

RIPPLES OF GENOCIDE: JOURNEY THROUGH EASTERN CONGO

Teacher Guide

GETTING STARTED IN THE CLASSROOM

As is the case with many current events around the world, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) can be difficult to understand and daunting to discuss with your students. The following suggestions are based on the premise that learning is a process, and both students and teachers can learn together. All of the suggested activities utilize the Museum's Web site and may be adapted to fit the technological needs of your classroom.

COURSE OF STUDY

It is highly recommended that the Web site and these classroom activities be incorporated into a larger course of study, such as:

- World cultures
- Current events
- Western civilization
- African history, especially the history of colonialism
- Holocaust and genocide studies

OBJECTIVES

Each of these objectives corresponds to a classroom activity below.

Students will be able to:

- a) Use the Web resources provided in *Ripples of Genocide* to learn about recent events in the DRC and efforts to prevent genocide elsewhere.
- b) Compare and contrast varying accounts and perspectives of the conflict in the DRC.
- c) Utilize primary source material (i.e., first-hand accounts and photographs) from the conflict in the DRC to learn about what is happening there and how they can inform others of the situation.
- d) Discuss the causes of genocide, the role of human rights organizations in calling international attention to human rights abuses and the threat of genocide, and the challenges inherent in preventing genocide.
- e) Monitor current events and develop ideas about what they can do to raise awareness about events in the DRC.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)**Culture and Cultural Diversity (NCSS Standard I)**

Analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns.

Time, Community, Change (NCSS Standard II)

Apply key concepts such as time, chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.

People, Places, Environment (NCSS Standard III)

Examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes.

Power, Authority, Governance (NCSS Standard VI)

Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.

Global Connections (NCSS Standard IX)

Examine conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.

[A] FIND OUT MORE

Understanding what is happening in a country like the DRC can be overwhelming. Breaking it down into smaller topics may give students an opportunity to become familiar with one part of the conflict and, through sharing, better understand the whole.

Begin by providing students with the [overview](#), [glossary](#), and [maps](#) to familiarize them with basic information about the conflict and humanitarian crisis in the DRC. Then, using the list of topics below—which correspond to chapters within the *Ripples of Genocide* Web journal—assign a student or group of students responsibility for finding information about a specific topic from the Web site. In addition, have the students select an image from their chapter which they think best represents the topic. After researching their assigned topics, the individual students or groups of students should report back to the class about what they found and why they chose the image they did.



All photos by Edward Parsons

TOPICS

- Displacement and Hunger
- Child Soldiers
- Militias and Armed Groups
- Attacks on Villages/Collapse of Coping Systems
- Rape and Counseling

[B] COMPARING ACCOUNTS

Ripples of Genocide incorporates the firsthand accounts of two individuals who visited the DRC, Angelina Jolie and John Prendergast. Angelina is an actress and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) Goodwill Ambassador. John is a policy analyst. Each has a different perspective on what they saw and experienced.

Either as a class, in groups, or individually (depending on the technology you have available), ask students to compare and contrast Angelina’s and John’s accounts.

1. What information do the students get from Angelina’s account? John’s? How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Why are these two accounts different?
3. What effect do these different accounts have on the viewer?
4. Which perspective do the students find more moving? Persuasive? Sympathetic? Boring? Why?
5. What are the positive and negative aspects of using firsthand accounts to learn about the situation in the DRC—or, for that matter, any situation?

[C] INTERPRETING IMAGES

Select several photographs from those provided in the “For Educators” section of the *Ripples of Genocide* Web site. Divide students into small groups and ask each group to analyze a different photograph. Print out the “Interpreting a Photograph” worksheet, distribute a copy to each group, and ask them to complete the questions on it as they relate to their photograph.

NOTE: It does not matter at this point if the students have any knowledge of the DRC; the objective is for students to exercise critical viewing and thinking skills.

1. After working in their groups, ask each one to share their photograph and observations with the rest of the class.
2. After all of the groups have finished, explain to the students that the photographs they just interpreted are from the DRC and were taken in 2003 by photographer Ed Parsons.
3. As a class, in groups, or individually (depending on the available technology), ask students to explore the *Ripples of Genocide* Web site and, in the course of doing so, to find the photographs they interpreted. Challenge them to find out as much as possible about the photos and the context in which they were taken.
4. Once they have more information about the photographs, ask students to return to their groups with their original photographs. Based on their new knowledge, how have their interpretations and inferences about the photographs changed? Has their understanding of what was happening changed?
5. Thinking about the two types of sources used on the Web site, ask students to analyze the different effect hearing a firsthand account has from seeing it in a photograph. Was one source more persuasive or believable than the other?
6. Ask students to write new captions for the photographs reflecting the new knowledge they have learned.

ALTERNATIVE

1. Provide additional materials so that each group can create a poster using their photographs and/or other images from the Web site. The purpose of the poster is to inform other students in the school about what is happening in the DRC.
2. Each poster should include:
 - a. a headline or title that will draw attention to the poster;
 - b. the photograph and/or image collage created by the group;
 - c. a caption that explains what is happening in the photographs and in the DRC; and
 - d. a Web address where students can find out more.
3. Students who are more comfortable working in electronic media may choose to create a Web site or CD presentation about the DRC.



[D] DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As a class, in groups, or individually (depending on the available technology), ask students to explore *Ripples of Genocide: Journey through Eastern Congo* and discuss the following questions. Students may use the [glossary](#), [overview](#), and [maps](#) as reference resources during the discussion.

1. John asserts that “if there had been no genocide in Rwanda, there would have been no subsequent war in the Congo.” How did the Rwandan genocide and subsequent refugee problem catalyze violence and war in the DRC?
2. What factors have contributed to ongoing instability, resulting in massive suffering and the deaths of civilians, in the DRC? Cite examples from Angelina’s and John’s narratives to support your answers.
3. Ultimately, who is responsible for protecting the civilians in the DRC and guaranteeing their human rights?
4. Does the United States have an obligation to help solve or improve the situation? If so, how and why?
5. If someone stopped you on the street today after school and asked you about what was happening in the DRC, how would you explain it to them?

[E] NEWS WATCH JOURNAL

After the Holocaust, many Americans claimed that they had heard nothing about the discrimination and murder of Europe’s Jews by Nazi Germany. Historians, however, have shown that news about the Holocaust was printed in many American newspapers while the events were happening. The stories were not always on the front page—although sometimes they were—but information about these atrocities did in fact appear in newspapers. Is this true today regarding the DRC? Is there information available?

CREATE A “NEWS WATCH JOURNAL”

Ask students to scan newspapers and Web sites over the course of a week for stories that focus on the DRC. When an article is found, students should record what they found in a “News Watch Journal” (print or electronic), along with the name of the newspaper or Web site, the title of the story, the date on which it appeared, the page number (if applicable), and a one- or two-paragraph synopsis of what they read. While students may not be able to travel to the DRC like Angelina and John did, they can create a journal that brings together what knowledge and impressions of the situation they have.

1. At the end of the week, review together as a class what the students found. What subsequent information did they learn about the DRC and the events happening there?
2. Is the story being covered in the local newspapers? If not, you may want to have the students contact the editors of the newspapers.
3. Raising awareness through the local news media is one step toward helping people who are suffering in the DRC. Have students discuss other concrete actions they can take.

[F] WEB LINKS

Students may want to visit the following Web sites.

NOTE: With the exception of the Committee on Conscience, these Web sites are not products of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Therefore, the Museum cannot guarantee their accuracy.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Committee on Conscience

www.committeeonconscience.org

International Crisis Group

www.icg.org

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

<http://www.unhcr.org>

OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**Amnesty International**

http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/dr_congo/index.do

British Broadcasting Company (BBC)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1076399.stm

The Committee on Conscience

<http://www.usmmm.org/conscience/alert/congo/>



International Crisis Group

http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=conflict_search&l=1&t=1&c_country=37

DISPLACEMENT AND HUNGER

World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/malaria/cmc_upload/0/000/015/902/congoaug2002.pdf

CHILD SOLDIERS

Amnesty International

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAFR620342003>

Amnesty International

http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/dr_congo/document.do?id=80256AB9000584F680256D9B00515B3A

Global Policy Forum

<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/congo/2003/1212child.htm>

MONUC

<http://www.monuc.org/>

Reuters Foundation, AlertNet

www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/50f10e41dbd2190f236606643fb3e05a.htm

MASS RAPE AND COUNSELING

Amnesty International

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAFR620222004>

Human Rights Watch

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/drc/Congo0602-04.htm#topofpage>

IRIN News, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

www.irinnews.org/S_report.asp?ReportID=46439&SelectRegion=Great_Lakes

Oxfam

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/where_we_work/drc/rape.htm



CURRENT SITUATION

AllAfrica

http://allafrica.com/congo_kinshasa/

Committee on Conscience

http://www.ushmm.org/conscience/news/news_all.php?category=02-locations&topic=05-central-africa

Human Rights Watch

<http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=congo>

ALTERNATIVE

Monitor the Situation in Other Countries

In addition to the tragic events in the DRC, there are other countries where civilians are threatened with mass violence and genocide. You may want to ask your students to create a “News Watch Journal” that focuses on one of the following regions:

Darfur (Sudan)

<http://www.ushmm.org/conscience/alert/darfur>

Chechnya (Russia)

<http://www.ushmm.org/conscience/alert/chechnya>