

TEN STAGES OF CHANGE

Stage One, taught through the Darfur genocides.

I CLASSIFICATION

Darfur

UNIT ONE · STAGE 1: CLASSIFICATION

Joshua Bicknell

TEN STAGES OF CHANGE

Genocide Education & Prevention

Curriculum Series • Unit 1

Stage 1: Classification • Case Study: Darfur

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stagesofchange.org

First Edition

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A note on content: this curriculum addresses genocide and mass atrocity. Content guidance for students appears at the start of every anchor text, and teaching guidance appears in the Series Guide.

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Note on standards: alignments throughout use the California Common Core State Standards (ELA/Literacy) and the California History, Social Science content standards and analysis skills. Verify against your district's current pacing.

“Genocide is a process that develops in ten stages that are predictable but not inexorable. At each stage, preventive measures can stop it. The process is not linear. Stages occur simultaneously. Each stage is itself a process.”

Gregory H. Stanton, “The Ten Stages of Genocide”

Author's Note

This series began with a question I asked Sudanese civilians during research for the first article, when the war in Sudan erupted in April 2023 and genocide was rapidly unfolding: what do you need from people outside the country? What can we realistically do?

The answers did not concern money, policy, or petitions. Instead, everyone answered the same way, and I think they would still today: talk about it.

That instruction informs every page of this curriculum and its case studies. Gregory Stanton's "Ten Stages of Genocide" serves as an analytical spine, crucial for recognizing that genocide develops as a process, predictable though never inevitable, and interruptible at every stage.

But research shows that facts motivate few. Furthermore, recent studies on human empathy reveal that the larger the group suffering, the less likely we are to empathize with their suffering. In fact, there is a human tendency toward aversion to such massive numbers: mass graves, crowded refugee camps, cramped detention centers – we become not only desensitized and overwhelmed, but actively avoidant.

Since 1915, beginning with the Armenian genocide, the crime has claimed somewhere between 60 million and over 100 million lives. How does one comprehend 6 million? 60 million? Surely, if we were to witness 60 million one-by-one, we would act. We would change our attitudes, protest, and refuse to back down, hearts filled with rage.

But too often, the 60 million were buried in mass graves—families never find closure, no proper burial, no single memorial—only pebbles and stones on a mass boulder, if lucky.

The reason genocide is the worst of all crimes—more than war crimes or other crimes against humanity—is that it does more than destroy a people who are targeted haphazardly or used as a means toward an ethnically unrelated goal. Genocide destroys a culture and a language. When a child—whether on the Kindertransport, wading through dangerous waters off Bangladesh, or a little girl in Afghanistan hiding in a basement teaching other girls to read at the risk of death—confronts a stone near a mass grave where their parents were discarded, their final thoughts turn to their children's safety, and they realize their culture has also been eradicated—this is the gravest crime against humanity. Ninety percent of Polish Jews were killed during the Holocaust. One quarter of Cambodia's population was murdered; later, mass graves revealed pink baby shoes, Mickey Mouse headbands, and two hands held in a final goodbye. The Hazara in Afghanistan lost ninety percent of their population before the most recent wave of persecution began.

Languages die. Traditions die. Every connection—indeed, the sole link—to what once existed at the core of a person's identity and family dies when all is lost. One cannot simply recover from such an atrocity. We should not be comfortable knowing ordinary men commit these crimes with virtually no accountability, often receiving praise and promotions. We wear the clothes of slave labor as Uyghur culture melts away; we live among Armenians whose grandparents never knew their own names, parents, or ages, and died never knowing. When a culture is destroyed, everyone suffers. Multiculturalism and diversity of thought and expression—no matter how conflicted—indisputably make life on earth richer, fuller, more joyful, bringing us closer to the deepest parts of ourselves seeking meaning. We can achieve that only through connection, and no one has the right to steal that opportunity from the world.

Survivor testimony and narratives are key to seeing past the numbers, turning 60 million into one, a loving family of four, a friend group of twelve, and so on. We remember faces, names, feelings. Teaching genocide must move beyond pure facts, without equating it to bullying or reducing it to a lesson on "kindness" or moral absolutism. That would be absurd; instead, use a comparative lens to view all forms of discrimination

as potential patterns that could progress, and summon the courage to stop them before the unfolding non-linear stages become an uncontrollable machine.

The narratives give us a reason to care: Mariam in Jebel Marra, Emi asking an audience to witness her, Tep Vanny knee-deep in the water that swallowed her neighborhood, Ly Sivhong waiting under studio lights for her sister and mother, and Jawahir at a mountaintop grave holding her son's grave daily, each makes the pattern real and the numbers alive. The series asks students to hold both truths simultaneously—the pattern and the person—because prevention depends on both. One is simply not feasible without the other.

These units do not pretend the subject is easy. The anchor texts are direct and difficult, and the guidelines in this Series Guide ensure challenge never becomes harmful. The norms and breaks are part of the instructional design, not optional add-ons.

And so is the conviction on which the project rests: ordinary people, especially students, have repeatedly interrupted this pattern and hold immense power to continue and to refuse to live in a society where cultural extermination is ever acceptable—wherever it occurs, however unpopular it is to discuss, however strange it may seem. (“Why can’t you just take up recycling?” some will say.)

Teaching one or more of these units invites students to be called, as Stanton was, as I was, as we all are; we have no choice. Some students will be called as well. In all its darkness, humanity remains beautiful.

Every anchor text closes with actions scaled to the time a reader actually has, because recognition without response stalls prevention. The killing in Sudan did not stop while this series was written. The krama is still worn. Girls in Afghanistan continue teaching one another in basements, whispering poetry and song between lessons.

“Please find me,” they say. “Please talk about it.” So, let’s talk about it.



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TEN STAGES OF CHANGE · SERIES GUIDE**How to Use This Series**

The pages that follow, the scope and sequence, the guidelines for teaching genocide, and Lesson 0, are shared by every unit in the series. They are included in each unit so that a class can begin with any stage and still have the foundation it needs.

Each unit centers one stage of Gregory Stanton’s “Ten Stages of Genocide” through a single case study. A unit runs about two weeks. Teach one unit to hit targeted standards, or teach the full sequence over roughly ten weeks. This volume collects the Series Guide and Units 1–3 (Classification · Symbolization · Discrimination); Units 4–5 (Dehumanization · Rwanda and Organization · Myanmar) follow the same structure and are in development. Every unit shares the same shape: a launch lesson, two to three core lessons, an anchor text, checks for understanding, and a summative assessment.

Scope & Sequence				
Weeks	Stage	Case Study	Key Themes	Assessment
1–2	Stage 1: Classification	Darfur (Sudan)	Identity; us vs. them; media rhetoric	Classification spectrum & synthesis writing
3–4	Stage 2: Symbolization	Cambodia (Khmer Rouge)	Cultural symbols; memory; reconciliation	Symbol analysis project (e.g., the krama)
5–6	Stage 3: Discrimination	Afghanistan (Taliban)	Gender inequality; rights; legal identity	Case-based analysis & position paper
7–8	Stage 4: Dehumanization	Rwanda	Hate speech; propaganda; power	Multimedia campaign or PSA
9–10	Stage 5: Organization	Myanmar (Rohingya)	Bureaucracy; systems of harm; resistance	Action-plan proposal or infographic

TEN STAGES OF CHANGE · SERIES GUIDE

Guidelines for Teaching Genocide

These guidelines follow best practices from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Facing History & Ourselves, and Echoes & Reflections. Each pairs a principle with something you might say to students. Adapt to your own style and classroom.

1. Establish a grounded purpose from the start

Make clear this is not a curriculum about despair or shock. It is about how societies change and how people make choices within them. Return to that purpose often to give students direction and agency.

Say

We aren't studying horror for its own sake. We're studying patterns, how change happens, how people justify harm, and how others resist it. That's where we start, and what we keep coming back to.

2. Build a class contract, and keep it alive

Co-create norms with students, guided by non-negotiables: respect lived experience, avoid comparisons that minimize harm, and recognize that identity shapes perception. Revisit the contract before sensitive lessons.

Tip

Ask before a hard lesson: "Do these norms still fit? Is there anything we should add?"

3. Don't dodge the "Why didn't they just...?" questions

Questions like "Why didn't they fight back or leave?" are opportunities. Validate the curiosity, then redirect to the structural realities, power, fear, propaganda, lost rights, that shape what people can do.

Say

That's an important question. Let's explore what made that kind of resistance so hard, and what resistance did happen anyway.

4. Respond to harmful comments with repair, not punishment

Not every off-mark comment is malicious; some come from shock or testing boundaries. Pause, breathe, and restore.

Say

For a pause: "Let's stop there, that comment doesn't match the seriousness of what we're discussing."

To explore: "Tell me more, what makes you say that? Let's unpack it."

To correct: "That's a harmful stereotype, and we don't repeat those here. Let's look at the facts."

5. Recognize and manage emotional activation

These topics can raise fear, guilt, or anger. Normalize emotional reactions, allow movement or quiet processing, and avoid overexposing students to graphic detail.

Tip

Offer “pause pages” for private processing. Invite, but never require, students to share.

6. Handle politicized reactions with curiosity, not control

When a student draws a comparison to current events, let the class reflect without centering your opinion. Keep the focus on pattern recognition, not political allegiance.

Say

Interesting connection. What’s similar? What’s different? What context do we need to understand both situations more fully?

7. Teach the gray areas without false equivalence

Human behavior during genocide resists black-and-white judgments. Guide students through complicity, silence, and survival, and the blurred lines between victim, perpetrator, and bystander, without excusing harm.

Say

There’s room for different interpretations of history, but not for denying that this harm occurred or debating someone’s right to exist.

8. Prioritize student voice, within boundaries

Let students lead inquiry, voice discomfort, and connect personally. The framework is imperfect, and definitions of genocide are contested; invite students to find and improve on those gaps. Hold one firm line: the classroom is not a stage for denying harm or questioning anyone’s humanity.

9. Create space for hope and responsibility

Counter despair with stories of resistance and solidarity, as evidence that people made meaningful choices even inside systems built for harm.

Closure

End units with a reflective prompt: “What patterns do we need to notice today?” or “Where do we go from here?”

10. You don’t have to have the perfect answer

You will be asked things you don’t know. “That is a good question; the class will look into it together” is a good answer. What matters is modeling intellectual humility, emotional regulation, and a commitment to accuracy over comfort.

TEN STAGES OF CHANGE · SERIES GUIDE

Lesson 0

Unit Launch: Introducing the Ten Stages

Defining Genocide, Challenging the Framework, and Establishing a Classroom Culture

Teach this launch lesson before any unit if your students are new to the series. It builds a shared definition of genocide, introduces Stanton's framework, and co-creates the norms that make this work safe and serious.

Lesson Overview	
Grade Level	9–12
Time	≈ 100 minutes (1–2 days)
Format	Class discussion; short lecture; group work

Essential Questions

- What is genocide, how is it different from other crimes, and why is it so hard to identify and prosecute?
- How does the “Ten Stages” framework help with prevention, and what are its limits?
- What makes difficult histories hard to study, and how can we study them well?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Define, compare, and synthesize several definitions of “genocide” to build a shared understanding.
- Identify, compare, and critique the “Ten Stages of Genocide” framework and its terminology.
- Collaborate with peers to establish norms for learning about difficult topics.

Standards, Common Core & California History, Social Science	
Reading (CCSS)	RH.11-12.1 cite evidence · .2 central ideas · .6 author's point of view · .7 integrate multiple sources · .8 evaluate claims; RI/RL.11-12.1, .4
Writing & Speaking (CCSS)	W.11-12.9 draw evidence from texts; SL.11-12.1 collaborative discussion (norm-setting) · SL.11-12.4 present findings
California History, Social Science	World History 10.8, 10.9, 10.10 (genocide & human rights) · Analysis Skills: Chronological & Spatial Thinking; Historical Research, Evidence & Point of View; Historical Interpretation

Key Terms

Genocide · Convention on the Prevention & Punishment of Genocide · Intent · Complicity · Incitement · Ten Stages of Genocide · Tribunal · Raphael Lemkin · International Court of Justice · Ethnicity · United Nations

Materials Needed

- “The Call”, TEDx talk by Gregory Stanton (TEDxFoggyBottom, 2017)
- “Ten Stages of Genocide”, Prezi by Genocide Watch
- Chart paper, markers, and sticky notes
- Index cards (for self-care notes and the opening/closing reflection)
- “Four Definitions of Genocide” handout (provided)

Lesson Procedure**Part 1: Opening Discussion & Establishing Norms** (20 minutes)**A. Opening Discussion** · 10 min

1. As students enter, hand each one a blank index card.
2. Project the prompt. Students write a few sentences on one side of the card:
 - a. What makes some topics difficult to discuss in class?
 - b. What helps you feel comfortable discussing challenging issues?
 - c. What should we keep in mind when discussing hard topics together?
3. Think, Pair, Share with a trusted partner, then optional whole-group share. Students **keep their cards** for the closing reflection.

SEL Tip

Students respond to teacher vulnerability. Naming an early hesitation, and how a view changed, lowers the barrier to engagement. Emphasize collective support; never single anyone out.

B. Establishing Norms · 10 min

1. Post a large, visible “Class Agreements” chart (or a projectable digital version for multiple sections; consider rotating a student “keeper of the norms”).
2. Explain the purpose of the unit in **positive** terms (cultural awareness, critical thinking, empowerment). Give a broad definition of genocide, but **don’t default to the Holocaust as the only example**; it is one of many, each unique.
3. Have students propose norms on sticky notes, then vote on the top four or five, such as:
 - a. “One mic, one voice.”
 - b. “Take care of yourself, it’s okay to step out.”
 - c. “Questions welcome, no judgment.”
4. Add a **hand-signal system** for “Pause,” “Time out,” or “Need a break.” Consider a signed class contract.

Teacher Note

Balance a safe space with firm expectations. If a student uses “time outs” to avoid work, offer alternatives, noise-cancelling headphones for five minutes, or independent work, rather than leaving class.

Part 2: Defining “Genocide” (20 minutes)

A. Graffiti Writing · 20 min

1. Introduce the term. Briefly establish the key facts (think-aloud, KWL, or mini-lesson):

What Is “Genocide”?

- “Genocide” is a **legal term** for a specific international crime, it can happen anywhere.
- It is rarer and harder to prosecute than “war crimes” or “crimes against humanity.”
- The term was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer from Poland, and first published in 1944.
- It involves the **deliberate intent to destroy** an ethnic, religious, or racial group. (Here it gets tricky, what about political, gender, or sexual groups?)
- On **Dec. 9, 1948**, the UN adopted the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**.

2. Explain that scholars have re-defined genocide over time, even though the UN definition remains the only legal one, elements like “intent” and the exclusion of political and gender groups make it contested.

3. Post four different definitions of genocide around the room (author, year, context). In groups, students rotate and **“graffiti-annotate”** each: who is targeted, whose point of view, what’s included or left out.

Teaching Tip

Assign roles at each station, two annotators, two communicators, one scribe, so every student has a job.

4. Groups synthesize a **common definition** from what they noticed, then share aloud and critique one another’s versions.

Teacher Note

The goal is the **skill** comparing language and noticing how word choices change meaning, not a perfect definition. Incomplete definitions are expected. Close by naming the UN definition and why “intent” makes genocide so hard to prove.

Part 3: “The Call”, Content Introduction (20 minutes)**A. Video Analysis** · 20 min

1. Transition from **what** genocide is to **how** we prevent it.

Teacher Script, Say:

Now that we know what genocide is, and that every state is obligated to prevent it, how do we actually do that? That’s where the “Ten Stages” framework comes in. Like the definition, it’s imperfect, but it helps us notice the patterns that lead to harm. Let’s meet its creator, Gregory Stanton.

2. Distribute the viewing guide for **“The Call”** (Stanton’s TEDx talk), organized around:

- Turning points** key moments that changed Stanton’s path;
- Evidence & impacts** specific examples he uses;
- Personal responses** students’ reactions and connections.

3. Watch “The Call” and complete the guide.

Teacher Note

For 50–60-minute classes, end Day 1 here and begin Day 2 at Part 4.

Part 4: Ten Stages Overview (25 minutes)**A. Transition & Self-Care** · 5 min

1. Take a short, deliberate break before the Genocide Watch presentation. Model self-care and vulnerability.

Teacher Script, Say:

Hearing that account of the children is difficult. That feeling is exactly why learning to recognize and prevent this matters. Let's reset for a minute.

2. Offer a stretch, a breathing exercise, calming music, or an active reset (a brief active reset works well).

Teacher Note

Keep the audience in mind. Let them sit with heavy content; some discomfort is expected. Intervene only if a class norm is broken.

B. Interactive Prezi, Genocide Watch · 20 min

1. Distribute the “Early Warning Signs” tracker and the “Ten Stages” viewing guide. (If both feel like too much, use just the viewing guide.)
2. As students view the presentation, they:
 - a. record key characteristics of each stage,
 - b. note real-world examples,
 - c. generate prevention ideas,
 - d. connect back to insights from “The Call.”

Part 5: Final Synthesis & Check for Understanding (20 minutes)**A. Exit Ticket, “Preventing Genocide Starts With...”** · 20 min

1. On the **back** of their opening index card, students record five things:
 - a. one insight from “The Call,”
 - b. one stage that stood out from the presentation,
 - c. one element of “defining genocide” they want to explore further (intent, protected groups, political targets, cultural genocide),
 - d. one sentence on how they feel now about discussing sensitive topics,
 - e. a personal self-care strategy.

Teacher Note

Collect the cards to spot students who need the definition revisited, then **return** them, since they hold each student’s self-care plan. Have students keep the card with the norms poster to revisit when content feels heavy.

Assessment (Formative)

- **Participation & observation** use the discussion rubric (aligns with SL.11-12.1 and RH.11-12.3).
- **“The Call” video analysis**, aligns with RH.11-12.1 and RH.11-12.6; CA H, SS 10.10.
- **Early Warning Signs tracker** informal check.
- **Exit tickets** sort by understanding; plan intervention or peer pairing for the next lesson.

Extensions, Accommodations & ELL Support

Extensions

- Research Genocide Watch’s current work and the Alliance Against Genocide.
- Design prevention-awareness materials or a Ten Stages infographic (by hand or in Canva).
- Draft a student action guide as a brochure or newsletter.

Accommodations & Modifications

- Provide the transcript of “The Call.”
- Offer a simplified Ten Stages summary and guided notes.
- Allow audio recording of responses; enable translation tools.

English-Language-Learner Support

- Share “The Call” transcript in advance; offer subtitles.
- Create vocabulary cards with key terms in simplified language.
- Provide sentence frames: “I noticed that Stanton...,” “This stage matters because...,” “One example of prevention is...,” “This connects to....”

UNIT ONE • STAGE 1

Classification

Case Study: Darfur

How societies sort people into groups, and how ordinary labels can harden into the first stage of genocide. Students examine formal and informal classification, analyze how media reinforces “us vs. them” narratives, and build counter-narratives that resist division.

UNIT 1 • CLASSIFICATION • CASE STUDY: DARFUR**Unit Overview**

Unit Overview	
Unit Title	Stage 1: Classification, Case Study: Darfur, Sudan
Unit Summary	This interdisciplinary unit introduces students to the first stage of genocide, Classification, through the lens of the Darfur conflict. Students explore identity, labeling, and the “us vs. them” mentality through engaging activities, critical reading, group discussion, and visual tools. The curriculum is grounded in Gregory Stanton’s “Ten Stages of Genocide” framework and includes a focus on critical media literacy, social justice, and the power of civic action.
Curriculum Links	World History, World Geography, Human Geography, English I–IV, Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Civics, Media Literacy, College Readiness
Grade / Form	Grades 9–12
Time Needed	1.5–2 weeks (5–7 class periods, 60–90 minutes each)
Format	Direct instruction, close reading, small-group analysis, media workshop, and informal presentation

Lessons at a Glance			
Lesson	Focus	Key Skills	Student Product
0	Unit Launch: Introducing the Ten Stages	Defining genocide; norms; framework critique	Class norms & exit-ticket reflection
1	Classification in Our World	Identity mapping; close reading; spectrum reasoning	Classification Spectrum & presentation
2	Media Analysis & Counter-Narrative Creation	Media literacy; bias analysis; counter-narrative	Media analysis & counter-narratives

Unit Foundation	
Targeted Standards (suggested)	
Reading (CCSS)	RH.11-12.1 cite evidence · .2 central ideas · .3 evaluate explanations & cause, effect · .6 author’s point of view · .7 integrate sources · .8 evaluate claims · RI/RL.11-12.1, 4, 5, 6
Writing & Speaking (CCSS)	W.11-12.1 argument · .2 informative/analytical · .7–.9 research & draw evidence; SL.11-12.1 collaborative discussion · .4 present findings
California History, Social Science	World History 10.8, 10.9, 10.10 (genocide, human rights, nation-building) · Analysis Skills: Chronological & Spatial Thinking; Historical Research, Evidence & Point of View; Historical Interpretation

Student Objectives / Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Analyze multiple definitions of genocide (UN, Lemkin, Shaw, Dadrian) and synthesize key elements across them, citing evidence and evaluating differing points of view.
- Explain classification as a precursor to genocide and evaluate how identity labels can escalate toward group-based violence, using the Darfur case study.
- Interpret primary and secondary sources to determine how context and point of view shape the portrayal of classification in genocide.
- Identify and compare social classifications in school and society, assessing whether they are neutral, problematic, or dangerous.
- Evaluate the role of civic engagement and education in genocide prevention and articulate steps students can take to promote tolerance.

Curriculum-Framing Questions	
Essential Question	How does classifying people into groups create the conditions for violence, injustice, or genocide?
Unit Question	How did classification based on race, ethnicity, and geography lead to the targeting of civilians in Darfur?
Content Questions	How do historians use evidence and context to explain how classification contributed to genocide in Darfur? What rhetorical devices do authors use to influence our understanding of group division?

Assessment Plan		
Assessment Timeline		
Before / Diagnostic	During (Lessons 1–2)	After / Summative
Participation norms & identity charts Pre-assessment on genocide definitions	Classification spectrum, anchor-text analysis, group discussion, media/video analysis Formative CFUs by content area, exit tickets, optional extension	Formative CFUs by content area, spectrum presentations Final standards-aligned summative assessment

Assessment Summary
Assessment is both formative and summative: class participation, annotation and discussion of the anchor text, group analysis of classification spectrums, synthesis writing, standards-aligned CFUs, and an end-of-unit summative. Key tools include “The Call” video analysis, the identity reflection, and informal presentations. Students are evaluated with rubrics aligned to the Common Core & California H, SS standards, and results are recorded on the printable Standards & Mastery Tracker (Appendix C).

Unit Details
Prerequisite Skills / Prior Knowledge
• Basic understanding of historical events and global geography • Ability to read and analyze nonfiction

- Basic collaboration and discussion skills
- Awareness of current global issues is helpful

Instructional Procedures / Teaching, Learning Activities

- Unit launch with definitions of genocide and safe-space norms
- Viewing and analyzing “The Call” TED Talk and the Ten Stages framework
- Identity reflection and discussion on classification
- Close reading of the anchor text “Us or Them”
- Group analysis: classification examples from history, school, and society
- Classification-spectrum activity and justification
- Media analysis and counter-narrative creation
- Exit-ticket synthesis and CFUs by content area

Accommodations for Differentiated Instruction

Special Needs	● Visual and graphic organizers; guided notes ● Audio versions of texts ● Modified group roles or expectations ● Built-in breaks and emotional-support strategies
Gifted	● Extension activities (prevention action plans; design an infographic) ● Deeper research on global conflict and intervention ● Creative writing from survivor or witness perspectives
ESL / Multilingual	● Vocabulary support with visual cards ● Sentence starters and structured discussion frames ● Subtitled or translated materials ● Paired/group support with fluent peers ● Audio readings and slower playback

STAGE 1 • CLASSIFICATION • DARFUR**Lesson 1****Classification in Our World**

Students examine how societies classify people and groups, and the difference between neutral, problematic, and dangerous classifications. Through an identity reflection, a close reading of the Darfur case study, and a collaborative spectrum-building activity, they evaluate how classification can escalate from everyday labels to systemic harm.

Lesson Overview

Grade Level	9–12
Time	≈ 100 minutes (1–2 days)
Format	Independent practice; small group (2–3); close reading; presentation

Essential Questions

- How does an “us” and “them” mentality take shape in our society? Around the world?
- What are the benefits, drawbacks, and dangers of classification in a society?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how classification operates in society.
- Evaluate the progression from neutral to harmful classification.
- Connect historical events to contemporary situations.

Standards, Common Core & California History, Social Science

Reading (CCSS)	RH.11-12.1 cite textual evidence · RH.11-12.2 determine central ideas · RH.11-12.6 assess an author’s point of view · RI/RL.11-12.4 word meaning & tone
Writing & Speaking (CCSS)	W.11-12.1 write arguments (justify spectrum placement) · SL.11-12.1 collaborative discussion · SL.11-12.4 present findings and reasoning
California History, Social Science	CA H, SS 10.10 human rights & instances of genocide · Analysis Skill: Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View

Concepts & Vocabulary

Classification · Identity · Formal vs. Informal · Neutral · Problematic · Harmful · Dangerous · Spectrum · Perspective · Bias

Materials Needed

- Anchor Text: “Us or Them: Classification in the Darfur Genocide(s)” (Appendix A, two reading levels)
- Markers / colored pencils

- Classification Spectrum template and activity sheet (provided)
- Students' self-care index cards and the posted class contract (from Lesson 0)

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Anticipatory Set (15 minutes)

A. Opening Protocol & Unit Launch · 5 min

1. Return students' self-care index cards from Lesson 0. Lay out colored signal cards on desks.

Content Warning & Signal Cards

Display the content-warning slide and reset the signal-card system before beginning.

- **Green** = I'm okay · **Yellow** = I need help · **Red** = I need a break

Keep the class contract from Lesson 0 posted and visible; students may use a self-care card or step out at any time.

2. Briefly review yesterday's class agreements before beginning.

Teacher Script, Say:

Before we begin, let's review our agreements from yesterday about discussing sensitive topics. Today we're looking at how societies create groups and divisions. Let's review our support systems one last time, then dive in.

B. Identity Reflection Activity · 10 min

1. Distribute blank paper (or students use their own).
2. Students draw a large circle and divide it into 6–8 "pieces."
3. In each piece, students write a different aspect of their identity.
 - a. Prompt: "Write different ways you identify, or how others might classify you."
 - b. Examples: nationality, religion, ethnicity, student, athlete, artist, sibling, personality.
4. Then students annotate their chart:
 - a. Star (★) identities they chose for themselves.
 - b. Circle identities others have assigned to them.
 - c. Underline identities that have changed over time.

Teacher Note

Remind students that identities can overlap, a student might both circle and underline a religious identity they were "born into" but also embrace. The goal is to reveal the complexity of identity, not a binary set of labels.

5. Turn-and-talk: share one chosen vs. assigned identity, whether the task was easy or hard, and anything surprising. Then a brief whole-class share for students who are comfortable.

Part 2: Classification in Our World (55 minutes)

A. Transition · 5 min

1. Collect or have students keep their identity charts (not graded), and shift from personal identity to the idea of classifying. Post the essential questions on the board.

B. Close Reading · 25 min

1. Divide students into groups of 2–3. Distribute the anchor text “Us or Them” and the activity sheet.

Differentiation

Two versions of the anchor text are provided (Appendix A), each labeled by Flesch-Kincaid grade level. Distribute the version that best fits each student’s reading level; the versions are similar enough to mix within one class.

2. Students read closely and annotate anything surprising, interesting, controversial, emotional, or relatable, and especially every **example of classification** in the article.

C. Group Analysis · 25 min

1. On the activity-sheet chart, groups record:
 - a. two examples of classification from the anchor text,
 - b. two examples from the school environment,
 - c. two examples from society at large.
2. Groups answer the discussion questions: Who creates these classifications? Who benefits or loses from them? Are they formal or informal?

Teacher Note

Pause to clarify: **formal** classifications are strict and enforced (e.g., the scientific classification of the animal kingdom); **informal** classifications are looser and subjective (e.g., “cute” vs. “dangerous” animals).

3. On the Visual Spectrum template, groups place each example along the range:

Classification Spectrum

NEUTRAL → PROBLEMATIC → HARMFUL → DANGEROUS

Groups may disagree on placement, encourage healthy debate toward consensus, and note the justifications.

4. Justify placement with **evidence**: use the text (context and surrounding detail) for the Darfur examples, and concrete real-life examples for the school and society classifications.

Part 3: Informal Presentation & Check for Understanding (30 minutes)**A. Presentation** · 15 min

1. Groups present their spectrums, one at a time or paired for informal discussion. Observe to assess; use the rubric below.
2. Each group shares their spectrum and addresses: reasons for each placement, the factors that escalate a classification toward “dangerous,” and how necessary classifications can be managed safely.

B. CFU 1.1 · 15 min

1. Administer CFU 1.1 for your content area (Appendix B). Record results on the Standards & Mastery Tracker (Appendix C).

Extension Activities

- **Creative writing:** a short story or journal entry about characters breaking down harmful classifications, how did they do it, and what was the effect?
- **Current events:** find a news article showing classification today (besides Sudan) and apply the critical questions, who benefits, who is affected, harmless or dangerous?
- **Higher-level text:** use both versions of the anchor text within one class for comparison.

Accommodations & ELL Support

- Provide a template pie chart for the identity activity instead of drawing one.
- Offer sentence starters: “My friends would say I am...,” “I take pride in my ability to...,” “I feel different because I am...”
- Allow students to listen to the audio recording of the anchor text as they read.
- **ELL:** more explicit sentence stems (“I am originally from...,” “My parents were born in...”); limit to one real-life and one society example; pair with fluent peers; slow the audio to 0.75x.

Assessment Rubric, Classification Spectrum (20 points)

Identification (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	All 6 examples identified with clear explanations.
Good (4)	5 examples with mostly clear explanations.
Fair (3)	4 examples with basic explanations.
Needs Work (1–2)	Fewer than 4 examples; unclear explanations.

Analysis (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Thoughtful placement; strong justification.
Good (4)	Logical placement; adequate justification.
Fair (3)	Some logical placement; basic justification.
Needs Work (1–2)	Unclear placement; weak justification.

Evidence (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Consistently cites text and real-world examples.
Good (4)	Usually cites evidence from multiple sources.
Fair (3)	Sometimes cites evidence.
Needs Work (1–2)	Rarely cites evidence.

Presentation (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Clear, engaging; thoughtful responses to questions.
Good (4)	Clear and complete presentation.
Fair (3)	Basic presentation.
Needs Work (1–2)	Incomplete or unclear presentation.

STAGE 1 · CLASSIFICATION · DARFUR**Lesson 2****Media Analysis & Counter-Narrative Creation**

Students identify and critique how media shapes public understanding of group identity and classification. Through close analysis of historical and contemporary headlines, they examine how language and imagery reinforce or challenge “us vs. them” narratives, then create counter-narratives that reframe biased messaging.

Lesson Overview

Grade Level	9–12
Time	60 minutes (may extend to 1–2 days)
Format	Media-analysis workshop

Essential Questions

- How does the media shape our understanding of classification?
- How can we counteract harmful or problematic language and narratives related to classifying?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how media platforms can amplify or challenge classification.
- Examine the role of language and imagery in creating “us vs. them” narratives.
- Create counter-narratives that bridge divided groups.

Standards, Common Core & California History, Social Science

Reading (CCSS)	RH.11-12.6 determine author’s purpose & rhetoric · RH.11-12.8 evaluate premises, claims & evidence · RH.11-12.9 integrate sources · RI.11-12.5 text structure
Writing & Speaking (CCSS)	W.11-12.1 write arguments (counter-narratives) · W.11-12.4 clear, coherent writing · SL.11-12.1 collaborative discussion
California History, Social Science	CA H, SS 10.10 human rights & instances of genocide · Analysis Skill: Historical Interpretation

Concepts & Vocabulary

Media Framing · Counter-Narrative · Bias · Divisive vs. Unifying Language · Loaded Language · Source Credibility · Author’s Purpose · “Us vs. Them” Narrative · Point of View

Materials Needed

- Anchor Text: “Us or Them” (Appendix A, Version 1 or 2)

- News-articles & social-media collection: examples of Darfur coverage and commentary (from Google News Archives)
- Media Analysis handout (provided)
- Highlighters in three colors

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Anticipatory Set (15 minutes)

A. Independent Reflection · 10 min

- Students choose one option to review prior material (they will need the anchor text “Us or Them”):
 - Recall:** summarize the article and define key terms (genocide, ethnic cleansing, Darfur, ICC).
 - Analyze:** interpret a diagram or chart from the text; make inferences about classification and ethnic tension; suggest alternative presentations.
 - Synthesize:** create a tri-Venn diagram for the Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat narratives; identify shared traits and how each conveys the “us vs. them” mentality.

B. Share & Prepare · 5 min

- Students discuss their work. Confirm a basic understanding of classification and its role in genocide, and name any common misconceptions before proceeding.

Part 2: Media Archaeology (50 minutes)

A. Setup · 5 min

- Students form pairs or groups of three. Distribute a **Media Analysis Packet** to each pair:
 - one historical headline about Darfur,
 - one social-media post about Darfur today,
 - a Media Analysis tool (one per student),
 - highlighters in three colors, **yellow: divisive language · green: unifying language · pink: loaded / emotional terms.**

Teacher Note

Articles are drawn from Google’s News Archives and intentionally vary in their classifying language. There is often no single “right” answer, let students interpret the language as they read it, so long as they justify their claims.

B. Guided Analysis · 15 min

- Model the analysis with a sample headline or the anchor text.

Teacher Script, Say:

Consider a headline such as “Arab militias target Black African villages.” Highlight the divisive terms, the unifying language, and the loaded words, then name the classification technique. This one classifies by ethnicity and geography.

- Demonstrate highlighting divisive, unifying, and loaded terms, and naming the classification techniques (ethnicity, geography, gender, religion, political party, language).

3. Distinguish **formal** (legally mandated or strictly defined) from **informal** (casual, socially constructed) classifications.
4. Show how to note **alternative phrasing** for harmful words. Remind students that not every article contains harmful, or unifying, language, and that bias is often unintentional, reflecting intrinsic assumptions.

C. Group Analysis · 20 min

1. In pairs, students analyze their own article and post as modeled:
 - a. highlight the three types of language,
 - b. circle or underline the specific classification techniques,
 - c. complete the **Language Impact** column: Who is being classified? How are groups separated? What assumptions are being made?
2. Students complete the **Counter-Narrative** column, reframing biased messaging.

D. Rotations · 10 min

1. Groups leave their annotated articles and rotate to a new set, reading the previous group's annotations and completing the Language Impact and Counter-Narrative columns for the new samples.

Teacher Tip

After rotating, it's fine if students skim rather than close-read, the goal is to recognize the *language of classification* quickly, the way we encounter media in real life.

2. Students return to their original work and note any additions or changes.

Part 3: Check for Understanding (20 minutes)

A. Independent Quick-Write & CFU · 20 min

1. On an exit ticket (paragraph or bullets), students answer: "What are the most common types of classification you noticed?" and "How might someone from each group feel reading these headlines?"
2. Administer **CFU 1.2** (Appendix B) and record results on the tracker (Appendix C).

Part 4: Closing Remarks (10 minutes)

1. Tie up loose ends and clarify misconceptions. Review student responses before the next lesson, noting patterns and any interventions observed while circulating.

Extension Activities

- **Small-scale debate:** students defend whether a media example is intentionally divisive or a product of its time and context.
- **Multimedia counter-narrative:** instead of rewriting headlines, students make a short video, infographic, or social-media thread addressing media bias.

Accommodations & ELL Support

- **Pre-highlighted texts:** provide some articles with divisive/unifying language already marked to reduce cognitive load.

- **Simplified packets:** offer a modified set of articles with bullet-point summaries.
- **Sentence starters:** “One example of classification I found is...,” “This article portrays [group] as....”
- Allow students to discuss and record responses together before writing independently.

Assessment Rubric, Media Analysis & Counter-Narrative (20 points)

Language Identification (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Accurately marks divisive, unifying, and loaded language throughout.
Good (4)	Marks most language types correctly.
Fair (3)	Marks some language; several missed.
Needs Work (1–2)	Little accurate identification.

Classification Analysis (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Names techniques and formal/informal precisely, with insight.
Good (4)	Identifies techniques with minor gaps.
Fair (3)	Basic identification; limited analysis.
Needs Work (1–2)	Techniques not identified.

Counter-Narrative (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Reframes bias with a fair, evidence-aware alternative.
Good (4)	Clear counter-narrative; mostly effective.
Fair (3)	Attempts a counter-narrative; underdeveloped.
Needs Work (1–2)	Missing or off-topic.

Evidence & Collaboration (5 points)

Score	Description
Excellent (5)	Consistently cites the text; strong pair collaboration.
Good (4)	Usually cites evidence; solid collaboration.
Fair (3)	Some evidence; uneven collaboration.
Needs Work (1–2)	Rarely cites evidence.

APPENDIX A

Anchor Text

“Us or Them: Classification in the Darfur Genocide(s)”

Two reading levels are provided: the full version (grade 10.4) and a simplified version (grade 8.6) for developing readers and multilingual learners.

ANCHOR TEXT · FULL VERSION (V1)**'Us or Them': Classification in the Darfur Genocide(s)****Stage 1: Classification | Case Study: Darfur, Sudan.****Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 10.4***by Joshua Bicknell*

*Originally published December 27, 2023, for "Ten Stages of Change: A Project for Genocide Education."
Revised for this edition.*

Please Note: This article contains descriptions of violence and genocide, and analyzes human behavior related to sensitive topics including racism, intolerance, sexual violence, physical violence, death, and genocidal acts. Some images and descriptions may be upsetting. Please be mindful of the content, and let a teacher know if you need a break or if the content is triggering.

Consider speaking with a parent, counselor, or teacher for support during this lesson.

Think: How do geography and location play a role in classification? How does the physical space we inhabit both create community and divisions? What inference can you make about the region before you read?

Introduction

Genocide is a process that occurs in ten stages. The process is not always linear, and the stages often occur simultaneously. Dr. Gregory H. Stanton's framework offers a way of recognizing the patterns that lead to genocide so that early intervention can occur.

This series of articles on genocide and its ten stages aims to raise awareness of past and present genocides and to provide immediate actions, within realistic time constraints, that you can take to promote change, prevention, and tolerance. Each entry focuses on a different stage, with a specific country or region in focus, analyzing how that stage manifested and offering targeted actions against it.

Stage 1, classification, is the first stage of genocide. The case study is Darfur, Sudan, with genocide occurring from 2003 to the present.

I. Mariam Ibrahim Ausher. Jebel Marra; Darfur, Sudan. Early 2020.

Picture: UNAMID / Olivier Chassot. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Her name is Mariam Ibrahim Ausher.

On the outside, she embodies the traits of a true woman warrior. Her face is stoic and still, her hands rough and calloused. Her arms are strong and her shoulders square and wide, protruding through the ornate *toub* (traditional dress) that cascades down her back, encircles her chest, and drapes past her knees as morning winds push through the jagged, unforgiving Jebel Marra mountain range where she stands. Her *toub*'s composition of deep purple, royal blue, and bright orange stands as an act of defiance against the monochromatic haze of the land in front of her: land already lost, lives already gone.

Fourteen years have passed since a historic treaty was signed between the Sudanese government and rebel groups in Darfur. According to Mariam and the ever-shrinking number of individuals like her, the treaty was performative at best. The killing never stopped.¹

Now Mariam is a soldier for the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), carrying an assault rifle as she travels on foot through caves and cliffs, while on the horizon, smoke still rises from recent burnings.

"The rape, the killing, and the burning made my heart strong, and brave enough to be a good fighter," she says, speaking to the first outside journalists allowed into the harsh terrain of the Jebel Marra mountains in five years. At the time of the 2020 interview, it is the final rebel stronghold left in Darfur, held together only by a group of rebel fighters, many of them the sole surviving members of entire families after years of relentless persecution.

Surrounding the mountains are the scattered remnants of villages, an all-too-familiar sight for the people of Darfur, dating back to 2003, when hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children were murdered in an "ethnic cleansing" campaign that the United States ultimately recognized as genocide.

By 2020, years after the campaign to Save Darfur exited mainstream media and everyday consciousness, the promise of a return to peace has proven as empty as the land itself.

When asked to take up arms, Mariam never hesitated.



Emtithal Mahmoud: A Young Poet Tells the Story of Darfur, by Access Humboldt. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Toward the end of her interview, away from the others and alone with the journalists, Mariam sets her rifle aside for a moment and describes what led her here. Government forces attacked her village, gathered all the men, and killed hundreds within minutes. Mariam lost two children when the same forces rounded up every child in the village, forced them into a hut, and burned them alive. After watching her family killed, she watched her entire village set ablaze, and then the women were assaulted.

¹ Julia Steers, "Inside the Forgotten War in Darfur, Where the Killing Never Stopped," VICE News, July 13, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/inside-the-forgotten-war-in-darfur-where-the-killing-never-stopped/>.

Mariam is the type of woman who does not shed many tears. After recounting the murder of her family and the destruction of her village, the camera holds on her back for a moment as she wipes her eyes with the back of her hand.

II. Emtithal "Emi" Mahmoud. TEDMED. 2016.

Four years earlier, in 2016, Emtithal "Emi" Mahmoud stands in front of an audience at TEDMED, recalling how, at ten years old, in 2003, she first "learned what the word genocide meant."²

It was in 2003 when non-Arab rebels first armed themselves in response to unresolved neglect and discrimination, which resulted in government counterattacks led by Arab militias that were, to put it lightly, brutally effective.

Emi's voice begins to tremble as she recalls asking her mother why they were burying so many people that year.

"I don't remember the words that she chose to describe genocide to her 10-year-old daughter," she says. "But I remember the feeling. We felt completely alone, as if no one could hear us, as if we were essentially invisible."

Her story, which she recalls presenting to her high-school classmates years earlier, prompted one student in her class to protest, "Why do you have to talk about this? Can't you think about *us* and how it will make *us* feel?"

Who is *us*? And where does that position Emi?

"I'm a young African woman," she says, "with a scarf around my head, an American accent on my tongue, and a story that makes even the most brutal of Monday mornings seem inviting."

"Will you witness me?"

III. Ahmat Mohamed Abubakar Mussa. Chad Refugee Camp. Late 2023.



Camps for the internally displaced that were burnt down in Geneina, West Darfur, by Peoples Dispatch. Licensed under CC BY-SA.

It is late 2023, and Sudan is knee-deep in a war between political rivals. For the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who evolved from the Janjaweed of the early 2000s and carried out the murder of an estimated

² Emtithal Mahmoud, "A Young Poet Tells the Story of Darfur," TEDMED, November 2016, https://www.ted.com/talks/emtithal_mahmoud_a_young_poet_tells_the_story_of_darfur.

300,000 to 400,000 people in the 2003 to 2005 genocide, it is a prime opportunity to finish what was started: the elimination of certain African ethnic groups, including the non-Arab Masalit of West Darfur.³

The location is Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, effectively captured in under two months by the RSF and allied Arab militias between April and June of 2023. Since mid-June, at least 3,000 and as many as 10,000 Masalit civilians have been killed, a toll a United Nations panel of experts later estimated may have reached 15,000 in this one city by year's end. Mass graves continue to be uncovered, despite RSF efforts to hide the bodies. But room is running out, and the streets are overflowing with the dead.⁴

There are virtually no Masalit left in Geneina, and the SLA, whose fighters held the Jebel Marra, has disappeared from the city. The governor of West Darfur declared publicly that the RSF had committed blatant acts of genocide. When he refused to recant, the RSF tortured and executed him, along with nearly all of the humanitarian aid workers who remained.

The RSF blamed the Masalit.

Ahmat Mohamed Abubakar Mussa is one of them.⁵

He is in a hospital in neighboring Chad, where more than a million Darfuris have fled, many on foot, many carrying wounded children past hundreds of bodies scattered along the way. To reach any place of refuge, much less as a male, is extremely rare for Masalit and other Black Africans. The genocidal pattern targets men first and foremost, particularly lawyers and other professionals. Boys are prioritized next. Women, if not killed, are subjected to rape, dehumanization, and torture. Survivors report that if the RSF encounters what they describe as "anyone Black," they shoot.

As Ahmat's gunshot wounds are treated with the few resources available, he shares these same details, recalling how, after all the men in his village were murdered, he stayed alive by hiding among the bodies for days, shot and left for dead.

"The aim is to replace the Masalit ethnic group with Arab groups. They want to eliminate Black Africans," he says. "It's a crime against humanity. Not even animals can be treated the way we are being treated."

The evidence in a video he watches makes this clear. The RSF often documents its crimes with great pride. In the footage, one militia member films while another points to the bodies lining the streets.

"If you haven't seen what's happening here," says the voice behind the camera in complete calm, "I'll show you the work we've done."

The camera is shaky, but so are Ahmat's hands.

"We're on the street leading to the Bank of Khartoum," the voice continues, panning past bodies lined along the roadside, their belongings scattered nearby. "Look."

"Look at the *dogs*."

³ Maggie Michael and Ryan McNeill, "How Arab Fighters Carried Out a Rolling Ethnic Massacre in Sudan," Reuters, September 22, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/sudan-politics-darfur/>.

⁴ "Darfur Lawyers: 'Bodies Scattered across El Geneina,'" Radio Dabanga, June 22, 2023, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/darfur-lawyers-bodies-scattered-across-el-geneina>; on the UN panel's estimate, see "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan," UN Security Council, January 2024.

⁵ "Stories of Horror: Investigating a Massacre in Sudan's Darfur Region," France 24 English, December 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yv23oVWYQew>.

Ahmat remains still, staring through the camera, through the doctor tending to his wounds: "Not even animals... the way they treat... *us*."

IV. Us and Them

The words alone seem harmless enough, and in many contexts they are inescapable and neutral.

They are echoed by Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat.

And in the words of one Sudanese civilian, speaking through social media: "In Sudan, it's no longer us and them, or even us versus them. It's us *or* them."

That statement shows the evolutionary power that seemingly innocuous words can carry, and it explains why classification stands at the beginning of the ten stages of genocide.

Connect to your unit work: Return to the *Early Warning Signs* tracker from Lesson 0. Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat each describe being sorted into a category by someone else. Record which stage each account illustrates, and note where a single account shows more than one stage at once.

The Ten Stages of Genocide

The "Ten Stages of Genocide" is a framework developed by Gregory H. Stanton, founding president of Genocide Watch, a nonprofit dedicated to predicting, preventing, and stopping genocide, and a past president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars. He has taught human rights at the University of Mary Washington and genocide studies at George Mason University.⁶

The framework can be understood as a formula for how a society can engage in genocide, one that usually requires a large group, or a state, to carry it out. The formula is messy. The stages do not necessarily occur in sequential order, and more often than not they occur simultaneously rather than in isolation. The process starts with certain prejudices, growing increasingly insidious over periods, even short periods, of time.

The ten stages are classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial.

In the stories above, almost all of these stages are present. Darfur and much of war-torn Sudan have devolved once again into full-scale genocide, and the deaths of thousands of Masalit civilians in less than 60 days led multiple experts to compare the brutality to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In January 2025, the United States formally determined that the RSF and allied militias have committed genocide in Sudan.⁷

Discussing any region in the throes of genocide in terms of isolated stages is difficult. Still, it is in the earliest stages that the potential for preventing escalation is at its highest, which in no way means it is too late for Sudan. As Mariam accurately predicted, the killing has been ceaseless, lasting decades even after the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Omar al-Bashir, the former head of state responsible for the 2003 genocide, and even after his overthrow in 2019.⁸

⁶ Gregory H. Stanton, "The Ten Stages of Genocide," Genocide Watch, <https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>.

⁷ Antony J. Blinken, "Genocide Determination in Sudan," press statement, U.S. Department of State, January 7, 2025.

⁸ "Al Bashir Case," International Criminal Court, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir>.

Examining Darfur through the lens of classification means asking what went wrong from the start: the role classification has played historically and currently, and how an understanding, and a misunderstanding, of classification helped pave the way for decades of persecution and mass murder.

Starting at Stage One: Classification

From Stanton's original document, "The Ten Stages of Genocide":

"Classification: All cultures have categories to distinguish people into 'us and them' by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide."

Historical Context



Displacement camp, Darfur. Photo by unknown author. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Darfur is a region in western Sudan with a population of approximately 7 million. Sudan has a diverse population divided into two main tribal groups: Arab Sudanese tribes in the north, and Black African tribal groups in the west and south. While most of the population practices Islam, native African tribes also practice Christianity or traditional beliefs.⁹

The Fur tribe, from whom Darfur gets its name, was incorporated into an Islamic-ruled Sudanese nation. After gaining independence in 1956, Sudan experienced repeated civil wars, with Darfur neglected and used as a military pawn in conflicts with neighboring countries. Geography hardened the divide: groups settled in different regions and took on different livelihoods, nomadic herders and sedentary farmers, competing for shrinking land and water. The divide was never natural. Colonial administrators governed through favored elites, and in Darfur the classification of "Arab" and "African" rested not only on racial distinctions but also on social and economic constructs. The groups lived side by side for centuries, yet colonial policies reinforced a divide that later became lethal.

Money deepened it. The chart below shows how the government distributed development spending between 1996 and 2001.

⁹ Gérard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Figure 1. Share of regional development spending in Sudan, 1996–2001

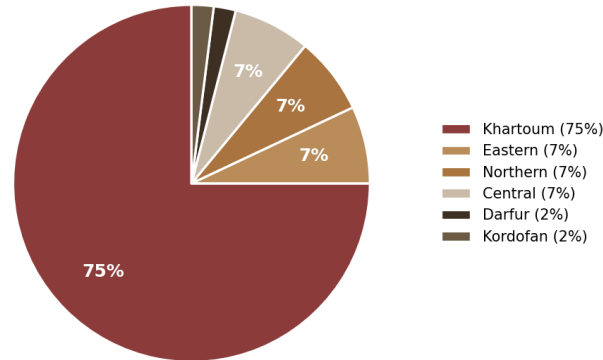


Figure 1. Regional development spending in Sudan, 1996–2001. Source: Diaz (2013); Prunier (2005).

The distribution tells a clear story. While Khartoum, the capital region, received 75% of development funds, Darfur received 2%. This economic discrimination laid the groundwork for conflict.¹⁰

Tensions escalated as Arab forces gained power and marginalized Darfur's African groups. The Sudanese Liberation Army formed and launched attacks in 2003, and the government's response was brutal. It armed militia groups known as the Janjaweed to terrorize and murder the populations of Darfur in an ethnic-cleansing campaign. Many fled; many died in refugee camps. Between 2003 and 2005, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people were killed. Sudan's head of state, Omar al-Bashir, who had come to power in 1989, obstructed peacekeeping forces and faced international arrest warrants for crimes against humanity and genocide.

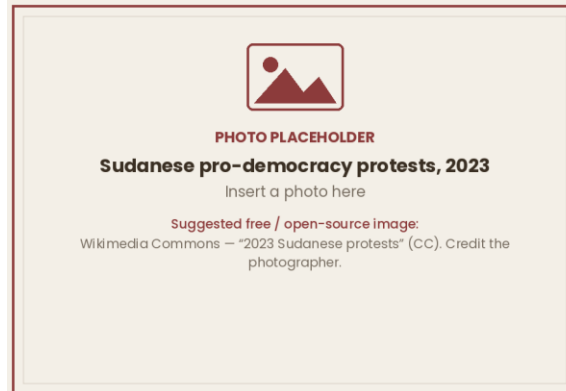
In 2019, al-Bashir was overthrown and imprisoned, but military leaders associated with the genocide took control, and in 2023 their rivalry ignited a new war. On December 6, 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken formally determined that the warring forces had committed war crimes, and that the RSF and allied militias had committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.¹¹

Classification, Complicated

Civilians across Sudan now face the consequences of earlier complacency as indiscriminate killing spreads through the country, while tribes such as the Masalit remain the targets of deliberate, genocidal violence.

¹⁰ Fabio Andres Diaz, "'Ethnic Conflict'? Armed Conflict from an Ethnic Perspective," SSRN Electronic Journal, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2763388>.

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, "War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Ethnic Cleansing Determination in Sudan," press statement, December 6, 2023.



Darfur displays the "bipolar society" Stanton warns is most at risk for genocide, boiled down to African versus Arab. According to Gérard Prunier, author of *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*, "Arabs and Black Africans are not at each other's throats because they are like cats and dogs but rather because, for the Arabs at least, they are not completely sure of what and who they are.... They desperately strive for recognition of their Arab status by other Arabs, who tend to look down upon them."

Prunier goes on to describe a "false consciousness" in which some Sudanese Arabs have surrounded themselves with an illusion: the belief that native Africans have accepted their place in society, and that their "sacrifices" are part of a "brotherhood," despite the resentments building underneath.

Prunier's analysis of an Arab need to be recognized echoes Emi's plea to her audience in 2016: "*Will you witness me?*"

The irony is painful. The "us" and the "them" of Darfur want the same thing: to be seen, recognized, and given space, both physical and otherwise. What distinguishes classification that carries genocidal consequences from classification that is harmless and necessary may be this: dangerous classification creates division by silencing, ignoring, or neglecting. The danger lies not in classification itself but in **forced classification that leaves someone out**, whether the "us," the "them," or, in most cases, both.

Stepping back from the violence to look at societies and groups, especially those that are marginalized and even those that only perceive a marginalization, makes one pattern visible. Every group will eventually make itself seen. Recognizing that allows tensions and unresolved conflict to be addressed earlier.

Looking at a situation like Sudan's without concluding that one side is simply, inherently evil can be uncomfortable. Evil exists. It is also often bred from the sting of feeling unseen, unheard, or unappreciated in one's own skin. Humans cling to identity more fiercely than almost anything, and prevention strategies that work must acknowledge all identities. No policy, law, or government action will make a lasting difference until that first, critical piece is addressed.

V. Shifting to Unity

Is it too late for Darfur? For all of Sudan? For other ongoing genocides? The questions can seem too large to hold at once.

The weight of the world's conflicts does not rest on any single set of shoulders. That does not release anyone from the responsibility to be informed and to act according to their own ethics and values, even in small ways. The effect of a single action has created unexpected change before. The only thing guaranteed to help nothing is to do nothing.

The following actions shift the tensions of "us" and "them" toward a more harmonious "we."

Stage 1 (Classification) Actions

- **One minute.** Bookmark genocidewatch.org and check its current watches and warnings. Genocide works best when the world is distracted and passive.
- **Five minutes.** Stanton names tolerance as the central preventive measure at this stage: institutions and opportunities that bring different groups together. Build global perspective with a country-of-the-week quiz, starting with Sudan.
- **Thirty to sixty minutes.** Learn the basics of another language from the region. The Foreign Service Institute offers free courses, including Arabic.
- **A few hours.** Volunteer with an interfaith or cross-cultural organization locally, or explore human-rights advocacy through Amnesty International.

Action for Sudan

Sudanese civilians asked about their needs answer the same way, without exception:

"Talk about it."

Sudan has been forgotten before, and it is being forgotten again, often overshadowed by conflicts the world finds more familiar. Social media remains the most effective route for ordinary people to spread awareness, and being spoken about gives Sudanese civilians reason to believe they are seen and heard.

- **Share verified reporting** using **#EyesOnSudan**, **#KeepEyesOnSudan**, and **#LiberateSudan**, the tags Sudanese civilians themselves recommend.
- **Write to your representatives**, urging protection for the people of Darfur. A personal letter carries more weight than a template.
- **Donate if able.** Doctors Without Borders, the Sudan Relief Fund, and the Darfur Women Action Group all work in the region. Talking about it remains the overwhelming request.

STAGE 1 • CLASSIFICATION: ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

1 min · Bookmark genocidewatch.org; check current watches.
 5 min · Build cross-group knowledge; take a country quiz on Sudan.
 30–60 min · Begin learning Arabic or another regional language.
 A few hours · Volunteer with an interfaith or cross-cultural group.
 Anytime · **Talk about it.** Share verified reporting: **#EyesOnSudan**.
 Anytime · Write your representatives; support Darfuri relief groups.

VI. "Emi" (2016)

Toward the end of her talk at TEDMED in 2016, where she implored her audience to witness her and her people, Emi dedicates one final poem to her cousin Zainab.¹²

"You Have a Big Imagination or 400,000 Ways to Cry"

¹² Mahmoud, "A Young Poet Tells the Story of Darfur." The poem's full title is "You Have a Big Imagination or 400,000 Ways to Cry."

War makes a broken marriage bed out of sorrow. You want nothing more than to disappear, but your heart can't salvage enough remnants to leave. But joy, joy is the armor we carried across the borders of our broken homeland. ... So allow me to express that if I make you laugh, it's usually on purpose. And if I make you cry, I'll still think you are beautiful. This is for my cousin Zainab ... surrounded by family, by remnants of a people who were given as a dowry to a relentless war but still managed to make pearls of this life; by the ones who taught me to not only laugh, but to live in the face of death.

To learn more about the ongoing genocide in Sudan, visit operationbrokensilence.org, follow @GenocideWatch, and check [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org) for current actions.

The next unit examines Stage Two: Symbolization. The case study is Cambodia, 1975 to 1979. Until then, and always, keep #EyesOnSudan.

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ANCHOR TEXT · SECOND READING LEVEL (V2)**'Us or Them': Classification in the Darfur Genocide(s)****Stage 1: Classification | Case Study: Darfur, Sudan.****Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 8.6***by Joshua Bicknell*

This is the second reading level of the anchor text, the same story and evidence as the full version, written in shorter sentences.

Please Note: This article describes violence and genocide. Some parts may be hard to read. If you need a break, use your signal card or tell your teacher. You may also want to talk with a parent, counselor, or teacher during this lesson.

Think: How do geography and location play a role in classification? How can the physical spaces we share both build community and create divisions? What inference can you make about the region before you read?

I. Mariam (2020)

Picture: UNAMID / Olivier Chassot. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Her name is Mariam Ibrahim Ausher. She looks like a true warrior. Her face is stoic and still, her hands rough and calloused, her shoulders square and wide. She stands in the jagged Jebel Marra mountains of western Darfur. Her *toub* (traditional dress) of deep purple, royal blue, and bright orange stands out against the gray, burned land in front of her: land already lost, lives already gone.

Fourteen years have passed since the first peace treaty was signed between the Sudanese government and Darfur's rebels. According to Mariam and the shrinking number of people like her, the treaty was for show. The killing never stopped.

Now Mariam is a soldier for the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA). She carries a rifle as she travels on foot through caves and cliffs, while smoke from recent burnings rises on the horizon. "The rape, the killing, and the burning made my heart strong, and brave enough to be a good fighter," she tells a team of journalists, the first outsiders allowed into this terrain in five years. It is the last rebel stronghold left in Darfur, held together by fighters who are often the only survivors of their entire families.

When asked to take up arms, Mariam never hesitated. Alone with the interviewer, she sets aside her rifle and describes what led her here. Government forces attacked her village and killed hundreds of men within minutes. They forced the children into a hut and burned them alive, including two of Mariam's own. Then the village itself was set on fire.

Mariam does not cry easily. But as she finishes, the camera catches her back for just a moment, as she wipes tears away with her hand.

II. "Emi" (2016)



Emtithal Mahmoud: A Young Poet Tells the Story of Darfur, by Access Humboldt. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Four years earlier, in 2016, Emtithal "Emi" Mahmoud stands before an audience at TEDMED. She recalls how, at ten years old in 2003, she first "learned what the word genocide meant." That year, non-Arab rebels armed themselves after years of neglect and discrimination, and the government answered with attacks by Arab militias that were, to put it lightly, brutally effective.

Emi's voice trembles as she remembers asking her mother why they were burying so many people. "I don't remember the words that she chose to describe genocide to her 10-year-old daughter," she says. "But I remember the feeling. We felt completely alone, as if no one could hear us, as if we were essentially invisible."

She remembers sharing her story with high-school classmates years earlier, and one of them protesting, "Why do you have to talk about this? Can't you think about *us* and how it will make *us* feel?"

Who counts as "us"? And where does that leave Emi?

"I'm a young African woman," she says, "with a scarf around my head, an American accent on my tongue, and a story that makes even the most brutal of Monday mornings seem inviting." Then, a question for the audience:

"Will you witness me?"

III. Ahmat (2023)



Camps for the internally displaced that were burnt down in Geneina, West Darfur, by Peoples Dispatch. Licensed under CC BY-SA.

It is late 2023, and Sudan is deep in a war between political rivals. For the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the war is a chance to finish what they started. The RSF grew out of the Janjaweed, the militias that murdered an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people in the 2003 to 2005 genocide. Their target now: certain African ethnic groups, including the non-Arab Masalit of West Darfur.

The place is Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, captured by the RSF and allied militias in under two months. Since mid-June of 2023, between 3,000 and 10,000 Masalit civilians have been killed. A UN panel later said the toll in this one city may have reached 15,000. Mass graves keep being uncovered, even as the RSF tries to hide the bodies. The governor of West Darfur said publicly that the RSF had committed genocide. When he refused to take it back, they tortured and executed him, along with aid workers.

Ahmat Mohamed Abubakar Mussa is one of the few Masalit left. He is in a hospital in neighboring Chad. More than a million Darfuris have fled there, many on foot, many carrying wounded children past hundreds of bodies. He survived by hiding among the dead for days after the men in his village were killed. "The aim is to replace the Masalit ethnic group with Arab groups. They want to eliminate Black Africans," he says. "It's a crime against humanity. Not even animals can be treated the way we are being treated."

The RSF often films its own crimes with pride. In footage Ahmat watches, one fighter records while another points to bodies lining a street. "If you haven't seen what's happening here, I'll show you the work we've done," the voice says calmly. "We're on the street leading to the Bank of Khartoum. Look. Look at the *dogs*."

Ahmat stares through the camera, through the doctor treating his wounds: "Not even animals... the way they treat... *us*."

IV. Us and Them

The words alone seem harmless, and in many settings they are neutral. They are echoed by Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat. And in the words of one Sudanese civilian online: "In Sudan, it's no longer us and them, or even us versus them. It's us *or* them."

That is the power that seemingly harmless words can carry, and it is why classification is the first of the ten stages of genocide.

Connect to your unit work: Return to the *Early Warning Signs* tracker from Lesson 0. Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat are each sorted into a category by someone else. Record which stage each account shows.

The Ten Stages of Genocide

The "Ten Stages of Genocide" is a framework by Gregory H. Stanton, the founder of Genocide Watch, an organization dedicated to preventing genocide and prosecuting those who commit it. The framework works as a formula for how a society can engage in genocide, one that usually needs a large group, or a state, to carry it out. The stages do not always happen in order; they often happen at the same time. They begin with prejudice and grow more dangerous over time.

The ten stages are classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial. In the stories above, nearly all of them are present. In January 2025, the United States formally declared that the RSF and its allies have committed genocide in Sudan.

Starting at Stage One: Classification

From Stanton's original document, "The Ten Stages of Genocide":

"Classification: All cultures have categories to distinguish people into 'us and them' by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide."

Historical Context



Displacement camp, Darfur. Photo by unknown author. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Darfur is a region in western Sudan with about 7 million people. Sudan is divided into two main groups: Arab Sudanese tribes in the north, and Black African tribal groups in the west and south. Most people practice Islam, though some African tribes also practice Christianity or traditional beliefs. The Fur tribe, from whom Darfur gets its name, was folded into an Islamic-ruled Sudan. After independence in 1956, Sudan suffered civil wars, and Darfur was neglected and used as a pawn in conflicts with neighbors.

Geography deepened the divide. Groups settled in different regions and took on different ways of life, nomadic herders and settled farmers, competing for scarce land and water. Colonial rulers governed by favoring some groups over others. So the labels "Arab" and "African" were never only about race. They were also about power and money. The groups lived side by side for centuries, yet those policies hardened a divide that later became deadly.

Money mattered most of all. Between 1996 and 2001, the capital region (Khartoum) received 75% of the government's development spending. Darfur received 2%.

Figure 1. Share of regional development spending in Sudan, 1996–2001

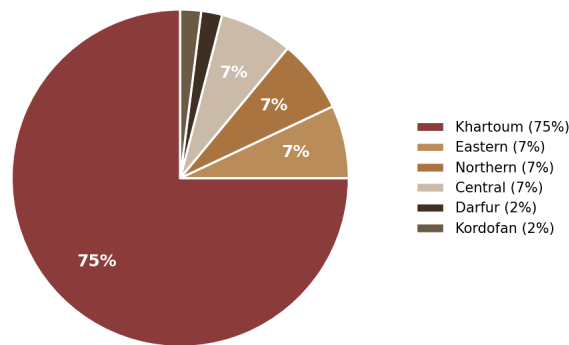


Figure 1. Regional development spending in Sudan, 1996–2001. The capital received the vast majority; Darfur received about 2%.

Arab forces gained power and pushed aside Darfur's African groups. In 2003, the Sudanese Liberation Army formed and attacked. The government answered by arming militias called the Janjaweed to terrorize and murder Darfur's people. Between 2003 and 2005, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people were killed. Sudan's leader, Omar al-Bashir, blocked peacekeepers and was charged by the International Criminal Court with crimes against humanity and genocide. He was overthrown in 2019, but military leaders tied to the genocide took power, and the war has continued.

On January 7, 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued this determination:

"The RSF and allied militias have systematically murdered men and boys, even infants, on an ethnic basis... Based on this information, I have now concluded that members of the RSF and allied militias have committed genocide in Sudan."

Classification, Complicated

Darfur displays the "bipolar society" Stanton warns is most at risk, a society boiled down to African versus Arab. But according to Gérard Prunier, author of *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*, the two sides are not simply enemies "like cats and dogs." Many Sudanese Arabs, he writes, are "not completely sure of what and who they are," and "desperately strive for recognition of their Arab status by other Arabs, who tend to look down upon them."

The irony is painful. Both sides want the same thing: to be seen, recognized, and given space. What separates dangerous classification from the ordinary, necessary kind may be this: dangerous classification divides people by silencing them, ignoring them, or neglecting them. The danger lies not in classification itself but in **forced classification that leaves someone out**, whether that someone is the "us," the "them," or, in most cases, both.

Looking at a situation like Sudan's without deciding that one side is purely evil can be uncomfortable. Evil is real. It is also often bred from the sting of feeling unseen, unheard, or unappreciated. Humans cling to identity more fiercely than almost anything, and prevention strategies that work must acknowledge all identities. No law or policy will make a lasting difference until that first, critical piece is addressed.

V. Shifting to Unity

Is it too late for Darfur? For Sudan? For other ongoing genocides? The questions can feel overwhelming. The weight of the world's conflicts does not rest on one person's shoulders. The only action guaranteed to help nothing is to do nothing.

- Follow **@GenocideWatch** and bookmark **genocidewatch.org**. Genocide works best when the world is distracted.
- Share verified news using **#EyesOnSudan**, **#KeepEyesOnSudan**, and **#LiberateSudan**, the tags Sudanese civilians themselves recommend.
- Write to your representatives about protecting the people of Darfur.
- Begin learning basic Arabic or another language from the region.
- Support organizations that help Darfuri refugees, such as Doctors Without Borders and the Sudan Relief Fund.
- Join or start a human-rights club at your school, or organize an awareness event.

The most powerful message from Sudanese civilians is simple: **"Talk about it."** Sudan has been forgotten before, and it is being forgotten again. Now that you know what is happening, speak up and share reliable information.

STAGE 1 · CLASSIFICATION: ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

1 min · Bookmark genocidewatch.org; follow [@GenocideWatch](https://twitter.com/GenocideWatch).

5 min · Share verified news: **#EyesOnSudan**, **#KeepEyesOnSudan**.

30–60 min · Begin learning Arabic or another regional language.

Anytime · Write your representatives about Darfur.

Anytime · Support Darfuri refugee organizations.

Always · **Talk about it.**

VI. "Emi" (2016)

Before leaving the stage, Emi dedicates one last poem to her cousin Zainab. Her words carry both the pain and the strength of her people:

"But joy, joy is the armor we carried across the borders of our broken homeland. ... So allow me to express that if I make you laugh, it's usually on purpose. And if I make you cry, I'll still think you are beautiful. This is for my cousin Zainab ... by remnants of a people who were given as a dowry to a relentless war but still managed to make pearls of this life; by the ones who taught me to not only laugh, but to live in the face of death."

Mariam, Emi, and Ahmat all send the same message, one we can choose to answer:

Will you witness me?

Sources for this article appear at the end of the full version (V1).

Appendix B: Assessment

Unit 1: Classification, Case Study: Darfur

I. Standards-Aligned Checks for Understanding (CFUs)

II. Summative Assessment (with Answer Key & Rubric)

Note on standards: the California History, Social Science and Common Core (CCSS) alignments are suggested and should be verified against your district's mapping.

I. Standards-Aligned Checks for Understanding

Overview and Guide for Use

Each lesson ends with brief, informal Checks for Understanding (CFUs), aligned to the same standards assessed on the summative. Label your Standards & Mastery Tracker (Appendix C) with the assessed standards so you can see which skills need re-teaching.

Step 1: Decide on standards. These are suggestions; adjust for your content area.

Step 2: Assess at the end of the lesson. You do NOT need every item, choose your content area and give a quick check.

Step 3: Track the data. Look for trends; re-teach before moving on if mastery was not reached.

Unit 1, Lesson 1 CFUs

Each content-area CFU is placed on its own page so departments can copy and use only their section.

I. World History CFU 1.1

Focus: *Identifying genocide; sequencing cause and effect; comparing historical context over time.*

1. Which of the following is **NOT** an example of genocide?

- From 1915–1923, the Committee of Union and Progress in the Ottoman Empire carried out death marches into the Syrian Desert, specifically targeting ethnic Armenians.
- In 1941, “mobile killing squads” under German command murdered thousands of Jews and Communists “by bullets” after invading the Soviet Union.
- In 1959, a revolt in the Tibetan capital against the People’s Republic of China led to heavy fighting and the deaths of thousands of protesters and soldiers.
- From 2003, government-backed Arab “Janjaweed” forces responded to a rebel attack in Darfur with mass displacement, assault, and murder in a years-long scorched-earth campaign.

2. The diagram below shows the sequence of events that led to genocide in Darfur in 2003. Which of the following would **BEST** fit in Box [II]?

Unequal distribution of economic resources unfairly favored the largely Arab population of the capital, Khartoum. I.	[?] II.	Armed militia groups (the Janjaweed, now the RSF) retaliated against Darfur’s Black African population, killing up to 400,000 people. III.
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- Black African tribes in western Sudan established a peace treaty with the Arab-backed militias.
- The Sudanese Liberation Army formed to fight against years of discrimination suffered by the people of Darfur.
- The United Nations intervened to establish a ceasefire, which ended unsuccessfully.
- President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in a coup, leading to civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF.

3. Explain how the concept of “genocide” has **evolved** since the term was first introduced in 1944, and how that evolution shapes our understanding of both past and contemporary conflicts.

STANDARDS CHECKED CA H, SS 10.10 · RH.11-12.3 · RH.11-12.6

II. English Language Arts & Reading CFU 1.1

Focus: Academic meaning of words; synthesis of information across sources and definitions.

Read the following definition, then answer Question 1.

*“Genocidal action is action in which armed organizations treat civilian social groups as enemies and aim to destroy their real or **putative** social power, by means of killing, violence, and coercion against individuals whom they regard as members of the groups.”, Martin Shaw, What is Genocide? (2007)*

1. In the context of Shaw’s definition, the word “**putative**” is best defined as,
 - a. forced
 - b. unwarranted
 - c. commonly accepted
 - d. judged harshly
2. Compare several definitions of “genocide” and identify one element common to every definition. Defend whether that common trait is also the **most important** one, or whether one definition is missing a key component. Reference at least two definitions.

STANDARDS CHECKED RI/RL.11-12.4 · RH.11-12.9

III. World Geography CFU 1.1

Focus: *Causes and effects between conflicts and groups; distribution of resources.*

1. Using the diagram from the World History CFU, which of the following would **BEST** fit in Box [II], the step between economic inequality and the Janjaweed's violence?
 - a. Black African tribes established a peace treaty with the Arab-backed militias.
 - b. The Sudanese Liberation Army formed to fight against years of discrimination.
 - c. The United Nations established a lasting ceasefire in the region.
 - d. The Arab and African populations merged into a single political party.
2. Describe how the distribution of both **natural and economic resources** in Sudan contributed to the conflict between Black Africans and Arabs. Be specific.

STANDARDS CHECKED RH.11-12.3 · RH.11-12.7

CFU 1.1 Answer Key(s)*Answer + Standard***World History:**

1. CCA H, SS 10.10. The Tibetan uprising was a political revolt met with military force, not the deliberate destruction of an ethnic, religious, or racial group.
2. BRH.11-12.3. The SLA's formation is the cause that links economic inequality to the militia violence.
3. Answers vary, RH.11-12.6. Strong responses note the difficulty of prosecuting genocide, especially the element of "intent" in the UN definition, and how definitions keep evolving.

English Language Arts & Reading:

1. CRI/RL.11-12.4. "Putative" means *reputed* or *commonly accepted / supposed*.
2. Answers vary, RH.11-12.9. Should resemble the World History constructed response, comparing definitions and defending a common element (often "intent").

World Geography:

1. BRH.11-12.3.
2. Answers vary, RH.11-12.7. Khartoum received 75% of development funds while Darfur received 2%; competition over land and water deepened the divide.

Unit 1, Lesson 2 CFUs

I. World History Studies CFU 1.2

Focus: *Analyzing patterns of culture, classification, and prediction (CA H, SS 10.10; RH.11-12.6).*

1. Which of the following **best** explains how classification contributed to conflict in Darfur?
 - a. A long-standing cultural divide between settled farmers and nomadic herders, worsened by resource scarcity.
 - b. Classification was based only on language differences, and older conflicts had little impact.
 - c. The Sudanese government initially classified all ethnic groups equally and treated them fairly.
 - d. The conflict was caused solely by outside influences, which created internal division.
2. Explain the correlation between the first stage of genocide (classification) and how historians can both **analyze the past** and **predict the future** through this stage. Use at least one contemporary example.

STANDARDS CHECKED CA H, SS 10.10 · RH.11-12.6

II. World Geography Studies CFU 1.2

Focus: *Effects of land and natural resources; analyzing regional patterns (RH.11-12.7).*

1. Which **geographic factor** contributed most to the classification of groups in Darfur?
 - a. The presence of major rivers dividing the region into separate cultural areas.
 - b. The unequal distribution of natural resources, leading to conflict over land and water.
 - c. Mountainous terrain that prevented all interaction between ethnic groups.
 - d. The complete absence of any government control over land disputes.
2. Sudan's regions differ sharply in resources and in government control. Using what you have learned, explain what conclusion can be drawn about how **physical and human geography** contributed to division and conflict in the region.

STANDARDS CHECKED RH.11-12.7

III. English Language Arts & Reading CFU 1.2

Focus: *Author's purpose; bias and credibility; nonfiction text structures (RH.11-12.6).*

1. How does the author's use of language in "Us or Them: Classification in the Darfur Genocide" shape the reader's perception of classification?
 - a. The author presents classification as a process with consequences limited to the African continent.
 - b. The author highlights the dangers of classification by illustrating its role in historical conflicts and its potential for future division.
 - c. The author avoids discussing classification directly, focusing on other aspects of the conflict.
 - d. The author relies mainly on statistics and charts as the primary way to communicate the dangers of classification.
2. Consider the sources examined in this lesson, primary sources, news articles, and social-media posts. Which form of media contained more **divisive or biased** language? Give a specific example, and describe one way to counteract that biased or divisive language.

STANDARDS CHECKED RH.11-12.6 · RH.11-12.8

CFU 1.2 Answer Key(s)*Answer + Standard***World History:**

1. ACA H, SS 10.10.
2. Answers vary, RH.11-12.6. Classification lets historians read the past *and* flag present risk: a society dividing sharply into two groups (as in Darfur, or Rwanda in 1994) is an early-warning sign.

World Geography:

1. BRH.11-12.7.
2. Answers vary, RH.11-12.7. Resource inequality and separate settlement patterns hardened the Arab/African divide into conflict.

English Language Arts & Reading:

1. BRH.11-12.6.
2. Answers vary, RH.11-12.8. Strong answers name a specific divisive example and a concrete counter-move (add context, humanize the group, cite a credible source).

II. Summative Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Multiple-Choice Section (15 Questions)

Part 1: Reading Comprehension and Analysis

(Questions 1–3 are based on the excerpt below.)

“In Darfur, the classification of ‘Arab’ and ‘African’ was not based solely on clear racial distinctions but also on social and economic constructs. The groups lived side by side for centuries, yet colonial policies reinforced a divide that later became lethal.”, from “Us or Them: Classification in the Darfur Genocide(s)” (Appendix A)

1. What is the author’s **main argument** in this passage?
 - a. Racial differences in Darfur were always the main source of conflict.
 - b. A combination of factors led to conflict in Darfur, classifying people beyond race alone.
 - c. The groups in Darfur had no differences before colonial intervention.
 - d. Classification was beneficial in preventing conflict.
2. What rhetorical strategy does the author use in stating that “the groups lived side by side for centuries”?
 - a. Metaphor, to symbolize unity
 - b. Emotional appeal (pathos)
 - c. Ethos, establishing credibility through history
 - d. Logical appeal (logos)
3. Which of the following best describes the author’s **purpose** in this text?
 - a. To persuade policymakers to intervene in future genocides
 - b. To argue that genocide is inevitable in regions with ethnic divisions
 - c. To entertain readers with a dramatic account of conflict
 - d. To inform readers about the historical context that led to violence in Darfur

(Questions 4–6 are based on the anchor text as a whole.)

4. Which of the following best explains how the text **builds a historical argument**?
 - a. By providing multiple perspectives on classification, including survivor testimony and historical context.
 - b. By making general claims about genocide without supporting evidence.
 - c. By relying only on government documents from the Sudanese regime.
 - d. By arguing that classification applies only to Darfur, not to other events.
5. Why does the author include references to **government policies that favored Arab groups**?
 - a. To show that colonial legacies had no effect on modern Sudanese conflicts.
 - b. To emphasize how state policies reinforced classification and fueled ethnic divisions.
 - c. To argue that these policies successfully promoted peace and unity.

d. To demonstrate that government involvement in classification is always neutral.

6. What is the effect of using **firsthand accounts** like Mariam's story?

- a. It replaces historical facts with opinion, making the article less reliable.
- b. It weakens the argument by introducing subjective perspectives.
- c. It provides emotional and personal context that helps readers connect to the issue.
- d. It distracts from the political complexity of the Darfur crisis.

Part 2: Textual Evidence and Rhetorical Analysis

7. What rhetorical strategy does the author use in the phrase "the classification of "Arab" and "African" was not based solely on clear racial distinctions"?

- a. Logical appeal (logos), to highlight inconsistencies in classification.
- b. Emotional appeal (pathos), to create sympathy for those affected.
- c. Ethical appeal (ethos), to establish expertise on Sudanese history.
- d. Anecdotal evidence, to illustrate an individual experience.

8. What historical factor made classification in Darfur **more dangerous**?

- a. Sudanese governments reinforced ethnic divisions through land and resource policies.
- b. Classification was not a factor in the Darfur conflict.
- c. The region's geography created natural unity between ethnic groups.
- d. The international community quickly intervened to prevent violence.

9. Which classification example best demonstrates the shift **from neutral to harmful**?

- a. Students being placed in different academic tracks based on performance.
- b. Japanese Americans identified by their heritage and later classified as "enemy aliens" after Pearl Harbor in 1941.
- c. Job titles distinguishing different professional roles.
- d. The "Baby Boomer" generation being called "Boomers" by younger people.

Part 3: Historical and Social Implications of Classification

10. Which of the following is an example of a **formal** classification system?

- a. Social-media labels for different interest groups
- b. A community's informal distinction between "locals" and "outsiders"
- c. Legally enforced racial classifications under apartheid South Africa
- d. The way students form friend groups based on shared interests

11. How does **geography** contribute to classification in Sudan?

- a. Sudan's deserts and rivers force unity between different ethnic groups.
- b. Geography plays little to no role in shaping classification in Sudan.
- c. Urbanization eliminated ethnic and regional divisions.
- d. Geographic isolation reinforced ethnic identities, as groups settled in different regions and took on roles like "nomadic herders" or "sedentary farmers."

12. Why does the phrase "it's no longer us and them, it's us **or** them" matter?

- a. It highlights the growing unity between different ethnic groups.
- b. It suggests that classification always leads to war.

- c. It demonstrates how language can escalate conflict by portraying others as threats.
- d. It provides a neutral perspective on Sudanese identity.

13. How can **language in media reporting escalate classification toward harm?**

- a. By reinforcing stereotypes that dehumanize certain groups.
- b. By promoting fair and balanced discussion of ethnic identities.
- c. By preventing conflict through accurate historical reporting.
- d. By reducing tensions between groups.

14. What role did **colonial policies play in shaping classification in Darfur?**

- a. Colonial rulers reinforced divisions by favoring some ethnic groups over others.
- b. Colonial policies had no effect on ethnic classifications in Darfur.
- c. Colonial rule promoted equality and eliminated classification-based discrimination.
- d. Sudan was never under colonial rule.

15. Which **counterargument best challenges the idea that classification always leads to genocide?**

- a. All historical examples of classification have resulted in genocide.
- b. Many societies use classification in neutral ways, such as for census data or cultural identity.
- c. Genocide occurs randomly and is not connected to classification.
- d. The concept of classification does not exist in modern society.

Short Answer Section (5 Questions)

Short Answer Rubric (3 points each): 3 = fully addresses the prompt with strong textual evidence and clear reasoning; 2 = addresses the prompt but lacks depth or evidence; 1 = partial answer, unclear or unsupported; 0 = no response or off-topic. *Provide additional paper as needed.*

16. Justifying Classifications. Using evidence from the anchor text, explain how classification in Darfur changed from a neutral or informal system into a harmful one. Provide at least **two** examples.

17. Connections to Modern Society. Provide a real-world example of how classification is used in society today. Explain whether it is neutral, problematic, harmful, or dangerous, and justify your answer.

18. Evaluating Media Narratives. Analyze a news article about a current global conflict where classification plays a role. Identify the language used to describe the groups and explain whether the wording reinforces bias.

19. Critical Thinking on Classification. In your opinion, is classification always harmful? Support your answer with evidence from the anchor text and a real-world example.

20. Proposing Solutions. Imagine you are a journalist covering the Darfur conflict. How would you write a counter-narrative to challenge harmful classifications? Provide a brief sample paragraph.

Alternative Performance Assessment

In place of the multiple-choice summative, students may complete one of the options below. Each reaches the same standards at a higher level of synthesis and transfer, and is scored with the 20-point analytic rubric that follows. All options require evidence from the anchor text and at least one additional credible source.

Option 1, Curatorial Project: “The Classification Spectrum Gallery”

Build an annotated gallery (display, poster, or slides) that places **five real classifications** drawn from Darfur, another historical case, and students’ own school or society, along the **neutral → problematic → harmful → dangerous** spectrum. Each entry cites evidence, explains its placement, and names one factor that could push it toward “dangerous.” Include a **curator’s statement (250–400 words)** on what the gallery reveals about classification and prevention. (*RH.11-12.1, .2; W.11-12.2; SL.11-12.4*)

Option 2, Civic Project: “Counter-Narrative Media Kit”

Create a small **media kit** (two or three pieces, e.g., a reframed headline, a social-media post, and a poster/infographic) that counters a biased portrayal of a group in coverage of Darfur or another conflict. Include an **author’s note** explaining the rhetorical choices and how they resist “us vs. them” framing. (*RH.11-12.6, .8; W.11-12.1; SL.11-12.5*)

Option 3, Essay (choose argumentative or analytical)

Argumentative: “Classification always leads to genocide.” Evaluate this claim in a well-organized argumentative essay, taking a **defensible position** supported by evidence from “Us or Them” and at least one additional example. (*W.11-12.1*)

Analytical: Analyze how the author of “Us or Them” uses the **three personal narratives** (Mariam, Emi, Ahmat) and the **“us or them” framing** to build an argument about classification. (*W.11-12.2, RH.11-12.6*)

Alternative Assessment, Analytic Rubric (20 points)

Score each criterion 1–5. For a project, read the last row as “Design & Communication.”

Claim / Thesis (5 points)

- 5 Excellent:** A precise, defensible claim or curatorial argument controls the whole piece.
- 4 Good:** Clear claim; mostly sustained.
- 3 Fair:** General or partial claim.
- 1–2 Needs Work:** Claim unclear or missing.

Evidence & Sources (5 points)

- 5 Excellent:** Specific evidence from the anchor text plus a credible second source; all ethically cited.
- 4 Good:** Relevant evidence; most cited.
- 3 Fair:** Some evidence; citations thin.
- 1–2 Needs Work:** Little evidence; sources missing.

Analysis & Reasoning (5 points)

- 5 Excellent:** Insightful reasoning ties evidence to classification and prevention.
- 4 Good:** Clear reasoning with a solid connection.
- 3 Fair:** Basic reasoning; connection implied.
- 1–2 Needs Work:** Reasoning unclear or absent.

Craft / Design & Conventions (5 points)

- 5 Excellent:** Polished, purposeful, audience-aware; conventions strong.
- 4 Good:** Organized and clear; minor errors.
- 3 Fair:** Basic organization; errors distract.
- 1–2 Needs Work:** Disorganized; errors impede meaning.

Summative Assessment: Answer Key + Rubric

Grade Level: 9–12

Aligned Standards (suggested):

1. **Reading (CCSS):** RH.11-12.1, .3, .5, .6, .7, .8; RI/RL.11-12.1, .4
2. **California History, Social Science:** World History 10.8–10.10; Analysis Skills (Historical Research, Evidence & POV; Historical Interpretation)
3. **Writing & Speaking (CCSS):** W.11-12.1 argument, .2 informative; SL.11-12.1, .4

Answer Key (Multiple Choice)

1. **B**a combination of factors led to conflict in Darfur, classifying beyond race alone
2. **D**logical appeal (logos)
3. **D**to inform readers about the historical context that led to violence in Darfur
4. **A**multiple perspectives, including survivor testimony and historical context
5. **B**to emphasize how state policies reinforced classification and fueled ethnic divisions
6. **C**it provides emotional and personal context that helps readers connect to the issue
7. **A**logical appeal (logos), to highlight inconsistencies in classification
8. **A**Sudanese governments reinforced ethnic divisions through land and resource policies
9. **B**Japanese Americans later classified as “enemy aliens” after Pearl Harbor
10. **C**legally enforced racial classifications under apartheid South Africa
11. **D**geographic isolation reinforced ethnic identities (nomadic herders / sedentary farmers)
12. **C**it demonstrates how language can escalate conflict by portraying others as threats
13. **A**by reinforcing stereotypes that dehumanize certain groups
14. **A**colonial rulers reinforced divisions by favoring some ethnic groups over others
15. **B**many societies use classification in neutral ways (census data, cultural identity)

Standards Alignment (Multiple Choice)

1. RH.11-12.6 (author’s language & structure); CCSS RL/RI.11-12.1
2. RI.11-12.6 (rhetorical devices); CCSS RH.11-12.6
3. RI.11-12.6 (author’s purpose); CCSS RH.11-12.6
4. RH.11-12.9 (synthesizing sources); CCSS RH.11-12.7
5. RH.11-12.6 (historical sources); CCSS RH.11-12.8
6. RI.11-12.1 (explicit/implicit meaning); CCSS RH.11-12.6
7. RH.11-12.6 (rhetorical technique); CCSS RL/RI.11-12.4
8. RH.11-12.3 (causes & effects of conflict); CCSS RH.11-12.1
9. RH.11-12.3 (cause-effect analysis); CCSS RH.11-12.7
10. CA H, SS 10.10 (examples & systems); CCSS RH.11-12.6
11. RH.11-12.7 (cultural patterns); CCSS RH.11-12.7
12. RH.11-12.6 (word choice & tone); CCSS RL/RI.11-12.4
13. RH.11-12.1 (historical context); CCSS RH.11-12.8
14. CA H, SS 10.10 (historical analysis); CCSS RH.11-12.1
15. RH.11-12.8 (challenging claims); CCSS RH.11-12.6

Short Answer Section, Standards & Model Responses

Rubric: 3 points each (see scale above). Award full credit for a clear claim, specific textual evidence, and logical reasoning.

16. RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.3 | CCSS RH.11-12.1

Question: How did classification in Darfur change from neutral to harmful?

Model response: Classification in Darfur began as a social distinction but became harmful through colonial and political manipulation. For example, the British reinforced ethnic divisions by favoring Arab elites, creating resentment; later, propaganda framed “Africans” as rebels, licensing violence.

17. RH.11-12.2 | CCSS RH.11-12.7

Question: A real-world example of classification today, neutral, problematic, or harmful?

Model response: Answers vary. A strong response names a specific system (e.g., immigration status), explains its neutral uses (taxation, voting), and shows how it becomes harmful when rhetoric marks a group as dangerous, mirroring how classification in Darfur justified unequal treatment.

18. RH.11-12.1 | CCSS RH.11-12.8

Question: Analyze a news article, does its language reinforce bias?

Model response: Answers vary. A strong response identifies loaded terms (e.g., “freedom fighters” vs. “terrorists”) and explains how the framing shapes perception, then proposes more objective, multi-perspective language, as the Darfur coverage shows.

19. RH.11-12.6, CA H, SS 10.10 | CCSS RH.11-12.5

Question: Is classification always harmful?

Model response: Answers vary. A strong response argues classification is not inherently harmful (medical diagnosis, grade levels) but becomes dangerous when used to build hierarchies and dehumanize, as in Darfur, with intent as the key variable.

20. SL.11-12.1 | CCSS RH.11-12.7

Question: Write a journalist’s counter-narrative to challenge harmful classifications.

Model response: Answers vary. A strong sample humanizes the people affected, avoids “Africans vs. Arabs” framing, highlights shared history, and explains how colonial policy and political interest, not ethnicity itself, shaped the divide.

UNIT 1 • CLASSIFICATION • DARFUR

Appendix C, Standards & Mastery Tracker

A printable companion to the Checks for Understanding (Appendix B). Use it to record mastery by content area and standard, spot trends, and decide what to reteach. (A live spreadsheet version is available as a separate file.)

How to Use

- **Mastery codes (CFU grids):** 2 = Mastered · 1 = Approaching · 0 = Not yet · blank = not assessed.
- **Summative tally:** after grading, record how many students answered each item correctly (MC) or at proficiency (short answer), then compute the class percentage.
- **Reteach flag:** any item or standard below **70%** class mastery is a candidate for reteaching, in smaller groups or with new scaffolds.
- Standards alignments are suggested; verify against your district's mapping.

Standards Map

Every CFU and summative item, the skill it targets, and its suggested Common Core / California standard.

Assessment	Item	Skill / Focus	CCSS / CA H, SS
CFU 1.1	World History Q1	Distinguish genocide from a political revolt	CA H, SS 10.10
CFU 1.1	World History Q2	Sequence cause & effect (rise of the SLA)	RH.11-12.3
CFU 1.1	World History Q3	How the term “genocide” has evolved since 1944	RH.11-12.6
CFU 1.1	ELAR Q1	Academic vocabulary in context (“putative”)	RI/RL.11-12.4
CFU 1.1	ELAR Q2	Synthesize & compare definitions of genocide	RH.11-12.9
CFU 1.1	World Geo Q1	Cause & effect in the classification sequence	RH.11-12.3
CFU 1.1	World Geo Q2	Resource distribution & conflict in Sudan	RH.11-12.7
CFU 1.2	World History Q1	How classification contributed to the conflict	CA H, SS 10.10
CFU 1.2	World History Q2	Using classification to analyze & predict	RH.11-12.6
CFU 1.2	World Geo Q1	Geographic factor behind classification	RH.11-12.7
CFU 1.2	World Geo Q2	Geography, division & conflict	RH.11-12.7
CFU 1.2	ELAR Q1	Author’s language shapes perception	RH.11-12.6
CFU 1.2	ELAR Q2	Media bias & counter-narrative	RH.11-12.8
Summative	Q1, Q6	Close reading: argument, rhetoric, purpose, evidence	RH.11-12.6; RI.11-12.1, .6
Summative	Q7, Q9	Rhetoric, the danger factor, neutral → harmful	RH.11-12.6; RH.11-12.3; RH.11-12.3
Summative	Q10, Q15	Formal systems, geography, media, colonial legacy, counterargument	CA H, SS 10.10, RH.11-12.1; RH.11-12.7; RH.11-12.8
Summative	Q16, Q20	Short answer: classification, society, media, critique, solutions	RI.11-12.1; RH.11-12.1, .3, .9; W.11-12.1

CFU 1.1, Lesson 1 Mastery Record

Enter a mastery code (2 / 1 / 0) for each student. Bottom rows: total the class and flag anything below 70%.

Student	WH-1	WH-2	WH-3	ELAR-1	ELAR-2	WG-1	WG-2

Class % at mastery (2): _____

Standards to reteach:

CFU 1.2, Lesson 2 Mastery Record

Enter a mastery code (2 / 1 / 0) for each student. Bottom rows: total the class and flag anything below 70%.

Student	WH-1	WH-2	WG-1	WG-2	ELAR-1	ELAR-2

Class % at mastery (2): _____

Standards to reteach:

Summative, Item Analysis

After grading, record how many students reached mastery on each item, then compute the class percentage and flag items under 70%.

Q	Skill	CCSS / CA H, SS	# at mastery	Class %
1	Author's main argument	RH.11-12.6		
2	Rhetorical strategy (logos)	RI.11-12.6		
3	Author's purpose	RI.11-12.6		
4	How the text builds an argument	RH.11-12.9		
5	Purpose of policy references	RH.11-12.6		
6	Effect of firsthand accounts	RI.11-12.1		
7	Rhetorical strategy (logos)	RH.11-12.6		
8	The danger factor in classification	RH.11-12.3		
9	Neutral → harmful shift	RH.11-12.3		
10	Formal classification system	CA H, SS 10.10		
11	Geography & classification	RH.11-12.7		
12	"Us or them", language & conflict	RH.11-12.6		
13	Media language & dehumanization	RH.11-12.1		
14	Role of colonial policy	CA H, SS 10.10		
15	Counterargument to "always genocide"	RH.11-12.8		
16	SA, Justifying classifications	RI.11-12.1, RH.11-12.3		
17	SA, Connections to society	RH.11-12.2		
18	SA, Evaluating media narratives	RH.11-12.1		
19	SA, Critical thinking	RH.11-12.6, CA H, SS 10.10		
20	SA, Proposing solutions	SL.11-12.1		

Standards Summary

Roll up class mastery by standard (from the CFU grids and item analysis) and record next steps.

Standard	Where assessed / notes	Class %	Reteach?
CA H, SS 10.10			
RH.11-12.6			
RH.11-12.1			
RH.11-12.3			
RH.11-12.7			
RH.11-12.2			
RI/RL.11-12.4			
RI.11-12.1			
RH.11-12.9			
RH.11-12.8			

APPENDIX D

Student Handouts & Exemplars

Reproducible pages referenced in Lessons 1–2. Each is print-ready at one page per student.

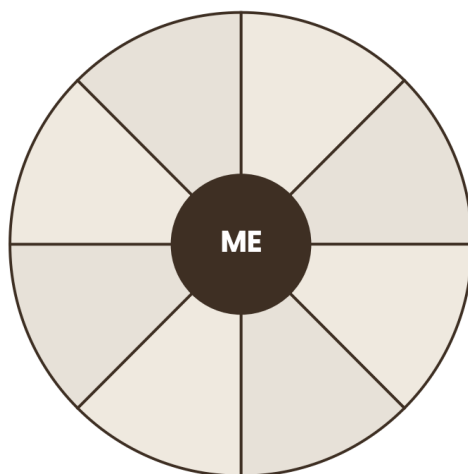
HANDOUT D-1 • LESSON 1**My Identity Wheel**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Before we study how societies classify people, start with yourself. In each wedge, write a different part of your identity, for example: family role, language, religion, hobby, neighborhood, culture, or a group you belong to.

My Identity Wheel

Write a different part of who you are in each wedge.

Then mark your wheel

- Put a **star (★)** next to identities you chose for yourself.
- **Circle** identities others have assigned to you.
- **Underline** identities that have changed over time.

Reflection: Which identities did you choose, and which were assigned? Was anything surprising?

Not graded, this is a private reflection students may share only if comfortable.

HANDOUT D-2 • LESSON 1**The Classification Spectrum, Activity Sheet**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Not all classifications are equal. Some are neutral, some become dangerous. Use the spectrum to place real examples and judge their risk.

The Classification Spectrum**Place your examples**

With your group, list classifications from the Darfur case study, from history, and from your own school or society. Place each on the spectrum and justify its placement.

Classification (who is labeled?)	Where on the spectrum?	Why? What could push it toward "dangerous"?
Example 1		
Example 2		
Example 3		

Discuss

- What moves a classification from **problematic** to **dangerous**? Who has the power to move it?
- How is government-issued (formal) classification different from everyday (informal) labeling?

EXEMPLAR, completed row:

Classification: "African" vs. "Arab" identity cards issued in Sudan.

Placement: Dangerous.

Why: A formal, state-issued label was tied to rights and safety; it sorted people into "us" and "them" and was later used to target the group marked "African."

HANDOUT D-3 • LESSON 2**Media Analysis & Counter-Narrative**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Media shapes who we see as “us” and who we see as “them.” Analyze how a headline or image frames a group, then rewrite it as a fair counter-narrative.

Part 1, Analyze the source		
Element	What you notice	Effect on the reader
Headline / caption, exact wording		
Loaded or emotional language (list the words)		
Imagery, who is shown, and how?		
Whose voice is centered? Whose is missing?		
Part 2, Write the counter-narrative		

Rewrite the headline (and describe a fairer image) so it informs without dividing people into “us vs. them.”

Your revised headline	
Fairer image you would choose (describe it)	
One sentence: what changed, and why it matters	

EXEMPLAR, analysis → counter-narrative:

Original headline: “Tribal Violence Erupts Again in Lawless Darfur.”

Loaded language: “tribal” “erupts” “lawless”, makes the violence sound natural and leaderless, hiding who is responsible.

Counter-narrative: “Government-Backed Militias Attack Darfuri Villages, UN Reports.”, names the actors, removes the “savage/chaos” frame, and restores accountability.

HANDOUT L0-1 • LESSON 0

Four Definitions of Genocide

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

“Genocide” is defined differently by different people and institutions. Read all four, then compare them. No single definition is perfect, that is exactly the point.

Source & definition	What it emphasizes / leaves out
1. Raphael Lemkin (1944), the scholar who coined the word: “a coordinated plan aimed at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of a national group.”	
2. UN Convention (1948), acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.	
3. Vahakn Dadrian (1975), sociologist: “the successful attempt by a dominant group, vested with formal authority and/or with preponderant access to the overall resources of power, to reduce by coercion or lethal violence the number of a minority group.”	
4. Martin Shaw (2007), sociologist: “action in which armed organizations treat civilian social groups as enemies and aim to destroy their real or putative social power.”	
5. Your working definition (write it after discussion):	
Analyze	

- Which groups does the UN definition **protect** and which (e.g., political groups) does it leave out?
- Why does the word “**intent**” make genocide hard to prove? Who decides intent?
- Which definition do you find most useful for **preventing** genocide, and why?

HANDOUT L0-2 · LESSON 0**“The Call”, Viewing Guide**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

As you watch Gregory Stanton’s talk “The Call,” capture your thinking in the three sections below.

Turning points, key moments that changed Stanton’s path	
Evidence & impact, specific examples he uses	
Personal response, your reactions and connections	

One question this talk leaves you with:

HANDOUT L0-3 · LESSON 0**Early Warning Signs, Ten Stages Tracker**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

As we walk through the Ten Stages framework, use this tracker to record each stage, a real-world example, and one idea for prevention.

Stage	Key characteristic (in your words)	Real-world example	One prevention idea

The ten stages, in order:

Classification · Symbolization · Discrimination · Dehumanization · Organization · Polarization · Preparation · Persecution · Extermination · Denial

End Matter

The pages that follow support the whole series: a glossary of key terms, a consolidated list of works cited, further resources for teachers and students, and information about the author and the project.

Glossary of Key Terms

Terms are defined as they are used in this series. The ten stages are listed first, in order; all other terms follow alphabetically.

The Ten Stages of Genocide (Gregory H. Stanton)

- 1. Classification:** Dividing people into “us and them” by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality. Universal and often harmless, and the foundation every later stage requires.
- 2. Symbolization:** Giving names, colors, dress, or other marks to the classified groups. Dangerous when combined with hatred and forced on an unwilling group (the yellow star; the blue krama).
- 3. Discrimination:** A dominant group using law, custom, and political power to deny other groups their rights, education, work, movement, citizenship, legal protection.
- 4. Dehumanization:** Denying the humanity of a group by equating its members with animals, vermin, or disease, overcoming the normal human revulsion against murder.
- 5. Organization:** Genocide is always organized, usually by a state, often through militias that provide deniability (the Janjaweed in Darfur).
- 6. Polarization:** Extremists drive groups apart, silence moderates, and criminalize contact between communities.
- 7. Preparation:** Leaders plan, arm, train, and indoctrinate, often behind euphemisms such as “ethnic cleansing” or “counter-terrorism.”
- 8. Persecution:** Victims are identified, separated, dispossessed, and concentrated; genocidal massacres begin.
- 9. Extermination:** The mass killing that the law names “genocide”, called “extermination” by killers who no longer believe their victims are human.
- 10. Denial:** The stage that lasts throughout and always follows: hiding evidence, blaming victims, and blocking justice. Among the surest predictors of further killing.

General Terms

Anchor text: The illustrated case-study article at the heart of each unit, provided at two reading levels in Appendix A.

Bipolar society: A society divided into two dominant, unmixed groups, the social structure Stanton identifies as most at risk of genocide.

Bystander: A person, institution, or nation that witnesses harm without intervening. Perpetrators count on bystander passivity.

Complicity: Participation in or enabling of harm, including through silence, profit, or obedience, often under coercion, which complicates but does not erase accountability.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948): The UN treaty defining genocide as acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” The only legal definition, and a contested one.

Counter-narrative: A deliberate reframing that answers biased or dehumanizing messaging with context, accuracy, and the humanity of the targeted group.

Crimes against humanity: Widespread or systematic attacks against civilians, murder, enslavement, deportation, persecution, whether or not genocidal intent can be proven.

Early warning: Observable indicators, discriminatory decrees, hate speech, group marking, that a society is escalating toward mass violence while prevention is still possible.

ECCC (Khmer Rouge Tribunal): The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the UN-backed hybrid tribunal (est. 2006) that tried senior Khmer Rouge figures.

Ethnic cleansing: The forced removal of a group from a territory by violence and terror. Not a separate legal crime; often a euphemism perpetrators prefer to “genocide.”

Formal vs. informal classification: Formal classifications are codified and enforced (identity cards, legal categories); informal ones are social and subjective (labels, cliques, stereotypes). Both can escalate.

Gender apartheid: A system of laws and enforcement that segregates, subordinates, and excludes people by gender, the term observers use for Taliban rule over Afghan women and girls.

Genocide Watch: The nonprofit founded by Gregory H. Stanton to predict, prevent, stop, and punish genocide; coordinator of the Alliance Against Genocide.

Hazara: A predominantly Shi’a ethnic group of central Afghanistan, targeted by massacre, displacement, and institutional discrimination for more than 130 years.

Impunity: The absence of punishment for violence against a group, itself a risk indicator, because it teaches perpetrators that harm is permitted.

Intent: The element of the legal definition of genocide (“intent to destroy”) that makes the crime hardest to prove, and central to classroom debates about definitions.

International Criminal Court (ICC): The permanent court in The Hague that prosecutes genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes; issued arrest warrants for Sudan’s Omar al-Bashir.

Janjaweed / Rapid Support Forces (RSF): Arab militias armed by Sudan’s government for the 2003–2005 Darfur genocide; reorganized as the RSF, the paramilitary later determined by the United States to have committed genocide against the Masalit and other groups.

Khmer Rouge: The Communist Party of Kampuchea, which ruled Cambodia from 1975–1979 under Pol Pot and killed roughly two million people, about a quarter of the population.

Krama: The checkered Cambodian scarf, worn for well over a thousand years, a national symbol weaponized by the Khmer Rouge and later reclaimed as heritage.

Masalit: A non-Arab ethnic group of West Darfur, Sudan, targeted for elimination by the RSF and allied militias in 2023.

Media framing / loaded language: The choices of wording, imagery, and emphasis through which coverage shapes who is seen as “us,” “them,” victim, or threat.

Memorialization: The act of preserving memory, museums, monuments, testimony, ritual, as resistance against erasure and denial.

Midstream prevention: Action taken while risk is escalating but before mass violence is total (James Waller’s framing): targeted sanctions, documentation, protected education, refuge, diplomacy.

Politicide: Systematic murder targeting people for perceived political affiliation rather than ethnicity, a term often applied to the Cambodian genocide.

Prisoner of conscience: A person imprisoned for beliefs, identity, or peaceful expression, Amnesty International’s designation for Tep Vanny.

Raphael Lemkin: The Polish-Jewish lawyer who coined the word “genocide” (first published 1944) and drove the campaign for the 1948 Genocide Convention.

Reclamation: Taking back a symbol that was used to harm and refilling it with dignity, the krama worn in protest; the S-21 portraits turned into memory.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P): The international commitment (2005) that sovereignty entails a duty to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

Risk indicator: A measurable warning sign of escalation, discriminatory laws, removal of rights, impunity, restriction of education, used by monitors such as the Global Centre for R2P.

Steelman: Stating the strongest, fairest version of an opposing argument before answering it, the opposite of a strawman, and a requirement of the Unit 3 position paper.

Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA): A Darfur rebel movement formed in 2003 in response to decades of neglect and discrimination.

Taliban: The armed fundamentalist movement that ruled Afghanistan 1996–2001 and returned to power in August 2021.

Ten Stages of Change: This project: pairing each of Stanton’s stages with a case study, an anchor narrative, and concrete actions, on the conviction that the stages of genocide can become stages of prevention.

Tuol Sleng (S-21): The Phnom Penh high school the Khmer Rouge converted into their most notorious prison; of some 15,000 prisoners, only twelve are known to have survived. Now a genocide museum.

“Us vs. them”: The elemental division at the root of classification, ordinary in most contexts, lethal when it hardens into “us or them.”

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Further Resources for Teachers & Students

Monitoring & Prevention

Genocide Watch and the Alliance Against Genocide (genocidewatch.com), current watches, warnings, and emergencies, plus the Ten Stages handout, PowerPoint, and Prezi.

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (globalr2p.org), atrocity-risk assessments and the R2P framework behind the Unit 3 risk indicators.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Simon-Skjodt Center, the Early Warning Project (earlywarningproject.ushmm.org).

For the Classroom

USHMM “Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust”, the pedagogical foundation of this series’ Series Guide.

Facing History & Ourselves (facinghistory.org), units, primary sources, and discussion protocols for difficult histories.

Echoes & Reflections (echoesandreflections.org), Holocaust-education lessons and testimony resources.

USC Shoah Foundation, IWitness (iwitness.usc.edu), searchable survivor and witness testimony.

United Nations #NoToHate resources on hate speech, including the self-test used in Unit 2’s actions.

Deeper Study

Gregory H. Stanton, “The Ten Stages of Genocide” and “Blue Scarves and Yellow Stars”, the primary framework texts.

Scott Straus, Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (USHMM, 2016), the field’s standard survey, free online.

James Waller, Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide (Oxford, 2016), source of the upstream/midstream/downstream prevention framing used in Unit 3.

Gérard Prunier, Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide (Cornell, 2005); David Chandler, A History of Cambodia (Routledge, 2018); Martin Shaw, What Is Genocide? (Polity, 2007).

Supporting the Communities in These Units

Sudan & Darfur, Operation Broken Silence (operationbrokensilence.org); Sudan Relief Fund; Darfur Women Action Group; Doctors Without Borders.

Cambodia, Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum; Documentation Center of Cambodia (dccam.org); National Cambodian Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial.

Afghanistan, Women for Afghan Women; the Bamyán Foundation; Equality Now; Genocide Watch’s #StopHazaraGenocide campaign.

About the Author



Joshua Bicknell is the creator of Ten Stages of Change, a genocide-education and prevention project that pairs each of Gregory Stanton’s “Ten Stages of Genocide” with a case study, a narrative anchor text, and concrete actions readers can take. The project began in 2023 as a weekly blog series and has grown into the standards-aligned curriculum in your hands.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Creative Writing from the University of Missouri–Columbia and shortly after earned his teaching certificate for English Language Arts in Texas, grades 7–12. He has taught, mentored, and freelanced across the Houston area for ten years. He holds a Master of Education with a concentration in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Gratz College, where his research focused on interdisciplinary approaches to teaching the Holocaust. He is an active member of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and worked briefly with the USC Shoah Foundation on the Junior Internship Program (JIP) for Leadership Actions and Values, as well as touring with the Hate Ends Now campaign in Florida before committing to the completion of this project full-time.

He currently lives in Los Angeles, California.

About Ten Stages of Change

Ten Stages of Change: Genocide Education & Prevention. Follow the stages. Unite for change. Genocide is a process: at once predictable, but not inevitable. This project exists so that more people can recognize the process early, and in doing so, interrupt it. Units 4–5 (Dehumanization · Rwanda and Organization · Myanmar) are in development; all case studies, the article series (only intended for ages 17+) with audio, and educator resources are published at stagesofchange.org.

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*“If you act in the name of conscience, you are stronger than
any government in the world.”*

Raphael Lemkin