



The Genocide Education Project

Under the Cover of World War I: The Armenian Genocide

Rationale:

During World War I, the Turkish leadership of the Ottoman Empire implemented a policy of annihilation against their minority Christian population; during this genocide, approximately 1.5 million Armenians—half the Armenian population living in their indigenous homeland of over 3,000 years—were murdered through deprivation, exposure, and torture. Their communal and personal properties were stolen, and the few survivors were forced to flee to other countries. This 50-minute lesson uses primary and secondary sources to introduce students to the Armenian Genocide; for more lessons and activities on teaching the Armenian Genocide, visit our [website](#).



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Sequence:

Grades 8-12

Social Studies and English Language Arts courses

One 50-minute class period

Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the Armenian Genocide.
- Evaluate the effects of genocide denial on modern geopolitics.
- Draw connections between Armenian displacement and American Indigenous removal.
- Integrate multiple sources (text, video, maps) to analyze historical and contemporary issues.

California State Standards:

California History-Social Science Standards:

- **10.5.5:** Discuss human rights violations and genocide, including the Ottoman government's actions against Armenian citizens.
- **10.10.1:** Understand the geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance of regions and international relations.

CCSS ELA-LITERACY

- **RI.9-10.1 / RI.11-12.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferentially.
- **W.9-10.9 / W.11-12.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **SL.9-10.1 / SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Model Genocide Curriculum

- **Theme 2:** Understanding genocide and mass atrocities, and the patterns leading to them.
- **Theme 4:** Analyze the consequences of genocide for communities and global memory.

Materials:

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
Introducing the Armenian Genocide video with questions

Process (50 minutes):

Step One: Introducing the UN Convention on Genocide

Hand out the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#).

As a whole group, read through the definition and pose the following questions for students to answer either in small groups, individually, written, or orally:

- What does "intent to destroy" mean?
- What does "in whole or in part" mean, and how might this apply to specific historical events?
- What key actions are listed in the definition (e.g., killing, harm, preventing births)?
- Which groups are protected? Are there missing groups?



Step Two: Learning about the Armenian Genocide

Students will watch [Introducing the Armenian Genocide Video](#) and answer these [questions](#) (link will force a copy you can print to hand out or distribute online). Upon completion, check for understanding via a full class discussion. (Please reference [Answer Key](#) if needed.)

Step Three: Silent Conversations

Foster empathy and connections to the material by using a silent conversation strategy. The teacher provides a large piece of paper with one of the following prompts:

“What surprised you most about the Armenian Genocide?”

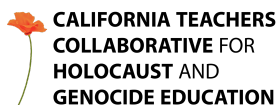
“How can studying this event help us address injustices today?”

“State one fact or quote that you learned from the videos. Why did that fact or quote resonate with you?”

Students will be divided into groups and have a silent conversation by writing on paper. Have students rotate to the next prompt and respond. Have students switch one more time, and then have students go on a gallery walk to reflect verbally. Students may now openly discuss in groups or in a class discussion. (*For more information about silent conversations, see this [article](#).*)

Enrichment:

- Use **Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (CER)** to answer the question:
How does genocide denial shape historical memory and modern geopolitics?
- Reflective writing prompt:
What responsibilities do individuals and nations have when confronting the legacy of genocide?



**CALIFORNIA TEACHERS
COLLABORATIVE FOR
HOLOCAUST AND
GENOCIDE EDUCATION**

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References:

Facing History & Ourselves, “Introducing the Armenian Genocide”, video, last updated March 31, 2015.

