

Never Again

This teaching guide represents several options on how to approach the topic of 20th and 21st Century genocides with your students. It is assumed that your students have some background in the Holocaust. This is not a comprehensive curriculum, but instead is a collection of suggested resources, approaches, and thought processes to bring to your classroom. The overall goal is to examine the stages of genocide and applying them to modern genocides.

This curriculum can be adopted for use across the Social Studies and Language Arts, including Humanities, English, Current Events, Geography, World History, American History, Government, Sociology, or Psychology. Due to the subject matter, these suggested approaches are geared toward upper level high school students, but could be adapted for lower grades

Needs versus options: This teacher's guide is divided into these two groups. Needs are basic ideas that are critical, in this author's opinion, to the curricula. The options sections are up to the teacher to jump into, and are extensions, not critical pieces.

Recommended resources:

Power, Samantha. America in the Age of Genocide.

Grossman, Colonel. On Killing.

O'Brien, Tim. How to Tell a True War Story.

Movies dealing with examples of genocidal actions and related subject matter:

Rabbit Proof Fence

Schindler's List

Killing Fields

Hotel Rwanda

Dances With Wolves

Need:

Define the term “genocide”. Have students look the word up in the dictionary. Explore the uses for the term: What separates genocide from mass murder?

How many deaths make genocide?

Who declares a genocide?

Does murder have to occur for a genocide to occur?

Explore historical and previously studied acts that might be termed genocide by the definition reach in class. This can be brought back out later as a starter for the eight stages comparison.

Option:

Use America in the Age of Genocide, chapter 2 and 3 as outside readings to understand the history surrounding the creation of the term “genocide.” Discuss different forms of genocide, different motivating factors, including: politicide (genocide committed for political goals.)

Need:

Students must first know the eight stages of genocide as defined by Gregory H. Stanton.

Introduce them to these stages. More elaborate examples and definitions can be found online at:

<http://www.genocidewatch.org/eightstages.htm>

Classification	Us and Them
Symbolization	Attaching a symbol to separate them from us. Not a problem, unless symbol is used to spread hatred and inflame.
Dehumanization	They are made out to be inhuman. They are equated with animals, less than animals. With this process, killing becomes psychologically more accessible. See <u>On Killing</u> .
Organization	Anti-them groups are organized to deal with the growing threat.
Polarization	Extremist propaganda force moderates to pick sides, silencing or castigating the middle.
Preparation	They are push out of society, separated from society, and propaganda pushes them to the edge of society.
Extermination	Killing begins, and is often state sponsored, or at least state sanctioned.
Denial	Perpetrators deny their actions and blame the victims, concocting huge stories to cover the truth. Often, as the state supported the actions, or the majority supported the genocide, the media and all information sources will continue to blame the victims.

Option:

By applying the stages to the Shoah, as a part of an entire Holocaust studies course, or for a short lesson, we can see examples of these stages in play during a clearly defined genocide. This well-known situation would provide concrete, well-documented facts to illustrate the eight stages for the students. It is highly recommended that teachers use this event in history as a springboard to understanding the eight stages in practice. Students can be given the task of finding examples to the stages in groups, in a jigsaw formation. Or, students can find examples of all eight stages independently. It is critical, though, that all students have complete understanding of the eight stages before moving on.

Need:

Timeline for postwar world –

24 October 1945 – birth of the United Nations

9 December 1948 – U.N. adopts Lemkin’s Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide

12 January 1951 – Convention takes effect

U.S. signs on to genocide convention

Discuss: Why did it take the United States so long to sign on to this convention?

What is the relationship between the United States and the United Nations?

What is our current relationship with the United Nations? Why?

Option:

Often the stories that come out of war zones and situations that are premeditating genocide are unbelievable. Victims stories are seen as irrational and incomprehensible. By the time that people realize that there is truth to the stories, it is too late to stop the perpetrators from many violent actions, and the cost of involvement has risen too high. Tim O’Brien, an infantryman in the Vietnam War wrote of his inability to express what he saw in combat in a semi-biographical novel, The Things They Carried. In the chapter entitled, “How to Tell a True War Story”, he tries to explain why firsthand accounts are often unbelievable. Have the students read through the chapter, or a pared down version, and discuss the author’s views. How do these ideas pertain to the first eyewitness accounts of extremist behaviors from the perspective of American media viewers and readers?

Option:

Read On Killing, focusing on chapters that deal with the effects of genocide.

Need:

Choose a modern genocide. Some choices: Rwanda, Iraq, Cambodia, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia. Students can work alone or in groups. Use eight stages, applying them to the situations. Have students come up with specific examples for chosen genocide detailing how each stage can be seen in that country. Students must document their work.