

Understanding the Ten Stages of Genocide

Time: Three, 50-minute class periods

Audience: 10th grade History Social Science

Student Outcomes

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

- Identify and describe Gregory Stanton's Ten Stages of Genocide
- Analyze different historical events of the Holocaust using the Ten Stages of Genocide
- Understand the role they can play in recognizing warning signs for the future

Aligned Standards (California Common Core)

- **CCSS.RH.9-10.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- **CCSS.RH.9-10.10:** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.WHST.9-10.10:** Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- **CA HSS Standard 10.8.5:** Analyze the Nazi policy of pursuing racial purity, especially against the European Jews; its transformation into the Final Solution; and the Holocaust that resulted in the murder of six million Jewish civilians.

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Context:

The goal of this lesson is to help students identify and apply Gregory Stanton's Ten Stages of Genocide. Students will examine Raphael Lemkin's 1944 definition of genocide and use the Ten Stages framework to analyze key events of the Holocaust, identifying how specific events illustrate different stages of the genocidal process. This lesson comes directly after a unit on the Holocaust in either 10th or 11th grade. Ideally, students would have looked in depth at the events of the Holocaust and be able to apply their learning to this lesson. To do this, students will use some of the key moments of the Holocaust and identify which stages are illustrated by different key moments of the Holocaust. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to answer the inquiry question: *How do the Ten Stages of Genocide help explain both past genocides and warning signs for the future?*

Materials:

- [Handout 1: Defining Genocide](#) (graphic organizer and primary source)
- [Handout 2: Ten Stages of Genocide](#) (and answer key)

- [Handout 3: Ten Stages and the Holocaust](#) (and answer key)
- [Handout 4: Writing Reflection](#)
- [Handout 5: Primary and Secondary Sources on the Holocaust](#)

Differentiation:

- Students can work in pairs or groups for the first handout based on the needs of the students and the class
- Instead of students generating and writing their own definitions of each of the Ten Stages, the teacher can guide students to a definition as a whole class OR students can be given the completed definition handout

Assessment(s): Identify how students will demonstrate their knowledge and applied learning of the material during/after the lesson. Consider how teachers will know what students know and what they can do, in order to monitor student progress toward outcomes and inform instruction.

- Formative Assessment: Completed student handouts of the definition brainstorming and the descriptions of the Ten Stages
- Summative Assessment: Completed reflection prompts.

Lesson/Activity: Write out the steps of the lesson in a format easily understood by teachers. Highlight where the differentiation strategies and assessments (mentioned above) take place in the lesson. You might also include a calendar or timeline.

- Provide a content warning to students that they will see disturbing images and think through difficult topics. Frame the lesson as a continuing conversation, and remind students of their options if they feel they need to take a break.

Day 1: Defining Genocide (Handout 1: Defining Genocide)

The goal of day one is to come to a collective definition of genocide. This is a critical step as recording a definition as a class creates a reference point for students to return to and revise after encountering Lemkin’s 1944 definition (not convention). It is likely that most students will have focused on the act of mass killings, and Lemkin’s definition will push them to think about genocide as a coordinated process rather than a single event of mass killing. This will provide a transition to the Ten Stages of Genocide portion of the lesson.

- Step 1: Think-Pair-Share (20 min)
 - Explain to students that today they will be looking at the definition of genocide and creating a definition that will be used going forward.
 - To start, remind them of what they learned in the previous unit about the Holocaust. Teaching this lesson after a lesson on the Holocaust is critical so students have background knowledge they can use.
 - Afterwards, show a short video from *Echoes & Reflections* called “[What is Genocide?](#)”
 - Students then take time to list on their own what they know are the components of genocide based on their previous knowledge and what they heard in the video.
 - Next, they will work with a partner to write their own definition of genocide.
 - After students have had a chance to brainstorm a draft definition, as a class, arrive at a collective definition that the students will use going forward.

- Step 2: Raphael Lemkin's Definition, 1944 (30 min)
 - After there is a class definition of genocide, students will read an excerpt from Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*.
 - Then, students will complete Step 2 of the "Defining Genocide" handout either on their own or in pairs.
- Assessment: Students answer the question for day one on the [Writing Reflection](#) handout

Day 2: Understanding the 10 Stages of Genocide ([Handout 2: Ten Stages of Genocide](#))

- On day 2, students will dive into the Ten Stages of Genocide. In 1996, Gregory Stanton developed a model called the Eight Stages of Genocide to help identify and prevent genocides. The model was expanded to Ten Stages in 2006. The model argues that genocides do not happen overnight, they follow recognizable patterns. Learning to identify these patterns is the first step toward stopping them.
- In groups, pairs, or as a whole class, students watch each of the short videos explaining each of the ten stages. <https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>
- As they watch, students record their own definition for each of the stages.
- Before leaving class, students reflect on what they have learned about the Ten Stages of Genocide.
- Assessment: Students answer the question for day two on the [Writing Reflection](#) handout

Day 3: Applying the Ten Stages of Genocide ([Handout 3: Ten Stages and the Holocaust](#))

- On the final day, students apply what they learned about the Ten Stages to sources from the Holocaust.
- Students are given a graphic organizer with the definitions and a set of ten [primary/secondary sources](#). In groups or pairs, students evaluate each primary or secondary source and determine which stage of genocide it represents, recording their reasoning on the organizer.
- Each source includes questions for students to help them analyze and understand the source.
- Assessment: Students answer the question for day three and the final question on the [Writing Reflection](#) handout

References

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- Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.
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- Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. 4. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947. 2118-PS, <https://www.vaholocaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/PoliceDecreeIdentification-2.pdf>
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- Samples of the Nuremberg Race Laws (the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection

of German Blood and Honor). Germany, September 15, 1935. *National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD,*

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nuremberg-laws>

- Supreme Court Decision on the Nuremberg Race Laws, December 9, 1936, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/supreme-court-decision-on-the-nuremberg-race-laws?parent=en%2F11475>
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- SS troops enter the Kroll Opera House, Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/ss-troops-enter-the-kroll-opera-house>
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- "Aryanization" of Jewish Owned Businesses, Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/aryanization-of-jewish-owned-businesses>
- Sam Itzkowitz Describes the gas chambers in Auschwitz, Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/sam-itzkowitz-describes-the-gas-chambers-in-auschwitz>
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