guide students through each step of the process.

IEPs/504s: To accommodate students with IEPs or 504 plans, preferred seating, frequent breaks, printed materials, and visual cues are provided as needed. Students may also receive additional monitoring and support during instruction. When appropriate, students are seated near peers who can provide academic assistance, such as reading support. Extended time for assignments and assessments is provided when specified in the student's plan.

English Learners: Materials are provided in Spanish when needed, and key vocabulary may be introduced in advance to support comprehension. Instruction includes clear enunciation and pacing, with directions and expectations also displayed in writing. Students are given frequent opportunities to practice English through peer interaction and collaborative activities.

Additional Information:

1) **Technology:** Chromebook, screen, laptop

2) **Language Proficiency:** Students listen, write, and speak to one another. The material is provided with data based on student reading levels.

3) **Special Needs:** Students are monitored during independent work time to ensure directions and expectations are understood. All IEP accommodations have been reviewed and implemented as needed. Students who are unable to participate in group activities are provided with opportunities to complete work independently.

Assessment(s): Monitor for engagement and thorough responses. Students will submit the graphic organizer with notes and responses. Teachers monitor participation and engagement by circumnavigating the classroom. Summative assessment evaluation of project on a four-point scale.

Lesson/Activity:

1. **Review Expectations:** (2 min) Present the Essential Question, Lesson Objective, and Agenda for the day.
2. **Open** the google [slides presentation](#).
3. **Safely In:** students will pair share about their experiences with difficult images.
4. **Pass Out** the graphic organizer.
5. **Take notes** on the Bosnian Genocide video
6. **Analyze:** Take notes on each photograph to decipher meaning.
7. **Watch & Answer Questions:** Watch the video, The Story Behind the Photo, and answer guided questions.
8. **Class Discussion:** Students will discuss in pairs and then with the class. What story does Paul Lowe tell about the Bosnian Genocide? Use the photographs, your notes, and the reading about photojournalism.
9. **Hands-On Activity:** Students become a photojournalist by curating photographs from Paul Lowe, or on a current event of their choice.
10. **Safely Out:** Reflect on the power of images to tell stories from the past and present.

References**Bibliography**

- Dorothea Lange + migrant mother. Accessed January 26, 2026.
<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/media-arts/dorothea-lange-migrant--mother/>.

- “Editorial & News Photo Licensing.” The Associated Press, January 20, 2026.
<https://www.ap.org/content/formats/photos/>.
- Hine, Lewis Wickes. “Fourteen Year Old Spinner in a[?] Brazos Valley Cotton Mill at West. Violation of the Law. Matty Lott Runs Six Sides. See Family Group and Their Story. Location: West, Texas.” Library of Congress, January 1, 1970.
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018677658/>.
- “A Kid Playing with a Ball next to a Tank Trap: Paul Lowe’s Best Photograph.” The Guardian, August 3, 2022.
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/aug/03/a-girl-plays-in-the-street-during-siege-sarajevo-paul-lowes-best-photograph>.
- Lange, Dorothea. “Destitute Pea Pickers in California. Mother of Seven Children. Age Thirty-Two. Nipomo, California.” Library of Congress, January 1, 1970.
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017762891/>.
- *The Story Behind The Photo, dedicated to the late VII contributing photographer Paul Lowe (1963 to 2024)*. Sniper Alley Photo, 2019. <https://youtu.be/Um20d8BJ2co?si=Jsi55WwN9zzmSBir>.
- The Times. “Paul Lowe Obituary: Photojournalist Who Captured Siege of Sarajevo.” The Times & The Sunday Times, September 3, 2025.
<https://www.thetimes.com/uk/obituaries/article/paul-lowes-obituary-photojournalist-who-captured-siege-of-sarajevo-0hqqnw68f>.
- “What Is Photojournalism and Why Is It Important?” NYTLicensing. Accessed January 26, 2026.
<https://nytlicensing.com/latest/marketing/what-is-photojournalism/>.