



Introduction to Genocide Mini Unit

Subject Matter: History/Social Studies, grade 9-12

Time required: 1-5 class periods

Washington State Learning Standards

History

H1.11-12.1 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts

H2.9-10.4 Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in world history (1450-present)

Civics

C3.11-12.1 Evaluate the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order or disorder.

C3.11-12.3 Evaluate the impact of international agreements on contemporary world issues

C4.9-10.2 Analyze how governments have or have not valued individual rights over the common good throughout history.

Introduction:

The twentieth century was marked by the outbreak of numerous conflicts in which whole civilian populations were targeted for destruction. From Armenia to Srebrenica, millions of people around the world were murdered simply on the basis of their identity. Midway through the century, Raphael Lemkin is credited with providing a term for these events: genocide. Developed by combining the term “geno” from the Greek, *genos* meaning “household, clan, family” or a people, and “-cide” from the Latin *caedere*, which means to kill, genocide became the term used to describe the destruction of a defined group of people based on their membership (either real or perceived) in that group. At its root, genocide is fundamentally an identity crime, and by acknowledging it as such, we can recognize that within all of us, there is a potential to be perpetrators of genocides, either individually or within the scope of the numerous groups with which we identify.¹

The activities in this unit outline will allow students to explore the development of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, from its early draft version to the final text approved by the United Nations in December of 1948. The unit also contains a lesson that gives the students the opportunity to explore the idea of genocide as a contested concept. Finally, students will analyze the risk factors and triggers for genocide through a case study of the Cambodian and Rwandan Genocides.

Rationale:

By exploring the history and development of the legal concept of genocide, students will reflect on the roles and responsibilities of individuals, groups, nations, and the international community when confronting the abuse of power, civil and human rights violations, and genocidal acts.

By understanding the risk factors and triggers for genocide, students can be actively involved in holding their nation accountable to the international norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the doctrine that affirms that

¹ David Moshman, “US and Them: Identity and Genocide,” *Identity* 7, no. 2 (2007): 115–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283480701326034>, 132.

states and the international community have a responsibility to protect populations from genocide and other forms of atrocities adopted in 2005.²

Essential Questions:

- What is identity?
- What is genocide?
- What does it mean that genocide is a contested concept?
- What are the risk factors for genocide?
- What is meant by triggers of genocide?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define genocide and identify why it is a contested concept.
- Students will be able to identify the risk factors for genocide.
- Students will understand the role of triggers in how a society progresses towards genocide.

For more information on R2P check out the [United Nations Office of Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect](#)

Recommended Additional Sources:

- [Guidelines for Teaching about Genocide](#) from the Holocaust Center for Humanity Seattle
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Genocide Prevention Website](#)
- The G Word: A Podcast on Genocide [Ep 1- The UN Genocide Convention](#) (36 minutes)
- Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide* by James Waller

Recommended Unit Outline:

These lessons are designed as standalone lesson plans or mini-units that explore many of the important elements of studying genocide. It is highly recommended that before beginning any study of genocide, the students have a working familiarity with identity and its critical role in defining the relationships between individuals and society.

Below is a suggested outline for the unit based on a 50-minute class period.

1 Week Unit Outline	
Day 1	Exploring Identity
Day 2	The Three Drafts- building the Genocide Convention
Day 3	Genocide as an Essentially Contested Construct
Day 4	Risk Factors and Triggers for Genocide: Case Studies

² Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), 9-10.

Lesson Plan: Exploring Identity

A lesson plan adapted from Facing History and Ourselves

Rationale:

The question “Who am I?” is especially critical for students during adolescence. This lesson aims to prompt students to consider how the answer to this question arises from the relationship between the individual and society. Understanding identity is valuable for students’ own social, moral, and intellectual development, and it also serves as a foundation for examining the choices made by individuals and groups throughout history. In this lesson, students will learn to create visual representations of their own identities, in the process, they will analyze the various ways we define ourselves and are defined by others.

Teacher Preparation:

Before beginning this lesson, it is strongly recommended that you have established classroom rules, including rules for discussion. Creating a safe, respectful classroom environment is an essential prerequisite to learning and considering tough topics, let alone discussing them with others. If you have not yet done so, [here is a lesson](#) that can be adapted regarding using classroom contracts to establish such rules and norms, and [here is an article](#) setting forth some essential rules for discussion that are easily adaptable for any age. The inclusive and reflective process of creating classroom contracts promotes buy-in from all students, thereby increasing the likelihood of a more consistently safe, respectful classroom.

Materials:

[Starburst Identity Chart](#)

“The Bear That Wasn’t” [video](#)

Copies of [Finding One’s Voice](#), [Being Jewish in the United States](#), [Words Matter](#), and [Finding Confidence](#)

Procedure:

Step 1 Identity

- Explain to students that today, they will be thinking about what makes up their identities and reading firsthand accounts of how various individuals grapple with the different ways they define themselves and are defined by others.
- Have students write a response to the question “Who am I?” in a quick journal entry.
 - They might list, or write in complete sentences, the first five to seven ideas that come to mind when they think about this question.
- Explain to students that identity encompasses the memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one’s sense of self. This combination creates a steady sense of who one is over time, even as new parts are developed and incorporated into one’s identity.
 - As a class, brainstorm a list of what types of things determine someone’s identity. Record these ideas, or categories, on the board. Examples might include:
 - Religious/spiritual affiliation
 - Culture, race, or ethnicity
 - Appearance/style
 - Language or nationality
 - Hobbies/interests
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Beliefs and values
 - Group/organization/community membership
 - Personality traits
- Watch [“The Bear That Wasn’t”](#)
 - Ask students to discuss the following questions in groups or pairs:

- Why do you think Frank Tashlin titled this story *The Bear That Wasn't*? Why didn't the factory officials recognize the Bear for what he was? Why did it become harder and harder for the Bear to maintain his identity as he moved through the bureaucracy of the factory?
 - What were the consequences for the Bear of the way others defined his identity?
 - Whose opinions and beliefs have the greatest effect on how you think about your own identity?
 - How does our need to be part of a group affect our actions? Why is it so difficult for a person to go against the group?
 - o Discuss the questions as a class.
- Hand out the Starburst Identity Chart
 - o Go over the directions:
 - Students place their name in the center circle.
 - At the end of the arrows pointing outward, write words or phrases that describe what they consider to be key aspects of their identity, and have them refer to the list they have already created of things that make up or influence identity.
 - At the end of the arrows pointing inward, write labels others might use to describe you.
 - Remind them to revisit the list the class created.
 - o You might start an identity chart for yourself on the board to help your students understand the format.

Step 2 Explore the Complexity of Identity

- Have students read four personal reflections on identity using the Jigsaw teaching strategy.
 - Begin by dividing the class into four “expert” groups, and pass out one of the following readings to each group:
 - o “Finding One’s Voice,” “Being Jewish in the United States,” “Words Matter,” and “Finding Confidence”
 - o Ask students to read their assigned text and discuss the connection questions at the end of the reading. Students should write down their answers.
 - Then, divide the class into new “teaching” groups. The members of each “teaching” group should have read a different reading in their “expert” groups.
 - o Instruct each student to summarize their “expert” group’s reading for the new “teaching” group.
 - o Ask the “experts” to share highlights from their group discussion of one of the questions they found especially interesting.
 - If time allows, discuss the reading as a class.

Step 3 Reflection

- Ask students to reflect on their identity charts in their journals by addressing the following questions:
 - o Has someone else ever made an assumption about you because of some aspect of your identity? Was it a positive assumption or a negative one? How did you find out about the assumption? How did you respond?
 - o How does reflecting on your identity impact how you view and think about other people or groups?
- Have students discuss their reflections in pairs or small groups.
- Discuss as a class.
 - o Consider highlighting that people's identities are made up of many different aspects and that no person is simply one thing. And that no one wants to be seen as only one part of their identity. Minimizing a person to one aspect of their identity (or their perceived identity) can lead to othering and, eventually, discrimination.

Lesson Plan: The Three Drafts- building the Genocide Convention

Introductory information for teachers:

In 1921, Soghomon Tehlirian, a survivor of the Armenian genocide, murdered one of the Turkish leaders responsible for the massacre of hundreds of thousands of his people. Upon reading a short news story about Tehlirian's trial, Raphael Lemkin, a young Polish Jew studying linguistics at the University of Lvov, asked why "it is a crime for Tehlirian to kill a man, but it is not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men?" This began a lifelong quest to develop not only a term for what Winston Churchill called a "crime without a name" but an international law that prevented and punished this crime.³ In 1939, Lemkin fled Poland as the German military advanced, landing first in Sweden and finally making it to the United States in 1941.⁴ While in Sweden, he worked diligently to collect the rules and decrees that the Nazis were imposing in Europe, and once in America, Lemkin went to great efforts to warn the government of the Nazi agenda. By 1944 he published *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, using his collection of documents to outline not only what the Nazis were doing throughout Europe but also introduced for the first time the word *genocide*.⁵ For Lemkin, the term was meant to connote not only the physical and cultural destruction of a group but also the motives of the perpetrators.⁶ In 1946 as the international community wrestled with the realities of the horrors committed by Nazis, the newly formed United Nations began the process of drafting a law that would criminalize genocide on an international level.

In this lesson, students will analyze the development of the legal definition of genocide by comparing the language and content of the draft proposals and the law's final text.

Materials Needed:

Examining the three drafts of the United Nations Genocide Convention Handout
Internet Connection
Projector/Smartboard

Procedure:

Step 1 Introduction the concept of genocide

- Show the film "[Conventional Revolution: Raphael Lemkin and the Crime Without a Name](#)" (14-minute film) by Facing History and Ourselves to introduce Raphael Lemkin and the concept of genocide.
 - Ask students to do a [SIT](#) Reflections as they watch the film.
 - Students are to identify the following:
 - One Surprising fact or idea
 - One Interesting fact or idea
 - One Troubling fact or idea
- After the film, ask the students to share their reflections with a partner.

Step 2 Examining the drafting of the UN Genocide Convention

- Explain to students that as the Allied Powers of World War II actively prosecuted the war crimes committed by the Nazi regime in the [Nuremberg Trials](#), they were not focused on any of the atrocities committed before the war in German territory. As a result, in 1946, Lemkin wrote a draft resolution that Panama, Cuba, and India sponsored that called for genocide to be declared an international crime. The process of drafting this new international law took two years and went through three stages.⁷
- Distribute the *Examining the Three Drafts of the United Nations Genocide Convention Handout*

³ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide New Ed Edition* (London: Flamingo, 2003), 18,29.

⁴ Ibid, 26.

⁵ Ibid, 38.

⁶ Ibid, 43.

⁷ James Waller, *Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 16-17.

- Explain to students they will now be examining how the process of developing the UN Genocide Convention progressed through a **Jigsaw**:
 - Divide the class into three *expert* groups and assign each group one topic: “protected groups,” “acts qualified as genocide,” and “punishable offenses.”
 - Ask students to identify specific examples of how the language of the law changes through each draft related to their assigned topic with their group.
 - Once they have identified the changes, ask them to discuss, as a group, the questions on the handout about their topic.
 - Remind them to record their answers on their handout, as they will share it with others in the next step.
 - From the *expert* groups, assign students to new *teaching* groups of three in which each member is an *expert* in a different topic.
 - Have students verbally share out their information while the other members of the teaching group take notes on their handout.
 - Once the groups have finished this task, ask the students to individually respond to the **final reflection** question on the handout.
 - Ask students to share their responses with their teaching group and/or share with the class.

- **Teacher Note:**

The process of drafting the UNGC was not without political influences. In particular, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the USSR heavily influenced the drafting process in order to avoid being held accountable for crimes they were committing against people in their nation and/or empires. You may consider discussing with students if the Jim Crow laws could have been interpreted as “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.” Also, could the United States policies related to indigenous boarding schools be viewed as “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”?

Many nations also opposed the inclusion of political groups as protected groups. Not the least of these were the USSR, but also far-right governments who wanted to be able to target communists within their borders. The United States strongly opposed the inclusion of cultural genocide as well as protecting linguistic groups.⁸ Again, students could consider the treatment of indigenous groups in the US at the time.

It is also worth noting that the United States did not ratify the UNGC until 1988, at the end of the Reagan administration.

⁸ James Waller, 18-19.

Lesson Plan: Genocide as an Essentially Contested Construct

Introductory information for teachers:

In 1956, social theorist W.B. Gallie proposed the idea of *essentially contested constructs*, that is, “concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper use on the part of their users.”⁹ These are ideas that can be interpreted in many ways by different people and are difficult to come to a consensus on. They may have multiple or competing definitions or interpretations that may seem clear to one group of people and not another.

Genocide is an example of a contested construct, in that while it may at first glance seem very clear what is meant by the term genocide, a close examination of the legal definition as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide reveals ambiguity and debatable interpretations.

In this lesson, students will analyze the text of Article 2 of the United Nations Genocide Convention to identify why genocide is considered a contested construct.

Material Needed

United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Handout

Procedure:

Step 1 Introduce “essentially contested concept” to the students based on the information in the information above.

- Inform the students that the term *genocide* was developed by Raphael Lemkin by combining the term “geno” from the Greek, *genos* meaning “household, clan, family” or **a people**, and “-cide” from the Latin *caedere* which means to **kill**.
- Ask them to discuss the following questions with a partner:
 - Does *geno* mean a biological group of people? Is it only physical? Why or why not?
 - Is the idea of a people group stable? Is it permanent?
 - Who defines a group and its characteristics?
 - What does it mean to kill a group? Is it only physical?
 - Does destroying culture (language, traditions, beliefs) kill a people? Why or why not?
- Have students share out their thoughts with the whole class.

Step 2 Analyze the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

- Distribute: *United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Handout*
 - Ask students to individually read and annotate Article 2 independently.
 - Then ask students to work in partners to answer the question on the handout, stopping before the “reflection” question.
 - Go over the questions as a class.
 - **Notes for Teacher:**
 - For an atrocity to meet the legal standard of genocide, *intent* to destroy a group *as such* must be proven. Intent, in a legal sense, means a mental desire and will to act in a certain way, and ‘as such’ means that the individuals need to be targeted because they are or are perceived to be members of the protected groups. Consider discussing with students why proving intent while an atrocity is happening might be problematic. How do we prove intent? If intent cannot be proven, how do you prevent genocide? While intent is a common part of the legal standards, how does it complicate the UNGC?

⁹ James Waller, 44.

- Have students consider the historical context when discussing what groups are missing from the protected list. [This was also discussed in the previous lesson.]
 - If the students have studied the Holocaust, they will note that the actions listed in A-E are all things the Nazis did to their victims. Here, we can see the influence of the recent memory of the Holocaust on the crafting of this law.
 - Some examples of ideas/concepts that people could have different views or interpretations of: intent, whole or in part, definition of a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, serious harm, conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction...
- Ask students to independently answer the reflection question on their handout.
 - Have students discuss their reflections as a class or in small groups.
 - Revisit the idea of genocide as a contested construct.

Lesson Plan: Risk Factors and Triggers for Genocide: Case Studies

Introduction:

Risk Factors are factors that are typically associated with the onset of genocide.¹⁰ The structural factors that put a state at risk for conflict.

It is important to highlight that each case of genocide is different and results from a combination of factors within each context. Risk factors must be understood and considered within the context in which they appear, along with considering the presence of other risk factors when assessing the probability of genocide. Genocide research has led to a set of generally agreed-upon risk factors that are typically associated with the outbreak of genocide. It is important to remind students that not all of the risk factors need to be or will be present for genocide to happen. These are factors that put a country at risk for genocide, they are not causes.¹¹

Materials need:

Projector or smartboard

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Case Study on Rwanda](#)

[United Nations Timeline of the Rwandan Genocide](#)

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Case Study on Cambodia](#)

[University of Minnesota Cambodian Genocide](#)

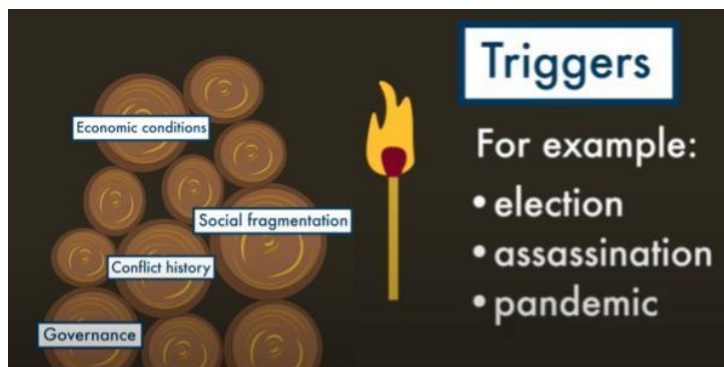
Risk Factors for Genocide Overview Handout

Analyzing the Genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda Handout

Procedure:

Step 1 Introduce the concept of *risk factors* for genocide

- Show students [“What are the risk factors for genocide?”](#) (5-minute video)
Or
- Distribute the *“Risk Factors for Genocide Overview”* and ask students to read and annotate.
- Discuss the concept of *triggers* with the students.
 - Triggers are generally single events or a chain of events that happen without warning and lead to an outbreak of violence. Triggers should not be seen as the causes of violence but as events that lead to the outbreak of genocide, the match that lights the fire.



- Make sure to remind students that a nation having risk factors does not mean it will become genocidal, it just means that, given the right set of circumstances, they have the potential for genocidal violence.

Step 2 Introduce the task

- Distribute *Analyzing the Genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda* Handout
 - Instruct the students that they will be using information from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The United Nations, and The University of Minnesota Holocaust and Genocide Studies websites to identify the risk factors and triggers for genocide that were present in Cambodia and Rwanda before the outbreak of the genocides in those nations. They will also be identifying the response of America and the international community to the genocide.
 - Once the students have completed the work, discuss it as a class to check for understanding.
 - Then, ask students to complete the reflection questions individually.

¹⁰ Scott Straus, 53.

¹¹ Ibid.

- o Have students discuss their reflections with a partner and/or share them with the class.

4. Do you think, based on how the law is written, genocide *only* occurs when a perpetrator targets a group in whole or in part **and** commits one or more of the acts outlined in Article 2, A-E against that group? Explain your thinking.
5. Genocide is often described as a *contested concept* (a concept that people argue about and do not consistently understand.) Look back over the legal definition of genocide and find at least three examples of ideas/concepts within the definition that people could have different views or interpretations of. List them below and then explain how you view those concepts.

1.

2.

3.

Reflection Question: What are the strengths of the UN Genocide Convention? What are the weaknesses? Do you agree with how genocide is defined in the Convention? Why or why not?

Examining the Three Drafts of the United Nations Genocide Convention

Task:

- For your assigned topic, identify specific examples of how the language of law changes through each draft.
- Then discuss and answer the questions.

Topic	Secretariat Draft	Ad Hoc Committee Draft	Final Version (General Assembly)
Protected Groups	<p>Art. I, Sec. I: The purpose of this Convention is to prevent the destruction of racial, national, linguistic, religious or political groups of human beings.</p>	<p>Art. II: In this Convention genocide means any of the following deliberate acts committed with the intent to destroy a national, racial, religious or political group, on grounds of the national or racial origin, religious belief, or political opinion of its members:</p>	<p>Art. II: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:</p>

Examples of how the language of the law changes related to protected groups:

Which of the changes are the most significant to you? Why?

Do you agree with the changes? Why or why not?

	Secretariat Draft	Ad Hoc Committee Draft	Final Version (General Assembly)
<p>Acts Qualified as Genocide</p>	<p>Art. I, Sec. II: In this Convention, the word “genocide” means a criminal act directed against any one of the aforesaid groups of human beings, with the purpose of destroying it in whole or in part, or of preventing its preservation or development.</p> <p>Such acts consist of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Causing the death of members of a group or injuring their health or physical integrity by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) group massacres or individual executions; or (b) subjection to conditions of life which, by lack of proper housing, clothing, food, hygiene and medical care, or excessive work or physical exertion are likely to result in the debilitation or death of the individuals; or (c) mutilations and biological experiments imposed for other than curative purposes; or (d) deprivation of all means of livelihood, by confiscation of property, looting, curtailment of work, denial of housing and of supplies otherwise available to the other inhabitants of the territory concerned. 2. Restricting births by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) sterilization and/or compulsory abortion; or (b) segregation of the sexes; or (c) obstacles to marriage. 3. Destroying the specific characteristics of the group by: 	<p>Art. II: (continuing from above)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) killing members of the group; (2) impairing the physical integrity of members of the group; (3) inflicting on members of the group measures or conditions of life aimed at causing their deaths; (4) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. <p>Art. III: In this Convention genocide also means any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion, or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of the national or racial origin or religious belief of its members such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group; (2) destroying or preventing the use of libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural 	<p>Art. II: (continuing from above)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

	<p>(a) forced transfer of children to another human group; or</p> <p>(b) forced and systematic exile of individuals representing the culture of a group; or</p> <p>(c) prohibition of the use of the national language even in private intercourse; or</p> <p>(d) systematic destruction of books printed in the national language or of religious works or prohibition of new publications; or</p> <p>(e) systematic destruction of historical or religious monuments or their diversion to alien uses, destruction or dispersion of documents and objects of historical, artistic, or religious value and of objects used in religious worship.</p>	institutions and objects of the group.	
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Examples of how the language of the law changes related to acts qualified as genocide:

Which of the changes are the most significant to you? Why?

Do you agree with the changes? Why or why not?

	Secretariat Draft	Ad Hoc Committee Draft	Final Version (General Assembly)
<p>Punishable Offenses</p>	<p>Art. II, Sec I: The following are likewise deemed to be crimes of genocide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. any attempt to commit genocide; 2. the following preparatory acts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) studies and research for the purpose of developing the technique of genocide; (b) setting up of installations, manufacturing, obtaining, possessing or supplying of articles or substances with the knowledge that they are intended for genocide; (c) issuing instructions or orders, and distributing tasks with a view to committing genocide. <p>Art. II, Sec. II: The following shall likewise be punishable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. willful [sic] participation in acts of genocide of whatever description; 2. direct public incitement to any act of genocide, whether the incitement be successful or not; 3. conspiracy to commit acts of genocide. <p>Art. III: All forms of public propaganda tending by their systematic and hateful character to provoke genocide, or tending to make it appear as a necessary, legitimate or excusable act shall be punished.</p>	<p>Art. IV: The following acts shall be punishable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) genocide as defined in Articles II and III; (b) conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) direct incitement in public or in private to commit genocide whether such incitement be successful or not; (d) attempt to commit genocide; (e) complicity in any of the acts enumerated in this article. 	<p>The following acts shall be punishable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.

Examples of how the language of the law changes related to punishable offenses:

Risk Factors for Genocide Overview

Governance

Autocratic¹² regimes are more likely to see events of mass murder or genocide than stable democracies. This is generally believed to be related to the fact that there are fewer structures in these types of governments to keep those in power accountable for their policies and actions. A general lack of confidence in the legitimacy of the government, especially in relation to high levels of corruption, or attempts to alter the structure of government to remain in power are also risk factors for genocide, as it is a weak government that is unable to provide necessary public services. Another issue related to governance is the level to which divisions between identity groups produce political tension, which could lead to radicalization and confrontation. Finally, the presence of systematic state-led discrimination, which aims to restrict the political and economic rights of specific minorities, has been found to have a significant influence on the occurrence of genocide.¹³

Conflict History

States with a history of identity-related tensions that result in a legacy of hostility and mutual violence may have fragile social structures that are often rooted in the history of European colonialism and make states vulnerable for genocidal violence. Also, a history of previous genocides may put states at a higher risk for future genocides, as well as create a legacy of vengeance built on previous injustices and atrocities. Finally, states with a history of ignoring and violating international human rights and laws displaying a lack of respect for people can be at increased risk for conflict and oppression.

Economic Conditions

Low levels of economic development have the impact of unequally harming certain groups, such as young people, leading to conflict because people in these groups may feel they have nothing to lose by engaging in violent behavior. There is also a relationship between high levels of poverty and governmental weakness, which has been found to result in indiscriminate violence. Conflict can also arise in states with high levels of economic discrimination in which inequality appears to be group-based. An over-reliance on a limited number of resources or industries and limited international trade both create environments conducive to violence as they can set a nation up for economic decline, which creates frustration among the population. Finally, the development of illegal black markets or hidden economies with unregulated profits can provide funding for violence or extremist groups.¹⁴

Social Fragmentation (division)

When there is a division between the majority members of a society and other social groups, the society is less resilient and at a greater risk for genocidal conflict. This is especially true when those divisions are based around identity, as power holders can use them for their own ends. These leaders can use the divisions to create an 'us' versus 'them' dynamic between the majority and minority groups. This type of manipulation of identity can result in a less stable and trusting culture within a state. Other forms of social fragmentation include demographic issues, such as when young people make up a disproportionately high percentage of the population. This can lead to opportunity gaps and conflicts, which destabilize the state as a whole. Societies that have divisions between genders can result in women being targeted for gender-based violence and can be at a greater risk for armed conflict and instability.¹⁵

¹² Autocracies can be defined as a repressive one-party/one person state in which there is very little opportunity for citizens to be a part of the political process. James Waller, *Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 151-152.

¹³ James Waller, *Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 150-160.

¹⁴ Ibid, 172-178.

¹⁵ Ibid, 180-192.

Categories of Risk Factors for Genocide

Adapted from James Waller¹⁶

<p style="text-align: center;">Governance</p> <p>Regime Type Legitimacy Issues State Weakness Systemic Government led discrimination</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Conflict History</p> <p>History of identity-related tensions Prior Genocides Past Cultural Trauma Legacy of Vengeance or Group Grievance Record of Serious Violation of Human Rights</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Economic Conditions</p> <p>Low Level of Economic Development Lack of Overall Economic Stability Economic Downturn Growth of Black Markets</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Fragmentation</p> <p>Identity-Based Social Division Demographic Pressures Unequal Access to Basic Goods and Services Gender Inequalities Political Instability</p>

¹⁶ Ibid, 151.

Analyzing Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda Handout

Part 1

Identify the risk factors for genocide that were present in Cambodia before the outbreak of the violence. Be as specific as possible.

Remember, there may not be examples from each category.

Risk Factors for Genocide	
Governance	Conflict History
Economic Conditions	Social Fragmentation (division)

Identify the trigger(s) for the genocide.

Summarize, in your own words, the international and the American response to the genocide.

Part 2

Identify the risk factors for genocide that were present in Rwanda before the outbreak of the violence. Be as specific as possible.

Remember, there may not be examples from each category.

Risk Factors for Genocide	
Governance	Conflict History
Economic Conditions	Social Fragmentation (division)

Identify the trigger(s) for the genocide.

Summarize, in your own words, the international and American responses to the genocide.

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