

Exploring the Evidence

The Holocaust, Cambodian Genocide, and Canadian Intervention



Centre commémoratif
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

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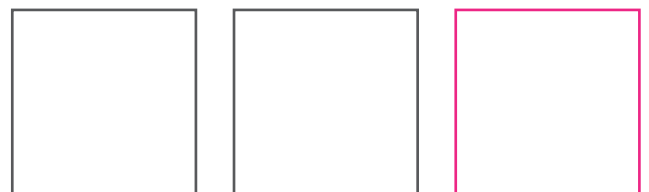
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General Explanation of Program

This education program on Canada's intervention during the Holocaust (1933-1945) and the Cambodian genocide (1975-1979) reflects on genocide, human rights, and the issues relating to intervention. Students study the history of the Holocaust and of the Cambodian genocide in order to reflect on the possibilities of intervention, as well as the principles that guide individuals and nations to act to protect human life. Particular attention is given to the role of Canadians and their government.

Upon completion of the program, students will have mastered the notions of rights and fundamental freedoms, genocide, and issues relating to the intervention and the protection of human rights.

Learning Objectives

To acquire the notional content pertaining to:

- The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945)
- The history of the Cambodian genocide (1975-1979)
- Canadian immigration policies
- Canadian intervention during the world conflict
- Canadian humanitarian intervention
- The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR)
- The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (CPPC)
- Canada's role within the United Nations Organization (UN)

To master the central concepts of:

- Genocide
- Intervention
- Rights

To develop the competencies of:

- Analyzing primary and secondary written and visual sources
- Practising historical and political interpretation
- Reflecting in a critical and complex way on international social issues

Pedagogical Approach

The activities contained herein reflect the historical method of interpreting facts by analysing primary and secondary sources.

It is a non-linear method with the following steps: Reading documents, picking out facts and information, establishing connections between the facts, and interpreting the facts in order to answer a question (giving meaning to the documents).

Links to Academic Programs of Study

Contemporary World

Subject-specific competencies:

- Understanding a contemporary world issue (genocide)
- Taking a position on a contemporary world issue (intervention)

The students are encouraged to:

- Interpret a contemporary world issue, in particular genocide
- Establish connections between past genocides and contemporary tensions and conflicts
- Establish connections between the facts, recognize the similarities and differences between the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide
- Define the terms genocide and human rights
- Improve their knowledge with respect to the exercise of human rights and freedoms, as well as international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN)
- Develop possible courses of action with respect to human rights, reflect on the means and principles leading to intervention in defence of human rights
- Take a position with respect to the issue of intervention in contemporary cases of genocide
- Use as cultural reference points the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948)

Ethics and Religious Culture

Subject-specific competencies:

- Reflecting on ethical issues
- Dialoguing

The students are encouraged to:

- Discuss a social issue - the defence of human rights and dignity
- Reflect on ethical issues: genocide as a violation of human rights and intervention in a foreign country
- Look at the tensions and conflicts between values and their potential consequences to human rights and dignity
- Engage in dialogue and develop a point of view on defending human rights

Symbol key



Duration of activity



Appendix



See DVD



Recommendation / Additional information

Proposed Method

The program is divided into five parts.

Part 1 -- The Holocaust

Part 1 consists of a historical examination of the genocide of the Jews during WWII. The objective is for students to familiarize themselves with this event and to see how Canada intervened

Activity 1	Initiating event / trigger
Activity 2	Activating students' knowledge
Activity 3	Historical examination of the Holocaust
Activity 4	Analysis of Canada's intervention

Part 2 – Human Rights and Intervention

Part 2 examines the issue of defending human rights and of intervention in general, as well as in the context of WWII. International legislation (*UDHR* and *CPPCG*) will be studied, and an activity will be done on the 1942 and 1943 Allied declarations.

Activity 1	Analysis of the international legislation (Was the Holocaust genocide?)
Activity 2	Declarations of the Allies and the Nuremberg international military tribunal

Part 3 – Museum visit and listening to a survivor's life story

In Part 3, students visit the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and hear a Holocaust survivor's life story. These activities will help to formalize what has been learned about the Holocaust.

Part 4 – The Cambodian Genocide

Part 4 is a historical examination of the genocidal crimes committed in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Students learn about this event and discover the nature of Canada's intervention with respect to this event.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Activity 1 | Initiating event / trigger |
| Activity 2 | Historical examination of the Cambodian genocide |
| Activity 3 | Analysis of Canada's intervention |
| Activity 4 | Genocide |

Part 5 – Summary

The objective in Part 5 is to compare the two historical events (similarities and differences in the stages leading to genocide) and to reflect generally on the issues relating to intervention, both then and now.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Activity 1 | Analysis of the stages that lead to genocide (comparison of the two) |
| Activity 2 | Reflection on intervention in the present day |

Part 1 – The Holocaust

As they exercise their historical critical-thinking skills, students are initiated to the history of the Holocaust and the role played by individual Canadians and their government.

Activity 1



30 minutes

Initiating event / trigger

Objective:

To arouse students' interest in the Holocaust through the reading and analysis of a letter written by a Jewish resistance fighter.



Method:

1. Ask the students to read the letter and do a critical analysis in response to the questions.
2. Collect the entire class' responses to the various questions.
3. Take note of the hypotheses and questions that have been put forward. Tell the students that possible answers will be revealed in the course of their study.
4. Give an overview of the facts that were established after reading the letter, and of the student hypotheses about the events being studied.



This activity can be done in small groups or with the class as a whole. It is important that every student know how to analyze a document, as this exercise will recur several times in the program



Activating prior knowledge of the Holocaust and the Jews

Objective:

To identify students' knowledge of the Holocaust and of the Jewish people.

Method:

1. Ask the class:

- Who has seen the films *The Downfall*, *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist*, *Life is Beautiful*, or others?
- What do the films have in common?
- What do you know about WWII?

Continue with the next question.

- Have you ever heard the words "Holocaust," "Nazism," "Hitler," "Jew," "genocide," "antisemitism"?

Divide the students into groups of four and have them define any one or all these terms.



Ask each group to write the answer to the following question (in point form or in a concept web):

- What do you know about the war?

2. Show various photos of pre-war Jews and ask the students to describe what they see, noting the characteristics of pre-war Jews.



3. Have the students reflect on the phenomenon of discrimination (particularly State discrimination that decides who is an enemy and who is not, without ever considering whether these people see themselves as such).

Begin student reflection by asking:



- What is a prejudice or a stereotype?
- What is a scapegoat?
- Who can be a victim of discrimination?

Activity 2



45 minutes



As is the case today, in the past it was not always possible in the past to identify Jews by their appearance. Moreover, as in Canada today, European Jews then had a variety of practices; they ranged from secular Jews (non-observant) to those who were deeply religious and lived according to the laws of the Torah, their sacred book.



Activity 3



variable

Historical examination of the Holocaust

Objective:

To acquire historical information on the Holocaust, through the analysis of documents.



Method:

1. Divide the students into groups of four. Give each group a series of documents. The students must analyze the documents to answer pertinent questions. Tell them that their task is to extract information (spatiotemporal context, important facts [ideology, events], persons involved) and to put this information into chronological order.



2. Once the documents are analyzed, all the groups come together to pool their information. Each team will appoint a spokesperson who will present the part of history that their team discovered in their dossier.



3. Summary or assessment activity: The students will answer the following questions:
 - What are the main characteristics of the Holocaust?
 - What elements of the social, political, and economic context explain this event?
 - Who are the executioners?
 - Who are the victims?
 - When did the genocide occur?
 - Why did the genocide happen?
 - What ideology is behind the genocide? What are the main ideas?
 - Where did the genocide take place?
 - How did the genocide end?

Analysis of Canada's Intervention

Activity 4

Objective:

To reflect on the reactions of the Canadian government and Canadian citizens regarding the persecution of the European Jews.

To understand the complexities of intervention

Method:

1. Divide the class into six teams. Assign one of the following three tasks to each team (two teams per task):
 - a. Jewish immigration to Canada
 - b. The positions of Prime Minister Mackenzie King
 - c. The speeches of Mr. Samuel Bronfman, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress

2. Lead a class reflection on the 1947 refugee policy, the first Canadian policy to accept refugees.
3. Lead a class discussion on the means that were available to Canadians to help the Jews, on their knowledge of the events and/or the choices or possibilities available to the Canadian State during the war.

Using what they learned in the previous tasks, ask the students to summarize the interventions by the Canadian government and Canadian organizations, such as; admission of a few immigrants during the war, sponsorship within the Jewish community, and participation in the war.

4. Discuss what was done by Canada and Canadians. Do a historical assessment (N.B. no value judgements.)



2 lessons

Part 2 – Human Rights and Intervention

The objective in Part 2 is to understand that after the Holocaust the international community sought to take measures to prevent genocides, and it established structures for reflection and intervention. This is a reflection on human rights and on the instruments of justice that ensure the respect of human rights and the punishment of violations.

Activity 1



80 minutes



The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or *La charte des droits et libertés de la personne [Québec]* can be included in the study.

A study of international texts

Objective:

To learn about two pieces of legislation that are still central to international politics and justice.

- *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*
- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*



Method:

1. Study of the international legislation
 - a. Reflection on human rights – activation of prior knowledge (40 minutes)

To encourage discussion, ask the students the following questions:

- What is a right? Give examples.
- Who has rights?
- Who decides on what is a right?
- Who puts them into effect?

Then ask the students to read the summary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and to express their reaction(s) to the rights it contains.

Discuss some of the following questions:

- Does a state have all the rights on its territory?
- In what ways does a democratic state differ from a totalitarian one? Are there countries today still living under a totalitarian regime?
- Can genocide occur in a democratic state?
- What can be done when a state turns against its citizens? What are possible individual reactions? Hide? Stay away? Collaborate? Resist?

- Who can intervene when a state turns against its citizens (individuals, societies, justice system, neighbouring states, others)?
- Under which principles should other countries intervene in cases where the population (or a segment of the population) of a country is threatened?
- Is an international organization (such as the UN) needed with the objective of monitoring countries and intervening when citizens are denied their rights?
- Can individuals intervene to defend human rights? How? Do you know of specific examples of intervention?
- In an ideal world, what role could States or international organizations play to protect human rights?



b. Defining genocide (20 minutes)

Ask the students for their definition of genocide. Write the elements of the definitions on the board.

Have the students read the UN definition and discuss again.



c. Was the Holocaust genocide? (20 minutes)

Ask the students to discuss and to answer the questions that follow. You can choose to record the answers or to have an open discussion.

- Based on the official definition of genocide, can we state that the Holocaust was genocide? Why?
- What Jewish rights were flouted during the Holocaust?

Take again the elements of the definition and illustrate them with the Holocaust.

d. Defending human rights today

- Do you know of examples where human rights are being violated today? Give examples of current international or national instances.
- Do you know of other examples of genocide?
- For what reasons were certain groups the victims of genocide (religion, social status, ethnic origin, skin colour, political convictions, others)?
- In your opinion, why are we studying this topic as part of our course? What purpose does it serve?



Exact answers to these questions are not required. The aim is to have students reflect on the fact that citizens' rights are protected by the State, and that this is not enough. The students should also grasp that a democratic State, a rule of law, is committed to respecting and protecting the rights of its citizens, while a totalitarian State can decide otherwise. They should, moreover, recognize that individuals have a role to play in protecting their own rights and those of other human beings.



Draw the students' attention to the term "race." Is the term appropriate in this document? Specify that there is not just a single race of human beings and that, although the use of the term "race" to describe cultural or ethnic differences is inappropriate, it does not nullify the official document.

Activity 2



1 hour

Declarations of the Allies and the Nuremberg international military tribunal

Objective:

To establish a connection between the legislative texts and the Holocaust. To understand that the Nuremberg international military tribunal was the first instance of international justice. It also marked the first time that the sovereignty of a state was curtailed in favor of protecting human rights.

Method:

1. Have the students do the activity on the Allied declarations of 1942 and 1943.



2. Present students with the main characteristics of the Nuremberg tribunal.

- a. Remind the students that the Allies' response to punish the criminals responsible for the Holocaust was to try them in a court of law. They set up the first international tribunal, the Nuremberg international military tribunal. Give an overview of its characteristics.



- b. Was the decision of the Allies to bring the criminals to justice justified? Was it the best option?



The aim of this activity is to show that the Allied leaders were well aware of the treatment inflicted on the Jews of Nazi Europe and to note that, apart from military intervention, there was no structure of international justice in place at that time to bring the guilty to trial.

Part 3 – Museum Visit

General objective:

The museum visit, which can be followed by a survivor's life story, provides a structured summary of the subject under study, the genocide of the Jews; it also enables the students to apply their newly acquired knowledge in a new context.



Method: BEFORE the visit, in class

1. Present the eight stages of genocide, as developed by Stanton.



2. It is important to consider not only the executioners' role but also the various reactions of the victims during the event.



3. Review with the students the different types of Canadian intervention as seen in the first part of this program.

Preparing for the visit

We suggest that the students be divided in groups of two or three (depending on the size of the class) – the visits will take place in groups of approximately 15 students – and that each group be assigned a task from among the following: stages of genocide, examples of resistance, examples of intervention).



It is important that the students work in groups so that they can focus on the rich lessons that will be learned during the guided tour.

Survivor's life story

After the visit, the students can listen to a survivor's life story either at the museum or in the classroom.

The survivors present their personal experience of the Holocaust, thus helping the students to put a human face on the numbers and to understand the impact of the Holocaust on the Jews' daily life.



Return to class: Pooling

The pooling of the groups' findings and the ensuing discussion will serve to summarize the first two phases of the program (The Holocaust and Human Rights).



If you wish, you can ask a group of students to use the example of the survivor they have met to illustrate how he/she lived through the persecution of the Jews and the various interventions (or non-interventions).

Part 4 – Cambodian Genocide

The aim of Part 4 is to learn about the Cambodian genocide that occurred between 1975 and 1979, as well as Canada's intervention to save the victims.

Initiating activity / trigger

Objective:

To have the students reflect and to arouse their interest in the subject.

Method:

1. Before starting, create an ambiance by playing Khmer music. The national anthem of Democratic Kampuchea under the Khmer Rouge or any other music of that period can be found at these sites:
 - <http://www.d.dccam.org/Archives/Musics/Music.htm>
 - http://www.d.dccam.org/Archives/Musics/Songs/Khmer_Rouge_National_Anthem.mp3
2. Show the photo of Duch without naming him and ask the students to imagine what his story might be.



Student materials

3. Tell the students that this man lives in Cambodia. Situate the country on a world map.
4. Introduce Duch briefly.



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5. Announce the topic of Part 4: The study of the Cambodian genocide and Canada's role in this event.
6. Who are the Cambodians? Briefly present the culture and history of Cambodia before the genocide.



14

It is important that the students understand that the executioners and the victims belonged to the same ethno-cultural group.

Activity 1



20 minutes

Activity 2



60 minutes

Historical examination of the Cambodian Genocide

Objective:

To familiarize students with the history of this genocide, as well as the victims, the executioners, the issues, the methods, etc.



14 + 15

Method:

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group a series of documents. The students must analyze the documents to answer pertinent questions. Tell them that their task is to extract information (facts, persons, events) and to put this information into chronological order.

2. Once the documents are analyzed, all the groups come together to pool their information. Each team will appoint a spokesperson who will present the part of history that their team discovered in their dossier.

3. Viewing of the short documentary *Life in the Open Prison*

<http://citizenshift.org/life-open-prison-2>

This film, made by the high school students of St. George's School of Montreal, presents the genocide and excerpts from the interviews with survivors presently living in Montreal.

Ask the students to identify the information on the genocide found in the film.

4. Summary or assessment activity: The students will answer the following questions:



14 + 16

- What are the main characteristics of the Cambodian genocide?
- Who are the executioners?
- Who are the victims?
- When did the genocide occur?
- What ideology led to the genocide? What are the main ideas?
- Where did the genocide take place?
- What elements of the social, political, and economic context explain this event?
- How did the genocide end?



33 minutes

Analysis of Canada's Intervention

Objective:

To understand Canada's position at the time of the genocide and to learn of the initiatives taken to come to the victims' aid.

Method

1. Assign the activity based on Minister Jacques Couture's letter.



2. Assign the activity on Canada's intervention in Cambodia.

- Did Canada know what was happening in Cambodia?



- Did Canada have economic interests in Cambodia?



- Did Canada have the means to intervene?



Activity 3



45 minutes



Even though Cambodia was sealed off from international journalists and other countries, individuals such as Pin Yathay related what was happening in that country. The world was not altogether in the dark.



Prime Minister P.E. Trudeau was one of the first political leaders to encourage commerce with China, the only country to recognize and to trade with Cambodia. Was that reason enough not to stop the Khmer Rouge?



After the Holocaust, the international community acquired reference documents; namely, the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which declare the moral commitment to intervene in order to protect the rights of all people.

Activity 4



1 lesson

Genocidal process

Objective:

To review Stanton's stages and to analyze the Cambodian genocide in terms of these categories for a comparison with the Holocaust table completed during the museum visit.

Method:

1. Divide the class into teams. Assign one stage to each team and ask the students to illustrate each stage, using their knowledge of the Cambodian genocide.



2. Ask a spokesperson for each team to share the results with the class.
3. Gather the responses from each team and distribute them to all the students so that each has the same information. This table will be useful in the next section.



Two teams can work on the same theme. Each team must identify two or three elements that illustrate each stage.

Part 5 - Summary

General objective:

This section allows students to exercise their critical judgement with respect to the crime of genocide and the issue of intervention to protect human rights.

Comparison of the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide, a question of methodology

Objective:

Using the scale of the eight stages of genocide, the students will understand the differences and similarities between the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide. They will realize that it is possible to recognize genocide when it occurs and how to intervene in order to stop it.



Method:

1. Make teams of four and ask them to compare their tables that illustrate the eight stages of genocide in the cases of both the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide. Ask each team to observe two major differences and two major similarities.
2. Ask the students to record the main types of intervention by Canada or its citizens during the two events under study. Ask them to describe the interventions. Were they far-reaching, costly, enduring, effective, etc.?



3. Ask the teams to share their results with the whole class and to note the differing responses of other teams.
4. Discuss the results.

Activity 1



30 minutes



It is essential that the study of the interventions be critical because, in the end, very little was done to stop the two genocides.

Activity 2



1 lesson

Reflection on intervention in the present day

Objective:

To update the reflection on Canada's intervention and on contemporary issues.

Method:

1. Ask the students to read the recommendations addressed to the Canadian government, adapted from the report of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Mobilizing the Will to Intervene and then to answer the pertinent questions.
2. Appoint a secretary for each team who will write down the best ideas of the team in response to each question. The team as a whole will select the best ideas.
3. Ask a spokesperson to convey the majority opinion of the team with respect to the questions asked in the document.
4. If possible, give the students time to write to their government representatives about the contemporary issues that concern them.



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