

# The Siege of Sarajevo

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## California Common Core Standards

- [HSS-PoAD.12.7.8](#)
- [HSS-11.9.1](#)
- [HSS-11.9.2](#)
- [HSS-10.5.5](#)
- [HSS-10.9.8](#)

## 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, and the State of California.

# Lesson: Siege of Sarajevo



**One/Two Day Lesson Plan**

**Grade Level: 9 - 12**

**Estimated Lesson Time: 90 Minutes**

## Teacher Preparation

- Preview short film: [Sarajevo: City Under Siege](#)
- Review Article: [The Serbs shelled Sarajevo for almost four years. Bosniaks hid from snipers' shells and bullets, resisted, and waited for NATO's help. This is how it was](#)
- Review: [academic research on urban war and the impact on the various citizens of Sarajevo](#).
- Preview the handouts used in this lesson
  - [Security Council Report on the Siege of Sarajevo](#)
  - [Survival Map of Sarajevo](#)
  - [Sarajevo Survival Guide 1993](#)
- Optional: watch [The Siege of Sarajevo: A Survivor's Real-life Stories](#)

## Lesson Objectives / Student Outcomes

Students will learn:

- About the history of the Siege of Sarajevo and the various influences from outside sources to bring it to an end.
- To explain the key elements that led to the Siege of Sarajevo.
- How did the siege affect various groups within Sarajevo?

## Materials (Google Integrated)

- [Sarajevo: City Under Siege](#)
- [The Serbs shelled Sarajevo for almost four years. Bosniaks hid from snipers' shells and bullets, resisted, and waited for NATO's help. This is how it was](#)
- [Before the War, War, After the War: Urban Imageries for Urban Resilience.](#)
- [Security Council Report on the Siege of Sarajevo](#)
- [Survival Map of Sarajevo](#)
- [Sarajevo Survival Guide 1993](#)
- [The Siege of Sarajevo: A Survivor's Real-life Stories](#)
- [USHMM encyclopedia](#)
- [Bosnia-Herzegovina Country Profile](#)
- *Sarajevo: The Longest Siege* by Amra Abadzic. [Author discussion.](#)
- [The Siege That Devastated Sarajevo](#)
- [Sarajevo Marks 30-Year Anniversary of the Siege](#)
- [Romeo and Juliet of Sarajevo](#)
- [Scream For Me Sarajevo](#)

## Differentiation

- **English Learners:** Use the [USHMM encyclopedia](#) articles to translate terminology in various languages.
- **Special Education:** Use the [Bosnia-Herzegovina Country Profile](#) to better understand Bosnia's demographics and timeline. Invite students to watch the summary of Zlata's Diary, in which she describes life in Sarajevo during the war as a young girl.
- **Accelerated Learners:** For advanced learners, offer to read *Sarajevo: The Longest Siege* by Amra Abadzic. Invite students to view a recording of the author [discussing the book](#). Allow them to take a deep dive into the impact on children, particularly students, during the siege.

# Glossary: Key Terms

**Blockade:** An act of war whereby one party blocks entry to or departure from a defined part of an enemy's territory.

**Bombarded:** Attack (a place or person) continuously with bombs, shells, or other missiles.

**Bosnian War:** Ethnically rooted war (1992–1995) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a former republic of Yugoslavia with a multiethnic population comprised of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Serbs, and Croats.

**Sarajevo:** National capital, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Siege:** A situation in which soldiers or police officers surround a city, building, etc., in order to try to take control of it; a serious and lasting attack of something—usually singular.

**Submission:** An act of giving a document, proposal, piece of writing, etc., to someone so that it can be considered or approved: an act of submitting something.

## Essential Questions

1. What was the historical and political context of Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina leading up to the war?
2. What were the human costs of the siege in terms of civilian casualties, displacement, and psychological trauma?
3. What was the international community's response to the siege of Sarajevo, and what were the challenges of intervening in the conflict?

## Lesson Procedures

Share lesson objectives:

### Students will learn:

- About the history of the Siege of Sarajevo and the various influences from outside sources to bring it to an end.
- To explain the key elements that led to the Siege of Sarajevo.
- How the siege affected various groups within Sarajevo.

## Opening Activity (5 - 10 Minutes)

- Students review the lesson with a teacher.
- Possible video to view and discuss: [The Siege That Devastated Sarajevo](#)
  1. What does the video clip imply is the reason for why the Serbian army attacked the civilians of Sarajevo?
  2. What did the civilians do when the blockade started?
  3. For how many months was Sarajevo under attack?
- Possible reading that can be discussed: [Sarajevo Marks 30-Year Anniversary of the Siege](#)
  1. What facts about the siege stand out most to you in your reading?
  2. What does the survivor testimony tell us about the effect of war on children?
- Go over Vocabulary and context with the lesson.

## Lesson (40 Minutes)

Teach objectives using the resources and materials listed below.

1. Distribute Security Council Report on the [Siege of Sarajevo Summary and Analysis](#)
2. Use [this handout](#) to guide discussion in small groups.

After students have discussed and analyzed the Security Council Report on the Siege of Sarajevo, ask them to imagine what day-to-day living would be like during this time in Sarajevo. Students will evaluate some of the materials and resources citizens created and used to survive during the siege. Ask students to work together with partners or in small groups and answer the questions about the effectiveness of the survival guide and survival map of Sarajevo.

1. Distribute [Survival Map of Sarajevo](#)
2. [Sarajevo Survival Guide 1993](#)
3. Use [this handout](#) to guide discussion in small groups.

## Closing (10 minutes)

View the CNN report of [Romeo and Juliet of Sarajevo](#)

Ask students: How does the setting of Sarajevo during the Bosnian War influence the development of the relationship between “Romeo and Juliet”?

## Extension Activities (suggestions)

1. Create a timeline of key events that occurred during the Siege of Sarajevo.
2. Research a prominent figure who played a significant role during the siege, such as Vedran Smajlović, the "Cellist of Sarajevo."
3. Write a creative piece, such as a poem, song, or short story, that conveys the emotions and experiences of the people of Sarajevo during the siege.
4. Participate in a class discussion or debate on the ethical dilemmas individuals and organizations face during the siege, such as the decision to provide humanitarian aid to besieged cities.
5. Engage in a project that raises awareness about the Siege of Sarajevo and its impact on the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
6. View the film, [Scream For Me Sarajevo](#).

## Formative and/or Summative Assessment

[Sample Summative Assessment](#) (link here)

## References

Abadžić, A. (2022). *Sarajevo: The longest siege*. [No Publisher].

Demick, B. (2012). *Logavina Street: Life and death in a Sarajevo neighborhood*. Random House Publishing Group.

Morrison, K., & Lowe, P. (2021). *Reporting the siege of Sarajevo*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

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