

# Teacher's Guide

## The Holocaust and Other Genocides History, Representation, Ethics

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# About the Author

Paul Fleming is the Social Studies Department Chairperson and teacher of 9th grade government, 10th grade World Studies, and 12th grade Humanities courses at Hume-Fogg Magnet High School in the Metro Nashville School District. He has a strong background and interest in human rights issues, developing and writing social studies curriculum, and in teacher training. He has been a Mandel Fellow with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and has won the Belz-Lipman Holocaust Teacher of the year award for the state of Tennessee. He has also been recognized by the Tennessee Humanities Council as a "Humanities Teacher of the Year" and has developed curriculum guides and led teacher workshops about the Holocaust and other genocides. He has worked as a Mentor teacher with Vanderbilt University's beginning teacher intern program since 1995. He has also been a faculty member at the Governor's School of International Studies, a one month program for gifted high school students at the University of Memphis. In addition, he has taken students to Russia as part of an AFS school exchange program, conducted Model United Nations conferences, and won grants for global education. In 2001 he was one of six finalists for the Metro Nashville Teacher of the Year Award. He coaches track and cross country at Hume-Fogg, is married and the father of two children.

# Introduction

Answers aim to settle things, but their ironic, even tragic, outcome is that they often produce disagreement, division, and death. People are less likely to savage and annihilate each other when their minds are not made up but opened up through questioning. The Holocaust shows as much: Hitler and his Nazi followers “knew” they were “right.” Their knowing made them killers.

-Professor and author John Roth

The purpose of this guide is to provide teachers with numerous ideas and strategies for using the interdisciplinary text, *The Holocaust And Other Genocides: History, Representation, Ethics*. The guide contains four sections.

**Section one** contains thirteen guidelines to consider when teaching about genocide.

**Section two** contains a summary of three historical frameworks (one about the Holocaust, one about Rwanda, and one about the characteristics of perpetrators of genocide that could be used to teach about all genocides) to use when structuring a unit on genocide, a list of specific documents from the text that correlate with the frameworks, and suggestions for using the documents in the classroom.

**Section three** contains five paradoxes to consider when teaching about genocide, a list of specific documents from the text that correlate with the paradoxes, a sample of student poetry about the Rwandan genocide, and suggestions for using the documents in the classroom.

**Section four** contains a list of journal writing prompts and suggestions for using the prompts in the classroom.

This teacher’s guide reflects the belief that the interdisciplinary study of genocides contained in the text, the Holocaust, Armenia, Bosnia, and Rwanda, provides both students and teachers with meaningful lessons and numerous opportunities to grapple with important, and often disturbing, questions about the actions of individuals and governments.

# section one

## Guidelines for Teaching About Genocide

### :: 1) Genocide is more than mass murder.

The term genocide has a specific definition. The United Nations recognized genocide as a crime under international law in 1948. Article II on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) states: Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: 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.

The term genocide should not be used interchangeably with other terms such as slavery, pogrom, abortion, or revolution. For example, it is important to point out that while slavery in the United States resulted in the killing and dehumanization of other humans, its intent was not to annihilate a specific group of people. Rather, slave owners benefitted from the free, forced labor of captured Africans. Using the term genocide interchangeably with other important historical terms devalues the concept and diminishes the power of its meaning.

### :: 2) Emphasize the power of language.

Language carries tremendous power and students need to understand how language can be used, with devastating results, by individuals and governments involved in genocide. Perpetrators of genocide often have developed euphemisms for mass murder such as “liquidation”, “relocation”, and “the final solution” (in Nazi Germany), or “do your work”, “public safety committee”, and “use your tools” (in Rwanda). Using examples of propaganda created by perpetrators can illustrate to students the power of the written word. Pointing out to students how governments justify inaction through the use of specific language illustrates the power of words and thoughts in shaping foreign policy. Consider the following response from U.S. State Department spokesperson Christine Shelley on June 10, 1994 to the question of whether genocide had occurred in Rwanda:

“I have guidance which I try to use as best I can. There are formulations that we are using that we are trying to be consistent in our use of. I don’t have an absolute categorical prescription against something, but I have the definitions. I have phraseology which has been carefully examined and arrived at as best we apply to exactly the situation... “

When students examine the words used by those involved in genocides they develop an understanding of how these words can shape ideas, attitudes, and official policies of individuals and governments.

**:: 3) Avoid oversimplifying the factors that cause genocide.**

Avoid oversimplifying the complex history of these genocides. One factor alone, such as the use of propaganda or pandering to prejudice, did not kill 6 million Jews in the Holocaust or 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda. Generalizations such as ‘all Germans were Nazis’ lead students to a superficial understanding of the unique and complex histories of all genocides. Moving students from a simple to a complex understanding of a particular genocide requires that they be encouraged to identify and understand the many factors involved.

**:: 4) Avoid simulations that aim to recreate or ask students to understand what it was like to experience a specific genocide.**

Asking students to recreate a gas chamber experience during the Holocaust by turning off the lights and crowding them together in the middle of the classroom may increase interest and drama, but such an exercise ultimately leaves students with several harmful assumptions. First, it trivializes the history and gives students a superficial understanding of the events. Second, it gives students a false impression that they have gained a better understanding of what it was like to be a victim of a genocide and now “know” how a victim suffered. Finally, nothing about any genocide needs dramatization as the powerful voices of the victims can be heard through primary sources. To quote Sidney Bolkosky, principle author of the “Life Unworthy of Life” curriculum that “Nothing about the Holocaust needs dramatization.”

**∞∞ 5) Choose topics for classroom discussion with great care.**

Be aware that although the ideas of genocidal actors are being openly discussed in the classroom, that discussion does not make those ideas acceptable or just. An examination of the motives and ideas of the perpetrators’ in any genocide is important, as long as students are led to understand that these ideas are not just or ethical excuses for mass extermination. For example, a discussion that seeks to understand the motives of Holocaust deniers, if improperly supervised and guided, could lead students to erroneously conclude that these individuals have a controversial, but equally valid argument. This type of discussion could also lead students to conclude that deniers are just articulating the “other side of the coin” rather than presenting arguments that have no historical validity.

**:: 6) Humanize the statistics of genocide.**

A focus solely on abstract ideas and numerical figures obscures the human dimension of the moral choices that many perpetrators, bystanders, and victims made during a time of genocide. Primary sources are an excellent tool to humanize and individualize the experiences and thoughts of those directly involved. Representing all victims in terms of simple numbers also fails to provide students with critical information about the victim groups targeted for genocide. Students may then erroneously conclude that there was no cultural or religious identity of the victims separate from the genocide. For example, the 1.5 million Armenians killed during the Armenian genocide were one of the Ottoman Empire's many Christian minorities that coexisted with the majority Turkish Muslim population for hundreds of years.

**:: 7) Construct daily lesson plans and unit objectives with specific outcomes in mind.**

It is important to develop a rationale for teaching these important histories before beginning a lesson or unit on genocide. Avoid shocking students with graphic images in the vague hope that these images will create a more tolerant student. Such a practice could also 1) cause students to withdraw from further study of any genocide, and 2) could lead to “emotional voyeurism” on the part of some students as they become attracted to obscene images and examples of misuses of power. Be sensitive to audio-visual materials that contain graphic images and consider carefully whether they are age-appropriate for your students.

**:: 8) Give ample opportunities for student expression.**

Emphasize the use of journal writing, small group sharing, and whole class discussion during a unit on genocide. Consider having students keep a daily journal in which to reflect on important questions, ideas, and emotions that arise during their study of genocide. An emphasis on “coverage of material” at the expense of student comprehension, expression and reflection should be avoided. Students will need ample time to process disturbing questions and ideas about genocidal actions. When time is an important factor, consider studying one genocide in greater depth rather than providing a survey of all genocides of the 20th century.

**:: 9) Use an interdisciplinary approach to increase student understanding.**

Move students from a simple to a complex understanding of these genocides through an interdisciplinary approach. Students exposed to a wide variety of primary and secondary sources will be better able to grasp both the broad historical scope and the individual experiences arising out of these genocides. Both historical and artistic sources show the many facets of a genocide, and they allow students to understand both the “big picture” and the

“individual experience” present within one genocide. Consider the use of film, art and poetry to convey the power of the individual experience, and to humanize the sheer numbers present within genocides. For example, an interdisciplinary approach that utilizes both historical and artistic sources allows students to understand and analyze how the forces of historical anti-Semitism in Europe, economic instability and lack of democratic traditions in post-WWI Germany, the use of skillful and pervasive Nazi propaganda, and the acceptance by Germany’s major societal institutions of Hitler’s belief in a “racial hierarchy,” all played a significant role in the implementation of the Final Solution for Jews in Europe. The Holocaust demands an interdisciplinary approach because of the simple yet horrifying fact that the Nazis used medicine, art, religion, law, science, education and the media to carry out genocide.

**:: 10) Avoid direct comparisons, or a ranking of, genocides according to the number of the victims.**

It’s important for students to understand that each genocide has a unique history. The motives of perpetrators may be similar, but victims of genocide vary greatly—both between genocides and within a particular genocide. It is important to understand that every genocide had an indelible impact on a specific culture or cultures. Therefore, the 1.5 million killed in Armenia, the 200,000 killed in Bosnia, and the 800,000 killed in Rwanda should not rank below the 6 million killed during the Holocaust in terms of human suffering. All human suffering is deplorable, regardless of the number who suffered.

**:: 11) Avoid teaching that all genocides were inevitable.**

Individual leaders and citizens have a complex array of choices concerning personal involvement and behavior. Understanding the moral choices involved and exercised by government leaders and ordinary citizens produces good students of history. It is easy for students to become disillusioned and cynical when confronted with the horrors of genocide and to discount the importance of individual actions. Examining how individuals made important small and large scale decisions that ranged from the destructive to the heroic emphasizes the power of individual choices and the importance of decision making in the students’ own lives. Teaching students about genocide also reinforces in them the notion of the danger of inaction, both historically and in modern society, when individual or collective acts of injustice occur. Teaching about genocide can also help students to understand and analyze how democratic values and institutions are not automatically protected but require active, compassionate citizenship to sustain, including the ability to recognize and act when confronting the “danger signals” of intolerance.



∴ 12) Balance your teaching of genocides through the use of multiple perspectives.

Presenting a unidimensional perspective of only one group can skew the students' understanding of a genocide. For example, the over-emphasis on the role of rescuers at the expense of perpetrators or victims during the Holocaust may cause students to conclude that most non- Jews were rescuers during this time period. The facts prove otherwise, as “ at best, less than one half of one percent of the total population (of non Jews) under Nazi occupation helped to rescue Jews” (Oliner and Oliner, 1991, p.363). An exclusive focus on the actions of the perpetrators in a genocide may cause students to lump the experiences of all the victims into one category or to conclude that there was no resistance to genocide offered by any individuals or groups.

∴ 13) Recognize the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum defines the Holocaust as follows:

The state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims--6 million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

Never before had a government, one that had prided itself on its own citizens high level of education and culture, sought to define a religious group as a **race** that must be eliminated throughout an entire continent, not just within a single country. Never before had a government harnessed the immense power of technology for such destructive ends, culminating in the horror of Auschwitz-- a death camp that, at its peak, “processed” 10,000 Jews a day. Never before had a government summoned their best and brightest people to mobilize destruction and use mobile killing units (Einsatzgruppen) to systematically kill approximately 1.5 million individuals in 2 years. And never before had a government sought to dehumanize a group through such a devastatingly thorough and systematic use of propaganda that included the use of film, education, public rallies, indoctrination of the youth, radio, newspapers, art and literature.

# section two

## Three Frameworks for Teaching about Genocide

### Perpetrators Framework

#### The Beliefs and Actions of Perpetrators preceding Genocide



- 1) The perpetrators point to a long and exceptional history, often marked by their perception of great suffering.
- 2) The perpetrators glorify their own history by stating that they are engaging in a special historical or religious mission to rectify a wrong or to effect justice.
- 3) The perpetrators demean the victims' group by assigning to its members many negative and often nonhuman characteristics.
- 4) The perpetrators believe that they are under severe and immediate threat from the victims' group.
- 5) The perpetrators call for extreme action, (genocide) and excuse the nature of that action as necessary and justifiable in a time of crisis to protect themselves and their special mission.
- 6) The perpetrators prepare for this extreme action in an exceptionally well planned (often months or years in the making), and systematic way. They do not overlook important logistics or rely on blind passion and fury to carry out the genocide.
- 7) The perpetrators use multiple means of insuring participation and complicity from their members, including promises of material gain from the victims' assets and physical threats and terror.

### Documents to Use for the Armenia Genocide:

- 1) Document 10.3., p.162\*. Talaat: Excerpt from Ambassador Morgenthau's Story by Henry Morgenthau. This document illustrates #4 of the perpetrators framework.
- 2) Document 10.2., p.160\*. The Deportations: Excerpt from the Report of Lieutenant Sayied Ahmed Moukthar Baas, December 26, 1916. This document illustrates #6 of the perpetrators framework.

### Documents to use for the Holocaust:

- 1) Document 1.2., p.8\*. The Jews and Their Lies by Martin Luther, 1543.  
This document illustrates #1 of the perpetrators framework.
- 2) Document 1.3., p.10\*. Political Statement by Adolf Hitler, September 16, 1919.  
This document illustrates #2 of the perpetrators framework.
- 3) Document 2.3., p.24\*. Combating the Gypsy Nuisance by Heinrich Himmler, December 8, 1938. This document illustrates #3 of the perpetrators framework.
- 4) Document 3.1., p.38. Protocols of the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942.  
This document illustrates #6 of the perpetrators framework.

### Documents to Use for the Bosnian Genocide:

- 1) Document 11.1., p.188. Peter Maass in Conversation with a Serbian Woman.  
This document illustrates # 3 and #4 of the perpetrators framework.
- 2) Document 11.4., p.193. The Mind of Perpetrators. Document 11.5. Days in the Life of Bosnian Inmates, 1992. This document illustrates #5 of the perpetrators framework.

### Documents to Use for the Rwandian Genocide:

- 1) Document 12.2., p.210. The Hutu Ten Commandments, 1990. This document illustrates #7 of the perpetrators framework.

\*NOTE: All page number references for specific documents are from the paperback version of The Holocaust And Other Genocides.

## Holocaust Framework

### Historian Raul Hilberg's Six Stages of Destruction (The Holocaust)

Stage 1: Definition

Stage 2: Expropriation

Stage 3: Concentration

Stage 4: Mobile Killing Units

Stage 5: Deportation

Stage 6: Killing Centers

### Summary of Raul Hilberg's Six Stages of Destruction

#### :: Stage 1: Definition

How does one define being Jewish? Through Culture? Race? Religion? The challenge confronting the Nazis in 1933 was to define a religious group already assimilated into German society. The Interior Ministry of the Nazi government was responsible for "solving" this problem. This group divided the German population into two categories. "Aryans" were people with no Jewish ancestors and "Non-Aryans" were all persons, Jewish or Christian, who had at least one Jewish parent or grandparent.

In the regulation of April 11, 1933, the term non-Aryan descent was defined as any person who had a Jewish parent or grandparent. The first Regulation to the Reich Citizenship law of November 14, 1935, set up three categories for all non-Aryans in Germany. The term Mischlinge of the second degree meant any person who descended from one Jewish grandparent. The term Mischlinge of the first degree meant any person who descended from two Jewish grandparents but not belonging to the Jewish religion and not married to a Jewish person on September 15, 1935. Finally, the term Jew meant any person who descended from two Jewish grandparents belonging to the Jewish religion or married to a Jewish person on September 15, 1935 and persons descended from 3 or 4 Jewish grandparents.

Only those classified as Jews were targeted for all stages of the destruction process. The Nazis had based this definition of the Jewish community on a profound and startling contradiction. The Nazis called all decrees which defined people as Jews as "racial laws" but the criteria for determining Aryan v. non-Aryan was based on the religion of their ancestors, not on any racial characteristics.

### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 1.3., p.10. Political Statement by Adolf Hitler, September 16, 1919.
- 2) Document 2.1b and Document 2.1c., p.19. (2 photos—"Only for Jews" and "Jews are not wanted here.")

### Suggested use in the classroom:

Hitler's writing reveals his belief in "racial antisemitism" and can be used in the classroom by students to identify Hitler's main arguments. Getting students to identify and analyze the "facts," according to Hitler, leads them to understand the contradiction of classifying a group as a race based on their religion. The two photographs demonstrate the extremes of Nazi definition of non-Aryan as even park benches were segregated by "race."

### :: Stage Two: Expropriation

From 1933 to 1938 the Nazis systematically took away civil rights, education, occupations, private property, and synagogues from Jews in an effort to force Jews to emigrate and to make Germany free of Jews. This policy evolved slowly until its climax on November 9th and 10th, 1938, during Crystal Night. This two day government planned pogrom resulted in: 1000 Jews killed, 30,000 Jewish males sent to concentration camps, over 1,000 synagogues burned or destroyed, and over 800 Jewish businesses destroyed. The following Nazi laws are examples of expropriation:

#### Civil Rights

- 1) The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 7, 1933, required most Jews holding civil service jobs to retire.
- 2) The Reich Citizenship Law of September 15, 1935, declared Jews are no longer German citizens.

#### Education

- 1) A regulation in April, 1933, expelled all Jewish professors from German Universities.
- 2) A regulation in November, 1938, expelled Jews from German schools and declared they must attend Jewish schools.

#### Occupations

- 1) A regulation in the summer of 1933 stated that all Jewish artists and writers were prohibited from practicing their professions and all books published by or about Jews were burned.
- 2) A regulation in July of 1938 stated that the medical licenses of Jewish doctors had been canceled and they could only treat Jewish patients as non-licensed doctors.

### Private Property and businesses

- 1) The Regulation for the Elimination of the Jews from the Economic Life of Germany of November 12, 1938, stated that Jews could not own retail stores and must pay 1.25 million Reichsmarks for damages caused on Crystal Night.
- 2) A regulation in February, 1939, stated that all Jews must surrender all their gold, platinum, silver objects, precious stones, and pearls to the German government.

#### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 2.2., p.20. Excerpts from the Texts of the Nuremberg Laws
- 2) Document 2.4., p.25. Report on Crystal Night from Berlin

#### Suggested use in the classroom:

These excerpts from the Nuremberg Laws provide students with an excellent opportunity to understand the power of official actions by a government. Ask students to brainstorm why laws are important for the functioning of any society. After students share these lists, ask them if there is a difference between just and unjust laws. Once students understand the difference between just and unjust, have them apply their understanding of these two terms to the Nuremberg excerpts. Document 2.4 explores the behavior of German bystanders during Crystal Night and forces students to analyze the power of inaction during an incident of state sponsored violence. What are the responsibilities of citizens when another group of citizens are targeted for violence?

### :: Stage Three: Concentration

The policy of forced emigration became a logistical impossibility after the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, when over 2 million additional Jews came under Nazi control. The concentration of Jews in Germany was more gradual than in Poland, in part because the vast majority of German Jews were already living in cities. In Germany the Nazis did not set up ghettos but the **process** of concentration was the same as in Poland. The following stages occurred:

- 1) Severance of social contacts between Jews and "Aryan" citizens;
- 2) housing restrictions;
- 3) movement regulation;
- 4) identification measures;
- 5) the initiation of Jewish administrative machinery-the Jewish councils or Judenrat.

By a government decree of November 28, 1939, every Jewish community in Poland with a population of up to 10,000 had to elect a Judenrat of twelve members, and every community

with more than 10,000 people had to choose twenty-four (The Destruction of the European Jews, Hilberg, p. 75). These councils were to be filled with prewar Jewish community leaders. Before the war, these leaders were concerned with the educational, religious, and health issues facing the Jewish community.

With the formation of the ghettos these leaders now had the following functions to carry out:

- 1) the transmission of German directives and orders to the Jewish population;
- 2) the use of Jewish police to enforce German will;
- 3) the deliverance of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the German enemy (Hilberg, p.76). Under this decree the Jewish councils were held responsible for the carrying out of all orders.

On September 20, 1939, the office chiefs from the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) met and created the following objectives: 1) clear German-speaking areas of Jews; 2) Remove the Jewish population from the Polish countryside and 3) concentrate Jewry in ghettos within major cities. (Hilberg, p.65) The Polish Jews were placed by the Nazis at the bottom of the racial hierarchy and were viewed as sub-human. One of the creators of the ghetto system in Poland, Friedrich Uebelhoer, did not view the ghettos as permanent. "The creation of the ghetto," he said, "is, of course, only a transition measure. I shall determine at what time and with what means the ghetto-and thereby also the city of Lodz-will be cleansed of Jews. In the end, at any rate, we must burn out this bubonic plague" (Hilberg, p. 80). The first major ghetto was established in the city of Lodz in April, 1940, with the Warsaw ghetto following in October of the same year. The following chart illustrates key facts about the Warsaw ghetto (Hilberg, p.84):

Beginning in 1941 starvation was the official policy in the Warsaw ghetto and the results were drastic. In 1940 90 Jews died of starvation and in 1941 over 11,000 died of starvation. The overall death rate in Warsaw from 1940 to 1942 was over 83,000 people.

	City of Warsaw	"Aryan" Warsaw	Ghetto of Warsaw
Population	1,365,000	920,000	445,000
Area (sq. miles)	54.6	53.3	1.3
Rooms	284,912	223,617	61,295
Persons per room	4.8	4.1	7.2

### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 3.2., p.47. Images of the Warsaw Ghetto
- 2) Document 3.3., p.48. Excerpt from the Warsaw Ghetto Diary of Avraham Levin, Friday, June 5, 1942.

#### Suggested use in the classroom:

These two documents individualize the ghetto experience. Telling students that starvation was an official policy of the Nazis for the Warsaw ghetto inhabitants is important but showing them the impact of this policy through primary sources reveals the tragic impact on individual lives. A photo like document 3.2 raises powerful questions for students to consider like: Who is contained in an individual's "universe of obligation?" (Those that one feels compelled to help and comfort in times of crisis) Immediate family? Friends and classmates? Strangers on the street? A dying child lying on the sidewalk?

### :: Stage Four: Mobile Killing Unit

After the concentration stage the Nazis had reached a crucial dividing line. Crossing this threshold was referred to as "the final solution of the Jewish question" (Hilberg, p.99). The term "final" had a dual meaning for the architects of this solution. First, it meant finalizing the goal of becoming Jew-Free--it meant death. Second, the "Jewish Problem" would never have to be solved again as the first three stages of destruction (definition, expropriation, and concentration) could all be undone. Killing would be irreversible. A new phenomena was created with the idea of the Einsatzgruppen or mobile killing units. The idea of mobile killers attacking stationary victims was primarily created by the chief of the Security Police and founder of the RSHA Reinhard Heydrich. Four Einsatzgruppen groups were set up, with a total of 3,000 men, to follow behind the German army as they invaded the Soviet Union in June of 1941. The majority of officers of the Einsatzgruppen were professional men. They included a physician, a professional opera singer, and a large number of lawyers. They were not criminals nor delinquents but became efficient killers (Hilberg, p.105).

When the Einsatzgruppen crossed the border into the USSR, five million Jews were living under the Soviet flag. Four million Jews were living in territories later controlled by the German army (Hilberg, p.107). The killing operation was standardized throughout every city in the following manner:

- 1) Jews were rounded up to a central location such as a school or town square.
- 2) They were marched outside city limits and were forced to hand over all valuables and often clothing.
- 3) They were then shot, either individually or in mass execution style. The Einsatzgruppen



was able to move with such speed behind the advancing army that Einsatzgruppen A reported on October 15, 1941, that it had killed 125,000 Jews. Einsatzgruppen B reported on November 14, 1941, an incomplete total of 45,000 victims. Einsatzgruppen C reported on November 3, 1941, that it had shot 75,000 Jews. Einsatzgruppen D reported on December 12, 1941, the killing of 55,000 people (Hilberg, p.109).

While the goal of this process was to be as uniform and efficient as possible, three major problems began to plague both the soldiers of the Einsatzgruppen and the Nazi leadership. First, Hitler's plan for secrecy in carrying out these killings wasn't possible as many non-Jews witnessed the disappearance and killing of Jewish citizens. Second, although hundreds of thousands of Jews had already been shot by December, 1941, there were still large communities of Jews untouched by the Einsatzgruppen. The mobile killing units were simply too "slow" and "inefficient." Finally, the morale of some of the killers in the Einsatzgruppen units was being affected as evidenced by the following quote by a German commander to Himmler at the site of a mass shooting in the city of Minsk. "Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished for the rest of their lives! What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!" (Hilberg, p.137). Despite the Nazi perception of the "inefficiency" of the Einsatzgruppen units, between 1.25 and 1.5 million Jews were killed between 1941 and 1942.

#### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 3.5., p.50. The Jager Report
- 2) Document 3.6., p.58. Testimony of Hermann Graebe, November 10, 1945
- 3) Document 3.7., p.59. Excerpts from *There Once Was a World* by Yaffa Eliach

#### Suggested use in the classroom:

These three documents show the devastating effects of the mobile killing units (Einsatzgruppen) from different perspectives. All three could be used in a single lesson when students are asked, before reading all three, the question: **What was lost during this time period?** On one level, students could note the horrific precision with which Nazi leaders recorded the loss of life in the Jager Report. On another level, students could observe that 900 years of Jewish history was wiped out by the Einsatzgruppen in Yaffa Eliach's excerpt. Finally, students could understand that future generations were lost through Hermann Graebe's testimony as a bystander witnessing the execution of Jewish citizens, regardless of age or gender.

## :: Stage Five: Deportation

In the summer of 1941 discussions were held to lay the groundwork for the "final solution of the Jewish question." At the Wannsee conference on January 20, 1942, 15 high level Nazis were present and Heydrich (chairman of the RSHA) made the following points:

- 1) His office was responsible for the central direction of the "final solution" regardless of boundaries.
- 2) The evacuees were to be organized into huge labor groups. During this process, a majority would "fall away through natural decline." The survivors of this process would have to be 'treated accordingly' since these Jews were the core of Jewry and were people who could rebuild Jewish life.
- 3) Jews who had distinguished themselves on the German side in WWI were to be sent to Theresienstadt--a model camp.
- 4) Various types of "solution possibilities" were being explored and needed to be refined (Hilberg, p.166).

The sheer magnitude of the deportation operation is revealed in the numbers. Although at least 500,000 died in the ghettos, about 2,200,000 still remained in the deportation areas (Hilberg, p.189). Deportation meant mobilizing a vast bureaucratic structure and at the core of this structure was the Transport Ministry. This agency was responsible for all trains throughout Europe. The Ministry had to book all Jews for transport as passengers even though they would be traveling in freight cars. One way fares were charged and billed to the RSHA. Poland became the headquarters of the killing centers and was the "East." 1942 was the crucial year for deportation. Deportations were announced as policy in January and by the end of 1942 two-thirds of deportations were already over. Most of the Jews of Warsaw were sent to their death in Treblinka. In an effort to resist the deportations, Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rose up against the German forces. The uprising lasted nearly a month, from April 19 to May 16, 1943. Despite the intensity of the Jewish resistance, the Jews had fewer weapons and the Nazis reduced the ghetto to rubble. Nazi general Jurgen Stroop wrote the following report about the Warsaw uprising:

"The resistance put up by the Jews and bandits could be broken only by relentlessly using all our force and energy by day and night. On 23 April 1943 the Reichs Fuhrer SS issued through the higher SS and Police Furher East at Cracow his order to complete the combing out of the Warsaw Ghetto with the greatest severity and relentless tenacity. I therefore decided to destroy the entire Jewish residential area by setting every block on fire, including the blocks of residential buildings near the armament works. One concern after the other was sys -

tematically evacuated and subsequently destroyed by fire. The Jews then emerged from their hiding places and dug-outs in almost every case. Not infrequently, the Jews stayed in the burning buildings until, because of the heat and the fear of being burned alive they preferred to jump down from the upper stories after having thrown mattresses and other upholstered articles into the street from the burning buildings. With their bones broken, they still tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which had not yet been set on fire or were only partly in flames. Often Jews changed their hiding places during the night, by moving into the ruins of burnt-out buildings, taking refuge there until they were found by our patrols. Their stay in the sewers also ceased to be pleasant after the first week. Frequently from the street, we could hear loud voices coming through the sewer shafts. “

—Account from Nazi General Jurgen Stroop on the Warsaw ghetto uprising—April 1943.  
The Holocaust Years, ed. Nora Levin, p.259-260

#### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 3.8., p.61. German Railway Schedule, January 16, 1943
- 2) Document 3.4., p.48. Chaim Rumkowski's Address on the Deportation of the Children from the Lodz Ghetto, September 4, 1942

#### Suggested use in the classroom:

Here are two documents that reflect the impact of a single policy (the Final Solution) through the perspectives of perpetrators and victims. These documents reflect both the clinical detachment of Nazi killers and the impossible choices facing the Jewish leadership in the ghettos. The issue of bystanders is raised, particularly in the railway schedule, about those individuals, such as train conductors, who participated in the transport of Jews to the death camps. For students, these documents raise powerful questions about the actual concept of a bystander (i.e. can there be such a thing as a bystander during a time of genocide?) and the degree of involvement of bystanders/perpetrators who were not active killers.

#### :: Stage Six: The Killing Centers

The six extermination camps, Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Majdanek were unprecedented as never before had people been killed on an assembly-line basis. The euthanasia program was a dress rehearsal for the "Final Solution" as systematic killing of non-Jews began with the handicapped and those suffering from mental illnesses in Nazi Germany. The establishment of the death camps represented the pinnacle of Nazi bureaucratic efficiency as the following examples demonstrate:

- 1) The camps marked a shift from stationary killers and mobile victims towards a more efficient killing system of stationary killers and mobile victims.

- 2) Fewer than 150 workers were needed at Treblinka to kill an estimated 750,000 Jews.
- 3) Auschwitz could "process" up to 10,000 people in one day.

The first three death camps were Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. All three sites were chosen because of seclusion and access to railroad lines. All three camp layouts were similar as they were all designed to convince Jews they were in a transit camp and needed to clean themselves on the way to the "East." All three camps had gas chambers disguised as showers and were equipped with diesel motors. Auschwitz was created by Commander Rudolf Hoss and was the largest death camp. Auschwitz "improved" upon the previous three by containing ovens for disposal of bodies and a new type of gas: Prussic acid or Zyklon. Secrecy was key and at Auschwitz was done by verbal camouflage in the following manner:

- 1) Killing centers were referred to as the "East."
- 2) Gas chambers and crematorium units were known as special installations and bath houses.
- 3) The primary term for the killing operation itself was special treatment.
- 4) All camp personnel were sworn to secrecy.

The Killing process:

Deception was key for getting victims to follow orders. At Auschwitz, labor requirements were greater than at the previous three camps so a selection process, carried out by SS doctors, was done. With a simple flick of the wrist to the left meant death and to the right meant work. Children, the elderly, and the sick were sent to the left. One of the most effective lies repeated was that victims were told to undress for their showers before the soup that would be served afterwards became cold. The exact number of victims killed at each camp will never be known because the Nazis did not record the individuals who went straight to the gas chamber.

Here is an approximate number of people killed at each of the six death camps (Smoke and Ashes, Rogasky, p.84).

CAMP	VICTIMS	SURVIVORS
Chelmno	360,000	3
Belzec	600,000	2
Sobibor	250,000	64
Treblinka	800,000	Under 40
Maidanek	500,000	Under 60
Auschwitz	1,500,000 to 2,000,000	Several thousand, because it was both a concentration & death camp

Recommended Documents:

1) Document 3.9., p.64. Abraham Kszepicki on Treblinka

Suggested use in the classroom:

This powerful document individualizes the horror of the Treblinka death camp—800,000 Jews killed by fewer than 150 workers.

## Rwanda Framework Four Stages of the Rwandan Genocide



Stage 1: Definition (Identity)

Stage 2: Enemy-Making (Process of Othering)

Stage 3: Concentration

Stage 4: Killing Process

### :: Stage 1: Definition (Identity)

Real and perceived cultural differences between groups are used to begin and orchestrate genocide. In Rwanda the Hutus and Tutsis shared a common language and heritage. In the absence of meaningful distinctions between the groups, the extremist Hutus deliberately and systematically exaggerated small differences to denounce the Tutsis as inferior. Over time the perceived differences became ingrained in the identity of each group. Author Philip Gourevitch notes the irony about these lack of differences in his book, *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* :

“But the next time you hear a story like the one that ran on the front page of *The New York Times* in October of 1997, reporting on “the age-old animosity between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups,” remember that until Mbonyumutwa’s beating lit the spark in 1959 there had never been systematic political violence recorded between Hutus and Tutsis-anywhere.”

Recommended Documents:

Document 12.1., p.208. Excerpt from *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* by Alison Des Forges

Suggested use in the classroom:

This selection is an excellent piece for introducing students to the history of Rwanda and the general characteristics of the two central groups, Tutsis and Hutus. It also illustrates how the Hutus sought to define the Tutsis as different, and ultimately inferior. This selection also shows the difficulty of labeling groups as separate, distinct cultures and can serve as a springboard for discussion about how and why societies classify different groups.

### :: Stage 2: Enemy-Making (Process of Othering)

Before an enemy can exist, the **idea** of an enemy must be clearly etched into the hearts and minds of people. The Belgian colonial government started this process by issuing ethnic identity cards for the Rwandan population in 1933-34 and declared the country 85 percent Hutu and 14 percent Tutsi. The minority Tutsis were given preferential treatment by the Belgian government until Rwandan independence in 1962. In the years preceding the 1994 genocide Hutu extremists recalled this preferential treatment of Tutsis through various means of propaganda and through the passage of various laws that sought to punish the Tutsi minority for earlier “misdeeds.”

Recommended Documents:

Document 12.2., p.210. The Hutu Ten Commandments, 1990

Document 12.4., p.212. The Corruption of Language: Common Euphemisms of the Holocaust and the Genocide in Rwanda

Suggested use in the classroom:

These two selections are a powerful combination to demonstrate how one group, the Hutus, sought to create the idea of an enemy of another group, the Tutsis, through the use of propaganda. In the Hutu Ten Commandments, ask students to find the most persuasive selection as an example of how language and ideas shape public attitudes. In document 12.4, ask students for their opinion about why both the Nazis and the Hutus used euphemisms to describe murder. Students can also be asked to identify euphemisms that American public officials use when carrying out policies.

### :: Stage 3 and 4: Concentration and Killing Process

There are two especially chilling facts about the Rwandan genocide. One, that over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in just 100 days. Two, that the number of Hutus actively killing Tutsis was in the hundreds of thousands. Unlike Poland during the Holocaust, where a majority of Jewish victims were forced from their homes, herded into ghettos, and

then sent to concentration and death camps during a five year period, the victims of the Rwandan genocide were concentrated and killed in a more collapsed and accelerated fashion. One of first locations where Tutsis were killed in large numbers, in mid-April 1994, was in a church on a rocky hill called Nyarubuye. Author Philip Gourevitch writes:

“Considering the enormity of the task, it is tempting to play with theories of collective madness, mob mania, a fever of hatred erupted into a mass crime of passion, and to imagine the blind orgy of a mob, with each member killing one or two people. But at Nyarubuye, and at thousands of other sites in this tiny country, on the same days of a few months in 1994, hundreds of thousands of Hutus had worked as killers in regular shifts. In Nyarubuye, when Tutsis asked the Hutu Power mayor how they might be spared, he suggested that they seek sanctuary at the church. They did, and a few days later the mayor came to kill them. He came at the head of a pack of soldiers, policemen, militiamen, and villagers; he gave out arms and orders to complete the job well. No more was required of the mayor, but he also was said to have killed a few Tutsis himself.”

#### Recommended Documents:

Document 12.3., p.211. *The Interhamwe: Excerpt from an Interview with Gloriose Mukakanimba*, 1994.

#### Suggested use in the classroom:

This selection illustrates the final two stages of the Rwandan Genocide with horrifying immediacy and illuminates a central principle of genocide, the eradication of every man, woman, and child of a certain group. It also can be used to discuss why Hutu citizens were willing to turn so quickly on fellow neighbors who happened to be Tutsi. Another discussion topic could focus on how the low-tech method of killing, the machete, killed at a rate five times faster than the Nazis during the Holocaust, thereby destroying the argument that technology is necessary to eradicate large numbers of people. This selection should be used only after a careful study of Rwanda, not as an isolated piece, and with ample time for discussion.

# section three

## Five Paradoxes to Consider When Teaching about Genocide

### 1) The paradox and power of language.

How does one describe the indescribable? The sheer enormity and complexity of genocide compels one to confront the challenge of teaching the unteachable and describing the indescribable. How do students and teachers wrap themselves around numbers that defy the imagination—6 million killed in the Holocaust, 800,000 in Rwanda in 100 days? Getting students to understand the 1.5 million children killed during the Holocaust would mean asking them to imagine that the size of a small high school (700 students) would have to be killed every day for the next seven years to reach 1.5 million. As survivor Primo Levi has written with disturbing eloquence about the language used to describe life in the concentration camps:

“We say “hunger,” we say “tiredness,” “fear,” “pain,” we say “winter” and they are different things. They are free words, created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the (camps) had lasted longer, a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind with the temperature below freezing, and wearing only a shirt, underpants, cloth jacket and trousers, and in one’s body nothing but weakness, hunger and knowledge of the end drawing nearer. “

(Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, p.123)

### Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 11.3., p.190. Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia
- 2) Document 6.5., p.113. “The Butterfly” by Pavel Friedmann
- 3) Document 6.6., p.114. “For My Child” by Abraham Sutzkever
- 4) Document 6.8., p.116. “You Onlookers” by Nelly Sachs

### Suggested use in the classroom:

Using various art forms, such as poetry, monuments, and photographs, to teach about genocide helps students understand the vast array of powerful experiences and issues that are present within each genocide. These four selections, all written by children or adult victims of genocide, humanize and individualize the collective agony suffered by so many in Bosnia and during the Holocaust. These poems illustrate how children’s observations about geno-



cide often reflect a loss of innocence and faith in society's ability to create and maintain goodness. These selections can serve as a powerful catalyst for discussion about the special harm that children suffer in genocide.

The following poems were written by four of my 12th grade Humanities students after studying the Rwandan genocide:

### Rwanda

"Hands and feet are all alike,  
but fear between divides us"  
--Dave Matthews

We each have hands to help with  
and feet to run to someone's aid.  
We each have eyes to see injustice  
and tears to shed when eyes turn away.  
We all have emotions and fear.  
We have compassion and instinct to  
protect those around us who we love.  
We each have hearts that ache when it  
seems we cannot help.

But unfortunately, some are blinded by  
colors,

Others  
by ethnicity,

Others  
by political indifference.

How can I  
ignore death, violent death,  
Where helping hands and feet  
were chopped off, eyes saw the destruction  
of loved ones, and aching hearts were  
put to rest with a machete.

But how can I  
help when my hand  
won't stretch half-way across the earth?

--Gina Vizvary, 18

## Shelter Me

While I sit here in a comfy chair writing,  
Tutsis fall onto makeshift pallets of hay and mud,  
Scared to return to the home they knew,  
Where they might still have a merciless machete  
swung at them...

When I was twelve,  
Ignorance alone kept me wrapped up in my seventh grade life  
of spin-the-bottle and first kisses.  
If I had known, would my life have changed?  
What could I do that would save the lives,  
of 800,000 Tutsis?

Instead of reading Seventeen Magazine by the pool,  
Twelve-year old Tutsi girls cried,  
as the boy they played Truth or Dare with just yesterday  
tried to murder them.  
The closest I had come to death was  
being chased by a dog at track practice.  
Running, panting, trying to escape--  
And that was just a dog.

After that I could go home and watch TV comedies,  
Stupefy my mind and live happily for 6 more years  
before anyone told me that not all 18-year old  
girls are so sheltered.

--Jennifer Kiilerich, 18

## **Voluntary Blindness**

What happens when the world chooses not to know?

6 million people die in 6 years

people are never found

some are gassed

children are motherless

and mothers are childless.

What happens when the world does not know the meaning of genocide?

800,000 people die in 100 days

blood flows in the street like streams into a river

parents are macheted with their children in sight

babies are sliced in half

women with swollen bellies are butchered

blue dead bodies float up and down the streams

to give diseases to sister countries

WHAT HAPPENS???

The survivors are given a plaque

And are told, "Sorry, we didn't know."

## **Rwandan Nursery Rhyme**

by Ashley Maynor, 17 years old

Death be nimble, death be quick

I've been climbing up this Jack and Jill hill

Too long.

The cupboard is bare,

The dog is dead, and

I'm all bones.

Old King Cole is a cold, old soul

Whose body can be found down the lane.

Rub-a-dub dub, the U.N.'s in the tub

Drowning in apathy.

America's in the corner eating Christmas pie.

Bah, bah black Belgium have you any tools?

Yes, sir, yes sir, all in use.

All the kings' horses and all the kings' men

Couldn't put Rwanda back together again.

—Olusola Tribble, 18

## 2) The paradox and power of meaning.

“The Holocaust thus stands at a point of departure rather than a point of arrival in humankind's ceaseless efforts to draw lessons from its own experience.” —Jan Gross

The Holocaust has been described as a rupture or break with modern society because it defied the notion that each advancing century saw the betterment of humankind and that the means of creating a better society (e.g., science, law, technological advances) were used in an attempt to eliminate an entire group of people. Many students study historical events with the expectation that a closer examination will provide greater knowledge, understanding, and ultimately, a sense of closure about many aspects of these events. The study of genocide often defies this notion by raising more questions than it answers, and by leading students to grapple with important ethical issues that contain few conventional answers. These questions, and the issues they raise, are important for students to ponder, but such study does not lead to a neat, orderly conclusion about genocide.

Recommended Documents:

1) Document 7.1., p. 127. Warsaw Ghetto Monument

2) Document 7.2., p.128. Treblinka

## 3) The paradox and power of memory.

Elie Wiesel has written the following concerning the importance of studying the Holocaust: “If we stop remembering, we stop being.” While it is important that societies do not forget the genocides that occurred in the 20th century, one must also acknowledge the destructive power of memory. Hitler's claim that ‘no one remembers the Armenians’ was used as justification for pursuing genocidal policies. During the buildup toward genocide in Rwanda, Hutu extremists used the memory of persecution of the Hutus by the Tutsis in 1959 as a rallying cry and justification for killing. Clearly, the act of remembering has promoted greater understanding of past genocides but it also has been used by perpetrators as a tool to aid their destruction of human life.

Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 8.1., p.132.
- 2) Document 8.2., p.133
- 3) Document 8.3., p.135.

4) **The paradox and power of progress.**

The 20th century saw many technological innovations to improve the human condition, and yet saw more destruction and more genocides than any other century. After the Holocaust the cry was “never again” about the possibility of another such genocide, yet both Bosnia and Rwanda demonstrate that neither greater educational levels nor public awareness derived from mass media sources such as television make societies immune from this level of destruction. The great advances of the 20th century in the fields of medicine, education, healthcare, and law have not translated into a more tolerant world. Studying this century raises disturbing questions about the notion of “progress” when genocides occur during a period of great advances.

Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 12.6., p.216. Excerpt from President Bill Clinton’s Address to the People of Rwanda, March 25, 1998
- 2) Document 4.2., p.80. Nashville Tennessean, June 30, 1942, p.12: “1,000,000 Jews Said Killed by Germans”
- 3) Document 4.3., p.81. Bishop of Munster, Clemens August Count Von Galen, Protests “Euthanasia” Killings, August 3, 1941

5) **The paradox and power of individual actions for the common good.**

“Genocide, after all, is an exercise in community building.” —Philip Gourevitch

How does one define the common good? The perpetrators of genocide believe that elimination of a group of people is for the common good and for the betterment of their society. How else can one explain the motives and actions of a Rwandan Hutu minister who turns over some of his Tutsi congregation to be killed, in his own church, by Hutu extremists? How else can one explain the motives and actions of Nazi doctors, sworn to the Hippocratic oath of their profession, in performing medical experiments on Jews in Auschwitz? The common good, for perpetrators, means taking the conventional norms of any society ( use of logic, language, law and ethics) and twisting them into unconventional and terrifying practices. Yet, there have been heroic individuals who have risked severe punishment, and even death, to save others during a genocide. The entire town of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France successfully hid and saved over 2,000 Jews during the Holocaust.

Recommended Documents:

- 1) Document 4.1., p.78. Olga Lengyel, Resister In Auschwitz
- 2) Document 4.4., p.82. Magda Trocme (of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon) in “The Courage to Care”

# section four

## Journal Writing and Prompts

### Why should students keep a journal?

- :: A journal can serve as an avenue of expression about a powerful subject such as genocide, especially if students don't have the opportunity or feel uncomfortable about expressing themselves in class.
- :: A journal can create opportunities for genuine reflection about both the universal ideas and individual experiences within this subject matter and offer greater understanding of both through written expression.
- :: A journal can serve as a creative outlet for students to create poetry, songs, drawings in response to studying about genocide.
- :: A journal can set up a personal dialogue between student and teacher as students will often express themselves more seriously and thoughtfully in writing as opposed to speaking in front of a classroom full of their peers.

### Journal Writing Insights

I often give a journal prompt to students for homework and use the prompt the next day to start class with discussion of their individual writings and reflections. These prompts can also be used at the beginning or in the middle of a lesson as a fast-write: five to ten minutes of uninterrupted writing followed by small group or whole class discussion.

### Journal Prompts

#### 1) Who am I?

Asking students to respond to this question as homework the night before the beginning of a unit on genocide produces an amazing array of responses. Asking students how they identified themselves, or by which categories, (such as race, gender, religion, social class, etc.), can lead to a discussion of how a particular government classified groups of people during a genocide.

#### 2) All the people like us are we, and everyone else is they. –Rudyard Kipling

Asking students to respond to this quote in context to their particular school environment is a good jumping off point to making a connection with a particular society/government that started a genocide through classification of different groups.

3) Their synagogues should be set on fire...their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed..let us drive them out of the country for al time. –Martin Luther, 1542

Giving this quote to students , without the author, and asking them to write about its meaning and possible author is a good activity for demonstrating the historical origins of anti-Semitism.

4) What does it mean to be an “educated” person? What specific characteristics does this kind of person have?

This prompt can be used in conjunction with Nazi Germany having an educated populace. What is the purpose of education when, in the case of Nazi Germany, over 50% of doctors were members of the Nazi party?

5) What does citizenship mean to you? If tomorrow your U.S. citizenship were taken away, how would your attitude and outlook about your country and yourself change?

This prompt forces students to examine the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship and its power when stripped away.

6) When you think of the long and gloomy history of man, you find more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have ever been committed in the name of rebellion. –C.P. Snow

This prompt is good to use as a culminating response to a unit on genocide as students can agree or disagree using specific historical examples.

7) The world is too dangerous to live in–not because of the people who do devil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen. –Albert Einstein

This prompt is good to use when studying the behavior of “bystanders” and the choices that many ordinary citizens make during a genocide.

8) Genocide, after all, is an exercise in community building. –Philip Gourevitch

This prompt is difficult but valuable for students to understand as they usually associate community as a positive concept. Therefore, getting students to explore other meanings of the idea of community is important when studying the actions of perpetrators of genocide.

9) A lie, repeated often enough, eventually gains acceptance. –Josef Goebbels

Asking students to respond to this quote in context to their particular school environment is a good jumping off point to making a connection with a particular society/government that started and perpetuated a genocide through different means of propaganda.



10) The law of existence requires uninterrupted killing, so that the Better may live.

—Adolf Hitler

This prompt is particularly useful when making connections to the eugenics movement and its ideas on inferior races, the handicapped, and the use of “science” to prove racial superiority/inferiority.

11) I graduated from a special school. Four years I spent there...all my days were nights. Everything that was near and dear to me they took. There is only one thing worse than Auschwitz itself, and that is if the world forgets there was such a place.

—Henry Appel, survivor

This quote illustrates the importance of studying history, and genocides, and asks for the question: Can education and awareness of past genocides prevent future ones?

12) Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren't born.

—Ervin Staub

Asking students to agree or disagree with this quote, with historical or personal examples, can lead to a good discussion about the motivations of those who choose to either help or harm others.

13) Where they burn books, they will soon burn people. —Heinrich Heine (19th century German Poet)

Asking students to reflect on the importance of books and libraries by asking: Is there any problem with burning/destroying books, especially unpopular ones? can lead to discussion about the implications when they are banned or destroyed. Is more than just the book being destroyed when this occurs?