

The Cambodian Genocide: Can Justice be Achieved?

Lesson Overview:

Thirty years after the Khmer Rouge came to power in Cambodia and committed many horrific atrocities, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) was formed to prosecute the leaders of the Khmer Rouge. Many problems have prevented the ECCC from doing its intended job, and Cambodians and the international community alike have criticized it for its inefficiency and incompetence. In this lesson, students will grapple with the idea of *justice*-- what is it, and how can it be achieved. Do we rely on the justice system to prosecute those most responsible for the Cambodian genocide? Should all people who committed these crimes in Cambodia be tried? How can the victims and/or their families find peace and justice?

Selected Essential Question:

- What is justice? How can we ensure that justice is achieved?

Primary Concepts: justice, genocide

Lesson Objectives:

- ESWBAT define justice and analyze its significance.
- ESWBAT recognize the ECCC's challenges and how to appropriately administer justice to the Cambodian genocide victims and families.
- ESWBAT compare and discuss various perspectives on how justice should be served to the remaining Khmer Rouge leaders.

Materials:

- Cambodian genocide photos:
 - En, Nhem. "Photographs from S-21." Retrieved from <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~amamendo/photos.html>
 - Oliver, Mark. "33 Haunting Photos From The Killing Fields Of The Cambodian Genocide." *Ati*. 15 August 2017. Retrieved from <http://all-that-is-interesting.com/the-killing-fields-cambodia>
- Readings:
 - "Pol Pot in Cambodia, 1975-1979." *The History Place*. 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/pol-pot.htm>
 - Campbell, Charlie. "Cambodia's Khmer Rouge Trials Are a Shocking Failure." *Time*. 13 February 2014. Retrieved From <http://time.com/6997/cambodias-khmer-rouge-trials-are-a-shocking-failure/>
 - Ung, Loung. "The Execution." from *First They Killed My Father*. 2006. <https://www.amazon.com/Firs2006t-They-Killed-Father-Remembers/dp/0060856262> (this text is widely available from libraries and bookstores)
 - Thul, Prak C. "Khmer Rouge Genocide: Justice Delayed May be Justice Denied." *Reuters*. 11 March 2013. Retrieved From <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-court/khmer-rouge-genocide-justice-delayed-may-be-justice-denied-idUSBRE9290HM20130311>

Lesson Plan:

Anticipatory Set

- Gallery Walk
 - Have students silently look at photos from the Cambodian genocide that are placed around the room (10-12 images can be pulled from the above sites)

- When students return to their seats, students will free write in response to the following questions: What stuck out to you in the photos? How does it make you feel? What do you think should be done to the people who caused and committed these horrific acts?

Body of Lesson

- What is justice? Think-Pair-Share:
 - Think-pair-share: come up with a definition of the word justice.
 - Come up with a class definition, write it on board or overhead.
 - Merriam-Webster learner's dictionary definition: the process or result of using laws to fairly judge and punish crimes and criminals
- Socratic Seminar:
 - Student should have come to class having read the articles about the Cambodian genocide, the ECCC, etc. (Also possible to jigsaw in class; might need to choose the readings that are most useful to your learning targets.)
 - A lot of people were brutally killed in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. Who should take responsibility for what happened? How can justice be achieved?
 - Should the ECCC only prosecute the Khmer Rouge leaders? Who else, in your opinion, should be prosecuted?
 - Is it worth it to prosecute people who have committed crimes over 40 years ago? How is the ECCC working to serve justice to the victims? Is it effective in your opinion? Why or why not?
 - Are there other ways that justice can be reached other than through the ECCC?
- Exit ticket:
 - How did your thoughts about justice change from the beginning of class?
 - What action that anyone in the room take today did you find most affirming or helpful for you in your understanding of genocide and/or justice?
 - Write one question you still have about justice or the Cambodia genocide.