

Mass Atrocities in the Early 1900s - Armenia and Ukraine

The early 20th century saw an increase in mass violence. Both war-related violence and violence directed at specific populations. While the Holocaust was a more well-known instance of genocide, many people are unfamiliar with the Armenian and Ukrainian genocides. Let's learn about those today.

We need to define the word "genocide" to determine how we know when genocide has occurred. Read the page and watch the quick one minute video on "[What is Genocide](#)" and answer the following questions:

What does the word "genocide" mean?	
Why did we need a new word for what happened in the Holocaust?	
What was "Resolution 1674" – and why is it important today?	

The Armenian Genocide: "Metz Eghern"

1. Head to the "Facing History, Facing Ourselves" website to view the [Introduction to the Armenian Genocide Video](#) and answer the following questions:

Why did the Ottoman Empire side with Germany in World War I?	
What happened to Armenians (and Greeks or other Christian) after the war began?	
Describe the torture inflicted on the Armenian people.	
How did the Armenians attempt to resist the Ottomans?	
How many Armenian people perished in 18 months?	

2. The Armenian Genocide is still a very controversial topic, even 100+ years later. Watch the PBS News Hour interview with scholars called "[Why Turkey doesn't use the word 'genocide' for Armenia](#)" and answer the questions as you watch:

Why does Turkey dispute the term "genocide" when referring to the Armenian atrocities? (0:00—3:34)	
Why doesn't the modern state of Turkey want to recognize the events as a genocide in the modern era? (3:35–7:28)	

Stalin's Ukrainian Famine and Genocide: "Holodomor"

1. Watch the video on the Ukrainian Famine - "[Holodomor: Stalin's Secret Genocide](#)." Answer the questions:

What does the word "holodomor" mean?	
What was Collectivization, and why was Ukraine targeted?	
How did Stalin use the famine for political control?	
Who was Walter Duranty of the New York Times? What did he report? (8:59)	
What happened to journalists who reported what was really happening?	
How is the tension between Ukraine and Russia still playing out today?	

Reflecting on what happened in Armenia and Ukraine

1. Both the Armenian "Metz Eghern" and the Ukrainian "Holodomor" are recognized by some as genocides but denied by others. Read the following quotes about them and reflect below:

"Studies by genocide scholars prove that the single best predictor of future genocide is denial of a past genocide coupled with impunity [exemption from punishment] for its perpetrators. Genocide Deniers are three times more likely to commit genocide again than other governments."

- Testimony to Congress by Dr. Gregory Stanton, President, IAGS, 4.23.08

"The black hole of forgetting is the negative force that results in future genocides. When Adolf Hitler was asked if his planned invasion of Poland was a violation of international law, he scoffed, 'Who ever heard of the extermination of the Armenians?'"

- The 8 Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton, President, Genocide Watch, 1996

"This is not simply a case of mass murder. It is a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation."

- Raphael Lemkin (Coined word genocide) Speech "Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine," 1953.

Describe your reaction to the above quotes.

2. Write a thesis statement for the questions below: **Evaluate the extent to which the causes of the Armenian Genocide and the Ukrainian Genocides were similar.**

