

CASE STUDY

Instructional Tool for Teaching About Genocide

EDUCATIONAL AIM

The primary aim is to help students gain a better understanding of the genocide process and become familiar with actions and measures for preventing this type of crime. The aim is also to situate the study of genocide within a more general reflection on how societies function and on State treatment of minorities. These studies will contribute to students' citizenship education.

OVERALL APPROACH

The approach consists in exploring each stage of genocide by studying a specific case that is put into context and presented as a problem. We recommend choosing a “big question” as a common thread for the learning sequence. Learning acquired in a course is easier for the students to apply when they analyze and interpret the issues of the world they live in.

Additional information sheets are provided in order to address more specific aspects stemming from this overall approach.

SUBJECTS TARGETED BY THE TOOL

CYCLE TWO

Ethics and Religious Culture

Competency:
Reflects on ethical questions (themes: justice, tolerance)

History of the 20th Century: all social phenomena

Competencies:
Characterizes a historical turning point;
Interprets a social phenomenon using the historical method

Contemporary World: Tensions and conflicts

Competency:
Interprets a contemporary world problem

The tool can be used for other subjects, such as Languages or History and Citizenship Education.

ICEBREAKER

Have the students read aloud the survivors' statements at the beginning of the background document for the case study chosen. Ask them if they know which event the survivor is referring to. Take this opportunity to introduce the theme of the lesson: The 20th century, a century of genocide? What is a genocide process? How can it be prevented?

QUESTION

The main, or “big,” question will be used to guide the study of genocide in general. Being able to answer the question, even if the answer is complex and nuanced, will help students demystify the concept.

1.

Choose one of the following questions, or formulate your own question, or ask the students to choose one.

- // What is the role of the State in protecting a country’s minorities?
- // How does war make genocide possible?
- // How can establishing a democratic government help prevent genocide?
- // In what context can external military intervention take priority over the concept of State sovereignty?
- // Are all pluralistic societies at risk of perpetrating a genocide?
- // What are the tools for preventing genocide?
- // What are the factors or causes that lead to genocide?
- // Can an ongoing genocide be stopped?
- // Should human rights be defended by force throughout the world?
- // Is racism the only cause of genocide?
- // What are the manifestations of resistance by individuals or countries in the face of genocide? How do the different stages of genocide impact fundamental human rights to justice, freedom, equality, etc.?

Note that the information sheets (Rule of Law, Right of Asylum, Distinction Among the Different Crimes) can help answer these questions.

2.

Have students identify their hypotheses regarding the chosen big question. You can have them do this on their own, in teams or as a group.

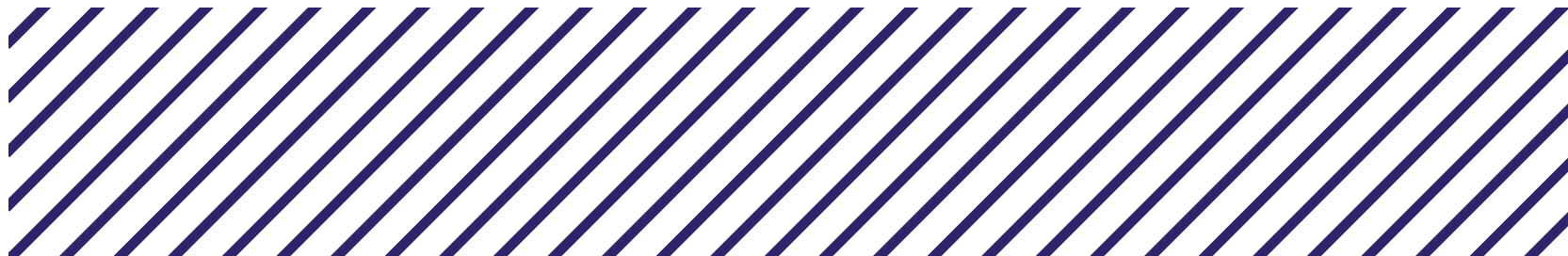
To do this:

// Ask students what their possible answers are to this question.

// Invite students to formulate sub-questions or identify elements that should be addressed in the answer.

You could, for example, divide the students' answers into four columns as shown in the table below:

Big question	What I know/think	What I would like to learn or know	What I learned during this learning sequence (To be filled out at the end)



DEFINITION

Start by having students come up with a definition of genocide that is based on their prior knowledge. Then, have students complete their definition by using the definition in the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948) of the United Nations (UN). Note: If your students are not familiar with the UN, give a brief overview of the organization.

1.

Ask the students to define the term “genocide” by drawing on their prior knowledge of the subject.

Ask the following questions:

- // What is a genocide?
- // What does this word make you think of?
- // Do you know any examples of genocides? What do they have in common? How are they different?
- // Try to formalize the preliminary definition by having the students write it down.

2.

Present the UN definition of genocide from the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* provided. You find it in the analysis tool.

Point out to the students:

- // the need to prove the intent to commit a genocide
- // the categories used to define victim groups
- // different actions that can lead to genocide
- // actions and measures to prevent genocide

During the lesson, have the students do the same exercise for the genocide being studied so that they can analyze it in light of the legal definition of genocide.

Students must find proof of the perpetrators' intent to commit a genocide in their discourse, writings, orders, etc.

Note :

If you have time, discuss the limited nature of this definition (which excludes, for instance, political opponents) and the context in which it was adopted in 1948.

CASE STUDY

The purpose of this learning situation is to help students, using one or more specific cases, to gain a better understanding of the different elements that contribute to the occurrence of a phenomenon such as genocide. The specific and global context, the different actors, the genocide process, the ideological and political issues, and issues related to justice will be addressed.

1.

Present the issue with respect to the chosen case study:

// Prompt students to share their knowledge about the subject.

// Examples: war, political crisis, religious rivalries

// Write it down so you can return to it later.

2.

Situate the event in history referring to the first two pages of the background document on the genocide being studied (map, timeline, highlights):

// Where did these events take place? (You can use the map.)

// Who are the actors in this genocide (perpetrators, victims, witnesses, collaborators, possible “saviours” or allies, etc.)?

// Present the actors in the genocide (their culture, language[s], religion, history, etc.).

// In what context did this genocide occur?

Note :

This process can be adapted to all the genocides described in this guide.



GENOCIDE PROCESS GRID

It is important to explain to students how to use the grid. Emphasize the fact that the stages serve as an analysis grid for the genocide process, and give students the opportunity to organize the information they have collected on one or more genocides. Remain particularly mindful of the danger of *simplifying* the analysis.

Divide the class into six teams and ask each team to choose a particular stage in the genocide process. Several teams can work on the same stage, but make sure that at least one team is assigned to each stage. You can ask one team to work on issues related to justice, or do it yourself.

1.

With the students, complete the Grid using the background document on the genocide chosen. To do this, ask them to read the description of their assigned stage in the Genocide Process Grid, and then the background document for the genocide chosen. Ask them to:

- // Situate the genocide in its specific historical and geopolitical context.
- // Complete each stage in the genocide (including the actions of the perpetrators, the impact of these actions on the victims, and any acts of resistance and prevention).
- // Do additional research in order to answer the big question and respond to the issue presented at the beginning of the sequence.

2.

Plan to compile results (written texts, posters, videos, oral presentations, etc.) and discuss the answers to the two initial questions (the big question and the issue associated with the genocide chosen).

3.

You can continue to study genocide by examining other cases presented in this guide or by looking at contemporary situations exhibiting the stages of the genocide process (e.g. Burundi, Sudan, Myanmar).

Note :

Tell the students that there are several possible answers, but that their answer must be corroborated by facts.