

RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT

Teaching Unit Introduction

As the most egregious of human rights violations, genocide is a difficult subject to broach with students. Yet, it is critically important to do so, elucidating the extent to which humans are capable of depriving others of freedom, dignity, and even life, so that those students are equipped to take action to help prevent future genocides.

Rafael Lemkin was moved to create the word “genocide” after learning of the Armenian case. From 1915-1918, The Turkish government of the Ottoman Empire annihilated approximately 1,500,000 Armenians, more than half of the Armenian population living on its historic homeland—and stole or destroyed virtually all Armenians’ community and personal properties. The Armenian Genocide stands as a seminal case of genocide that can be used effectively in the classroom to establish the characteristics and patterns of genocide using comparative examples, and to explain the ever-increasing damage and dangers of both systematic and non-systematic genocide denial.

Exploring the concept, forms, and examples of resistance can be an engaging and empowering window through which students can learn about genocide. The RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND EMPOWERMENT teaching unit does this through an examination of individual and collective actions in response to the Armenian Genocide and its denial, as it was being carried out and over the course of more than a century thereafter. The unit highlights for students the long, continuing legacy of genocide and the value of individual choice and cooperation in affecting positive change.

Using this curriculum

This curriculum set is designed for a 50-minute class period and can be used holistically or lessons can be pulled to serve the needs of the students and the teacher. The theme of resistance, agency, and empowerment runs throughout each lesson, so a quick explanation of those concepts may be necessary for lessons not used collectively.

Each lesson is adaptable for the target audience and course time. **Days 2, 3, and 4** are helpful for those who don't have a lot of time to devote to the study of the Armenian Genocide, as together they create a concise representation of the Armenian people and the Armenian Genocide. **Day 6** focuses on survivor accounts of the genocide, whereas **Days 8 & 9** focus on survivors and present-day Armenians. Connecting the Armenian Genocide to other genocides is easily done with **Days 1 and 10**, and **Day 10** is especially useful when examining the long-term impact of denial.

Through its teaching materials and professional development workshops, The Genocide Education Project ("GenEd"), helps educators fulfill a charge of the CA Department of Education to incorporate the Armenian Genocide into History-Social Science curriculum (CA 10th Grade HSS Framework, pg. 464, 478; Content Standard 10.5.5).

This curriculum was developed by Cynthia Martinez, a GenEd Teacher Fellow with The Genocide Education Project. It is part of a project of the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, established by the JFCS Holocaust Center, with support from a grant from the Marin County Office of Education and the State of California.

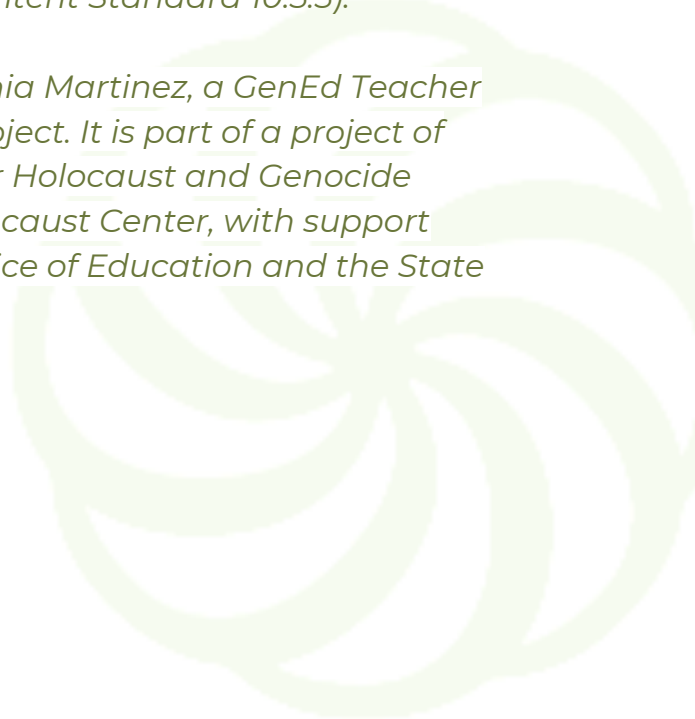


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Day 1: **Defining Genocide**

Students will learn the legal definition of genocide and apply it to four different cases of genocide: Cambodian, Rwandan, the Holocaust, and the Native Americans

Day 2: **Resistance, Agency, and Empowerment**

Students will define and apply these concepts in their own lives and while investigating Armenian identity.

Day 3: **The Armenians**

Students will explore who the ancient Armenians were and who the Armenians are at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Day 4: **The Armenian Genocide: Background**

Students will research the significant dates and events of the Armenian Genocide.

Day 5: **The Armenian Genocide: A Timeline**

Students will organize their research into a chronological timeline.

Day 6: **The Survivors**

Students will use primary and secondary sources to explore different Armenian experiences during the genocide

Day 7: **The Promise**

*Students will explore themes of resistance through the film, *The Promise**

Days 8 & 9: **The Armenian Experience**

Students will gather information about the Armenian experience before, during, and after the genocide, as well as what it means to be an Armenian today.

Day 10: **Legacy**

Students will explore the consequences of hate through antisemitism, anti-Armenianism, and denial.

