




Remembering the Unthinkable

Students will describe why historic sites from the Holocaust were established and why they should be maintained.

Instructional Support

A number of possible tasks are provided in this suggested activity. It is not intended that you work through all of the tasks, but rather select those tasks and resources that will best meet the learning needs of your students. The focus should be on ensuring that students have the background and support to be successful with the skill that is the focus for assessment (describe historical context).

Setting the Context for Learning


- Show students a movie and/or other digital media piece related to the Holocaust (e.g., *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* or CBC Digital Archives "Life after Auschwitz").
- Engage in a class discussion about ultranationalistic reasons for genocide and the impact of genocide on people.
- Let the students know that as they work through their inquiry over the next several classes, they will be working on the skills that they need in order to be successful with the [Summative Assessment Task: Lessons from the Past](#) .
- Share the assessment task and the [assessment task rubric](#)  with students. Point out the different parts of the task, and let students know that they will be working on the various parts of the task as the classes proceed.
- The language of the assessment task rubric is clarified through the formative assessment opportunities provided for each suggested activity. The boldfaced descriptive words in the rubric are also clarified in the [Summative Assessment Task Rubric Glossary](#) .

Describe Historical Context

Note: As students begin working on this activity, they will have had an overview of the events of the First and Second World Wars and of the impact of the Holocaust. To successfully complete this activity, students do not need to have a deep understanding of the various political ideologies, including fascism or Nazism.

- Provide students with background information about Nazi German rule, the Holocaust and the effects of genocide. Access a variety of resources, including Art Spiegelman's graphic novel, *Maus*; the [interactive website about Anne Frank](#); contemporary resources like [CBC News in Review](#); or other resources based on the interests and needs of those in your classroom context, to understand the overall impact of the Holocaust.
- Introduce students to the idea of crimes against humanity by having them view the video [Genocide](#) or another video of your choice. The McGraw-Hill Ryerson student basic resource, *Understanding Nationalism*, can be used to help students explain how ultranationalist actions can lead to crimes against humanity. Historical (e.g., First

World War and Second World War) and/or contemporary examples could be used to illustrate this point.

- Explore with students understandings of the conditions that exist in a nation–state that can lead to genocide/crimes against humanity. Use [The 8 Stages of Genocide chart](#)  as a basis for students to examine the aspects of a particular genocide.
- Model the 8 Stages of Genocide chart, using the Holocaust. Discuss with students the progression of characteristics of ultranationalism and how these characteristics can lead to genocide.
- Consider pairing stronger 20-4 students, as well as 20-2 students, to research a contemporary genocide (e.g., Armenia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Darfur) to see if the stages also apply to these case studies.
- Select examples of crimes against humanity that may be considered by some to be examples of genocide (e.g., Ukraine, Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Prompt students to use *The 8 Stages of Genocide* chart to examine whether these examples can be considered genocides.
- This activity was developed as a general examination of the historic sites commemorating the Holocaust. For students who struggle or need a definitive focus for their work, provide an example of a historic site, such as Auschwitz or the Anne Frank House.
- As students begin working on completing the first part of the summative assessment task, describe historical context, discuss with students the importance of taking historical context beyond a recounting of the events.
- Remind students that they used this skill in [Historical Context: More than a Summary](#). Point out to students that in that suggested activity, they looked at historical context in terms of political, social and economic factors; in this activity, they will be approaching historical context in a broader manner that is focused on the big picture of what happened in the Second World War and how these actions affected people globally. Encourage students to bring forward to this activity not only their learning about the events of the Second World War but also the skills they used to describe the context of those events.
- Although students may find it fairly straightforward to provide information about the time period, the skill of identifying the impact of events or actions is more complex. This involves examining not only the immediate results but also the impact felt based on events from the past and prospects for the future.
- For this activity, students will focus on describing the magnitude of the impact of genocide (the Holocaust) on the global community. The following questions may help guide the discussion:
 - What impact did genocide have on the Jewish community, as well as on other persecuted communities?
 - What impact did genocide have on Germany and the Axis countries?
 - What impact did recognizing that genocide had occurred have on people around the world?
- Students will need to select a method of organizing information to help them articulate the impact of events. If students struggle with organizing information, consider modelling for them a number of options for organizing information and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each method.
- For students who require additional support, consider facilitating a class or small-group discussion, using the questions above, before having students work independently.
- Consider providing students with a sample to model how the description of historical context in this activity will vary from the description of historical context in *Historical Context: More than a Summary*. Use the formative assessment tool [Describe](#)

[Historical Context: Peer Coaching Tool](#)  to guide the class discussion and examination of the sample.

Formative Assessment

Throughout this suggested activity, you will support students in achieving the following skill that is the focus for assessment:

- [describe historical context](#)

The following formative assessment opportunity is provided to help students unpack and develop the focus skill for assessment. Feedback prompts are also provided to help students enhance their demonstration of the focus skill for this activity. Formative assessment support is not intended to generate a grade or score.



Formative Assessment: Assessment for Learning Opportunity

Describe Historical Context



Involve students in *peer coaching* so they can provide and receive feedback about the comprehensiveness of the information they provided as they described the historical context of why historic sites from the Holocaust were established and should be maintained. Use the feedback prompts below to provide structure in guiding students through this formative assessment opportunity.

Feedback Prompts:

- Did I provide enough information to help the reader understand the enormous impact of the Holocaust?
- Did I describe the impact of the Holocaust on the victims?
- Did I describe the long-term impact of the Holocaust on our global consciousness?

These feedback prompts have been incorporated into the [Describe Historical Context: Peer Coaching Tool](#) , which can be copied or adapted for student use. Samples of tools created for a similar skill within a different formative assessment context may be found in the [Social Studies 20-4 Formative Assessment Summary](#) .

Linking to the Summative Assessment Task

- As students describe historical context through the suggested activity Remembering the Unthinkable, they will have completed the first portion of the [Summative Assessment Task: Lessons from the Past](#) .
- Students should consult the assessment task and the [assessment task rubric](#)  to ensure that they have provided the information required.
- Encourage students to use the feedback received during the formative assessment opportunity to make enhancements to their work in progress.
- If necessary, continue to use the feedback prompts from the formative assessment opportunity to coach students toward completion of a quality product.


Suggested Supporting Resources

Textbook References

Student Basic Resource—McGraw-Hill Ryerson, *Understanding Nationalism*:


- Pages 139–140 Instilling Ultrnationalist Values (Germany and Japan)
- Pages 152–159 Ultrnationalism and Crimes against Humanity
- Pages 160–161 Shoah—The Holocaust
- Page 164 What Are Some Current Consequences of Ultrnationalism?

Teaching Resource—McGraw-Hill Ryerson, *Understanding Nationalism*:

- Reproducible 2.7.1 Classifying Crimes against Humanity
- Reproducible 2.7.2 Ultrnationalism and Crimes against Humanity
- Reproducible 2.7.3 Factors That Can Lead to Crimes against Humanity (focusing on the Holocaust, on the "Factors That Made the Crime Possible" column and on completion of *The 8 Stages of Genocide* [chart](#) )
- Reproducible 2.7.5 Contemporary Examples of Crimes against Humanity

Web Resources

Web Links for Online Sources:

- Genocide Watch: [The International Alliance to End Genocide: The 8 Stages of Genocide](#)
- CBC News in Review: [Auschwitz: Remembering the Horror, March 2005](#) (examines the consequences of genocide)
- CBC Digital Archives: [Life after Auschwitz](#) (radio and television clips)
- [Anne Frank website](#) (interactive site, including audio and visual resources about the Holocaust)
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: [The Holocaust: A Learning Site for Students](#)
- Tools to create graphic novels:
 - [Animoto website](#)
 - [Comic Life website](#)
 - [ToonDoo website](#)
 - [Bubblr website](#)
- Scholastic Education: [Using Graphic Novels with Children and Teens: A Guide for Teachers and Librarians](#) 
- eHow mom: [How to Use Graphic Novels in the High School Classroom](#)
- YouTube.com website—video: [Maus Book Trailer \(DSi Flipnote Animation\)](#) (graphic novel trailer for *Maus*) (Using excerpts of the graphic novel and examples about this work from video clips and images and the video trailer, students can create their own graphic novel of another genocide.)
- Vimeo: [Art Spiegelman: Comics and Politics](#) (graphic comics and visuals and videos) (Using excerpts of the graphic novel and examples about this work from video clips and images, students can create their own graphic novel of another genocide.)
- [The Wave website](#) (includes a video about a school teacher who tries to explain how the Holocaust occurred by modelling the ultrnationalist conditions that existed in

the country at the time; there is also a link on the site to a related graphic novel, which, in addition to *Maus*, could be useful in modelling understandings about the Holocaust)

Videos:

- LearnAlberta.ca: [Genocide \(Series: Global Issues for Students\)](#) (Find other resources related to genocide on [LearnAlberta.ca](#) by entering the following search terms: Social Studies, Grade 11, Genocide.)

Critical Challenges:

- LearnAlberta.ca:
 - [Support Material: Collecting Information](#) (Comparing Information retrieval chart)
 - [Modelling the Tools: Creating Persuasive and Effective Visuals](#)
 - [Modelling the Tools: Analyzing a Situation](#)

Stories and Other Media (e.g., films, stories/literature, nonfiction, graphic novels)

- *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman (graphic novel about the Holocaust)
- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (film about the Holocaust, 2008, Miramax Films, Mark Herman [Director], 94 minutes)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank* (film about the Holocaust, 1959, Twentieth Century Fox, George Stevens [Director], 180 minutes)