

LESSON PLANNING

In *Social Studies for Secondary Schools 4th edition* (New York: Routledge, 2014) I discussed four different lesson plan formats (Chapter 8, pages 218 - 243) and examined in-depth the component parts of an activity-based lesson (Chapter 9, pages 254 - 274), which is the format that I prefer. For this book I am reproducing the ingredients of an activity-based lesson. This is followed by a sample lesson plan on the Armenian genocide using the format and an activity sheet. In this format state standards would be listed in the Goals/objectives and Main ideas/understandings sections.

A. Ingredients of an Activity-Based Lesson

Unit: This locates the lesson in the overall conceptual sequence of what is being taught.

Aim: A question that a particular lesson is designed to answer or a statement or phrase introducing the topic of a lesson. Usually it is written on the board at the start of the lesson. Sometimes it is elicited from students during the early stages of a lesson.

Goals/ objectives: The skills, concepts, and content that students will learn about during the lesson. Can also include social/behavioral/classroom community goals. Goals are broad and achieved during a long period of time. Objectives are specific short-term goals that are achievable during a particular lesson.

Main ideas/ understandings: The underlying or most important ideas about a topic that inform a teacher's understanding and influence the way lessons and units are organized. These are the ideas that teachers want students to consider. They can be formulated as statements or as broad questions that become the basis for ongoing discussion.

Materials: The maps, documents, records, and equipment needed by teachers and students during the lesson to create the learning activities.

Activities/ lesson development: This is the substance of the lesson. In this section a teacher explains how students will learn the goals and objectives. It includes discussions, document analysis, mapping, cartooning, singing, performing drama, researching, cooperative learning, and teacher presentations.

Do now activity: An introductory activity that immediately involves students as they enter the room. It almost always involves providing students with material to read or analyze and questions to answer.

Motivation(al) activity: A question, statement, or activity that establishes a learning context and captures student interest in the topic that will be examined. Motivations connect the subject of the lesson to things that students are thinking about or are interested in. They often relate the main ideas and historical content that will be explored with contemporary events.

Compelling questions: Prepared questions that attempt to anticipate classroom dialogue. They are designed to aid examination of materials, generate class discussions, and promote deeper probing. Medial summary questions make it possible for the class to integrate ideas at the end of an activity.

Transitions: These are key questions that make it possible for students to draw connections between the information, concepts, or understandings developed during a particular activity with other parts of the lesson and to a broader conceptual understanding.

Summary: A concluding question or group of questions that make it possible for the class to integrate or utilize the learning from this lesson and prior lessons.

Application: Extra optional questions or activities planned for this lesson that draw on and broaden what students are learning in the unit. These can be used to review prior lessons or as transitions to future lessons.

Homework assignment: This is a reading, writing, research, or thinking assignment that students complete after the lesson. It can be a review of the lesson, an introduction to a future lesson, background material that enriches student understanding, an exercise that improves student skills, or part of a long-term project.

B. Sample Lesson Plan

Unit: Genocide in the 20th Century (this is the 2nd lesson in the unit following an introductory lesson defining genocide).

Aim Question: Why should the world remember the Armenian Golgotha?

Goals/objectives: Students will examine maps to locate the Ottoman Turkish Empire and to evaluate evidence of genocide.

Working in teams and individually, students, acting as historians, will evaluate evidence presented by photographs, newspaper articles, and personal testimony.

Based on the evaluation of evidence, students will draw historical conclusions about the treatment of the Armenians in Turkey during World War I.

Main ideas/understandings: Between 1915 and 1918 over one million ethnic Armenians living in modern day Turkey were murdered or marched into the desert to die of exposure, thirst, or starvation by the Turkish military, police, and militias.

Although the government of Turkey continues to deny that genocide took place, primary sources including photographs, newspaper reports, and the memoirs of survivors document these events.

The failure of the world to defend the Armenians or even remember what happened to them was taken into account by Adolf Hitler when he planned Germany's attack on Poland in 1939 and the extermination of European Jews and other people.

Materials: Quote from Adolf Hitler; PowerPoint with maps and photographs from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/armenian-genocide-photos>; <http://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2009/06/30/armenian-genocide>; and <http://www.armenian-genocide.org>; edited passages from the memoir, *Armenian Golgotha* (NY: Vintage, 2010) written by Grigoris Balakian.

Activities/ Lesson Development

Do Now: Read the statement by German *Fuehrer* (leader) Adolf Hitler to commanding generals just prior to the invasion of Poland in 1939 and answer questions 1 – 3.

“What the weak western European civilization thinks about me does not matter . . . I have sent to the East only my ‘Death Head units’ with the orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of the Polish race or language. Only in such a way will we win the vital space we need. Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?”

(The New York Times, “Partial Text of Talks on Poland,” November 24, 1945, p. 7)

Questions

1. *What order did Adolf Hitler give to German generals attacking Poland?*
2. *Why did Hitler believe the attack on Poland was justified?*

3. *In your opinion, why did Hitler refer to the extermination of Armenians by Turks during World War I?*

Motivation: “*Golgotha*” is the biblical name for the hill in Jerusalem where Jesus of Nazareth is supposed to have been crucified. The name has come to mean a place or occasion of great suffering. In the twentieth century it was used to describe events that would later be called genocide. Between 1915 and 1918 over one million ethnic Armenians living in modern day Turkey were murdered or marched into the desert to die of exposure, thirst, or starvation by the Turkish military, police, and militias. ***In your opinion, why did Adolf Hitler refer to the annihilation of Armenians in this statement just before the start of World War II?***

Transition: *We will be examining photographs, maps, newspaper accounts, and a personal memoir of a survivor that document what happened to Armenians in Turkey during World War I. The question we need to consider is: Why should the world remember the Armenian Golgotha?*

Activity: PowerPoint Slides Showing Photographs, Maps, and Newspaper Headlines

Questions (about map and photographs)

1. *In what area of the world was the Ottoman Turkish Empire located?*
2. *This map shows the Ottoman Turkish Empire at the outbreak of World War I. What contemporary countries were parts of this empire?*
3. *What do we learn from the key for the map on extermination sites?*
4. *What do we learn from the map on extermination sites?*
5. *These photographs of Armenian deportees were taken by Armin Wegner, a second lieutenant in the German army. Wegner was stationed in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Describe what you see in each picture.*

6. As a historian, would you consider these photographs strong evidence that the Armenian genocide took place?

7. How might Turkish officials interpret these photographs differently?

Transition: What other evidence would you want to see before you definitively concluded that genocide took place in Turkey?

Questions (about newspaper articles):

1. What evidence is provided in these *New York Times* headlines and excerpts?

2. Lord Bryce was a British official who also charged that German troops committed atrocities in Belgium. In your opinion, is he a trustworthy witness? Explain.

Activity: *Memoir of Father Grigoris Balakian* (students will read the memoir and answer the questions working in teams)

Questions (about survivor memoir)

1. Who was the author of this memoir?

2. According to the Turkish officer, how many Armenians were killed in this district?

3. How were the people murdered?

4. In your opinion, based on this evidence should the treatment of Armenians in Turkey be considered genocide? Why?

Summary: *Are you convinced by the evidence that actions taken against the Armenians during World War I were genocide? Why?*

Application: In March 2010 a committee of the United States House of Representatives approved a resolution that the Armenian Golgotha was genocide. However the Turkish government, a military ally of the United States, continues to lobby against the resolution. It does

not want it approved by the House and Senate and signed by the U.S. President. In your opinion, do you think the U.S. government should formally endorse the view that what happened to the Armenians was genocide? Explain.

C. Sample Activity Sheet

***Aim:** Why should the world remember the Armenian Golgotha?*

Do Now: Read the statement by German *Fuehrer* (leader) Adolf Hitler to commanding generals just prior to the invasion of Poland in 1939 and answer questions 1 – 3.

“What the weak western European civilization thinks about me does not matter . . . I have sent to the East only my ‘Death Head units’ with the orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of the Polish race or language. Only in such a way will we win the vital space we need. Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?”

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Questions

- 1. What order did Adolf Hitler give to German generals attacking Poland?*
- 2. Why did Hitler believe the attack on Poland was justified?*
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New York Times headlines (1915)

(A) TELL OF HORRORS DONE IN ARMENIA (October 4, 1915)

The Committee on Armenian Atrocities, a body of eminent Americans who have been investigating the situation in Turkish Armenia, issued a detailed report asserting that in cruelty

and in horror nothing in the past thousand years has equaled the present persecutions of the Armenian people by the Turks.

(B) GOVERNMENT SENDS PLEA FOR ARMENIA (October 5, 1915)

It is probably well within the truth to say that of the 2,000,000 Armenians in Turkey a year ago, at least 1,000,000 have been killed or forced to flee the country, or have died upon the way to exile, or are now upon the road to the desert of Northern Arabia, or are already there.

(C) MILLION ARMENIANS KILLED OR IN EXILE (December 15, 1915)

In a statement issued yesterday from the offices of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief at 70 Fifth Avenue further atrocities committed by Turks against Armenian Christians were detailed and additional evidence was given to support Lord Bryce's assertion that the massacres are the result of a deliberate plan of the Turkish Government to "get rid of the Armenian question," as Abdul Hamid once said, by getting "rid of the Armenians."

Armenian Golgotha: A survivor's memoir (*Armenian Golgotha*, NY: Vintage, 2009)

Golgotha is the biblical name for the hill in Jerusalem where Jesus of Nazareth is supposed to have been crucified. The name has come to mean a place or occasion of great suffering. In the twentieth century it was used to describe events that would later be called genocide.

Between 1915 and 1918 over one million ethnic Armenians living in modern day Turkey were murdered or marched into the desert to die of exposure, thirst, or starvation by the Turkish military, police, and militias. The government of Turkey continues to deny that genocide occurred. It argues the death of the Armenians happened because of World War I and that the number of deaths is inflated.

In March 2010 a committee of the United States House of Representatives approved a resolution that the Armenian Golgotha was genocide. However the Turkish government, a

military ally of the United States, continues to lobby against the resolution. It does not want it approved by the House and Senate and signed by the U.S. President.

In 1922, an Armenian priest named Father Grigoris Balakian published an account of his deportation from the city of Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, with 250 other Armenian intellectual and political leaders. Father Balakian was able to use his fluency in German to help him escape from the doomed caravan. In the edited excerpt included here, Father Balakian reports on conversations with a police captain named Shukri in charge of escorting the prisoners. He titled the chapter “The Confessions of a Slayer Captain” (139-150).

(A) Now it’s not secret anymore; about 86,000 Armenians were massacred. We too were surprised, because government didn’t know that there was such a great Armenian population in the province of Ankara. However this includes a few thousand other Armenians from surrounding provinces who were deported on these roads. They were put on this road so that we could cleanse them.

(B) After we had massacred all the males of the city of Yozgat – about eight thousand to nine thousand of them in the valleys near these sites, it was the women’s turn . . . Every woman, girl, and boy was searched down to their underwear. We collected all the gold, silver, diamond jewelry, and other valuables, as well as the gold pieces sewn into the hems of their clothes.

(C) After stripping them all of their possessions and leaving them only what they were wearing, we made them all turn back on foot to the broad promontory [overlook] located near the city of Yozgat . . . Ten or twelve thousand Muslims were waiting there . . . The government order was clear: all were to be massacred, and nobody was to be spared.

(D) I had the police soldiers announce to the people that whoever wished to select a virgin girl or young bride could do so immediately . . . Thus about two hundred-fifty girls and young brides were selected by the people and the police soldiers.

(E) It's wartime, and bullets are expensive. So people grabbed whatever they could from their villages – axes, hatchets, scythes, sickles, clubs, hoes, pickaxes, shovels – and they did the killing accordingly . . . The Sheikh had issued a *fatwa* [order] to annihilate the Armenians as traitors to our state . . . I, as a military officer, carried out the order on my king.

(Grigoris Balakian, *Armenia Golgotha: A memoir of the Armenian genocide, 1915-1918*)

Questions

1. Who was the author of this memoir?
2. According to the Turkish officer, how many Armenians were killed in this district?
3. How were the people murdered?
4. In your opinion, based on this evidence should the treatment of Armenians in Turkey be considered genocide? Explain.