



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Overview
Grade Level: 11 and 12

Course Description:

This course examines genocide as a recurring and devastating phenomenon in modern and pre-modern history through a comparative, interdisciplinary lens. Students will explore the origins, definitions, and legal frameworks surrounding genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, beginning with early examples of mass violence and extending through major twentieth- and twenty-first-century cases such as, but not limited to, the Holocaust, Armenia, Rwanda, and Darfur. Through the analysis of primary sources, survivor testimonies, and scholarly research, students will investigate the political, social, and cultural conditions that enable genocide, the roles of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, and the lasting impact on societies and global justice. The course challenges students to grapple with moral and historical questions about human rights, responsibility, and the possibilities for prevention, reconciliation, and remembrance.

Course Big Ideas:

- Understanding the causes, definitions, and legal frameworks of genocide.
- Examining how identity, nationalism, colonialism, and ideology contribute to genocide.
- Analyzing the role of power, politics, and institutions in enabling mass violence.
- Studying the Holocaust and other genocides as historical case studies.
- Investigating the roles of perpetrators, bystanders, resisters, and survivors.
- Exploring the impact of genocide on gender, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Evaluating the influence of media, propaganda, and dehumanization.
- Examining memory, justice, accountability, and reconciliation after genocide.
- Assessing strategies for genocide prevention through education, awareness, and civic responsibility.
- Developing critical thinking through primary sources, survivor testimony, and historical analysis.

Course Essential Questions:

- How do societies define genocide, and why do legal definitions matter in responding to mass violence?
- How and why do beliefs about identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality lead to exclusion and genocide?
- How and why do governments and political leaders use power to justify oppression and mass violence?
- How and why did modern institutions and systems make the Holocaust possible on such a large scale?
- What influences individuals to participate in, ignore, or resist genocide?
- How and why are gender, age, and the human body targeted and controlled during genocide?
- How and why does propaganda shape public opinion and contribute to the dehumanization of groups?
- How and why should societies remember genocide, pursue justice, and rebuild after mass violence?
- What responsibilities do individuals, governments, and the international community have in preventing genocide today?

Course Competencies:

- Analyze the causes, processes, and consequences of genocide by examining historical, political, social, and cultural factors across multiple case studies.
- Evaluate the roles and responsibilities of individuals, groups, and institutions in the perpetration, resistance, prevention, and remembrance of genocide.
- Interpret and assess historical evidence using primary and secondary sources, survivor testimony, and scholarly research to construct evidence-based conclusions.
- Examine how identity, ideology, propaganda, and systems of power influence human behavior and contribute to exclusion, discrimination, and mass violence.
- Apply principles of human rights, justice, and civic responsibility to evaluate efforts to prevent genocide and

promote accountability, reconciliation, and global citizenship.

Course Assessments:

- Stimulus-Based Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District

Comparative Genocide

Grade Level: 11th and 12th

Unit 1: Understanding Genocide — Concepts, Definitions, and Law

Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Genocide and its legal definition under the United Nations Genocide Convention.
- The role of intent in distinguishing genocide from other mass atrocities.
- Differences between genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
- The influence of politics and international relations on genocide recognition.
- Debates surrounding the definition and scope of genocide.
- Gregory Stanton's Stages of Genocide as a framework for understanding escalation.
- Genocide denial as a continuation of mass violence.
- International efforts to promote justice, accountability, and prevention.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- The creation of the word "genocide" was itself a political act — without language to name a crime, there can be no legal framework to prosecute it or moral framework to condemn it.
- The 1948 Convention was a landmark achievement in international law, but its narrow definition reflects the political compromises that shaped it as much as the moral imperatives that inspired it.
- Genocide and ethnic cleansing may overlap in practice, but their distinction in law determines whether the gravest criminal charge in international law can be applied.
- Crimes against humanity cast a wider net than genocide, but the absence of a group-destruction requirement

means perpetrators may face lesser accountability for equally devastating violence.

- War crimes law governs conduct in conflict, but its separate standard means that mass atrocity committed outside formal war, or against one's own people, requires a different legal framework entirely.
- Because genocide requires proof of specific intent to destroy a group, that single legal threshold is often the difference between conviction and acquittal for perpetrators of mass atrocity.
- The decision to call something genocide is rarely purely legal — it is shaped by the political interests of powerful states who may have more to lose from recognition than from silence.
- Stanton's stages reveal that genocide does not begin with killing — it begins with language, classification, and dehumanization, meaning that prevention must start long before violence does, and that denial after the fact extends the harm by erasing the truth survivors carry.

Do:

- Trace Raphael Lemkin's personal and historical motivations for creating legal language to describe the destruction of a people.
- Examine the key provisions of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, including its definition, prohibited acts, and obligations of signatory nations.
- Interpret the legal meaning of "intent to destroy, in whole or in part" as the defining standard of genocide under international law.
- Compare and contrast genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes using precise legal definitions.
- Analyze how the concept of *dolus specialis* (specific intent) distinguishes genocide from other mass atrocities.
- Explain why the distinction between these categories matters for prosecution, recognition, and justice.
- Analyze why states and political bodies resist applying the term genocide and identify the diplomatic, economic, and political factors that shape that resistance.
- Interpret genocide denial as a continuation of the original crime and evaluate its consequences for survivors and historical memory.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What is genocide, and how is it different from other mass atrocities like ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity?
- How and why did the word "genocide" come to exist? What was happening in the world that made it necessary?
- What does the 1948 UN Genocide Convention say, and what are its strengths and limitations as a legal tool?
- Why is proving genocidal *intent* so difficult, and why does that difficulty matter for survivors and perpetrators alike?
- How does the way we define and label historical violence shape whether victims receive recognition, justice, or protection?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- Who has the power to name an atrocity "genocide," and what is gained or lost when that name is withheld?
- If the legal definition of genocide requires proof of *intent to destroy*, does that standard protect perpetrators more than victims?
- How did the world's failure to prevent atrocity shape the language we now use to describe it — and does that language still serve its original purpose?
- Is a crime that cannot be agreed upon, defined, or named capable of being prevented?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Document

Vocabulary:

Genocide	United Nations
1948 UN Genocide Convention	Crimes Against Humanity
Recognition	Ethnic Cleansing
Justice	Intent
Prevention	Denial
Atrocity	

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Grade Level: 11th and 12th
Unit 2: Ideology and Identity
Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Ancient empires used mass killing, deportation, and enslavement to expand and maintain power.
- Religious and imperial ideologies were used to justify conquest, persecution, and violence against targeted groups.
- The Crusades, Spanish Inquisition, and expulsions of Jews and Muslims demonstrate state-sponsored religious persecution.
- Religious institutions often legitimized violence against perceived outsiders and enemies.
- Pogroms and other forms of targeted violence reflected patterns of scapegoating and exclusion.
- Constructed ethnic, religious, racial, and national identities influenced who was targeted and who was protected.
- Purity ideologies defined certain groups as threats to society and justified discrimination and violence.
- Dehumanization portrayed targeted groups as inferior, dangerous, or deserving of mistreatment.
- Ideological beliefs reduced moral barriers to violence and enabled mass persecution.
- Gregory Stanton's stages of genocide as a lens for identifying early warning signs across historical cases.
- Premodern atrocity reveals that genocide is not a uniquely modern phenomenon but rather that modernity provided new tools — bureaucracy, technology, nationalism, industrial capacity — to carry out destruction at greater scale and speed.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Ancient empires systematically used mass killing, deportation, and enslavement not as incidental byproducts of war but as intentional instruments of political domination and territorial control.
- The Crusades demonstrate how religious ideology can be organized into a framework that authorizes conquest, justifies massacre, and designates non-Christian populations as legitimate targets of violence.
- The Spanish Inquisition and the expulsions of Jews and Muslims from Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth century reveal how states can weaponize religious uniformity, using persecution, forced conversion, and expulsion to eliminate those deemed incompatible with the social order.
- Religious institutions have repeatedly provided the ideological justification for state violence, lending moral authority to campaigns of persecution against groups defined as threats to spiritual or social order.
- Medieval pogroms against Jewish communities across Europe illustrate how scapegoating transforms an identifiable group into a target for collective violence, often in response to social crisis or political manipulation.
- Group identity — whether ethnic, religious, racial, or national — is socially constructed and those constructions have historically determined who is marked for violence and who is afforded protection.
- Ideologies of purity, in their religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural forms, have consistently functioned to cast certain groups as dangerous, inferior, or incompatible with the dominant social order, making them vulnerable to persecution.
- Dehumanization — the process of stripping a targeted group of their humanity through language, imagery, and propaganda — is not merely a symptom of mass violence but a necessary precondition that makes killing psychologically and socially possible.
- Imperial and religious ideologies have routinely framed conquest and persecution as righteous or divinely sanctioned, and that this moral reframing is a key mechanism by which ordinary people are recruited into acts of collective violence.
- Gregory Stanton's stages of genocide provide a structured framework for recognizing the warning signs of genocidal processes across different historical contexts, making it possible to identify patterns before mass killing begins.
- Premodern history contains clear examples of organized, large-scale atrocity, and while genocide is not a product of modernity, modern tools — including bureaucracy, industrial technology, nationalism, and centralized state power — have dramatically amplified its speed, scale, and lethality.

Do:

- Identify the deliberate use of mass killing, deportation, and enslavement by ancient empires as systematic tools of conquest and political control.
- Analyze the Crusades as a framework in which religious ideology was used to authorize conquest, massacre, and the targeting of non-Christian populations.
- Examine the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsions of Jews and Muslims from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497) as case studies in state-enforced religious homogeneity through persecution, forced conversion, and expulsion.
- Evaluate the pattern by which religious institutions lent ideological legitimacy to state violence against defined out-groups.
- Interpret medieval pogroms against Jewish communities across Europe as examples of scapegoating and targeted ethnic violence.
- Analyze the role of constructed group identity — ethnic, religious, racial, and national — in determining who is targeted for violence and who is protected from it.
- Trace how beliefs about purity — religious, racial, ethnic, or cultural — have historically been deployed to define certain groups as threatening, inferior, or incompatible with the social order.
- Define dehumanization and examine its function as a precondition for mass violence, including how targeted groups are portrayed as dangerous, subhuman, or deserving of destruction before killing begins.
- Interpret how imperial and religious ideologies frame conquest and persecution as righteous, necessary, or divinely mandated, and explain how such framing removes moral barriers to violence.

- Apply Gregory Stanton's stages of genocide as a diagnostic lens for identifying early warning signs across historical cases.
- Compare premodern and modern atrocities to argue that genocide is not a uniquely modern phenomenon, while explaining how modernity — through bureaucracy, technology, nationalism, and industrial capacity — enabled destruction at greater scale and speed.

Unit Essential Questions:

- If the logic of genocide — that some people are so different, so threatening, or so inferior that they must be destroyed — appears across every era of human history, what does that tell us about whether genocide is a modern invention or a timeless human capacity?
- When empires and religions have historically defined conquest and persecution as righteous, necessary, or divinely sanctioned, how do we distinguish between a society that committed atrocity and one that simply operated within the moral framework of its time?
- What is the relationship between the construction of difference — racial, religious, ethnic, or national — and the authorization of violence, and why does that relationship appear so consistently across cultures and centuries?
- If the patterns that precede genocide — dehumanization, scapegoating, the concentration of power, the silencing of targeted groups — are visible long before killing begins, why have human societies so rarely interrupted them in time?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- If genocide has roots in ancient and medieval history, what does that tell us about whether mass violence is a product of its time — or something more fundamental about how humans use power?
- Who decides which groups belong and which do not — and what happens when that power to define becomes the power to destroy?
- How have religion, government, and culture repeatedly transformed hatred into policy — and what allows ordinary people to go along with it?
- What is the difference between violence that happens in war and violence that is deliberately organized to eliminate a group of people — and does that distinction matter?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Document

Vocabulary:

Ideology	Religion	Power	Pogroms
Identity	Race	Purity	Expulsion
Mass Violence	Ethnicity	Difference	Crusades
Conquest	National Identity	Justification	Spanish Inquisition
Religious Persecution	Political Identity		

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Grade Level: 11th and 12th
Unit 3: Power, Politics, and the Logic of Domination
Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.). Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- The colonial era as a foundational period for modern genocide — how European imperial powers developed and normalized practices of conquest, dispossession, and extermination against non-European peoples.
- Settler colonialism as a distinct logic of elimination in which the goal is not merely to exploit a population but to replace it — and how that logic has driven indigenous dispossession across multiple continents.
- *Terra nullius* and other legal and ideological frameworks used to justify the seizure of indigenous land and the erasure of indigenous sovereignty.
- The civilizing mission and social Darwinism as ideological systems that cast colonized peoples as inferior, primitive, or expendable, providing moral cover for imperial violence.
- Cultural genocide — the deliberate destruction of a group's language, religion, customs, and identity — as a form of group destruction that does not require mass killing but shares the same eliminationist logic.
- Case studies of imperial conquest and indigenous dispossession — such as the genocides of Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians, or the Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa — as examples of how colonial power operated in practice.
- The relationship between military force, legal authority, and ideological justification in converting political ambition into organized atrocity.
- How political impunity — the absence of accountability for those who order or carry out mass violence — enables and emboldens genocidal regimes.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- The colonial era is where European powers first developed and practiced the methods of destruction that would later become modern genocide.
- Settler colonialism is not about controlling a population — it is about removing and replacing it, and that goal has driven the destruction of indigenous peoples across the world.
- Legal ideas like *terra nullius* were invented to make land theft look legitimate by declaring that indigenous peoples had no real claim to the land they had always lived on.
- The civilizing mission and social Darwinism gave colonizers a way to tell themselves that violence was justified by portraying the people they were destroying as inferior or subhuman.
- Cultural genocide does not require mass killing — destroying a group's language, religion, and way of life can be just as effective at eliminating a people as physical extermination.
- Different cases of colonial genocide share the same basic pattern — indigenous peoples were dehumanized, stripped of their land, and systematically destroyed by colonial powers using similar methods and justifications.
- Genocide does not happen by accident — it requires governments, armies, and legal systems all working together to turn the decision to destroy a group into organized action.
- When leaders who commit atrocities face no punishment, it sends a message that mass violence is acceptable — impunity does not just follow genocide, it helps make the next one possible.

Do:

- Distinguish settler colonialism from other forms of imperial domination by examining its core goal — not to exploit a population but to remove and replace it — and identify where that logic appeared across different continents.
- Examine the concept of *terra nullius* and other legal frameworks used to justify the seizure of indigenous land, and explain how these ideas were used to deny that indigenous peoples had any legitimate claim to their own territory.
- Identify the civilizing mission and social Darwinism as ideologies that portrayed colonized peoples as inferior or expendable, and explain how those ideas gave imperial powers a justification for violence.
- Define cultural genocide and evaluate whether the destruction of a group's language, religion, and customs constitutes genocide even when mass killing is not involved.
- Compare at least two case studies of colonial genocide — such as Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians, or the Herero and Nama — to identify common patterns in how indigenous populations were targeted and destroyed.
- Analyze how military force, legal authority, and ideology worked together to transform political ambition into organized mass violence.
- Explain how political impunity — the lack of accountability for those who order or carry out atrocities — enables genocidal regimes to operate without consequence.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How does political power transform prejudice into policy, and at what point does a government's treatment of a group cross the line from oppression into genocide?
- What role do ordinary institutions like bureaucracies, militaries, and legal systems play in making mass violence possible, and does participating in a system that enables genocide make you responsible for it?
- How did the colonial era establish patterns of domination, dispossession, and dehumanization that laid the groundwork for the genocides of the twentieth century, and are those patterns still present today?
- If a government destroys a people's language, culture, land, and identity without mass killing, is that genocide — and why does the answer matter?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- If European powers practiced conquest, dispossession, and extermination during the colonial era, what does that tell us about where the tools of modern genocide actually came from?
- What is the difference between colonizing a people and replacing them, and why does that distinction matter when we try to define what genocide is?
- If a legal framework can be invented to make land theft look legitimate, what does that tell us about the relationship between law and power?
- How did ideas like the civilizing mission and social Darwinism allow educated, religious, and otherwise "civilized" people to participate in or ignore the destruction of entire populations?
- If a government destroys everything that makes a group who they are — their language, religion, and culture — but does not kill them, is that genocide?
- What do the similarities between different cases of colonial genocide tell us — is there a pattern to how powerful groups justify the destruction of less powerful ones?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Document

Vocabulary:

State Power	Colonization	State-Sponsored	Racial hierarchy
Government	Imperialism	Cultural Genocide	White supremacy
Militarism	Indigenous	Impunity	Social Darwinism
Bureaucracy	Othering	Indigenous Dispossession	Dehumanization
Propaganda	Civilizing Mission	Terra Nullius	

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Grade Level: 11th and 12th Grade
Unit 4: The Holocaust as a Defining Genocide
and the Bureaucratization of Genocide
Time: 10 days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
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- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Context of the Holocaust — including the rise of the Nazi party, the conditions of post-WWI Germany, and the role of antisemitism in European history — as the foundation for understanding how genocide became state policy.
- Wannsee Conference as the moment when Nazi leadership formally coordinated the bureaucratic machinery of the Final Solution, demonstrating how genocide can be planned and administered like a government program.
- Structure and function of the concentration camp and extermination camp systems — including the role of the SS, Einsatzgruppen, and mobile killing units — as the operational infrastructure of industrialized genocide.
- Industrialized killing — how the Nazis applied modern technology, logistics, and administrative systems to carry out mass murder at unprecedented scale and speed.
- The banality of evil as a framework for understanding how ordinary people — bureaucrats, engineers, soldiers, administrators — became participants in genocide through compliance and professional duty rather than fanatical hatred.
- Experiences of victims — Jewish communities, Roma, disabled people, political prisoners, and others — as essential to understanding the human cost and the deliberately targeted nature of genocide.
- Cambodian genocide under the Khmer Rouge — including the ideology of Year Zero, the targeting of educated and urban populations, and the operation of the Killing Fields — as a case study in how revolutionary political ideology can drive auto-genocide.

- The Rwandan genocide — including the history of Hutu and Tutsi identity construction, the role of Radio Milles Collines in inciting mass violence, and the speed and scale of killing — as a case study in how rapid mass mobilization and ethnic propaganda can produce genocide without industrial infrastructure.
- The comparative analysis of the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda to identify both the shared mechanisms of genocide — dehumanization, state power, propaganda, impunity — and the ways in which each case reflects its own historical and political context.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- The Holocaust did not happen suddenly but grew out of specific historical conditions including national humiliation, economic collapse, and a long tradition of antisemitism that the Nazi party exploited to make genocide state policy.
- The Wannsee Conference shows that genocide can be planned and coordinated like a government program, with bureaucrats organizing mass murder through meetings, memos, and administrative decisions.
- The concentration and extermination camp systems were not improvised but deliberately designed and operated by organized institutions to carry out killing at industrial scale.
- The Nazis used the tools of modern society including technology, logistics, and bureaucracy to turn mass murder into an efficient system, showing that modernity can be a weapon as much as an achievement.
- Most people who participated in the Holocaust were not driven by extreme hatred but by obedience, professional duty, and the ability to follow orders without confronting the full meaning of what they were doing.
- Understanding genocide requires knowing who the victims were as individuals and communities, not just as numbers, because the human cost of genocide is inseparable from its meaning.
- The Cambodian genocide shows that genocide does not require a racial ideology or industrial infrastructure but can be driven by revolutionary political ideas that define entire categories of people as enemies of the state.
- The Rwandan genocide shows that mass killing does not require advanced technology or a powerful state apparatus because propaganda, constructed identity, and rapid mobilization of ordinary people can produce genocide at devastating speed.
- The Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda each followed similar patterns of dehumanization, state power, propaganda, and impunity, but each also had its own causes and context, which is why comparison is a tool for understanding rather than a way of flattening differences.

Do:

- Analyze the historical conditions that made the Holocaust possible, including the rise of the Nazi party, the aftermath of WWI, and the long history of European antisemitism, and explain how those conditions allowed genocide to become state policy.
- Examine the Wannsee Conference as a case study in bureaucratic genocide and explain how a ninety-minute administrative meeting became the moment Nazi leadership formally organized the Final Solution.
- Identify the structure and function of the concentration camp and extermination camp systems, including the roles of the SS, Einsatzgruppen, and mobile killing units, and explain how those systems made industrialized killing possible.
- Analyze how the Nazis used modern technology, logistics, and administrative organization to carry out mass murder at unprecedented scale and explain what that reveals about the relationship between modernity and atrocity.
- Apply Hannah Arendt's concept of the banality of evil to explain how ordinary people became participants in genocide through compliance and professional duty rather than fanatical hatred.
- Examine the experiences of victims and explain why centering victim experience is essential to understanding the full human cost of genocide.
- Analyze the Cambodian genocide under the Khmer Rouge by examining the ideology of Year Zero, the targeting of educated and urban populations, and the operation of the Killing Fields, and explain how political ideology drove a regime to commit genocide against its own people.

- Examine the Rwandan genocide by tracing the construction of Hutu and Tutsi identity, the role of Radio Mille Collines in inciting mass violence, and the speed of killing, and explain how ethnic propaganda and mass mobilization produced genocide without industrial infrastructure.
- Compare the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide to identify the shared mechanisms that made each possible and explain how each case also reflects its own distinct historical and political context.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What made the Holocaust possible — and to what extent was it the product of a unique ideology, or a blueprint that reveals what any modern state is capable of when hatred becomes policy?
- How did the tools of modernity — bureaucracy, technology, industrialization, and organized state power — transform genocide from an act of violence into a system of mass production, and what does that transformation tell us about the relationship between progress and atrocity?
- When genocide is carried out not by fanatics alone but by engineers, administrators, lawyers, and civil servants doing their jobs, who bears responsibility — and how do ordinary institutions become instruments of mass murder?
- What does it mean to say "Never Again" when the twentieth century produced genocide after genocide — in Cambodia, in Rwanda, and beyond — and what would actually have to change for that promise to mean something?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- How did defeat, economic collapse, and national humiliation create the conditions in which a genocidal ideology could take hold — and could that happen again?
- At what point did antisemitism in Germany stop being a social prejudice and become a government program?
- If rights can be stripped gradually and legally, what does that tell us about the relationship between law and protection — and who does the law actually protect?
- What made the Nazi camp system different from other forms of mass violence in history — and what does the industrialization of killing tell us about the relationship between modernity and atrocity?
- How did the physical and administrative design of concentration and extermination camps reflect the Nazi goal of not just killing people but eliminating them as efficiently as possible?
- If most people who participated in the Holocaust were not monsters but ordinary people following orders and doing their jobs, what does that tell us about the capacity for evil in all of us?
- What is lost when we reduce Holocaust victims to numbers — and why does it matter how we tell the stories of those who were killed?
- What do the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda have in common — and what do their differences tell us about whether genocide follows a predictable pattern?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined

Vocabulary:

The Holocaust	Einsatzgruppen	Eugenics	Antisemitism
The Industrial Revolution	Extermination camp	Totalitarianism	Wannsee Conference
Modernity	Death march	SS (Schutzstaffel)	Khmer Rouge
Systematic	Ghetto	Interahamwe	Year Zero
Concentration Camps	Deportation	Racism	Killing Fields
Banality of Evil			

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Grade Level: 11th and 12th
Unit 5: Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Resisters
Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Human roles in genocide — perpetrators, bystanders, collaborators, rescuers, and resisters — and why understanding the full range of responses matters for understanding how genocide functions.
- Psychological mechanisms that enable ordinary people to participate in genocide, including obedience to authority, conformity, diffusion of responsibility, and the gradual escalation of violence.
- Social and cultural conditions that make participation in genocide more likely, including dehumanization, peer pressure, ideological indoctrination, fear of punishment, and the normalization of violence over time.
- Ideology in shaping perpetrator behavior — how belief systems rooted in race, religion, ethnicity, or political identity can convince individuals that mass violence is not only acceptable but necessary or righteous.
- The bystander effect as a social psychological concept, and how it operates at both the individual and collective level during genocide — from neighbors who look away to nations that fail to intervene.
- Bystander behavior — from passive silence to active collaboration — and the factors that determine where individuals and communities fall on that spectrum.
- Case studies of perpetrator behavior drawn from the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, and other genocides, examining how individuals were recruited into violence and how their participation escalated over time.
- Stories of rescuers and resisters — such as those who hid Jewish families during the Holocaust, the White Rose resistance movement in Nazi Germany, or Hutu moderates in Rwanda — as evidence that choice and moral agency existed even under extreme conditions.
- The conditions that made resistance and rescue more likely, including strong social networks, prior

relationships across group lines, individual moral frameworks, and distance from ideological indoctrination.

- The tension between individual moral responsibility and systemic pressure, and what that tension reveals about the limits of personal agency under conditions of authoritarian control and mass violence.
- The implications of perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer behavior for how we think about prevention — what the existence of resisters tells us about the choices that were available to those who did not resist.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Genocide is not carried out by a single type of person but depends on a whole ecosystem of human behavior, and understanding the full spectrum from perpetrators to resisters is essential to understanding how mass violence becomes possible.
- Ordinary people become participants in genocide not primarily because they are evil but because of powerful psychological forces including obedience to authority, pressure to conform, and the gradual normalization of increasingly violent acts.
- Genocide does not happen in a vacuum but is enabled by specific social and cultural conditions that make violence feel normal, necessary, or unavoidable to those living inside them.
- Ideology is one of the most powerful forces driving perpetrator behavior because it gives people a framework that makes mass violence feel not just acceptable but morally justified and even righteous.
- The bystander effect operates at every scale of genocide, from the individual neighbor who says nothing to the international community that watches and waits, and understanding it is essential to understanding why intervention so rarely happens.
- Bystander behavior is not simply a choice between action and inaction but a spectrum shaped by fear, social pressure, self-interest, and moral awareness, and most people who witness genocide fall somewhere in the middle of that spectrum.
- Comparing perpetrator behavior across different genocides reveals that recruitment into violence follows recognizable patterns, and that participation tends to escalate gradually rather than beginning with the worst acts.
- The existence of rescuers and resisters in every genocide is evidence that choice was always possible, and their stories matter because they prove that the path taken by perpetrators and bystanders was not the only path available.
- Resistance and rescue were more likely when people had strong relationships, existing cross-group connections, and a moral framework that resisted ideological indoctrination, which tells us that the roots of moral courage are built long before a crisis arrives.
- The tension between individual conscience and systemic pressure is at the heart of every genocide, and how people navigate that tension reveals both the fragility and the resilience of personal moral agency under extreme conditions.
- If resisters existed in every genocide, then complicity was always a choice, and that means prevention is also always a choice, which is the most important lesson this unit has to offer.

Do:

- Identify the full spectrum of human roles in genocide including perpetrators, bystanders, collaborators, rescuers, and resisters, and explain why understanding the range of responses matters for understanding how genocide is carried out and sustained.
- Analyze the psychological mechanisms that enable ordinary people to participate in genocide, including obedience to authority, conformity, diffusion of responsibility, and the gradual escalation of violence.
- Examine the social and cultural conditions that make participation in genocide more likely, including dehumanization, peer pressure, ideological indoctrination, and the normalization of violence over time, and explain how these conditions work together to lower the threshold for participation.
- Analyze the role of ideology in shaping perpetrator behavior and explain how belief systems rooted in race, religion, ethnicity, or political identity can convince individuals that mass violence is not only acceptable but necessary.
- Define the bystander effect and apply it to genocide at both the individual and collective level, explaining how

the same psychological dynamic that causes neighbors to look away also allows nations to fail to intervene.

- Examine the range of bystander behavior from passive silence to active collaboration and identify the factors that determine where individuals and communities fall on that spectrum.
- Compare case studies of perpetrator behavior from the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Cambodia to identify patterns in how individuals were recruited into violence and how their participation escalated over time.
- Analyze stories of rescuers and resisters including those who hid Jewish families during the Holocaust, the White Rose movement in Nazi Germany, and Hutu moderates in Rwanda, and argue what their choices reveal about the existence of moral agency even under extreme conditions.
- Identify the conditions that made resistance and rescue more likely, including strong social networks, prior cross-group relationships, and individual moral frameworks, and explain what those conditions suggest about the factors that support moral courage.
- Evaluate the tension between individual moral responsibility and systemic pressure and explain what that tension reveals about the limits and possibilities of personal agency under authoritarian control.
- Apply the behavior of perpetrators, bystanders, and resisters to the question of genocide prevention, and argue what the existence of resisters tells us about the choices that were available to those who did not resist.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What does it take for an ordinary person to become a perpetrator of genocide — and if the answer is less about who they are and more about the situation they are in, what does that tell us about all of us?
- At what point does a bystander become complicit — and is silence in the face of genocide a moral failure, a survival strategy, or both?
- If resistance to genocide is possible even under the most dangerous conditions, why is it so rare — and what does the gap between those who resist and those who do not reveal about the role of choice in extreme circumstances?
- What do the stories of rescuers and resisters tell us that the stories of perpetrators do not — and why does it matter which stories a society chooses to remember?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- At what point does following orders stop being an excuse, and who decides?
- How did perpetrators in the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Cambodia come to believe that what they were doing was not only acceptable but right — and what does that tell us about the power of ideology to override individual moral judgment?
- If someone is raised from childhood inside an ideology that defines a group of people as enemies or subhumans, how much individual responsibility do they bear for acting on that belief as an adult?
- What is the difference between a bystander who does nothing out of fear and one who does nothing out of indifference — and does the distinction matter morally?
- What do the people who chose to resist or rescue have in common — and if certain conditions made moral courage more likely, what does that tell us about how societies could cultivate those conditions before the next crisis?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats

- Comparative Writings/Documents

Vocabulary:

Perpetrator	Obedience to authority	Ideological indoctrination	Civil disobedience
Bystander	Conformity	Normalization of violence	Moral courage
Collaborator	Diffusion of responsibility	Peer pressure	Armed resistance
Rescuer	Moral disengagement	Social conformity	Passive resistance
Resister	Groupthink	In-group loyalty	Sanctuary
Complicity	Desensitization	Fear of punishment	Underground networks
Passive complicity	Moral injury	Scapegoating	Conscientious objection
		Bystander Effect	Righteous among the Nations

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District

Comparative Genocide

Grade Level: 11th and 12th

Unit 6: Gender, Youth, and the Body in Genocide

Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Genocidal targeting by gender — how men, women, and children are often targeted differently within the same genocide, and why those differences matter for understanding the full scope of mass violence.
- Sexual violence as a weapon of genocide — how rape and sexual assault are used not as incidental byproducts of war but as deliberate tools to destroy communities, terrorize populations, and eliminate group identity.
- Systematic sexual violence against women in specific genocides including the Holocaust, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, and what those cases reveal about the relationship between gender and genocidal intent.
- Reproductive violence and genocidal intent — including forced sterilization, forced pregnancy, and the deliberate destruction of a group's ability to reproduce — as forms of genocide under the UN Genocide Convention's definition.
- Targeting of men and boys in genocide — including mass execution, forced labor, and the specific vulnerabilities of male victims — and why male victimization is often underrepresented in both historical accounts and legal frameworks.
- Experiences of children in genocide — including witnessing violence, separation from family, forced displacement, recruitment as child soldiers, and the destruction of educational and cultural institutions.
- Psychological impact of genocide on children and youth, including trauma, loss of identity, disrupted development, and the long-term effects of exposure to mass violence at formative stages of life.
- The concept of intergenerational trauma — how the effects of genocide are transmitted across generations through psychological, cultural, familial, and even biological mechanisms.

- Child soldiers as both victims and perpetrators — how children are recruited, coerced, and indoctrinated into committing violence, and the complex questions of responsibility and rehabilitation that follow.
- The legal frameworks that address gender-based violence in genocide, including the landmark recognition of rape as a weapon of genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.
- Gender-based genocidal violence on survivor communities and the long-term social and cultural effects thereof, including stigma, family breakdown, altered gender roles, and the challenges of rebuilding identity and community after mass atrocity.
- Bodily autonomy as a fundamental human right and how genocide systematically violates that right as a mechanism of group destruction.
- Unique vulnerability of children as targets of cultural genocide — including forced assimilation, removal from families, destruction of language and cultural identity — and how these practices aim to eliminate a group across generations.
- Gender and age in post-genocide recovery and justice, including the specific barriers faced by women and children in accessing legal redress, psychological support, and social reintegration.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Genocide does not target everyone in the same way — men, women, and children are often attacked differently, and understanding those differences is essential to understanding the full picture of how genocide destroys a group.
- Sexual violence in genocide is not accidental or incidental but is used as a deliberate weapon to terrorize communities, destroy families, and eliminate group identity.
- The systematic use of sexual violence in Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, and the Holocaust reveals that rape and sexual assault have been used across very different genocides as a consistent tool of destruction.
- Reproductive violence — including forced sterilization and forced pregnancy — is a form of genocide because it targets a group's ability to survive into the future, not just its members in the present.
- Men and boys are targeted in specific and often overlooked ways in genocide, and their experiences as victims are frequently absent from historical accounts and legal frameworks in ways that distort our understanding of mass violence.
- Children in genocide face a distinct set of horrors including separation from family, forced displacement, witnessing mass violence, and the destruction of the schools and cultural institutions that shape who they are.
- Exposure to genocide during childhood causes deep and lasting psychological harm that disrupts development, destroys identity, and shapes the lives of survivors long after the killing stops.
- The trauma of genocide does not end with the survivors but is passed down through families and communities across generations in ways that continue to shape societies long after the atrocity is over.
- Child soldiers are simultaneously victims and perpetrators, and their existence forces us to confront difficult questions about coercion, responsibility, and what justice and rehabilitation can look like for children who were made into killers.
- Survivor testimony about sexual violence and childhood trauma must be engaged with carefully and ethically, because bearing witness to those accounts carries responsibilities that go beyond simply gathering historical information.
- The legal recognition of rape as a weapon of genocide by international tribunals was a landmark moment that transformed how the world understands the relationship between sexual violence and genocidal intent.
- Gender-based genocidal violence leaves lasting damage on survivor communities long after the killing ends, including stigma, broken families, and the profound challenge of rebuilding identity and community in the aftermath.
- Bodily autonomy is a fundamental human right, and one of the defining features of genocide is that it systematically violates that right as a core mechanism of group destruction.
- The forced removal of children from their families and cultures is a form of genocide aimed at eliminating a group not through immediate killing but by severing the next generation from everything that makes them who they are.
- Women and children face specific barriers to justice and recovery after genocide, and those barriers must be

understood and addressed if post-genocide societies are to rebuild in ways that include their most vulnerable survivors.

Do:

- Identify how men, women, and children are targeted differently within the same genocide and explain why understanding those differences is essential to understanding the full scope of mass violence.
- Analyze sexual violence as a weapon of genocide and explain how rape and sexual assault function not as incidental byproducts of war but as deliberate tools used to destroy communities, terrorize populations, and eliminate group identity.
- Compare the systematic use of sexual violence in the Holocaust, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur and explain what those cases reveal about the relationship between gender-based violence and genocidal intent.
- Examine reproductive violence including forced sterilization and forced pregnancy and evaluate how those practices meet the definition of genocide under the UN Genocide Convention by targeting a group's ability to survive into the future.
- Identify the specific ways men and boys are targeted in genocide including mass execution and forced labor and explain why male victimization is frequently underrepresented in historical accounts and legal frameworks.
- Examine the experiences of children in genocide including witnessing violence, family separation, forced displacement, and recruitment as child soldiers and explain how those experiences differ from adult victimization.
- Analyze the psychological impact of genocide on children and youth including trauma, loss of identity, and disrupted development and explain how exposure to mass violence at formative stages of life produces long-term harm.
- Define intergenerational trauma and explain how the effects of genocide are transmitted across generations through psychological, cultural, familial, and biological mechanisms.
- Evaluate the position of child soldiers as both victims and perpetrators and argue what their experiences reveal about coercion, moral responsibility, and the possibilities and limits of rehabilitation and justice.
- Examine the legal frameworks that address gender-based violence in genocide including the landmark recognition of rape as a weapon of genocide by international criminal tribunals and evaluate what those developments mean for how international law understands genocidal intent.
- Analyze the long-term social and cultural effects of gender-based genocidal violence on survivor communities including stigma, family breakdown, and altered gender roles and explain the challenges those effects create for rebuilding identity and community.
- Define bodily autonomy as a fundamental human right and explain how genocide systematically violates that right as a core mechanism of group destruction.
- Examine the forced removal of children from their families and cultures as a form of cultural genocide and explain how those practices aim to eliminate a group across generations rather than through immediate physical destruction.
- Identify the specific barriers faced by women and children in accessing legal redress, psychological support, and social reintegration after genocide and evaluate what those barriers reveal about the limitations of post-genocide justice systems.

Unit Essential Questions:

- If genocide targets men, women, and children in deliberately different ways, what does that tell us about what perpetrators are actually trying to destroy — and is the goal always just to kill people, or is it something deeper?
- When sexual violence is used systematically as a weapon of genocide, what is it actually targeting — bodies, families, communities, or the future of a group — and what does the answer reveal about the relationship between gender and genocidal intent?
- If the trauma of genocide is passed down across generations to people who never experienced the original violence, who is a genocide survivor — and what does the answer mean for how societies reckon with atrocity long after it ends?

- What do we owe to children who were made into killers — and how does the existence of child soldiers force us to rethink the boundaries between victim and perpetrator, innocence and guilt, punishment and rehabilitation?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- What is the difference between sexual violence that happens during war and sexual violence that is organized and deployed as a tool of genocide — and how did international tribunals draw that line in Bosnia and Rwanda?
- How do practices like forced sterilization and forced pregnancy fit the definition of genocide — and what does their inclusion in that definition reveal about what it means to destroy a group?
- If a government can commit genocide without killing a single person by destroying a group's ability to reproduce and pass on its identity, how does that change the way we define and recognize genocide in the present?
- What does it mean to grow up inside a genocide — and how does exposure to mass violence during childhood shape a person's identity, relationships, and understanding of the world in ways that last a lifetime?
- If children who were forced to commit violence are both victims and perpetrators, how should post-genocide societies treat them — and what does the answer reveal about how we think about childhood, responsibility, and justice?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Document

Vocabulary:

Gendered violence	Reproductive violence	Child soldier	Bodily autonomy
Sexual violence	Forced sterilization	Youth indoctrination	Physical integrity
Rape as a weapon of war	Forced pregnancy	Orphan of Genocide	Reproductive rights
Femicide	Reproductive coercion	Age-based targeting	Violations of bodily autonomy
Torture	Demographic destruction	Psychological displacement	Transitional justice
Systematic abuse	Forced abortion	Restorative justice	
Truth and reconciliation	Birth prevention		

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District

Comparative Genocide

Grade Level: 11th and 12th

Unit 7: Media, Propaganda, and Dehumanization

Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- The relationship between propaganda and genocide — how the deliberate manipulation of information, images, and messaging has been used across multiple genocides to prepare populations for mass violence.
- Dehumanization in propaganda — how language, imagery, and media portrayals strip targeted groups of their humanity and make violence against them feel acceptable or necessary.
- Hate speech in the escalation toward genocide — how rhetoric that targets a group's identity, loyalty, or humanity moves along a spectrum from prejudice to discrimination to organized violence.
- The specific mechanisms of Nazi propaganda — including the use of film, radio, print media, and public spectacle — as a case study in how a modern state can use mass communication to build popular support for genocide.
- Radio Milles Collines and the Rwandan genocide as a case study in how broadcast media can be used to directly incite mass killing, including the role of specific language and messaging in mobilizing ordinary people to commit violence against their neighbors.
- The historical use of political cartoons, posters, and visual media to dehumanize targeted groups, and how visual propaganda creates lasting cultural associations between a group and danger, disease, or subhumanity.
- Escalation from prejudice to genocide — including Gordon Allport's scale of prejudice and Gregory Stanton's stages of genocide — as frameworks for understanding how hate speech and propaganda function as early warning signs.
- Ideology in shaping propaganda — how racial, ethnic, religious, and political belief systems provide the raw

material that propagandists use to construct narratives of threat, purity, and righteous violence.

- The legal and ethical boundaries of free speech in relation to hate speech and incitement to genocide, including international legal frameworks that distinguish between protected speech and speech that constitutes a crime.
- Modern and digital propaganda — including social media, online radicalization, and algorithmic amplification of extremist content — as contemporary extensions of the same mechanisms used in historical genocides.
- Concept of counter-messaging and media literacy as tools for resistance — how individuals and communities can recognize, challenge, and disrupt genocidal propaganda before it achieves its intended effects.
- Case studies of propaganda from multiple genocides including the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Darfur, and what comparing those cases reveals about the common techniques and specific adaptations of genocidal messaging.
- Ethical responsibilities of journalists, media organizations, and communication platforms in contexts where their content or infrastructure is being used to facilitate genocide.
- The lasting cultural effects of genocidal propaganda — how dehumanizing narratives can survive the genocide itself and continue to shape intergroup relations, memory, and the possibility of reconciliation long after the killing ends.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Propaganda is not just a feature of genocide but a precondition for it, and across every major genocide in history the deliberate manipulation of information and messaging has been used to prepare populations to accept or participate in mass violence.
- Dehumanization works by using language and imagery to strip a targeted group of their humanity until violence against them no longer feels like violence but like pest control, self-defense, or necessary cleansing.
- Hate speech does not jump directly to genocide but moves along a predictable escalating spectrum, and understanding that spectrum is essential to recognizing when rhetoric has crossed from offensive to genuinely dangerous.
- Nazi Germany represents the most comprehensive case study in state-controlled propaganda, demonstrating how a modern government can use every available communication tool to build mass public support for genocide.
- Radio Milles Collines shows that a single media outlet using the right language at the right moment can turn neighbors into killers, making it one of the most important and disturbing case studies in the direct relationship between media and mass murder.
- Visual propaganda creates powerful and lasting associations between a targeted group and concepts like disease, infestation, or existential threat, and those images can shape how an entire society perceives a group long before any killing begins.
- Frameworks like Allport's scale of prejudice and Stanton's stages of genocide show that hate speech and propaganda are not just offensive but are measurable early warning signs that a society may be moving toward mass violence.
- Propaganda does not create hatred from nothing but takes existing ideological beliefs about race, religion, ethnicity, or politics and shapes them into narratives that make targeted groups feel like an existential threat that must be eliminated.
- International law recognizes that not all speech is protected and that incitement to genocide is a crime, but the line between free expression and dangerous hate speech remains one of the most contested boundaries in both law and ethics.
- The same psychological mechanisms that made Nazi radio broadcasts and Rwandan hate radio so effective are now operating at global scale through social media platforms and algorithmic amplification of extremist content.
- Media literacy and counter-messaging are not just academic skills but practical tools of genocide prevention, because people who can recognize propaganda are significantly harder to mobilize into participation in mass violence.
- Comparing propaganda across the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Darfur reveals that while the specific content changes, the underlying techniques of dehumanization, fear-mongering, and calls to righteous

violence are remarkably consistent.

- Journalists, media organizations, and technology platforms bear real ethical and potentially legal responsibility when their content or infrastructure is used to facilitate genocide, even if they did not intend that outcome.
- Genocidal propaganda does not disappear when the killing stops but leaves behind dehumanizing narratives and cultural associations that continue to poison intergroup relations and make reconciliation significantly harder for generations.

Do:

- Analyze the relationship between propaganda and genocide and explain how the deliberate manipulation of information, images, and messaging has been used across multiple genocides to prepare populations to accept or participate in mass violence.
- Define dehumanization and examine how language, imagery, and media portrayals strip targeted groups of their humanity and make violence against them feel acceptable, necessary, or righteous.
- Trace the escalating spectrum from hate speech to genocide and explain how rhetoric targeting a group's identity or humanity moves from prejudice to discrimination to organized mass violence.
- Examine the specific mechanisms of Nazi propaganda including film, radio, print media, and public spectacle and explain how the Nazi state used mass communication to build popular support for genocide.
- Analyze Radio Milles Collines as a case study in broadcast incitement and explain how specific language and messaging mobilized ordinary Rwandans to commit violence against their neighbors.
- Interpret historical examples of visual propaganda including political cartoons and posters and explain how visual media creates lasting cultural associations between a targeted group and concepts of danger, disease, or subhumanity.
- Apply Gordon Allport's scale of prejudice and Gregory Stanton's stages of genocide to specific historical examples and explain how hate speech and propaganda function as measurable early warning signs of escalating mass violence.
- Analyze the role of ideology in shaping propaganda and explain how racial, ethnic, religious, and political belief systems provide the raw material propagandists use to construct narratives of threat, purity, and righteous violence.
- Examine the legal and ethical boundaries between protected speech and incitement to genocide and evaluate how international legal frameworks attempt to distinguish between free expression and speech that constitutes a crime.
- Compare historical genocidal propaganda to modern digital propaganda including social media radicalization and algorithmic amplification and explain how contemporary platforms extend the same psychological mechanisms used in historical genocides.
- Evaluate counter-messaging and media literacy as tools of genocide prevention and explain how individuals and communities can recognize, challenge, and disrupt genocidal propaganda before it achieves its intended effects.
- Compare propaganda from the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Darfur to identify the common techniques of genocidal messaging and explain how those techniques were adapted to fit different historical and cultural contexts.
- Evaluate the ethical responsibilities of journalists, media organizations, and communication platforms when their content or infrastructure is used to facilitate genocide and argue where legal and moral accountability should lie.
- Analyze the lasting cultural effects of genocidal propaganda and explain how dehumanizing narratives survive the genocide itself and continue to shape intergroup relations and obstruct reconciliation long after the killing ends.

Unit Essential Questions:

- If propaganda does not create hatred from nothing but takes existing prejudice and shapes it into a justification for mass violence, what does that tell us about the relationship between what a society already believes and what it can be convinced to do?

- At what point does speech become dangerous enough to be a crime — and who gets to decide where that line is, and what happens when the people drawing the line are the ones doing the inciting?
- If the same psychological mechanisms that made Nazi radio and Rwandan hate radio so effective are now operating at global scale through social media algorithms, what responsibility do technology companies, governments, and individual users bear for what those platforms make possible?
- What does it mean that words and images — not guns or gas chambers — are often the first and most essential weapons of genocide, and if propaganda is a precondition for mass violence, what would it actually mean to take that seriously as a society?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- If propaganda requires a population that is already primed to believe its messages, what existing conditions in Weimar Germany, pre-genocide Rwanda, or Cambodia made those populations vulnerable to genocidal messaging?
- What specific techniques do propagandists use to strip a group of their humanity in the eyes of the public — and when you look at political cartoons, posters, and imagery from the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Bosnia side by side, what patterns do you see?
- Why is visual dehumanization so powerful and so lasting — and why do images that associate a group with rats, cockroaches, or disease seem to prepare people for violence more effectively than arguments alone?
- Where is the line between speech that is offensive and speech that is criminal — and what do cases like Radio Milles Collines or Nazi propaganda tell us about when words become weapons?
- If international law recognizes incitement to genocide as a crime, why is it so rarely prosecuted — and what does that gap between law and enforcement tell us about the limits of legal frameworks in preventing mass violence?
- What responsibility do social media companies bear when their platforms are used to spread genocidal propaganda — and what would meaningful accountability actually look like in practice?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Documents

Vocabulary:

Disinformation	Eliminationist rhetoric	Mass media	Normalization of violence
Misinformation	Coded language	Broadcast media	Prejudice
Incitement	Euphemism	Print media	Discrimination
Messaging	Hate speech	Visual propaganda	Incitement to genocide
Narrative control	Derogatory labeling	Political cartoons	Ethnic nationalism
Psychological manipulation	Purity ideology	Public spectacle	Religious extremism
State-sponsored messaging	Us versus them thinking	Censorship	Political indoctrination
Media literacy	Source verification	Media monopoly	Conspiracy theory
Counter-messaging	Counter-narrative	Existential threat narrative	Social media radicalization
Critical consumption	Digital citizenship	Filter bubble	Algorithmic amplification

Fact-checking
Deepfake

Propaganda recognition
Viral messaging

Online extremism
Digital propaganda

Echo chamber

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District
Comparative Genocide
Grade Level: 11th and 12th
Unit 8: Memory, Justice, and Reconciliation
Time: 10 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- The definition and purpose of transitional justice — the set of legal, political, and social processes societies use to reckon with past atrocities and build a foundation for a more just future.
- The Nuremberg Trials as a foundational moment in international criminal accountability — what they established, what they failed to address, and how they shaped the development of international humanitarian law.
- The structure and function of international criminal tribunals including the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the International Criminal Court, and what each reveals about the possibilities and limitations of international justice.
- The concept of individual criminal accountability for genocide and crimes against humanity — how international law shifted the framework from collective guilt to the prosecution of specific individuals for specific acts.
- Truth commissions as an alternative or complement to criminal prosecution — how bodies like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Rwandan Gacaca courts attempted to balance accountability, truth-telling, and social healing.
- Reparations as a form of post-genocide justice — including financial compensation, land restitution, official apology, and symbolic recognition — and the debates around what reparations can and cannot accomplish.
- The politics of memory and historical narrative — how governments, survivor communities, diaspora groups, and international bodies contest the telling of genocidal history and what is at stake in those contests.

- Memorialization and the ethics of commemoration — how genocide memorials, museums, and official remembrance ceremonies shape collective memory, and the debates around who controls those spaces and whose stories are centered.
- Holocaust remembrance and education as a global model for how societies institutionalize memory of atrocity, including the role of institutions like Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- The concept of reconciliation — what it means, what it requires, and whether it is possible between communities that have experienced genocide, including the tension between justice and reconciliation as competing or complementary goals.
- Survivor testimony in the post-genocide context — the role of testimony in legal proceedings, truth commissions, educational settings, and public memory, and the ethical responsibilities involved in collecting, preserving, and using survivor accounts.
- The long-term psychological and social challenges of post-genocide communities — including ongoing trauma, displaced populations, destroyed infrastructure, and the rebuilding of civic trust and social cohesion.
- The role of education in post-genocide societies — how curricula, textbooks, and classroom practice either support or obstruct the honest reckoning with genocidal history, and what responsible genocide education looks like in practice.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Transitional justice is the set of processes societies use to reckon with past atrocities, and its goal is not only to punish perpetrators but to acknowledge victims, establish truth, and build a foundation for a society that can function after mass violence.
- The Nuremberg Trials established for the first time that individuals could be held criminally accountable for genocide and crimes against humanity, but they also left significant gaps in accountability that reveal the political limits of international justice even at its most ambitious moments.
- International criminal tribunals like the ICTR, the ICTY, and the ICC represent the world's attempts to hold individuals accountable for genocide across borders, but each has also revealed the limitations of international justice when political will, resources, and cooperation are uneven.
- One of the most important shifts in international law after the Holocaust was the move from holding nations collectively responsible to prosecuting specific individuals for specific acts, a change that transformed how the world understood guilt and accountability for mass atrocity.
- Truth commissions like the South African TRC and the Rwandan Gacaca courts show that criminal prosecution is not the only path to accountability and that societies must sometimes choose between the full weight of justice and the practical needs of social healing.
- Reparations can take many forms from financial compensation to official apology to symbolic recognition, but they all grapple with the same fundamental question of whether any form of material or symbolic redress can adequately address the scale of what genocide takes from its victims.
- The history of genocide is never neutral — governments, survivor communities, and international bodies actively compete over how atrocities are remembered and taught, and those contests reveal that historical memory is always also a form of political power.
- Genocide memorials and museums do not simply preserve memory but actively shape it, and the decisions about what to include, whose stories to center, and who controls those spaces are ethical and political choices with real consequences for how societies understand their own history.
- Holocaust remembrance has become a global model for how to institutionalize memory of atrocity, but that model also raises questions about whose genocide receives international recognition and resources and whose remains invisible or contested.
- Reconciliation between communities that have experienced genocide is possible but it is not simple, and it requires more than the passage of time — it demands truth, accountability, acknowledgment, and a willingness to rebuild trust that may take generations.
- Survivor testimony is one of the most powerful tools in post-genocide justice and education, but it also carries ethical responsibilities because the act of asking survivors to relive their trauma for legal, educational, or commemorative purposes can itself cause harm if not handled with care.
- The destruction caused by genocide does not end when the killing stops but leaves behind communities

dealing with ongoing trauma, shattered infrastructure, and the enormous challenge of rebuilding the social trust that mass violence systematically destroys.

- Education is one of the most powerful tools available to post-genocide societies, but it can also obstruct healing when governments use curricula and textbooks to deny, minimize, or distort what happened, making honest and responsible genocide education a matter of both historical and ethical urgency.

Do:

- Define transitional justice and explain how the legal, political, and social processes it encompasses work together to help societies reckon with past atrocities and build a foundation for a more just future.
- Examine the Nuremberg Trials as a foundational moment in international criminal accountability and evaluate both what they established and what they failed to address in terms of justice for genocide and crimes against humanity.
- Compare the structure and function of the ICTR, the ICTY, and the ICC and evaluate what each tribunal reveals about the possibilities and limitations of international justice when political will and resources are uneven.
- Explain the shift in international law from collective guilt to individual criminal accountability and analyze what that shift means for how the world understands responsibility for genocide and crimes against humanity.
- Compare truth commissions such as the South African TRC and the Rwandan Gacaca courts to criminal prosecution and evaluate how each approach attempts to balance accountability, truth-telling, and the practical needs of social healing.
- Examine reparations as a form of post-genocide justice including financial compensation, land restitution, official apology, and symbolic recognition and evaluate the debates around what reparations can and cannot accomplish for survivors and communities.
- Analyze the politics of memory and historical narrative and explain how governments, survivor communities, diaspora groups, and international bodies contest the telling of genocidal history and what is at stake in those contests.
- Examine how genocide memorials, museums, and official remembrance ceremonies shape collective memory and evaluate the ethical and political debates around who controls those spaces and whose stories are centered.
- Analyze Holocaust remembrance and education as a global model for institutionalizing memory of atrocity and evaluate what the prominence of that model reveals about whose genocide receives international recognition and whose remains invisible or contested.
- Define reconciliation and evaluate whether it is possible between communities that have experienced genocide, including the tension between justice and reconciliation as competing or complementary goals in post-genocide societies.
- Examine the role of survivor testimony in legal proceedings, truth commissions, and educational settings and evaluate the ethical responsibilities involved in collecting, preserving, and using survivor accounts without causing further harm.
- Analyze the long-term psychological and social challenges facing post-genocide communities including ongoing trauma, displaced populations, and destroyed infrastructure and explain what rebuilding civic trust and social cohesion requires.
- Evaluate the role of education in post-genocide societies and explain how curricula, textbooks, and classroom practice can either support or obstruct honest reckoning with genocidal history and why that distinction matters.

Unit Essential Questions:

- Can there ever be real justice after genocide — and if the scale of the crime makes full accountability impossible, does partial justice still matter, or does it risk making the world feel like it has done enough when it hasn't?
- Who gets to decide how a genocide is remembered — and when governments, survivor communities, and international bodies tell different stories about the same atrocity, what is at stake in that contest over memory?
- What is the difference between justice and reconciliation — and can a society pursue both at the same time, or does the demand for accountability make the work of healing and rebuilding more difficult?

- If the international community has built tribunals, truth commissions, memorials, and legal frameworks in response to genocide, and genocide has still happened again and again, what does that tell us about whether the world has actually learned anything — and what would it mean to truly reckon with that failure?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- What did the Nuremberg Trials establish about individual responsibility for genocide — and if they were the first time the world said that following orders was not a defense, why have so many perpetrators of genocide since then faced no consequences at all?
- What can a truth commission accomplish that a criminal trial cannot — and what does a criminal trial accomplish that a truth commission cannot, and which matters more in the aftermath of genocide?
- South Africa chose truth and amnesty over prosecution, and Rwanda chose community-based justice through Gacaca courts — what do those choices reveal about what different societies believe justice is actually for?
- Can money, land, or an official apology repair what genocide takes from a people — and if the answer is no, does that mean reparations are pointless, or does it mean we need to rethink what we expect them to do?
- Who controls the story of a genocide — and when a government denies, minimizes, or distorts what happened, what tools do survivors, scholars, and the international community have to push back?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Documents

Vocabulary:

Accountability	Truth commission	Reparations	Historical revisionism
Criminal prosecution	Commission	Financial compensation	Minimization
Legal redress	Gacaca courts	Land restitution	Distortion
Retributive justice	Amnesty	Official apology	Negationism
Reparative justice	Confession	Symbolic recognition	Memory suppression
Community-based justice	Testimony	Acknowledgment	Never Again
Restitution	Truth-telling	Collective redress	Post-genocide identity
Survivor legacy			

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments



Central York School District

Comparative Genocide

Grade Level: 11th and 12th

Unit 9: Preventing Genocide — Education, Awareness, and Responsibility

Time: 5 Days

Standards:

Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards

- 8.4.9.A: Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.
- 8.4.9.B: Contrast the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and sites which are critical to world history.
- 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change have impacted world history.
 - Belief systems and religions
 - Commerce and industry
 - Technology
 - Politics and government
 - Physical and human geography
 - Social organization
- 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations have influenced the history and development of the world.
- 8.4.C.A: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.3.12.J.) Evaluate the effectiveness of various international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.4.12.C.)
- 8.4.C.C: Evaluate critical issues in various contemporary governments. (Reference Civics and Government standard 5.3.12.J.) Historical examples and political philosophy to evaluate major arguments advanced for the necessity of government. (Reference Civics and Government Standard 5.1.12.B)
- 8.4.C.D: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. (Reference Civics and Government Standards 5.2.9.B.) Evaluate the role of nationalism in uniting and dividing citizens. (Reference Civics and Government Standards: 5.1.12.F.)

Know:

- Genocide prevention as an active and ongoing responsibility rather than a passive hope, and why prevention requires recognizing warning signs before mass violence begins rather than responding after it has already started.
- Role of the international community in genocide prevention — including the United Nations, regional bodies, and individual nations — and the gap between the legal obligation to prevent genocide under the Genocide Convention and the political will to actually do so.
- The Responsibility to Protect doctrine as an international framework that attempts to establish when and how the international community is obligated to intervene when a state is committing or failing to prevent genocide against its own population.
- Case studies of failed prevention — including international inaction during the Rwandan genocide and the Bosnian genocide — and what those failures reveal about the structural, political, and moral obstacles to timely intervention.
- The role of education in genocide prevention — how teaching about the history, mechanisms, and warning signs of genocide builds the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for citizens to recognize and resist genocidal processes.
- The role of civil society organizations, human rights groups, and advocacy networks in monitoring genocide risk, documenting atrocities, and pushing governments and international bodies to respond.
- The relationship between human rights education and genocide prevention — how cultivating empathy,

critical thinking, and commitment to human dignity in young people builds the long-term cultural foundation for a society less vulnerable to genocidal ideologies.

- The concept of moral and civic responsibility in a globalized world — what it means for students to be informed, engaged global citizens who understand their capacity to contribute to the prevention of mass atrocity through awareness, advocacy, and action.

Understanding/Key Learning:

- Genocide prevention is not something that happens after killing begins but requires active recognition of warning signs and deliberate intervention at the earliest possible stages, which means prevention is always a choice made before the worst happens.
- The international community has a legal obligation under the Genocide Convention to prevent genocide, but the gap between that legal obligation and the political will to act has allowed genocide to happen again and again while the world watched.
- The Responsibility to Protect doctrine represents the international community's attempt to establish that sovereignty is not a shield behind which governments can commit genocide, but its application has been inconsistent and politically selective in ways that reveal the limits of international norms without enforcement.
- The failures to intervene in Rwanda and Bosnia are not simply tragic mistakes but reveal deep structural and political obstacles to timely action, including the prioritization of national interest over human life and the unwillingness of powerful nations to bear the cost of intervention.
- Education about the history and warning signs of genocide is one of the most powerful long-term tools of prevention because citizens who understand how genocide works are significantly harder to mobilize into participation and significantly more likely to recognize and resist early warning signs.
- Civil society organizations and human rights groups play a critical role in genocide prevention because they often see the warning signs before governments do and have the independence to document and report atrocities that political bodies have an interest in ignoring.
- Building a society that is resistant to genocide requires more than laws and institutions — it requires cultivating in young people the empathy, critical thinking, and commitment to human dignity that make genocidal ideology harder to take root.
- Every student in this course is already a global citizen with the capacity to contribute to genocide prevention through awareness, informed advocacy, and the refusal to be a bystander — and understanding that capacity is the most important thing this course has to offer.

Do:

- Argue that genocide prevention is an active and ongoing responsibility rather than a passive hope, and explain why recognizing warning signs before mass violence begins is more effective than responding after it has already started.
- Analyze the role of the international community in genocide prevention including the United Nations, regional bodies, and individual nations, and evaluate the gap between the legal obligation to prevent genocide under the Genocide Convention and the political will to actually do so.
- Examine the Responsibility to Protect doctrine as an international framework and evaluate how effectively it establishes when and how the international community is obligated to intervene when a state is committing or failing to prevent genocide against its own population.
- Compare the international response to the Rwandan genocide and the Bosnian genocide and explain what those failures of prevention reveal about the structural, political, and moral obstacles that stand in the way of timely intervention.
- Evaluate the role of education in genocide prevention and explain how teaching about the history, mechanisms, and warning signs of genocide builds the knowledge and critical thinking skills citizens need to recognize and resist genocidal processes.
- Identify the role of civil society organizations, human rights groups, and advocacy networks in genocide

prevention and explain how those organizations monitor risk, document atrocities, and push governments and international bodies to respond.

- Analyze the relationship between human rights education and genocide prevention and explain how cultivating empathy, critical thinking, and commitment to human dignity in young people builds the long-term cultural foundation for a society less vulnerable to genocidal ideologies.
- Evaluate your own moral and civic responsibilities as a global citizen and argue how awareness, informed advocacy, and the refusal to be a bystander can contribute to the prevention of mass atrocity in the modern world.

Unit Essential Questions:

- If every genocide in history showed warning signs that were visible before the killing began, and the world still failed to intervene in time, is the problem a lack of knowledge — or a lack of will — and what would it actually take to close that gap?
- What is the difference between saying "Never Again" and meaning it — and what would a world that took that promise seriously actually look like in terms of laws, institutions, political will, and individual responsibility?
- If education is one of the most powerful tools for genocide prevention, what does that mean for what schools are actually for — and what responsibility do students, teachers, and institutions have to engage honestly with the history of atrocity?
- At what point does being an informed person become a moral obligation to act — and in a world where genocide warning signs are visible right now in multiple places, what does it mean to know what you know and do nothing?

Lesson Essential Questions:

- If powerful nations intervene in some genocides and ignore others, what factors actually determine when intervention happens — and what does that pattern tell us about whose lives the international community values?
- If students who study genocide are less likely to become perpetrators or bystanders, what does that tell us about what education is actually for — and what would it mean for schools to take that responsibility seriously?
- How can media and journalism serve as tools of genocide prevention — and given what we know about how social media can also spread genocidal propaganda, how do we build a media environment that works for prevention rather than against it?
- What is the difference between caring about genocide and doing something about it — and at the scale of an individual high school student, what does meaningful action actually look like?
- If you finish this course and go back to your life without changing anything about how you engage with injustice, prejudice, and the suffering of people different from you, what was the point — and what would it mean to let what you have learned actually matter?

Materials/Resources:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Yad Vashem
- Holocaust Learning Experience
- Genocide Watch
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
- USC Shoah Foundation
- The Genocide Education Project
- UN Genocide Convention (1948)
- Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" framework
- Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) — the text in which genocide was first defined
- Digital Design Formats
- Comparative Writings/Documents

Vocabulary:

Gregory Stanton's Stages of Genocide	Responsibility to Protect (R2P)	Human rights education	Media accountability
Atrocity prevention	Sovereign responsibility	Genocide education	Digital activism
Prevention framework	International obligation	Critical thinking	Social media advocacy
Genocide watch	Humanitarian intervention	Empathy	Free Press
Informed advocacy	Non-intervention principle	Civic engagement	Moral responsibility
Active citizenship	State sovereignty	Moral development	Civic duty
		Historical consciousness	Ethical obligation

Assessments:

- Summative Assessments
- Thinking Skills-Based Assessments
- Writing Prompts/Discussion Forums
- Project/Problem-Based Learning/Performance-Based Assessments