

- ⊙ prioritize critical analysis, cultural awareness and engaging in a diverse democracy and an interconnected world
- ⊙ include the contributions, perspectives and histories of individuals and groups previously underrepresented
- ⊙ address new requirements, including civics, ethnic studies, the Holocaust and other genocides

Oregon Senate Bill 664 requires the integration of Holocaust and genocide studies into instruction for the state's K-12 public school students.



**Oregon's  
Instructional  
Frameworks**

**SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

# **Genocide, Including the Holocaust: Grades 5–12**

## **Why is it important to teach about the Holocaust<sup>1</sup> and genocide<sup>2</sup>?**

**The Holocaust represents a pivotal historical event that demonstrates how a modern, industrialized society systematically targeted and murdered millions, reshaping international law, human rights frameworks and global politics.**

Understanding how propaganda and gradual normalization of extremism enabled the Holocaust helps students recognize warning signs of persecution, the fragility of democratic institutions and the dangers of unchecked authoritarianism, scapegoating of minority groups and collective indifference to the suffering of others.

**Examining genocides across cultures and time periods develops students' capacity for cross-cultural understanding and empathy while revealing how prejudice can manifest in various societal contexts.**

Examining both the Holocaust and other genocides provides students with a framework to analyze historical patterns across different societies and time periods. Students analyze the conditions and actions that led to genocide, identify universal human rights principles that emerged in response to these events and evaluate how various communities responded to extremism.

<sup>1</sup> The Holocaust during World War II was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. Antisemitism, the hatred of or prejudice against Jews, was at the foundation of the Holocaust and a basic tenet of Nazi ideology. This prejudice was widespread throughout Europe and continues to target Jews in Europe and the United States today.

<sup>2</sup> According to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), Article II: "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

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**Engaging with primary sources and survivor testimony fosters understanding of why individuals adopt the roles of perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, resisters and rescuers, and how the actions of individuals change based on a variety of situations.**

When students engage with survivor testimony and compare case studies of genocide throughout history they understand the complex human choices involved in these events. This analysis develops critical thinking skills that help them recognize historical patterns and evaluate how individual and collective responses shape outcomes during challenging moral circumstances.

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## **What does teaching about genocide and the Holocaust look like in practice?**

### **Essential Disciplinary Practice**

### **Example**

**Cultivate global awareness and cultural understanding** to effectively engage with the interconnected world, diverse cultures and perspectives.

A 10th grade world history class examines how different countries remember and teach the Holocaust. In small groups, they analyze cultural and historical influences on memorialization and compare global perspectives to Holocaust education in the United States.

**Example Standards:** HS.WR.CP.15, HS.WR.CP.17, HS.WR.CP.19

**Collect, interpret, evaluate and apply information from primary and secondary sources** to better understand and create historical narratives distinguishing between fact and opinion.

After reading about the experiences of Syrian refugees, a 7th grade class recreates a timeline of major events in the Syrian civil war using photographs, maps and news articles. The class discusses why families flee their countries and the challenges they face when seeking safety.

**Example Standards:** 6/7.G.MM.8 6/7.H.CE.12, 6/7.H.CP.14, 6/7.C.CE.5

The above examples offer ways that educators might bundle or group multiple standards across the social science domains and concepts within each grade level.

## Questions for Consideration and Discussion Starters

How can **educators** locate and identify resources about genocide and the Holocaust?

What strategies can **school leaders** use to coach and support teachers as they facilitate discussions about prejudice and bias?

How can **educators** help students make connections between historical and current events?

## Genocide, Including the Holocaust, in Grades 5–12

This module supports educators in teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides thoughtfully and sensitively, as reflected in Oregon’s 2024 Social Science Standards. It covers key themes such as the historical conditions, policies and social practices that have contributed to acts of genocide, the roles individuals and societies have played in these events and the lasting impacts on affected communities. The module guides educators in understanding how these topics develop across grade levels—from foundational explorations of human rights and responsibility to deeper analyses of survivor testimony, systemic injustice and justice efforts. Teachers will gain content knowledge and research-based instructional strategies to effectively teach these topics using Essential Disciplinary Practices such as evidence-based inquiry and perspective-taking. The module also provides strategies for engaging students in meaningful projects that connect past genocides to present-day issues, such as oral history interviews, advocacy efforts and research on ongoing human rights challenges.

**Online Module:** [Genocide, Including the Holocaust 5–12](#)

**Learn More**   [Social Science Standards Resource Website](#)  
[2024 Social Science Standards](#)  
[Essential Disciplinary Practices](#)