LESSON TITLE: The Eight Stages of Genocide

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL(S): High School (Grades 11-12)
*Please note-students must have prior knowledge on the Holocaust to successfully participate in the second half of this lesson.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME REQUIRED: 50-65 Minutes or 1-1 ½ full class periods. There is room for extension if time allows.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF LESSON:

In this lesson, students will learn about the different stages that lead to genocides. This is an essential lesson, as it will serve as a foundation that will allow students to understand what patterns typically serve as antecedents to genocide. It will also give students the tools necessary to identify what indicators to look for when pinpointing regions where genocides can potentially take place in the future. Understanding the stages of genocide also enables people to act to stop policies and practices that can lead to genocide.

NJ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN LESSON:

6.2.12.A.5.d Analyze the causes and consequences of mass killings (e.g., Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Sudan), and evaluate the responsibilities of the world community in response to such events.

COMMON CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS REFERENCED IN LESSON:

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms.
LITERACY DEVELOPMENT CONNECTIONS IN LESSON:

- Students will need to critically read the explanation of each stage of genocide in order to determine proper placement on the list. They will need to cite specific examples from the explanations to rationalize the order they placed the stages of genocide in.
- Students will need to clearly express, communicate, and defend their rationale for their placement of each stage of genocide both in a group and full class discussion.
- Students must communicate effectively and work cooperatively in a group setting to successfully complete all group tasks in this lesson.

LESSON GOALS/OBJECTIVES—Students will be able to:

1. Identify the eight stages of genocide.
2. Analyze and explain why the stages are in their given order.
3. Identify and analyze how previous genocides fit into the eight stages of genocide.
4. Analyze how certain stages may overlap, and how one stage may be operative at the same time as another.

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES:

**Please note: The instructor must use Handout A (Eight Stages of Genocide with Explanations Reference Sheet) to create the envelopes with the eight stages of genocide cut apart and mixed up inside that are used for the group activity. This must be completed prior to the lesson.

1. The instructor will write the lesson objectives and Hook/Do Now questions on the board. The Hook/Do Now questions are as follows:
   a. Why and how do societies move down a path towards genocide or become genocidal?
   b. Using your prior knowledge on the Holocaust, what pre-genocidal characteristics can you identify?
2. Students will be directed to independently answer the Hook/Do Now question in written form in their notebooks upon entering the classroom. (5 minutes)
3. The instructor will call the class together to discuss the Hook/Do Now question and informally assess student responses. (5 minutes)
4. The instructor will inform the class that there are, in fact, specific stages that make genocide possible. The instructor will then review the directions for the upcoming cooperative group activity. The instructions are as follows:
   a. Students will be placed in groups of 3-4 and will be given an envelope with the eight stages of genocide on laminated paper cut up and mixed up inside (this can be made using handout A).
   b. It is the students’ job to read the descriptions of each stage, cooperatively decide the order that the stages occur in, and place each stage in the correct location.
c. Once they are finished, they should discuss as a group why they placed each stage in the location on the list that they did.

d. The instructor should circulate in the classroom to assess student progress on the activity, and provide guidance where necessary. The instructor should not tell students whether or not they are correct at this point. (10 minutes)

5. After all groups finish putting the stages in order, the instructor will direct the students' attention to the front of the room and a Power Point presentation will be displayed on its title page (resource 1). The instructor will then ask each group to report out what stage they believed should come first in the list. After each group reports out, the instructor will go to the next slide depicting the first stage of genocide and read it as a class. The instructor will then ask the class why they felt this stage should be the first, and hold a brief discussion to enhance student understanding. This process should be repeated for all eight stages, to ensure that all students not only understand the order of the eight stages, but why each stage falls where it does in the list. (10-15 minutes)

a. The instructor should point out that while certain stages might precede others, it is not a perfectly clear process. It is common for one stage to be operating at the same time as others. A brief discussion of the interactive and overlapping nature of the stages is crucial to enhance student understanding.

b. Sample questions for discussion:
   i. What context clues allowed you to determine the proper placement of the steps?
   ii. Why do you think this stage should precede/succeed the others?
   iii. Do these stages necessarily have to be in this exact order? Why or why not?
   iv. How might it be possible for the stages to overlap one another? Can you think of any examples from your prior knowledge?

6. The instructor will then pass out a handout with the 8 stages of genocide listed in a graphic organizer (handout B). The instructor will also pass out a list of the 8 stages of genocide with their descriptions to each student as a reference sheet (handout A) The students will be instructed to work with their groups and use their prior knowledge about the Holocaust to fill out the graphic organizer in order to show how the Holocaust fits into the eight stages of genocide. Each student should fill out their own graphic organizer. The instructor should inform the students that the graphic organizer will be handed in at the end of the period, and must be completed. The instructor will circulate in the classroom to assess student progress on the activity and provide guidance, when necessary. This should take the students to the end of the period to complete. (10 minutes)

7. The instructor will inform the students to hand in their graphic organizers upon leaving the classroom as an “exit pass”. The instructor can use the graphic organizer as a formal assessment to identify whether or not the students understand the eight stages of genocide. Feedback should be provided for the students to enhance understanding of the content.
8. **Homework Assignment**: To be assigned by the instructor at a convenient time during the lesson.
   a. The students will be given primary source documents to analyze and pinpoint what stage of genocide is represented in the reading. They will fill out an accompanying handout that asks for what stage is represented in the document, as well as a rationale for why they think it is that particular stage that is represented.
   b. This assignment should be collected as a formal assessment, and should be reviewed in class the next day to enhance student understanding and correct any misconceptions. (10 minutes)

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:**

1. Informal assessment during group work and class discussion: The instructor can use his or her observations to ascertain whether or not students are meeting lesson objectives.
2. Formal assessment: The student-completed eight stages of genocide graphic organizer (using the Holocaust as an example) can be used to determine whether or not students understand how the eight stages can be applied to actual genocides.
3. Formal assessment: The homework assignment will determine whether or not students understand the stages of genocide in practice.

**LEARNING RESOURCES:**

1. Resource 1 – The Eight Stages of Genocide Power point presentation: See attached Power point file
3. Handout B – Eight Stages of Genocide Graphic Organizer: See attached Word File
   Electronic link to the eight stages of genocide (the content was condensed for the purpose of this lesson) [http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html](http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html)
   [https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust-encyclopedia](https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust-encyclopedia) - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia

**EXTENSION RESOURCES:**
1. Examine different genocides by comparing them to the eight stages using the graphic organizer (Handout B) to reinforce the eight stages and/or review other genocides.
2. Apply the eight stages of genocide to current events around the world to determine whether or not genocide is possible in the targeted region.
3. Brainstorm if/how genocide could be prevented during each of the preparatory stages of genocide (steps 1-6).
4. The lesson can be extended in an additional lesson where students could be presented with primary source or secondary source documents and be asked to pinpoint the stage represented in the reading. The students could then hypothesize what happened before and after the event presented in the reading based on the eight stages model.

**MODIFICATIONS OR ADAPTATIONS OF THE LESSON FOR DIFFERENTIATED LEARNERS:**

1. Allow extra processing time for classified students.
2. Provide extra time on graphic organizer for classified and ESL students (ex: finish graphic organizer for homework and submit at the start of the next class period).
3. Differentiate student groups to allow for stronger students to assist weaker students.
4. Provide a language reference sheet for ESL students to allow for a simplification of the language utilized in the lesson.
5. Pair ESL students with other students who have an understanding of their language (when possible) to allow for translation.
The 8 Stages of Genocide

**CLASSIFICATION**
All cultures have categories to distinguish people into “us and them” by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality (German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi), and bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide.

**SYMBOLIZATION**
We give names or other symbols to the classifications. We name people “Jews or Gypsies” or distinguish them by colors and dress, and apply those symbols to group members. Classification and Symbolization are universally human and do not necessarily result in genocide unless they lead to the next stage. When combined with hatred, symbols may be forced upon unwilling members of pariah groups; the yellow star for Jews under Nazi rule, or the blue scarf for people from the eastern zone in the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia.

**DEHUMANIZATION**
One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder.

**ORGANIZATION**
Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, though sometimes informally, (Hindu mobs led by local RSS militants) or by terrorist groups. Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings.

**PREPARATION**
Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. They are often segregated into ghettos, forced into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved.

**EXTERMINATION**
Extermination begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called “genocide.” It is “extermination” to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human. When it is sponsored by the state, the armed forces often work with militias to do the killing. Sometimes the genocide results in revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide.

**DENIAL**
Denial is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass grades, burn bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims. They block investigations of the crimes, and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile. There they remain with impunity, like Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless they are captured and a tribunal is established to bring them to trial.

Electronic link to the eight stages of genocide (the content was condensed for the purpose of this lesson)
http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Genocide</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Symbolization</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Dehumanization</td>
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<td>4. Organization</td>
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<td>5. Polarization</td>
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<td>6. Preparation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7. Extermination</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Denial</td>
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</table>
Homework Document 1

Homework Document 2

*Heinrich Himmler: A Secret Speech on the Jewish Question (October 8, 1943)*

...May I now, in this most intimate circle, touch upon a question which all of you, members of the Party, have accepted as self-evident, but which for me has become the hardest question of my life: The question of the Jews. You will accept it as self-evident and gratifying that in your districts there are no Jews and more. All German people—a few exceptions notwithstanding—have also understood that we could not have endured the Allied bombardment, nor the hardships of the fourth and perhaps, the coming fifth and sixth-war year with this destructive pestilence still in the body of our people. The sentence, “The Jews must be exterminated,” is a short one, gentlemen, and is easily said. For the person who has to execute what this sentence implies, however, it is the most difficult and hardest thing in the world. Look, of course they are Jews, it is quite clear, they are only Jews, but consider how many people-members of the Party as well-have sent their famous petitions to me or to the authorities, declaring that all Jews, naturally, were pigs, but that so-and-so was a decent Jew and should not be touched. I dare say that, according to the number of petitions and opinions expressed in private, there were more decent Jews in Germany than the number of Jews that actually were to be found in the entire country. In Germany we have so many millions of people who have their famous decent Jew... I am only saying this because, from your own experience within your districts, you will have learned that respectable and decent National Socialist people all know their decent Jew.

I must ask you only to listen and never to speak about what I am telling you in this intimate circle. We had to answer the question: What about the woman and children? Here, too, I had made up my mind, find a clear-cut solution. I did not feel that I had the right to exterminate the men—that is, to murder them, or have them murdered—and then allow their children to grow into avengers, threatening our sons and grandchildren. A fateful decision had to be made: This people had to vanish from the earth. For the organization in charge of the mission, it was the hardest decision we have had to make so far. It has been executed—as I believe I may say—without damage to the spirit and soul of our men and leaders. This danger was very real. The path between the two existing possibilities, either to become too brutal and to lose all respect for human life, or else become too soft and dizzy and suffer from nervous breakdowns...

*Source:*  

Homework Document 3

*A line from a speech given by former Iranian President Ahmadinejad to the United Nations’ General Assembly in 2009*

"They (the Western powers) launched the myth of the Holocaust. They lied, they put on a show and then they support the Jews."

### Identifying the 8 Stages of Genocide through Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document 1</th>
<th>a. What stage of genocide does this document represent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Rationale to support your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document 2</td>
<td>a. What stage of genocide does this document represent?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document 3</td>
<td>a. What stage of genocide does this document represent?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Rationale to support your answer.</td>
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