

Am I Supposed to Care?

An Introduction to Genocide

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- **EXAMINE** how genocide can be understood as a series of events that take place in ten stages, from CLASSIFICATION to EXTERMINATION & DENIAL.
- **DESCRIBE** the stages of genocide using the definitions of each stage, with special focus on several individual stages.
- **ANALYZE** photos, clips of survivor testimony and other resources, and **EXPLAIN** how each is an example of one or more stages of genocide.
- **READ** and **SUMMARIZE** historical accounts and key facts of historical genocidal events.
- **REFLECT** on and **WRITE** about key questions and ideas that come out of a study of this content.

OVERVIEW

In this six-day unit students will be introduced to the concept of Genocide, the ten stages of genocide identified by Dr. Gregory Stanton, historical examples of genocide (in short summaries), and enduring questions that arise when a student of any age is asked to examine the history and current reality of genocide across the globe. Finally, students will reflect on and communicate actions they can take in response to the stages of genocide or conditions that can give rise to stages of genocide when they are not directly confronted in a society.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Grades 8-12 History, Social Studies, Civics (can be adapted for grades 9-12 by teachers following MHGE guidelines, available at www.mhge.org).

ACTIVITY LENGTH

A minimum of six (6) 50-minute class periods for each day's lesson

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Genocides throughout history can be studied when they are broken into the ten stages of genocide, and the stages then create a mental model for students to use when they study any genocide, historic or contemporary. Understanding the stages of genocide can potentially allow students to then recognize conditions that come up in contemporary times that could lead to genocide if left unchecked.

The title of the unit *Am I Supposed to Care?* Is an actual question asked by an eighth-grade student during the first day of the first field test of these lesson plans. The student reported having no prior knowledge of genocide or historical examples of genocide, and her question was genuine. These lesson plans were given this title with the hope they provide an opportunity for students with questions like this one.

Michigan Social Studies Standards *8th Grade

READING AND COMMUNICATION: READ & COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

P1 1. Use appropriate strategies to read and interpret basic social science tables, graphs, graphics, maps and texts

Overview & Getting Started

Pre-Test, Big Question, and Enduring Understanding

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- **DEMONSTRATE** prior knowledge about the term/concept of genocide and on historical examples of genocide on a unit Pre-Test.
- **COMPREHEND** both key terms and concepts of this unit, specifically the term genocide and the terms and concepts of the 10 Stages of Genocide.
- **REFLECT** on and **WRITE** about the big question of this unit: *Am I Supposed to Care about Genocide?*

**Am I Supposed
to Care about
Genocide?**

OVERVIEW

Day one includes a Pre-Test of prior knowledge that students bring to the unit on genocide, and on two historical examples of genocide: the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide.

Students will be introduced to major concepts of this unit: what genocide is (definition) and that instances of genocide can be understood and studied as taking place in stages. Students will receive definitions of **10 Stages of Genocide** from the work of Dr. Gregory Stanton (summarized from the definitions provided at the website Genocidewatch.com.)

Students will be asked to consider the big question of this unit of study: *Am I Supposed to Care?*, by responding to the following question in discussion or writing (as an exit ticket):

Why should (or shouldn't) a student your age care, learn, or be concerned about the concept of genocide and historical examples of genocide? Do you think most students your age already do care about these topics? Why or why not? Please explain.

A NOTE TO TEACHERS:

The lesson plans were designed to work best in classrooms that have been built as collaborative communities, where dialogue and open-ended questions are supported and encouraged. Students will encounter and be asked to respond to challenging subject matter, and mature dialogue in a supportive environment is a critical component of successful instruction of this unit.

Day 1

Pre-Test & Introduction to Genocide

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- **DEMONSTRATE** prior knowledge about the term/concept of genocide and on historical examples of genocide on a unit Pre-Test.
- **COMPREHEND** both key terms and concepts of this unit, specifically the term genocide and the terms and concepts of the 10 Stages of Genocide.
- **REFLECT** on and **WRITE** about the big question of this unit:
Am I Supposed to Care about Genocide?

LESSON SEQUENCE

- Provide copy of Unit Pre-Test as a bell-ringer or warm-up activity. Ask students to complete/turn in Pre-Test
- Provide students with the definition of the term Genocide from the resources. Study and discuss the term with students, and let them know you'll be using and returning to the term many times in the next days. Ask them if they can think of any examples from history of the different parts of the definition taking place in the past. Ask students if the date the definition was established is significant (three years after WW2.)
- Provide students with the summarized definitions of the **10 Stages of Genocide**, and present definitions in dialogue with students so they can ask questions, provide or ask for examples from history, and/or put into their own words so they begin to grow comfortable with the terms and concepts. Tell students you'll be exploring many of the terms in detail over the next days as you explore many historic examples of genocide.
- Ask students to share questions they have about genocide that they had written on their Pre-Tests; use this as formative assessment, but also to generate points of inquiry for the remainder of the unit.
- Conclude by asking students to think about and respond in writing to prompt, as follows (share as time permits):

Why should (or shouldn't) a student your age care, learn, or be concerned about the concept of genocide and historical examples of genocide? Do you think most students your age already do care about these topics? Why or why not? Please explain

RESOURCES NEEDED

- 1-1) Genocide Unit Pre-Test
- 1-2) Definition of Genocide
- 1-3) Summarized Definitions of the 10 Stages of Genocide

One (1) 50-minute class period