

FIVE 30-minute LESSONS ON THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE:
Uyghur Culture and Identity, Introduction to the Uyghur Genocide,
Impacts on Women and Children, Exploring Uyghur Poetry, and
Understanding Uyghur Perspectives Through Testimony

CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)	3
VOCABULARY	5
LESSON ONE: Uyghur Culture and Identity	6
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES	6
LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)	6
LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	6
ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION	7
Uyghur Culture Information Sheet	9
Map of China and Surrounding Countries	10
Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity	11
LESSON TWO: Introduction to the Uyghur Genocide	12
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES	12
LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)	12
LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	12
ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION	13
Historical Background to the Uyghur Genocide	15
The Camps	16
From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor	17
Conflicts in East Turkestan	18
LESSON THREE: Uyghur Genocide Impacts on Women and Children	19
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES	19
LESSON MATERIALS (handout included below)	19
LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	19
ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION	21
Issues Pertaining to Women and Children	22
LESSON FOUR: Exploring Uyghur Poetry	23
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES	23
LESSON MATERIALS	23
Suggested Uyghur Poetry Books	23
LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	24
ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION	25
Uyghur Poetry Analysis handout	26
LESSON FIVE: Understanding Uyghur Perspectives Through Testimony	28
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES	28
Resources on Teaching with Testimony	28
LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)	28

Uyghur Testimonies Available Online	29
LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	29
ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION	31
The Significance of Testimony	34
Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide	35
References	37

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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.

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS: Middle School (grades 7-8)

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME: Five 30-minute sessions, which can be used on their own, integrated into longer class periods in conjunction with other topics, or extended as time permits.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LESSONS: The Uyghur genocide is an ongoing genocide happening in our time which remains grossly underreported. These lessons aim to do the following: introduce students to Uyghurs as an ethnic group; understand the different dimensions of the ongoing Uyghur genocide, including its impacts on women and children; engage with Uyghur poetry to humanize Uyghurs and situate the genocide within a cultural and historical context; explore Uyghur perspectives through testimony; and call students to action as upstanders by considering what their individual and collective responsibilities are. These lessons can be used as supplements to previous lessons on the Uyghur genocide or on their own. Each lesson includes extensions for further study, as time permits. Students should have a basic understanding of genocide before engaging in these lessons, and teachers should use their discretion in deciding what degree of detail students will be exposed to when learning about this difficult topic.

CALIFORNIA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)

The Uyghur genocide lesson plans align with the following CCSS for **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS** in grades 6-8, which can be adapted for grades 9-12:

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events)

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA.RI.7.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

CCSS.ELA.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA.W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA.SL.7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA.SL.7.2: Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

The Uyghur genocide lesson plans also align with the following CCSS for **LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES** in grades 6-8, which can be adapted for grades 9-12:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: 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.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: 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.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

<p>NOTE TO TEACHERS: A preliminary lesson on genocide, including Raphael Lemkin, the Genocide Convention, stages of genocide, and examples of historical genocides will be useful in helping students to fully understand and engage in these lessons.</p>

RESOURCES ON TEACHING GENOCIDE:

- Facing History and Ourselves:
<https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/9-classroom-resources-on-genocide>
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, DC:
<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/what-is-genocide>
- C-SPAN: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18096>
- Genocide Ed. Project:
https://genocideeducation.org/teaching_guides/new-stages-of-genocide-a-toolkit-for-educators/
- HRE USA: <https://hreusa.org/hre-library/topics/genocide/lesson-plans/>
- Human Rights Watch student task force:
<https://www.hrwstf.org/wordpress/genocide-awareness-toolkit-new/>
- Holocaust Center for Humanity:
<https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/guidelines-for-teaching-about-genocide>
- Echoes and Reflections: <https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-12/>
- California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education:
<https://cateacherscollaborative.org/education-resources/>
- UNESCO: Teaching about the Holocaust and genocide:
<https://www.unesco.org/en/teaching-holocaust-genocide>

VOCABULARY

1. genocide: the deliberate, targeted destruction of a specific group of people
2. Uyghurs: ethnic group in China Indigenous to Xinjiang/East Turkestan
3. Muslim: person who observes the beliefs and traditions of Islam
4. Islam: one of the major (Abrahamic) world religions
5. Han Chinese: majority ethnic group in China (~92%)
6. marginalize: to treat a person, group, or concept as insignificant
7. prejudice: preconceived opinion or bias that is not based on reason or experience
8. dispossess: to deprive someone of land, property, or other possessions
9. oppress: to crush or burden by abuse of power or authority
10. sterilization: making someone unable to reproduce
11. internment: the state of being confined as a prisoner
12. indoctrination: teaching someone to accept beliefs or ideas without questioning them
13. surveillance: keeping a close watch over someone or something
14. atrocities: cruel and harmful acts, typically involving violence
15. intergenerational cultural transmission: passing elements of culture (beliefs, traditions, knowledge, etc.) from one generation to the next

LESSON ONE: Uyghur Culture and Identity



[Uyghur Meshrep](#)

LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to describe cultural characteristics of Uyghurs, thus humanizing them as a people
- Students will be able to locate East Turkestan on a map
- Students will be able to describe how Uyghur culture and identity have been under assault and will reflect on the collective impact of these actions

LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- **Uyghur Culture Information Sheet** (handout)
- **Map of China and Surrounding Countries** (handout)
- **Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity** (handout)
- Paper and pen/pencil or computer access for written assessment and reflection

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Ask students if they've heard about Uyghurs (pronounced "wee-gers"). Then ask if they know where East Turkestan (Xinjiang) is in the world.

Tell them, “today we’re going to learn about Uyghurs, who are an Indigenous ethnic group in China.”

2. Who are Uyghurs? Share **Uyghur Culture Information Sheet** with students.

In small groups (3-4 students), have students read the info sheet and discuss among themselves. Then ask students to share what they learned about Uyghur culture with the whole class (*formative assessment*).

3. Pass out copies of **Map of China and Surrounding Countries** and read together as a class, highlighting Xinjiang. Emphasize that Uyghurs call Xinjiang “East Turkestan,” as it is their Indigenous homeland.

4. Inform students that Uyghurs are currently undergoing a genocide in China, which they will learn more about in the next lesson.

5. Instruction: Teach students about the **Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity** (handout), which is one dimension of the ongoing genocide.

([Additional resource](#) on destruction of Uyghur burial grounds with images)

6. Brief discussion: Turn and talk to neighbor: Ask students “How do you think these actions impact Uyghurs’ ability to freely express their identity?” (*formative assessment*)

7. Wrap up and summarize interactively with students: “Today we’ve learned about who Uyghurs are, where they live, and some of the challenges they have faced in maintaining their culture and identity. Who can tell me..” (review based on today’s content—*formative assessment*)

ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 2, 6, and 7, assign the written, summative assessment below.

Written Assessment: During class, if time permits, or as homework, have students respond to the following prompts:

- a. Describe three aspects of Uyghur culture and identity.
- b. Provide three examples of how the actions of the Chinese government are an assault on Uyghur culture and identity.

- c. How do you think these actions impact Uyghurs' sense of freedom and ability to express their identity in their Indigenous homeland?
- d. Optional Reflection (can also be discussion in small groups or whole class): What is your opinion on the role governments should play in controlling children's names, dress codes, languages spoken, and cultural and religious practices?

Differentiation: Written responses can range from a few sentences to one or more paragraphs, depending on the students.

Alternative: Consider offering a visual art option for some or all students. Students can draw/illustrate elements of Uyghur culture and identity, along with creatively expressing the impacts on Uyghurs of the destruction of their culture.

Possible extension: Have students research different elements of Uyghur culture and identity. Then create and share presentations (slides, posters, brochures, recipes, etc.).

Uyghur Culture Information Sheet

Uyghurs are one of China's 56 officially recognized ethnic groups.

Uyghurs are **Muslim** and speak a **Turkic language**, which uses an Arabic-derived writing system.

The majority of people in China—about 92%—are **Han Chinese**.

Uyghurs are **Indigenous to East Turkestan** and maintain traditions which are very different from Han Chinese.



There are about 12 million Uyghurs in East Turkestan.

They are known for their **music, dancing, poetry, calligraphy** (see the work of Niyaz Kerim Şärqiy below), and **delicious food**.



Map of China and Surrounding Countries



Uyghurs are Indigenous to **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR or Xinjiang)**, which they call **East Turkestan**. ~12 million Uyghurs live in East Turkestan.

The official capital of East Turkestan is **Urumqi**, and the cultural capital is **Kashgar**.

“Xinjiang” literally translates as “new territory,” and this land is not new to Uyghurs, so they prefer to call it East Turkestan to signify their Indigenous homeland

- Notice Xinjiang/East Turkestan’s geography, bordering a number of Central Asian countries, thus positioning it as a crossroads between China and its Central Asian neighbors.
- Xinjiang/East Turkestan is rich in natural resources, including coal, oil, natural gas, minerals, and cotton.

Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity

In 2015, a **ban on children's names** associated with "extremism" was issued, and this was followed by an additional list of banned names in 2017. These names include "Fatima," "Aishe," and "Mohammed."

In 2017, China also imposed a ban on growing "abnormal" beards and wearing veils and burqas throughout East Turkestan.

Since at least 2016, **mosques, shrines, and cemeteries have been desecrated and destroyed** throughout East Turkestan.



A Chinese flag flies over a mosque closed by authorities in the old town of Kashgar. Photograph: Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



The Keriya Grand Mosque, 2014, seen here with many visitors. **This building no longer exists.** Photo Courtesy of Ruth Ingram and Bitter Winter.



← An image of a graveyard in Aksu in 2015 and the same view in 2018 and then again in 2019 showing a new park called "Happiness Park." (Earthrise/AFP/Getty)

Cemeteries are sacred places for Uyghurs where they connect with generations of their ancestors who have been buried there. They can no longer do this.

Also, **since 2017, the Uyghur language has been banned in schools** and from public and professional life. Shops have had to clear their shelves of anything written in Uyghur, and the Uyghur language has been removed from street signs and signboards (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2019).

LESSON TWO: Introduction to the Uyghur Genocide

NOTE TO TEACHERS: A preliminary lesson on genocide, including the Genocide Convention and stages of genocide, will be useful in helping students to fully understand and engage in this lesson. (See page 3 for resources on teaching genocide.)

Please use discretion in deciding what degree of detail students will be exposed to when learning about this difficult topic.

LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to describe the historical background to the Uyghur genocide
- Students will be able to identify different aspects of the Uyghur genocide, including how it has evolved over time
- Students will consider what it means to be an upstander and articulate what they believe their individual and collective responsibilities are in the face of genocide
- Optional Extension: Students will make connections between the different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide and other genocides (conquest, land, and resources; separation of children and families; forced sterilization; etc.)

LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- **Historical Background to the Uyghur Genocide** (handout)
- **The Camps** (handout)
- **From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor** (handout)
- Paper and pen/pencil or computer access for written assignment
- (Optional) **Conflicts in East Turkestan** (handout) for additional historical information

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review previous lesson interactively with students: (*formative assessment*)
“Who can tell me something about Uyghurs? Where is their Indigenous homeland? How is their culture and identity under threat?”
2. Tell students that Uyghurs are currently experiencing a genocide in East Turkestan, which has been ongoing since at least 2016.

3. “Today we are going to learn about the different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide and some historical background.”

Pass out **Historical Background to the Uyghur Genocide** handout and read together.

(formative assessment) How did life change for Uyghurs between the 1950s and 1990s in their Indigenous homeland? Have students provide specific examples. (This can be done as a whole class or in small groups)

(Optional) If time permits, go over **Conflicts in East Turkestan** (handout) for additional historical information.

4. Pass out **The Camps** handout and read together.

Note: this handout contains information which students may find disturbing. Please prepare them (“some of what we are about to learn is very unsettling and troubling”), use discretion, and make space for students to express their feelings.

5. Next, pass out the **From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor** handout. Explain that the Uyghur genocide is ongoing and has evolved in recent years with many people being moved from the camps to prisons and forced labor facilities. Have students read on their own or in small groups.

Discuss in small groups, then share with whole class: “how can you make an impact by shopping responsibly?”

See *Coalition to End Forced Labor* for additional details:

<https://enduyghurforcedlabour.org/>

6. Summarize and review: “Today we have learned about different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide, which is ongoing.” Ask students to provide details. *(formative assessment)*

7. Tell students that in the next lesson they will learn more about how the Uyghur genocide has impacted women and children.

ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 3, and 6, assign the written, summative assessment and reflection below.

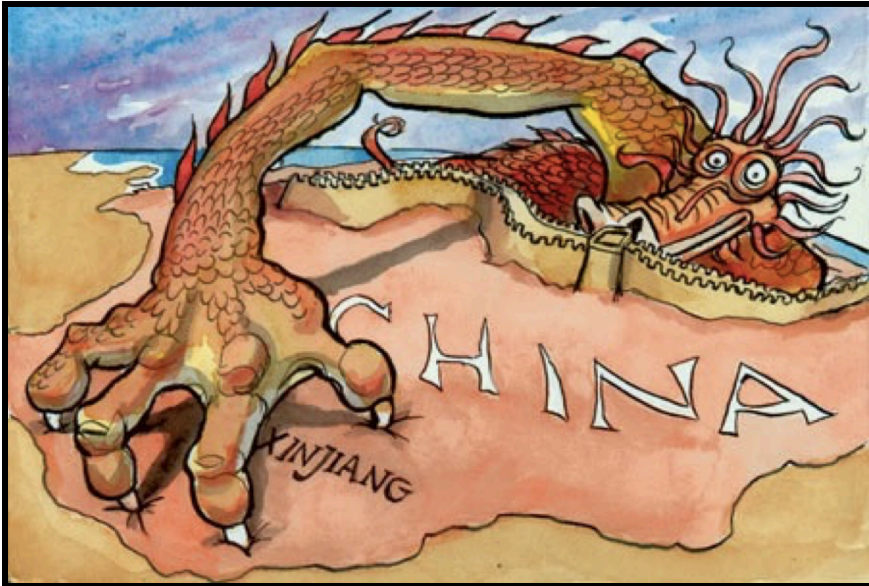
1. Considering both yesterday's and today's lessons, describe at least three different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide.
2. What does it mean to be an upstander? What do you believe your individual and collective responsibilities are in the face of genocide?
3. What can you do to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide and support Uyghurs?

Differentiation: Written responses can range from a few sentences to one or more paragraphs, depending on the students.

Additional assessment, if time permits: Have students create an advocacy piece to raise awareness of the Uyghur genocide. This may be a poster, flier, video, podcast, animation, artwork, and/or presentation.

Optional Extension: Have students research another genocide and make connections between the different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide and another genocide (or genocides), including conquest, land, and resources; separation of children and families; mass detention; forced labor; crematoria; forced sterilization; etc.

Historical Background to the Uyghur Genocide



In the 1950s, the **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** began to take control of Xinjiang.

Beginning in 1956, **policies** were enacted which **created intolerance and repression of ethnic cultures.**

In the late 1960s, there were **numerous armed conflicts** in East Turkestan as part of the Cultural Revolution.

After the **death of Mao Zedong in 1976**, gradual change began to take place.

The 1980s were relatively peaceful, but then in the 90s, the Chinese government began to develop **East Turkestan.**



The government encouraged people from other parts of China to **migrate to Xinjiang** for work.

These people were Han Chinese.

There were significant changes in urban planning which demolished old housing and built new apartment blocks, created new shopping centers, and commercialized former public spaces.

These new developments were for the Han.

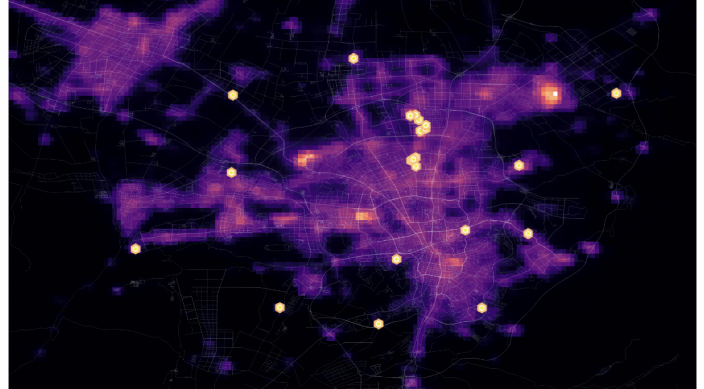
Han and Uyghur communities became increasingly segregated.



The Camps



A guard tower and barbed wire fences are seen around a facility in the Kunshan Industrial Park in Artux, Xinjiang, December 3, 2018. Photo by Ng Han Guan/AP



This nighttime satellite view shows the location of each detention and re-education camp in Urumqi, Xinjiang province, China, January 2021. Image by NOAA VIIRS and OpenStreetMap

In 2017, news began to emerge about the mass **internment** of Uyghurs in “re-education” camps.

These facilities have since been called **concentration camps**.

It is estimated that up to **three million people** have been interned in these camps.

Conditions in the Camps

- Uyghurs have been forced to eat pork and drink alcohol, which they avoid
- Very crowded rooms: people have to take turns sleeping
- Limited access to toilets and showers; sometimes just a bucket in the room for everyone to share
- Constant surveillance
- Forced indoctrination to Chinese Communist Party ideology

Atrocities in the Camps

- Torture: Numerous accounts of torture exist
- Sexual Assault: Both men and women have been subjected to sexual assault.
- Organ Harvesting: China has a well-documented history of using executed prisoners as organ donors.
- Suicide: Many attempts at suicide have been reported.

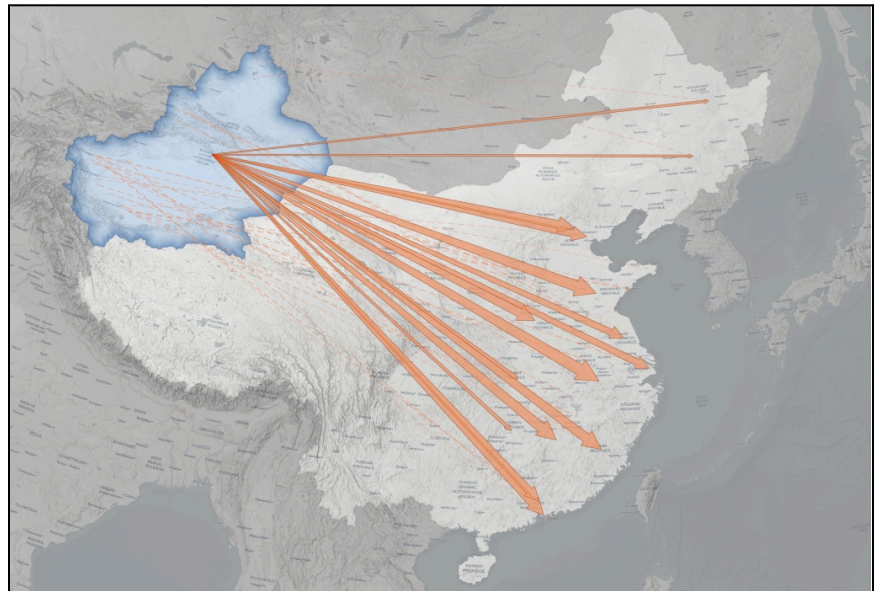
Deaths and Crematoria: In 2018, it was reported that crematoria were rapidly being constructed throughout East Turkestan. This is not only disturbing, but also violates Uyghur funerary traditions.

From Camps to Prisons and Forced Labor

Many Uyghurs have been transferred directly from the camps to highly secured prisons and factories in XUAR and elsewhere in China.

Uyghurs have been placed in factories with boarding facilities since at least 2017.

Conditions for factory workers are reportedly very similar to the camps, including “ideological training” outside of work hours.



data sources, including local media reports and official government sources. <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>

1 in 5

cotton garments in the global apparel market are tainted by forced labour from the Uyghur Region

45%

of the world's solar-grade polysilicon (used in solar panels) supply comes from the Uyghur Region

17+

global industries – from agriculture to toys – are implicated in Uyghur forced labour

<https://enduyghurforcedlabour.org>

The [list of goods produced by forced labor](#) in China includes electronics, cotton, hair products, solar cells, thread and textiles, gloves, and bricks.

In 2020, a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) revealed that 83 major brands have been using forced labor by ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

These brands include the following:

Abercrombie & Fitch, Adidas, Amazon, Apple, BMW, Calvin Klein, Cisco, Dell, Fila, Gap, General Electric, General Motors, Google, H&M, Hitachi, Jaguar, L.L.Bean, Lacoste, Lenovo, Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Nike, Nintendo, Nokia, The North Face, Panasonic, Polo Ralph Lauren, Puma, Samsung, Siemens, Skechers, Sony, Tommy Hilfiger, Toshiba, Uniqlo, Victoria's Secret, Volkswagen, Zara.

Question for consideration: How can you make an impact by shopping responsibly?

Conflicts in East Turkestan

The Ghulja Incident: February 5, 1997

(Sometimes called “The Ghulja Massacre” by Uyghurs)



Uyghurs gathered in the city of Ghulja in non-violent demonstrations calling for basic rights, religious freedom, and opportunities.

Protesters were met with violence by local authorities and many were arrested. Riots ensued between protesters and police, and hundreds of Uyghurs were killed.

Violent interrogations and arrests of Uyghurs continued for months afterward, and **Uyghurs were labeled “religious extremists” and “terrorists.”**

The Urumqi Uprising / Urumqi Massacre: July 5, 2009



Uyghurs gathered for a peaceful protest in Urumqi, again demanding basic rights and opportunities. Police tried to disperse them, unsuccessfully. The protesters migrated through the city, and violence ensued between protesters and police. Han civilians got involved, and there were deaths on both sides.

Following the Urumqi riots, hundreds of Uyghur men and teenage boys were forcibly detained. Families could not get any information about where they were.

These enforced disappearances have continued on a massive scale since 2017 in camps, prisons, and forced labor facilities.

LESSON THREE: Uyghur Genocide Impacts on Women and Children

LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to identify and describe issues specifically pertaining to women within the context of the Uyghur genocide
- Students will be able to identify and describe issues specifically pertaining to children within the context of the Uyghur genocide
- Students will articulate the significance of intergenerational cultural transmission and how a lack thereof impacts an ethnic group, particularly during a time of genocide

LESSON MATERIALS (handout included below)

- **Issues Pertaining to Women and Children** (handout)
- **Book:** [Daddy? Daddy, When Are You Coming Home?](#) and accompanying animated video: [Still Waiting: The Ongoing Uyghur Genocide](#)
- Paper and pen/pencil or computer access for written assessment and reflection

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review previous lesson interactively with students: (*formative assessment*)
“Who can tell me something about Uyghurs? Where is their Indigenous homeland? Last time we started to learn about the Uyghur genocide, which is ongoing. What are some dimensions of the Uyghur genocide? What has been happening to Uyghurs?”
2. “Today we are going to learn about some of the ways in which women and children have been impacted by the ongoing genocide.”

Pass out **Issues Pertaining to Women and Children** handout.

Note: this handout contains information which students may find disturbing. Please prepare them (“again, some of what we are about to learn is very unsettling and troubling”), use discretion, and make space for students to express their feelings.

Introduce the issues that women have had to contend with: “In addition to the camps, women have had to deal with a host of other issues as part of the ongoing genocide.”

Read handout together and discuss each point, ensuring students understand the vocabulary.

Question for consideration: (students may do a quick write, discuss with a partner, or in small groups) How do these actions against women affect the Uyghur population as a whole? (*formative assessment*)

3. Still using the **Issues Pertaining to Women and Children** handout, tell students that Uyghur children have also been directly affected by changing laws and the ongoing genocide in East Turkestan. Read the “**Issues affecting children**” section together, and allow time for students to process and share their feelings.

Point out that up to one million children are thought to be trapped in state care, and China continues to build boarding schools for children as young as kindergarten age.

See Amnesty International Report for additional information:
[The Nightmare of Uyghur Families Separated by Repression](#)

Also, CNN article, including testimony: [Beijing’s crackdown in Xinjiang has separated thousands of children from their parents, new report claims. CNN found two of them](#)

4. Have a class discussion about the role that parents and grandparents play in the upbringing of children.

Explain the concept of **intergenerational cultural transmission**: the passing of culture from one generation to the next, including language, traditions, knowledge, beliefs, etc.

Questions for consideration: (may be discussed as a whole class, in small groups or pairs, or as a written reflection)

- a. What is the importance of intergenerational cultural transmission?
 - b. How does a lack of intergenerational cultural transmission impact people?
 - c. Describe the possible impacts of a lack of intergenerational cultural transmission on an ethnic group experiencing genocide?
5. Summarize and review: “Today we have learned about how women and children have been and continue to be impacted by the Uyghur genocide.” Ask students to provide details. (*formative assessment*)

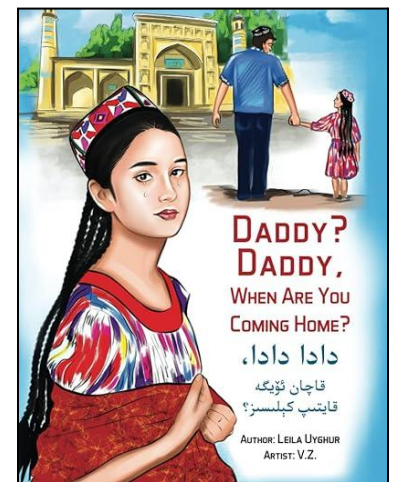
Tell students that in the next lesson they will engage with some Uyghur poetry to explore and understand Uyghur experiences and perspectives through creative expression.

ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 2, and 5, assign the written summative assessment and reflection below.

This can be done as homework if students have individual copies of the book, or during class time with a partner or in small groups if they are sharing copies.

1. Read the book, *Daddy? Daddy, When Are You Coming Home?*, which is told through the eyes of a Uyghur child, and watch the accompanying animated video: [Still Waiting: The Ongoing Uyghur Genocide](#)
2. As they read, have students identify and write down elements of Uyghur culture and identity described and illustrated in the book (connection to lesson one).
3. Then go back a second time, and identify and write down aspects of the Uyghur genocide described in the book. (They can refer to the materials provided in lessons two and three as needed.)



Differentiation: Specify the number of elements of Uyghur culture students should identify (#2 above), as well as aspects of the genocide (#3). Challenge students to identify more than the minimum requirement. Written responses can range from a few sentences to one or more paragraphs, depending on the students.

Optional Extension: After they have identified Uyghur cultural elements and aspects of the genocide, have students write a review of the book. This should include the following:

- a. a summary of the story
- b. opinion of the book as a whole (writing and illustrations)
- c. a description of the significant ideas and messages conveyed in the book
- d. suggestions for supporting Uyghurs

Issues Pertaining to Women and Children

Women have had to deal with a number of issues both inside and outside of the camps. These include the following:

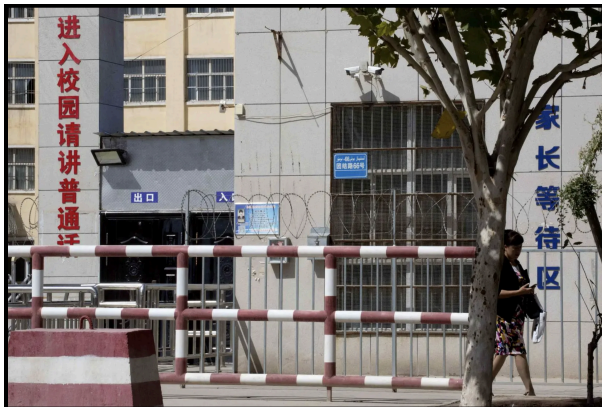
- **sexual assault**
- **forced abortions**
- **imposed birth control**
- **sterilization**

Not only are these affronts and violations to the women themselves, but these actions also have an impact on the Uyghur population and culture as a whole.

Question for consideration: How do these actions against women affect the Uyghur population as a whole?

Issues affecting children:

In 2017, laws were passed which demanded that children receive a national state education in Mandarin. (The Uyghur language was banned in schools.)



The entrance to the No. 4 High School with a sign that reads "Entering school grounds, please speak Mandarin," in Peyzawat, Xinjiang region. © 2018 AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

Also in 2017, reports revealed that children were being placed in state care after both of their parents were detained in the camps, even if grandparents were available to care for them.

It is estimated that **up to one million children are trapped in state care.** These state care facilities include **orphanages, children's shelters, and boarding schools.**

These places are all **highly secured compounds with armed police, barred windows, and barbed wire fences,** and people are not allowed to come and go.

LESSON FOUR: Exploring Uyghur Poetry

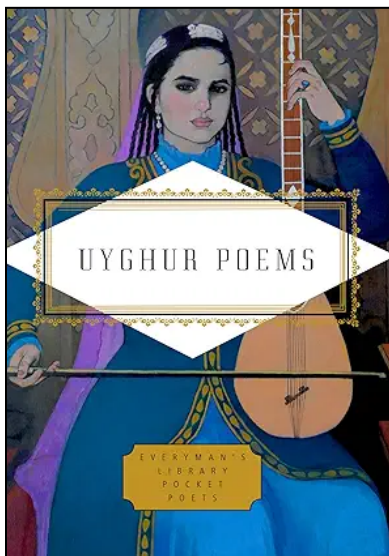
LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will engage with Uyghur poetry to explore complex emotions and develop empathy within the context of the Uyghur genocide
- Students will analyze the use of language, identify key themes, and interpret mood, tone, point of view, and meaning in Uyghur poetry
- Optional Extension: Students will use poetry as a creative tool to express aspects of their own identities and experiences while refining their writing skills

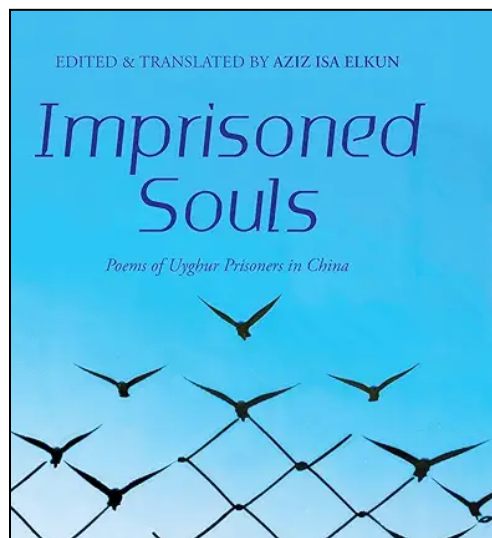
LESSON MATERIALS

- Uyghur poetry (suggestions below)
- **Uyghur Poetry Analysis** (handout)
- Pen/pencil
- (Optional) Pen/pencil and paper or computer access for optional written poetry

Suggested Uyghur Poetry Books



[Uyghur Poems](#)
Edited by Aziz Isa Elkun



[Imprisoned Souls](#)
Edited by Aziz Isa Elkun



[Timeless Ties](#)
Gulnaz Abdukadir

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review previous lessons interactively with students: (*formative assessment*)
“Who can tell me something about Uyghurs? We have now learned about different dimensions of the Uyghur genocide, which is ongoing. What are some aspects of the Uyghur genocide? What has been happening to Uyghurs? How have women and children been impacted?”
2. “Today we are going to read some poetry written by Uyghurs and explore their perspectives within the context of the ongoing genocide.”

Tell students that since 2017, most Uyghurs in the diaspora have been disconnected from their family members in East Turkestan and have not been able to safely return to their Indigenous homeland.

This helps to provide context for many contemporary Uyghur poems, which often reflect loss and longing.

Remind students that many of these poems have been written during the ongoing genocide, so they may encounter some intense emotions as they read.

(Note: Poetry has been an important part of Uyghur culture for centuries. There are also many Uyghur poems written before the genocide.)

3. Start by discussing poetry as an art form and medium for creative expression.

Ask students:

- How is poetry different from other forms of writing?
- How might poetry enable or encourage the expression of emotions in ways that other forms of writing do not?

4. Choose a poem to read aloud to the class.

Read the poem once, slowly, and ask students what they heard. (Do not yet provide them with a written copy. They are just listening the first time through.)
Discuss their interpretation of the poem: (*formative assessment*)

- What is the poem about?
- What words or phrases stood out?
- What is the author trying to convey?

- What is the mood of the poem?
- What emotions are expressed?

Then read the poem aloud again. This time, either give students a copy of the poem or project it for everyone to see. Discuss the following:

- How does the language used by the author convey the meaning of the poem?
- How does the author’s language create the mood of the poem?
- What is the author’s point of view?
- What is the tone of the poem?
- Consider the poem within the context of the ongoing Uyghur genocide. How does the poem relate to the genocide?

Note: “Mood” refers to the *reader’s* experience and how the poem makes them feel, while “tone” refers to the *author’s* voice, attitude, and/or state of mind.

5. Have students choose their own poem(s) to read and interpret. Provide them with some options. (They can do this individually or in pairs.)

Pass out the **Uyghur Poetry Analysis** handout (below).
(*summative assessment*)

Students should answer the questions and complete the boxes in the handout. This can be done during class or for homework, depending on the time available.

Optional: If time permits, students may share their chosen poem and interpretation with the class

6. Summarize and review: “Today we have explored some Uyghur poetry, which has helped us to understand the personal experiences of Uyghurs in a creative, moving way.” Ask students to provide details, referencing the poems they examined. (*formative assessment*)
7. Tell students that in the next lesson they will learn more about Uyghur perspectives by engaging with testimony.

ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 4, and 6, assign the written, summative assessment below.

Written *summative assessment*:

Uyghur Poetry Analysis handout
(page 27 below)

Students should answer the questions and complete the boxes in the handout. This can be done during class or for homework, depending on the time available.

They may need some reminders or guidance, particularly if they are not familiar with analyzing poetry. Review the concepts of mood, tone, point of view, and theme, if necessary.

The reflection should consist of students' opinions and/or responses to the poem. This may be on an emotional level and/or may include analysis of the structure, language, and literary devices used by the author.

Differentiation: Written responses can range from a few sentences to a paragraph, depending on the students.

Optional: If time permits, students may share their chosen poem and interpretation with the class

Extension (highly encouraged if time permits): Have students write their own poems about their identities and experiences, and share with the class. They may include reflections and details about the following aspects of their identities:

- Things they love
- Important people in their life
- Accomplishments
- Where they and/or their ancestors are from
- The notion of “home”
- Significant cultural traditions, beliefs, and/or celebrations
- Food
- Fears
- Hopes and dreams

They can share individually with the whole class, in small groups, exchange their poem with a classmate, or as part of a class special event, such as a non-competitive Poetry Slam or showcase.

Name: _____

Date: _____

UYGHUR POETRY ANALYSIS



Title: _____

Author: _____

Date poem was written (if known): _____

Directions: Analyze the poem by examining each element below. Write your thoughts in the boxes.

MEANING OF TITLE

AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW

MOOD AND TONE

MEANING OF POEM

THEMES AND CONNECTIONS TO
UYGHUR GENOCIDE

REFLECTION

LESSON FIVE: Understanding Uyghur Perspectives Through Testimony

LESSON OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students will reflect on the significance of engaging with testimony as a primary source of information and why it is important to bear witness to history
- Students will articulate how stories of survivors of genocides and their descendants are relevant in our world today
- Students will be able to identify and describe components of the Uyghur Genocide based on testimony

Resources on Teaching with Testimony

Using Visual History Testimony in the Classroom (Shoah Foundation):

<https://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Data/EducatorData/Using-Testimony-in-Classroom.pdf>

Guidelines for Teaching with Testimony (USHMM):

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/USHMM-Guidelines-Teaching-with-Survivor-Testimony.pdf>

Teaching with Holocaust Survivor Testimony (USHMM):

<https://www.ushmm.org/teach/holocaust-lesson-plans/teaching-with-holocaust-survivor-testimony>

Survivor Testimony and the Legacy of Memory (Facing History):

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/survivor-testimony-legacy-memory>

Impacts of Holocaust Education and Survivor Testimony

<https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2020/09/28761-survey-shows-holocaust-education-and-survivor-testimony-has-profound-impacts>

LESSON MATERIALS (handouts included below)

- Access to the internet to explore various Uyghur testimonies (though some may be printed in advance)
- Paper and pen/pencil or computer access for written assessment and reflection
- (Optional) Initial Reflection Sheet: **The Significance of Testimony** (handout below)
- (Optional) Summative Assessment: **Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide** (handout below)

Uyghur Testimonies Available Online

Elfidar Iltebir (written):

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/Elfidar%20Iltebir%27s%20statement-CECC%20Hearing%20on%20Forced%20labor.pdf>

Tursunay Ziyawudun (written):

<https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/CECC%20Hearing%20Testimony%20-%20Tursunay%20Ziyawudun.pdf>

For High School Students: Tursunay Ziyawudun Video (26:30-37:30)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5q2MwCOQow&ab_channel=HMTC

Rahima Mahmut (written):

<https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/interpreting-witness-statements-from-the-uyghur-genocide>

Mihrigul Tursun (both written and video):

<https://time.com/5467628/china-uyghur-congress-torture/>

Multimedia resource:

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/02/asia/xinjiang-china-karakax-document-intl-hnk/>

VOA journalist Kasim Kashgar (video):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKfmF8GLuc&ab_channel=VoiceofAmerica

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Review previous lessons interactively with students:
“What do we know about Uyghurs? Where do they live? What is happening to them right now in East Turkestan (be specific)?” (*formative assessment*)
2. “We have read some Uyghur poetry and have seen how Uyghurs express their experiences creatively in a moving way. Today we are going to engage with some Uyghur testimony as a primary source to learn more about Uyghur experiences related to the genocide.”

Discuss as a whole class, or share prompts with students to discuss in small groups: (*formative assessment*)

- What is testimony?
- What can we learn from testimony?
- How is learning from testimony different from other forms of learning history?
- How are the stories of survivors of genocides and mass atrocities and their descendants relevant in our world today?
- What can we learn from survivors about our responsibilities to one another?

Alternatively, provide students with an optional initial written reflection: **The Significance of Testimony** (handout below). Students may do this individually, with a partner, or in small groups.

3. Explain that testimony comes in different forms (written, oral, recorded on audio or video, etc.), and we will be exploring mostly written testimony.

Warning: Much of this material is very intense and some includes graphic descriptions of torture. Please screen before sharing with students and determine what is best for your classes.

4. Review dimensions of the Uyghur genocide and tell students that China continues to deny the genocide.

Select a few different Uyghur diaspora testimonies for students to explore individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Summative Assessment:

After selecting some options for students, have them read (and/or watch) the testimony twice and take notes on what they think is important to remember. Circulate around the room and check in with students regularly.

Using their notes from their engagement with the selected Uyghur diaspora testimonies, have students write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony, along with aspects of the Uyghur genocide included or referenced in the testimony. (in class or homework)

(Refer to [Genocide Convention](#) if necessary.)

5. Reflection: (discuss as a group) What is the importance of testimony as a primary source of information? How are stories of survivors of genocides relevant in our world today?
6. Summarize and review: “Today we have discussed the significance of testimony, and you have engaged with different testimonies from Uyghur diaspora members. What are some of the aspects of the Uyghur genocide revealed in their testimonies?” (*formative assessment*)
7. Conclude by thanking students for their engagement with this difficult topic and reiterating their responsibilities to support one another and act as upstanders in the face of injustice. If possible, have them articulate ways in which they can specifically support Uyghurs during this time of ongoing genocide.

ASSESSMENT and REFLECTION

In addition to the formative assessments included in the lesson in steps 1, 2, and 6, assign the written, summative assessment below (step 4 above). This can be completed during class or as homework.

Written Summative Assessment: on a piece of paper or Google doc

Select a few different Uyghur diaspora testimonies for students to explore individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

They will read their given testimony twice. The first time, they should pay attention to the individual’s experiences and emotions, and the second time, they will identify aspects of the Uyghur genocide mentioned in the testimony.

After selecting some testimony options for students, have them read (and/or watch) the given testimony a first time and take notes on what they think is important to remember in the person’s story.

Circulate around the room and check in with students regularly throughout.

Then have the students read (and/or watch) the given testimony a second time, taking notes and paying particular attention to aspects of the Uyghur genocide that come up.

Using their notes from their engagement with the selected Uyghur diaspora testimonies, have students write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony, along with aspects of the Uyghur genocide included or referenced in the testimony. (in class or homework)

(Refer to [Genocide Convention](#) if necessary.)

Consider an additional option for a more thorough assessment (**Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide**) if time permits below.

Optional Unit Summative Assessment: Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide, Individual Work (have students create a doc or use the handout below)

Paragraph 1: Using their notes from their engagement with the selected Uyghur diaspora testimonies, have students write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony.

Paragraph 2: Then, write a paragraph connecting the ideas and experiences to specific aspects of genocide. (Refer to [Genocide Convention](#) if necessary.)

Paragraph 3: Reflect on the importance of testimony as a primary source of information. Describe how stories of survivors are relevant in our world today, and how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the present time. Articulate why it is important to bear witness to history.

Additional Resources on Uyghur Testimony

Please screen in advance before sharing with students to determine what is appropriate for your class.

<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/hearing-testimony-the-chinese-communist-partys-ongoing-uyghur-genocide>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/30/uyghur-tribunal-testimony-surveillance-china>

<https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/witness-testimony/hearing-chinese-communist-partys-ongoing-uyghur-genocide-witness-testimony>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/china-families-of-xinjiang-detainees-speak-out-as-they-await-long-overdue-un-report/>

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/ZS/ZS00/20230323/115543/HHRG-118-ZS00-Wstate-SidikQ-20230323.pdf>

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/genocide-select-committee-03242023125434.html>

Name: _____

The Significance of Testimony

1. What is testimony? _____

2. What can we learn from testimony? _____

3. How are the stories of survivors of genocides and mass atrocities and their descendants relevant in our world today?

4. How is learning from testimony different from other forms of learning history?

5. What can we learn from survivors about our responsibilities to one another?

Name: _____

Using Testimony to Make a Case for Genocide

Paragraph 1: Using your notes from your Uyghur diaspora testimony, write a paragraph summarizing the main experiences and ideas shared in the testimony.

Paragraph 2: Using your notes from the second reading of your Uyghur diaspora testimony, write a paragraph connecting the shared ideas and experiences to specific aspects of the Uyghur genocide. (Refer to the Genocide Convention if necessary.)

Paragraph 3: Reflect on the importance of testimony, and explain its significance in the following ways:

- as a primary source of information
- how stories of survivors are relevant in our world today
- how these stories can educate us about our responsibilities to one another in the present time
- why it is important to bear witness to history

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