

Material Covered:

Throughout this course, we will explore how and why groups of people have been targeted for destruction, and how the world has responded. By tracing the origins of the term “genocide” through historical and contemporary case studies, you will gain a deeper understanding of the conditions that make genocide possible, the strategies used to carry it out, and the ongoing efforts to recognize, prevent, and respond to it.

Theme 1: Defining and Understanding Genocide Our journey begins by examining how the term “genocide” came to be defined and understood. In Unit 1 (Defining Genocide: Origins of the Term), we trace the legal and historical development of the concept, from its coining in the 1940s to its use in international law today. Unit 2 (Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Vulnerable Groups) investigates the conditions and roles that allow genocide to occur, examining the people who carry it out, those who stand by, and those who are targeted. Finally, Unit 3 (The Eight Stages of Genocide) analyzes the recognizable pattern genocides follow, from classification and dehumanization through to extermination and denial.

Theme 2: Case Studies in Genocide Moving from theory to history, we examine specific genocides from across the globe and across the past century. Unit 4 (Indigenous Peoples: The Beothuk and Residential Schools) examines the destruction of the Beothuk people and the legacy of Canada's residential school system. Unit 5 (The Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust) explores two of the twentieth century's defining atrocities and their lasting impact on international law. Unit 6 (Cambodia, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia) investigates genocides carried out in the latter half of the twentieth century, and how the international community responded.

Theme 3: Strategies, Response, and Prevention In the final section of the course, we transition from individual case studies to the broader mechanisms and responses that shape how genocide is carried out and confronted. Unit 7 (Strategies of Genocide: Propaganda and Dehumanization) breaks down the tactics perpetrators use to prepare a population for mass violence. Unit 8 (Recognition and Response: Reparations and Reconciliation) investigates how the world has responded to genocide through tribunals, reparations, and memorialization. Lastly, Unit 9 (Genocide Denial, Evidence, and Prevention) addresses the ongoing challenge of denial, the evidence used to counter it, and international efforts toward prevention.

BC Curriculum Big Ideas:

This course is aligned to the BC Ministry of Education's Genocide Studies 12 curriculum. Everything you do — notes, worksheets, quizzes, and tests— connects back to these big ideas:

- The intentional destruction of peoples and their cultures is not inevitable, and such attempts can be disrupted and resisted.
- The use of the term “genocide” to describe atrocities has political, legal, social, and cultural ramifications.
- Despite international commitments to prohibit genocide, violence targeted against groups of people has continued to challenge global peace and prosperity.
- While genocides are caused by and carried out for different reasons, all genocides share similarities in progression and scope.

Textbook:

No textbook is required for this course.

Course Design:

This course is designed to support independent student learning. Each unit includes instructional notes and worksheets. Understanding is checked through unit quizzes, and students will also complete three cumulative exams—one at the end of each theme—to measure overall progress and retention.

Grading:

Your progress and understanding in this course will be assessed through a combination of worksheets, projects, and formal testing. Worksheets are worth 40% of your final grade and provide an opportunity to demonstrate your learning as you work through new material and build your foundational skills. Quizzes and projects are each weighted at 30%, giving you the chance to show how well you can retain and apply the knowledge you have gained.

Defining Genocide: Origins of the Term

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to investigate the origins of the term “genocide” and how its legal and historical definition has developed over time.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Explain who coined the term “genocide” and why
- Describe the legal definition of genocide under the United Nations Convention
- Distinguish genocide from other forms of mass violence and atrocity
- Examine how the definition of genocide has been applied, debated, and contested
- Recognize the political, legal, and social consequences of naming an event a genocide
- Explain why some historical atrocities are not formally recognized as genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 1 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 1 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 1 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 1 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Vulnerable Groups

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to develop an understanding of the roles individuals and groups play in the lead-up to and commission of genocide.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Identify the economic, political, social, and cultural conditions that make genocide possible
- Describe the roles of perpetrators, victims, bystanders, rescuers, and upstanders
- Explain why certain minority groups become targets of genocide
- Analyze how ordinary people can become complicit in mass violence
- Examine the role of leadership and organized regimes in carrying out genocide
- Recognize examples of individuals who resisted or intervened against genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 2 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 2 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 2 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 2 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

The Eight Stages of Genocide

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to investigate the characteristic stages genocide follows, from classification through denial.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Identify and describe the eight stages of genocide: classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, extermination, and denial
- Explain how dehumanization and propaganda prepare a population for violence
- Analyze how genocide progresses from discrimination to organized mass violence
- Compare the stages of genocide across different historical case studies
- Recognize warning signs that may indicate a society is moving toward genocide
- Explain why denial is considered the final stage of genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 3 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 3 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 3 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 3 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

- Ask your teacher for the Theme 1 Project #1. Hand in when completed.

Indigenous Peoples: The Beothuk and Residential Schools

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to examine the destruction of Indigenous peoples and cultures in Canada, including the extinction of the Beothuk and the legacy of residential schools.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Describe the colonization of Indigenous lands and its impact on Indigenous peoples
- Explain the events that led to the extinction of the Beothuk people of Newfoundland
- Describe the purpose and operation of Canada's residential school system
- Analyze the impact of residential schools on Indigenous individuals, families, and communities
- Examine the concept of cultural genocide and its application to the Canadian context
- Identify ongoing efforts toward truth, reconciliation, and redress in Canada
- Compare the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada to other cases studied in this course

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 4 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 4 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 4 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 4 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

The Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to investigate the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, two of the twentieth century's defining atrocities.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Explain the causes and course of the Armenian Genocide
- Describe the rise of Nazi ideology and its role in the Holocaust
- Examine the systems and strategies used to carry out mass extermination during the Holocaust
- Compare survivor testimony and historical evidence from both genocides
- Analyze the international response to the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust
- Explain the influence of the Holocaust on the development of international human rights law
- Identify the role of denial in shaping public understanding of the Armenian Genocide
- Describe the establishment of Israel and its connection to the aftermath of the Holocaust

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 5 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 5 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 5 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 5 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

Cambodia, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to investigate genocides carried out in the latter half of the twentieth century and how the international community responded.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Describe the rise of the Khmer Rouge and the causes of the Cambodian genocide
- Explain the causes and course of the Rwandan genocide
- Describe the breakup of Yugoslavia and the genocide committed in Bosnia
- Compare the international response to each of these genocides
- Analyze the role of ethnic and political division in each case
- Examine the use of war crimes tribunals to prosecute those responsible
- Identify the role of the international community, and its failures, in each case
- Explain the concept of ethnic cleansing and how it relates to genocide
- Recognize the long-term impact of these genocides on survivors and their societies

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 6 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 6 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 6 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 6 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

- Ask your teacher for the Theme 2 Project #2. Hand in when completed.

Strategies of Genocide: Propaganda and Dehumanization

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to develop an understanding of the strategies used to prepare for and carry out genocide.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Explain how propaganda is used to dehumanize and demonize a target group
- Describe strategies used to organize and carry out genocide, including sexual violence, starvation, and denial of rights
- Examine the role of technology in promoting and carrying out genocide
- Analyze how language and media can be used to incite mass violence
- Identify common strategies used across different genocides
- Recognize how these strategies continue to appear in conflicts today
- Explain the role organization and planning play in carrying out genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 7 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 7 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 7 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 7 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

Recognition and Response: Reparations and Reconciliation

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to explore how governments, institutions, and individuals have recognized and responded to genocide.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Explain the purpose of apologies, reparations, and redress
- Describe the role of human rights tribunals and war crimes trials
- Examine efforts at memorialization and truth-telling following genocide
- Analyze the role of international law and organizations in responding to genocide
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different responses to genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 8 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 8 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 8 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 8 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.

Genocide Denial, Evidence, and Prevention

Goal:

The goal of this unit is to examine the evidence used to document genocide, the movements that deny it, and efforts made to prevent it.

Key Concepts:

While completing this unit you will:

- Identify the types of evidence used to demonstrate the scale and nature of genocide, including forensics, testimony, and mass graves
- Explain the strategies and motivations behind genocide denial movements
- Analyze how denial causes further harm to survivors and descendants
- Describe international laws and mechanisms intended to prevent genocide
- Evaluate the effectiveness of genocide prevention efforts to date
- Identify steps individuals and governments can take to help prevent future genocides
- Reflect on what you have learned throughout this course about the causes and prevention of genocide

What to Do in this Unit:

- Ask your teacher for the Unit 9 Notes. Read the Notes in full.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 9 Worksheet and complete all the work as directed there.
- When you are ready, submit your work for the Unit 9 Worksheet to your teacher for marking.
- Ask your teacher for the Unit 9 Quiz. Hand in your quiz when ready.
- Ask your teacher for the Theme 3 Project #3. Hand in when completed.

Congratulations! You have completed Genocide Studies 12!