

BIG IDEAS

The intentional destruction of peoples and their cultures is not inevitable, and such attempts can be disrupted and resisted.

The use of the term “genocide” to describe atrocities has political, legal, social, and cultural ramifications.

Despite international commitments to prohibit genocide, violence targeted against groups of people has continued to challenge global peace and prosperity.

While genocides are caused by and carried out for different reasons, all genocides share similarities in progression and scope.

Learning Standards

Curricular Competencies	Content
<p><i>Students are expected to be able to do the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions • Assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance) • Assess the credibility of, and the justification for the use of, evidence after investigating the reliability of sources and data, the adequacy of evidence, and the bias of accounts and claims (evidence) • Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups at different times and places (continuity and change) • Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, locations, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence) • Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, locations, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspective) • Make reasoned ethical judgments about, and assess varying responses to, actions and events in the past or present (ethical judgment) 	<p><i>Students are expected to know the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • origins and development of the term “genocide” • economic, political, social, and cultural conditions of genocide • characteristics and stages of genocide • acts of mass violence and atrocities in different global regions • strategies used to commit genocide • use of technology in promoting and carrying out genocide • recognition of and responses to genocides • movements that deny the existence of or minimize the scope of genocides • evidence used to demonstrate the scale and nature of genocides • genocide prevention, including international law and enforcement

Curricular Competencies – Elaborations

- **Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions:**

Key skills:

- Draw conclusions about a problem, an issue, or a topic.
- Assess and defend a variety of positions on a problem, an issue, or a topic.
- Demonstrate leadership by planning, implementing, and assessing strategies to address a problem or an issue.
- Identify and clarify a problem or issue.
- Evaluate and organize collected data (e.g., in outlines, summaries, notes, timelines, charts).
- Interpret information and data from a variety of maps, graphs, and tables.
- Interpret and present data in a variety of forms (e.g., oral, written, and graphic).
- Accurately cite sources.
- Construct graphs, tables, and maps to communicate ideas and information, demonstrating appropriate use of grids, scales, legends, and contours.

- **Assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance):**

Key questions:

- What factors can cause people, locations, events, or developments to become more or less significant?
- What factors can make people, locations, events, or developments significant to different people?
- What criteria should be used to assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments?

Sample activities:

- Use criteria to rank the most important people, locations, events, or developments in the current unit of study.
- Compare how different groups assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments.

- **Assess the credibility of, and the justification for the use of, evidence after investigating the reliability of sources and data, the adequacy of evidence, and the bias of accounts and claims (evidence):**

Key questions:

- What criteria should be used to assess the reliability of a source?
- How much evidence is sufficient in order to support a conclusion?
- How much about various people, locations, events, or developments can be known and how much is unknowable?

Sample activities:

- Compare and contrast multiple accounts of the same event and evaluate their usefulness as historical sources.
- Examine what sources are available and what sources are missing and evaluate how the available evidence shapes your perspective on the people, locations, events, or developments studied.

Curricular Competencies – Elaborations

• **Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups at different times and places (continuity and change):**

Key questions:

- What factors lead to changes or continuities affecting groups of people differently?
- How do gradual processes and more sudden rates of change affect people living through them? Which method of change has more of an effect on society?
- How are periods of change or continuity perceived by the people living through them? How does this compare to how they are perceived after the fact?

Sample activity:

- Compare how different groups benefited or suffered as a result of a particular change.

• **Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, locations, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence):**

Key questions:

- What is the role of chance in particular events, decisions, or developments?
- Are there events with positive long-term consequences but negative short-term consequences, or vice versa?

Sample activities:

- Assess whether the results of a particular action were intended or unintended consequences.
- Evaluate the most important causes or consequences of various events, decisions, or developments.

• **Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, locations, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspective):**

Key questions:

- What sources of information can people today use to try to understand what people in different times and places believed?
- How much can we generalize about values and beliefs in a given society or time period?
- Is it fair to judge people of the past using modern values?

Sample activity:

- Explain how the beliefs of people on different sides of the same issue influence their opinions.

• **Make reasoned ethical judgments about, and assess varying responses to, actions and events in the past or present:**

Key questions:

- What is the difference between implicit and explicit values?
- Why should we consider the historical, political, and social context when making ethical judgments?
- Should people of today have any responsibility for actions taken in the past?
- Can people of the past be celebrated for great achievements if they have also done things considered unethical today?

Sample activities:

- Assess the responsibility of historical figures for an important event. Assess how much responsibility should be assigned to different people, and evaluate whether their actions were justified given the historical context.
- Examine various media sources on a topic and assess how much of the language contains implicit and explicit moral judgments.

Content – Elaborations

- **economic, political, social, and cultural conditions of genocide:**

Sample topics:

- perpetrators: regimes and leaders
- demographics: vulnerable minorities
- heroes, bystanders, perpetrators

Key questions:

- What were the underlying social (or economic or cultural or political) conditions in Germany that led to the Holocaust?
- What was the role of individuals within the Khmer Rouge in determining the events of the genocide in Cambodia?
- Are all Khmer Rouge leaders equally significant in causing the genocide?

- **characteristics and stages of genocide:**

Sample topic:

- eight stages of genocide:
 - classification
 - symbolization
 - dehumanization
 - organization
 - polarization
 - preparation
 - extermination
 - denial

Key questions:

- How do the stages of genocide affect different people in the areas in which genocides occur?
- How do people’s lives change depending on who and where they are? In what ways might they remain the same?

- **acts of mass violence and atrocities in different global regions:**

Sample topics:

- indigenous peoples and cultures
- Beothuk extinction
- Armenian genocide
- anti-Semitic pogroms
- Soviet Union and Ukraine (Holodomor famine)
- Japanese occupation of Korea and China

Content – Elaborations

- the Holocaust
- Khmer Rouge in Cambodia
- Rwanda
- Sudan
- Guatemala
- Yugoslavia

• **strategies used to commit genocide:**

Sample topics:

- rape
- stereotyping and propaganda
- social pressure
- dehumanization
- organized violence
- polarization
- denial of rights
- starvation
- extermination

• **recognition of and responses to genocides:**

Sample topics:

- recognition and responses (e.g., apologies, reparations, redress, reconciliation, memorialization)
- human rights tribunals
- war crime trials
- international intervention
- memorials and museums

Key questions:

- What are some examples of appropriate demonstrations of recognition and responses to genocide?
- What are some examples of inappropriate responses?
- Why do some forms of recognition and response fall short?

• **movements that deny the existence of or minimize the scope of genocides:**

Sample topics:

- reasons why people deny the existence of genocides
- methods used to cast doubt on evidence for genocides

Content – Elaborations

Key question:

- What questions can we ask of the evidence used by genocide denial groups to assess the credibility of the sources and recognize the bias in these sources?

- **evidence used to demonstrate the scale and nature of genocides:**

Sample topics:

- forensics and testimonies
- mass graves and human remains
- survival stories

Key questions:

- What kinds of evidence can we use to prove genocide, and how do we justify which pieces of evidence we use?
- At what point do we consider our evidence to be adequate?