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RWANDA – ETHNIC CONFLICT

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World Geography Academy – Session I

Thursday, October 11, 2012

University of Oklahoma, Norman

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Grade Level: 7th

Purpose/Overview:

This lesson helps students discover the multiple elements that come together to make genocide possible. The focus of the lesson is on the role different elements of society played in causing or allowing the genocide to happen. NOTE: Young adolescents will react strongly to graphic images of real violence. Typically, they will either be visibly upset by it or will laugh it off as a way to protect themselves from the reality of it. Neither of those reactions will help them understand the causes or preventions of genocide. For that reason, this lesson does not use graphic images of violence.

National Geography Standards from *Geography for Life, Second Edition* Geographic Elements & Standards:

Standard 4.1.A: Concept of Place - Personal, community, and national identities are rooted in and attached to places. *Therefore, the student is able to explain how personal, community, or national identities are based on places.*

Standard 10.3.B: Cultural Diffusion and Change - Changes in cultural characteristics and the distribution of cultures result from migration of people and the diffusion of ideas and technology. *Therefore, the student is able to explain how the spread of religious structures follow from processes of colonization*

Standard 13.3.A: Conflict - There are multiple sources of conflict resulting from the division of Earth's surface. *Therefore, the student is able to explain how conflicting territorial claims can erupt over resources, land use, and ethnic and national identities.*

Oklahoma C³ Standards:

Grade 7 World Geography: Eastern Hemisphere

Literacy Skills Standard 1: The student will develop and demonstrate Common Core Social Studies reading literacy skills.

A.2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Content Standard 2: The student will examine the human and physical characteristics of the major regions of the Eastern Hemisphere.

3. Explain and summarize how common physical or human characteristics can link as well as divide regions, including

E. Cultural differences resulting in civil war and genocide in Darfur and Rwanda.

Objectives:

- The student will understand some of the multiple factors that must co-exist before genocide becomes possible.
- The student will understand the long-term impact of European colonization on the economic and social development of Rwanda, including the widening of cultural, economic, and political differences between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa ethnic groups.

Materials:

Internet access, LCD projector, computer and screen/whiteboard

Handout: “History of the Tutsis and Hutus” (1 per student)

Handout: “Rwanda – Shared Blame” (1 per student)

PowerPoint: “Rwanda – Background Information”

Post-It notes: sets of six with the numerals 1-6 written on them (1 set per student group, with group sizes at 3-4 students per group)

Online video clip: “The Voice of God – Propaganda and the Rwanda Genocide” on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/uW6GyzT-wbs>

WARNING: This video clip needs to be “trimmed” on Real Player or any other editing program you have, or simply start the video 47 seconds into the clip and stop it at 3:57. Otherwise, students will see an overwhelming number of **corpses**, including bloated ones floating in the river, as well as a **beheading**. I chose to “trim” it to make sure none of that showed. This video clip, after trimming, is about 3 minutes long. It focuses on the Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines broadcasts of inflammatory and genocidal messages. The original language plays in the background; English subtitles are shown.

Online video clip: “Rwandan Tutsi Forgives” on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/DKXHK74qLdg>
This 8 ½ minute video clip is from *CBS Morning* with Harry Smith, and is part of a series he did on people who have survived horrifying experiences and have found a way to forgive. It is an interview with Immaculee Ilibaguza, a Tutsi and Rwandan genocide survivor who was hidden by a Hutu pastor during the genocide. There are a few pictures of corpses at the beginning, but nothing extremely graphic. The tone of the video is positive, and includes a Hutu woman who became a close friend of Ilibaguza.

Time Frame: two to three 50-minute class periods

Procedures:

1. Introduce the Rwandan genocide using the PowerPoint “Rwanda – Background Information,” slides 1-11.
2. Distribute the handouts “Rwanda – Shared Blame” and “History of the Tutsis and Hutus.”
3. Go over the instructions on Slide 11. Be clear that students are gathering evidence to determine guilt. Also, make sure students understand they need to write directly on the handout.
4. If the class has never done anything like this before, you should read the first page to them, stopping at strategic places to let them decide as a class how to “code” the

evidence. (Do not have a student read it aloud. You need to model the process, and a student will not be able to do that.)

5. Allow the students time to finish the rest of the reading and coding. Monitor, encouraging students and answering questions.
6. When most students are finished reading and coding, have a brief class discussion about evidence against the different groups. If some students are feeling unsure of the process, this will help them feel much more sure.
7. At this point, you can show the 3 minute video clip, “The Voice of God – Propaganda and the Rwanda Genocide” if you wish (web site in the “Materials” section).
8. Show Slides 12 & 13. Have students individually fill out the bottom part of the “Rwanda – Shared Blame” handout. After most students are done, put them in heterogeneous groups and have each group reach consensus on the ranking of blame from “most” to “least.” (Reinforce the fact that “1” is the most and “6” is the least.) Remind students that disagreements should be settled using evidence from the reading.
9. While they work on reaching consensus, distribute the sets of Post-It notes, one set per group. Tell them to post their rankings on the board (wherever you have the PowerPoint Slide 14 projected).
10. After all groups have posted, work together as a class to reach consensus on ranking.
11. This can be followed up with the 8 ½ minute video clip “Rwandan Tutsi Forgives” (web site listed in the “Materials” section).

Assessment:

Have students write a paragraph on what factors came together to make genocide possible in Rwanda in 1994. Have them include one or two ideas about how the genocide might have been avoided.

Resources:

See Materials above.