



SARA CORNING CENTRE FOR GENOCIDE EDUCATION

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Unit Title

Artsakh War

Lesson Title

Preserving Our Identity

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will study...

- Analyzing the effects of war on one's own cultural identity
- Reflect on how one preserves their cultural identity after being displaced from their homeland

Background Information

Our cultural identity is a critical component of our personal identity. Our cultural attributes are what define us as individuals.

The Armenian Genocide of 1915 displaced millions of Armenians from their homes. Armenians living in the Diaspora are the most direct effect of the genocide. There are approximately 10 million Armenians in the world, but only an estimated 3 million actually live in Armenia.

During the Artsakh War of 2020, more than 120,000 Armenians were forced to leave their homes and belongings behind, again, risking the loss of their cultural identity and roots.

Resources

- Article; [Finding Identity for Armenian Genocide Survivors Is Still a Struggle | Opinion – HyeTert](#)
- Excerpt from the Armenian Genocide Museum; [Genocide Museum | The Armenian Genocide Museum-institute \(genocide-museum.am\)](http://genocide-museum.am)

Materials

- **Retell, Reflect, Relate** – Note Taking Chart
- **Research Assignment**; Preserving Culture and Identity
- **Discussion Questions**



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Assessment Strategies

- Observation
- Question and Answer
- Group Discussion
- Small Group Research Assignment

Activity

- Small Group Activity; Assign 1 reading to each small group. In their groups, students are to read, reflect and discuss the contents of the reading while completing the Retell, Relate, Reflect handout. Students will then present their notes to the class, discussing one another's findings.
- Allow opportunities for small group and large group discussions throughout
- Connect readings and student notes to discussion questions

Discussion Questions

- What is culture?
- What is cultural identity comprised of?
- How would someone's cultural identity be at risk?
- What are some ways we can hold on to and preserve our culture?
- What activities or events do you participate in that reflects your cultural identity?

Assignment

Preserving Cultural Identity While Living in a Diaspora

- For this assignment, students are to research and identify aspects of Armenian cultural identity; food, music, art, clothing, language, fashion, beliefs, values, behaviours etc.
- Reflect on the importance of preserving cultural identity
- Present findings to the class



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Finding Identity for Armenian Genocide Survivors Is Still a Struggle | Opinion

2021-04-21

MANOUK AKOPYAN

My grandmother Annik Khorsikyan lost her battle to COVID-19 on January 18. She was 87.

Nene, as her six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren called her, was the backbone of the entire family.



The pandemic robbed her loved ones from visiting her during the holidays, or giving her a proper goodbye during her final days. As has tragically become the case for many around the world, she died alone in an overcrowded hospital, hers being the Hollywood Presbyterian hospital in Los Angeles—the location of my birth 35 years ago.

It's still hard to process or heal from nene's death because I couldn't properly mourn the loss of our matriarch.

Losing nene was like losing a piece of my identity.

I heal and find solace knowing that her existence, and the life she persevered through as a widowed mother of three by the age 20, is a miracle itself.

Annik was the daughter of Hovanes Dakesian, an Armenian genocide survivor who escaped slaying at the hands of the Ottoman Empire when they persecuted and massacred over 1.5 million Armenians during World War I.

Ottomans ransacked Armenian-occupied land, forced them out of their homes, led them to death marches, all while murdering men, raping women and leaving children orphaned along the way. The 2016 film "The Promise" starring Christian Bale and Oscar Isaac documents some of the harrowing details.

Hovanes' brother Gevork, who was 8-years-old at the time, wasn't so fortunate to survive, as he was kidnapped and never found again.

The attempted ethnic cleansing of Armenians, the world's first Christian nation, is one of the darkest chapters in history. Assyrians and Greeks were grouped in the mass killings as well. Turkey till this day vehemently denies a genocide ever took place in order to avoid paying reparations for its human rights violations.

That hasn't stopped an overwhelming number of countries, politicians, public figures and historians alike to call the killings what they are—a genocide.

If my great-grandfather had not escaped his death sentence, there never would have been a nene to commemorate, or a grandson to commemorate her.



My family and I would never exist, and an entire clan would be reduced to a red stroke of t paintbrush, as depicted in the “Our Wounds Are Still Open” mural on Hollywood Boulevar near Alexandria Avenue, the cross-streets where nene lived in Los Angeles’ Little Armenia.

My parents emigrated to the U.S. four decades ago from Yerevan, Armenia and coincidentally first settled right near this mural, too. I was conceived nearby on Lexington Avenue. Every time I visited nene’s house, I quickly entered a hazy time machine piecing a puzzle around my identity.

Many Armenians left the land they knew to pursue greener paths around the world because they were bereft of their history, belongings, land and identity.

Both the image and message in Tinseltown’s mural serve as a stark reminder of the strength and resilience of the Armenian people. It also proves the wound is still blistering and far from being able to heal.

Backed by Turkey and Syrian jihadists, Azerbaijan waged a 44-day war against Armenians and seized historical land in the Republic of Artsakh last November.

Several thousand young Armenians soldiers lost their lives, and several thousand more citizens were displaced once a ceasefire agreement was arranged by Russia.

Artsakh was populated and controlled by ethnic Armenians for centuries, and a heavier war between Armenians and Azerbaijanis took place in 1994. The internationally known region as Nagorno-Karabakh sits inside Azerbaijan’s borders after the territory was annexed by Joseph Stalin soon after Armenians died or dispersed in 1918.

My cousins, friends and former co-workers were all forced to leave their families and careers behind in the recent battle to fight in a hopeless war ignited by the opposition. Over 100,000 Armenians—myself included—marched the streets of Hollywood during the pandemic, desperately trying to bring attention to a second attempt of genocide. Armenians around the world held similar demonstrations.

Azerbaijan meanwhile has since used the seizure of sacred land to glorify its racism, highlighted by a war “park” it recently created in Baku to boast about their victory by depicting Armenians in a humiliating light. One such putrid part of the park presents the helmets from fallen soldiers. Other areas show dead mannequins. The degrading display invites children to attend, further teaching the systematic hatred and harboring of hard feelings and brainwashing of an innocent generation.



Nene was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1933 because her father was forced to flee from his original home in Tekirdağ, Turkey to Burgas, Bulgaria. They did not live in Armenia until her family was awarded a relocation program from Armenian officials in 1946.

Shortly before her death, Nene relived the trauma of her past because the atrocious wrongs of the last century were never righted. The stained hands of the perpetrators were never cleansed. The war in Artsakh was one of the last emotional pains she experienced before COVID-19 took over her fragile body.

Nene's stories can never be heard again, but they'll be carried in our identities, much like millions of others who share a similar past.

The seeds from strong genocide survivors from over a century ago still remain, sprinkled in concentrated areas from Los Angeles, New York and Boston to Beirut, Iran, Russia, London, Amsterdam, Argentina, Uruguay, Australia and all around the world, presently reaching nearly 11 million.

They exist to preserve their identities and fight against the violation of human rights for people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

To help prevent history from repeating for its people, and other groups.

To raise awareness and educate in order to revitalize a country for a prosperous and promising future ahead.

To protect political interests, the United States has forever pandered to Turkey's problematic stance even when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member has always had crises in the west.

Like several presidents before him, President Joe Biden promised to recognize the Armenian genocide.

"The Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence," former President Barack Obama once said as an Illinois senator running for office. "The facts are undeniable."

The entire Armenian nation around the world awaits to see how the United States' pen can once and for all be mightier than Azerbaijan and Turkey's swords, guns and drone bombings.

My nene, and every Armenian who's no longer with us, would be able to rest in peace with resolution and restitution.



Manouk Akopyan is a journalist who's written for USA Today, Los Angeles Times and The Guardian, among countless other publications.

The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.

<https://www.newsweek.com/finding-identity-armenian-genocide-survivors-still-struggle-opinion-1585192>

Yorumlar kapatıldı.

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HyeTert



Mission News Theme Compete Themes tarafından yapılmıştır.



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Retell, Relate & Reflect

<p><u>Retell</u> <i>the details</i></p> <p>The reading is about... I found it interesting when... I noticed that...</p>	
<p><u>Relate</u> <i>analysis</i></p> <p>It sounds like... This reminds me of... This is different from...</p>	
<p><u>Reflect</u> <i>opinion & understanding</i></p> <p>I think that... I wonder why... I understand that...</p>	



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Preserving Cultural Identity While Living in a Diaspora

Assignment



- Research and identify aspects of Armenian cultural identity; food, music, art, clothing, language, fashion, beliefs, values, behaviours etc.
- Reflect on and discuss the importance of preserving cultural identity, especially while living in a diaspora
- Present findings to your class

I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, literature is unread, music is unheard, and prayers are no more answered.

Go ahead, destroy Armenia.

See if you can do it. Send them into the desert without bread or water. Burn their homes and churches. Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again.

For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.



William Saroyan
1908 - 1981