



One of the seven survivors of  
Tuol Sleng prison in Cambodia

*David A. Harvey/National Geographic/  
Getty Images*

# CAMBODIA:

## The Rise and Fall of the Khmer Rouge Regime

Assessment and Activity Options

## ABOUT THESE ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

The five activities provided in the following pages complement the *Cambodia: The Rise and Fall of the Khmer Rouge Regime* background reading and related learning materials available on the Asia Pacific Curriculum website (<http://www.asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/rise-and-fall-khmer-rouge-regime>). They can be used to build and assess the curricular competencies outlined in the new social studies curriculum for British Columbia (BC) high schools. These competencies are (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/10-12#ss>):

1. Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
2. Assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance).
3. Assess the credibility of and justification for evidence after investigating the reliability of sources and data, the adequacy of evidence, and the bias of accounts and claims (evidence).
4. Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups, at different times and places (continuity and change).
5. Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, places, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence).
6. Explain and infer different perspectives on past and present people, places, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspectives).
7. Recognize implicit and explicit ethical judgments in a variety of sources (ethical judgment).
8. Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions and assess varying responses to events in the past or present (ethical judgment).

These assessment options were designed and have been used by Mr. Graeme Stacey, a high school Social Studies / History 12 / Holocaust 12 teacher at Kelowna Secondary (BC), for his course titled *Holocaust 12: A Blueprint for Modern Societal Tragedies (Genocide) 12*. This topic can also be used in other high school courses, such as 20<sup>th</sup> Century World History, Asian Studies, and Social Justice.

Questions and feedback may be directed to the Asia Pacific Curriculum project, an initiative of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, at [curriculum@asiapacific.ca](mailto:curriculum@asiapacific.ca).

## ACTIVITY 1: QUIZ AND COMPARISON WITH HOLOCAUST

Curricular competencies: 1, 2, 4–6, 8 (answer key available on pages 19–20)

1. What were the years of the Cambodian genocide?
2. What was the name of the ruling party that governed Cambodia during the genocide years?
3. The capital city of Cambodia was the scene of one of the largest mass exoduses in human history. What was the name of that city?
  - a. Lon Nol
  - b. Ho Chi Minh City
  - c. Phnom Penh
4. The Cambodian genocide ended when the United States intervened in that country.

True / False
5. Are the following sentences mostly accurate or inaccurate? If a sentence is inaccurate, change it or re-write it to make it more accurate.

*Example:* During the genocide years, between 150,000 and 500,000 Cambodians died from U.S. bombing.

*Option 1:* ~~From 1969–1973~~ During the genocide years, between 150,000 and 500,000 Cambodians died from U.S. bombing.

*Option 2:* During the genocide years, approximately two million ~~between 150,000 and 500,000~~ Cambodians died from execution, starvation, and exhaustion ~~U.S. bombing~~.

- a. The Khmer Rouge leaders grew up poorer and less educated than other Cambodians.
- b. Prince Norodom Sihanouk always strongly opposed the Khmer Rouge.
- c. U.S. bombing of eastern Cambodia created resentment that drove many Cambodians to support the Khmer Rouge.
- d. After the Khmer Rouge was overthrown, its leaders were immediately arrested and brought to trial.
- e. Post-genocide reconciliation in Cambodia has relied almost entirely on the international tribunal process.

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER GENOCIDES

The genocide in Cambodia had some similarities **with other genocides, such as the Holocaust, Rwanda genocide, and the cultural genocide of First Nations Peoples,** but differed from them in other ways. Think about these similarities and differences, and then list and explain them in the spaces below.

<b>Similarities between the Cambodian Genocide and other genocides</b>	<b>Differences between the Cambodian Genocide and other genocides</b>
<i>Example 1:</i>	<i>Example 1:</i>

COMPARISON WITH OTHER GENOCIDES (CONTINUED)

<b>Similarities between the Cambodian Genocide and other genocides</b>	<b>Differences between the Cambodian Genocide and other genocides</b>
<i>Example 2:</i>	<i>Example 2:</i>

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP PHOTO NARRATIVE ACTIVITY

**Curricular competencies:** 1–6, 8

*Note: Any images can be used for this activity, but a list of image websites is provided on pages 6–7. Teachers should preview all images before assigning this activity, as some of them depict violence or are in other ways disturbing.*

### STEP 1

Working with one other student, sort through all 25 images related to the Cambodian genocide. On a piece of paper, list each photo by providing a simple caption. Then, together, the two of you are to narrow down and select the six images you feel best represents the “totality” of the genocide.

As you are doing this, think about the following:

- How will your group approach this task?
- Which photos will you choose and why? Challenge your own assumptions, think critically, and explain your rationale to one another.
- Remember the three C’s:

**Content:** Consider what the Cambodian Genocide “looked like,” and why and how it happened.

**Context:** Pre-1975, 1975–1979, and post-1979

**Complexity:** There is no single-dimension genocide(s); there are many dimensions of why and how it happened.

### STEP 2

You and your partner will then be assigned to work with another pair of students that has also selected their top six images. The four of you should dialogue, discuss, and determine which six images best tell the story of the Cambodian genocide.

### STEP 3

Once your group of four finalizes your six images, post those images on poster paper and come up with a title that explains the images. This can be as creative as you want it to be. Write this anywhere on your poster paper, and write your group’s names on the back of the paper.

### STEP 4

Your group will be asked to explain and answer questions about your selected images.

## STEP 1: IMAGE OPTIONS

1. U.S. President Richard Nixon on plans to bomb the Vietnam-Cambodia border, <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/130109122349-15-nixon-horizontal-large-gallery.jpg>
2. U.S. aircraft bombing Cambodia, 1973; [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e9/US\\_aircraft\\_LORAN\\_bombing\\_over\\_Cambodia\\_c1973.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e9/US_aircraft_LORAN_bombing_over_Cambodia_c1973.JPG).
3. Cambodian child soldiers walk during a U.S. bombing raid; <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/photos/2012/08/14/today-in-photo-history-1973-u-s-bombing-of-cambodia-ends>
4. Cambodian government troops capture Khmer Rouge soldier, 1973, <https://syahrilkadir.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/captive-of-the-khmer-rouge.jpg>
5. Sihanouk posing with members of the Khmer Rouge, <http://www.cambodianlifestory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/king2.jpg>
6. Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge soldiers, [http://pgresize.outlookindia.com/images/gallery/20151022/pol\\_pot\\_20151102.jpg](http://pgresize.outlookindia.com/images/gallery/20151022/pol_pot_20151102.jpg)
7. Days before the Khmer Rouge occupation of Phnom Penh, evacuations of U.S. and other foreign nationals, [http://assets.nydailynews.com/polopoly\\_fs/1.2180523.1428678879!/img/httpImage/image.jpg\\_gen/derivatives/article\\_750/cambodia11n-6-web.jpg](http://assets.nydailynews.com/polopoly_fs/1.2180523.1428678879!/img/httpImage/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/article_750/cambodia11n-6-web.jpg)
8. Khmer Rouge soldiers as they enter Phnom Penh, 1975, [http://1.bp.blogspot.com/\\_oIAhQMTG-dU/S\\_foJahm3DI/AAAAAAAAE9E/hqG3UrRRk88/s1600/khmer-rouge-killings-history-pictures-rare-unseen-001.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_oIAhQMTG-dU/S_foJahm3DI/AAAAAAAAE9E/hqG3UrRRk88/s1600/khmer-rouge-killings-history-pictures-rare-unseen-001.jpg)
9. Victorious Khmer Rouge soldiers on the streets of Phnom Penh, April 17, 1975, <http://peteralanlloyd.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/KR-celebrate-the-fall-of-PP-585x394.jpg>
10. People evacuating Phnom Penh, 1975, <https://userscontent2.emaze.com/images/43d1acba-014c-4d6c-ad7c-837b6fee848a/5565d3c8-d014-4bc9-8c97-be64723851b7.jpg>
11. Empty streets of Phnom Penh after evacuation 1975, <http://peteralanlloyd.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/peter-alan-lloyd-BACK-novel-vietnam-war-backpacker-khmer-rouge-abduction-danger-laos-cambodia-vietnam-tri-border-jungle-ho-chi-minh-trail-khmer-rouge-pol-pot-briton-murdered-phnom-penh-10.jpg>
12. Cambodian children after fleeing with their families, 1975, <http://endgenocide.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/08/Cambodia-refugees-AP-600x.jpg>
13. Newspaper "Year Zero," <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Year-Zero.jpg>

14. Forced labourers digging canals in Kampong Thom province, <http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Dam-January-1st-via-VOA.jpg>
15. Cars, forbidden under Khmer Rouge, left along the side of the road, <http://peteralanlloyd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Peter-alan-Lloyd-BACK-novel-backpackers-in-danger-Vietnam-war-secret-war-in-laos-khmer-rouge-abduction-Cambodia-jungle-khmer-rouge-cars-and-money-banned-photos-2.jpg>
16. Prisoner in leg chain, [https://diogenesii.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/s-21\\_0140.jpg](https://diogenesii.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/s-21_0140.jpg)
17. Cambodians lying near and in a ditch, <http://www.oldpicz.com/picz/2016/07/Cambodian-Genocide-1975-5.jpg>
18. Torture room, S-21 Prison, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0f/Detention\\_and\\_torture\\_room,\\_Security\\_Prison\\_21\\_\(S-21\),\\_Tuol\\_Sleng\\_Genocide\\_Museum,\\_Phnom\\_Penh,\\_Cambodia.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0f/Detention_and_torture_room,_Security_Prison_21_(S-21),_Tuol_Sleng_Genocide_Museum,_Phnom_Penh,_Cambodia.jpg)
19. S-21 Prison, January 1979, <http://www.tuolsleng.com/graphics/9012.jpg>
20. Mug shots of S-21 prisoners, [http://www.killingfieldsmuseum.com/uploads/3/0/1/4/3014111/1111724\\_orig.jpg](http://www.killingfieldsmuseum.com/uploads/3/0/1/4/3014111/1111724_orig.jpg)
21. Soldiers of the Vietnam-backed National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea advance on the Royal Palace, January 1979, <https://diogenesii.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/liberation-day.jpg>
22. Streets of Phnom Penh after the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge, 1979, <https://diogenesii.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/phnom-penh-in-1979-just-after-the-overthrow-of-the-khmer-rouge-regime.jpg>
23. Excavation of the Killing Fields, <http://peteralanlloyd.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/peter-alan-lloyd-BACK-novel-kmer-rouge-torture-murder-backpackers-in-danger-captives-khmer-rouge-cambodia-killing-fields-human-fertilizer-fertiliser-cambodians-find-human-remains-of-khmer-rouge-victims.jpg>
24. Pol Pot leaving Khmer Rouge trial, 1997, [http://www.nate-thayer.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/polpot\\_late-trial-nate-thayer.jpg](http://www.nate-thayer.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/polpot_late-trial-nate-thayer.jpg)
25. Kaing Guek Eav, a.k.a. Duch, former director of Tuol Sleng prison, sentenced to life in prison, [http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02127/Khmer-Rouge\\_2127847b.jpg](http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02127/Khmer-Rouge_2127847b.jpg)



STEP 1: WORKSHEET FOR LISTING ALL IMAGES WITH A CAPTION

Sort through all 25 images and list each one by providing a simple caption.

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 14. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 15. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 16. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 17. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 18. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 19. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 20. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 21. _____ |
| 9. _____  | 22. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 24. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 25. _____ |
| 13. _____ |           |

STEP 1: SELECTING YOUR SIX IMAGES

**Names:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We chose the following six images (please provide a full explanation for why you chose each image):

<p><i>Complete caption and explanation:</i></p>
<p><i>Complete caption and explanation:</i></p>
<p><i>Complete caption and explanation:</i></p>

STEP 1: SELECTING YOUR SIX IMAGES (CONTINUED)

*Complete caption and explanation:*

*Complete caption and explanation:*

*Complete caption and explanation:*

STEP 2

Working with another pair, narrow down your total number of images from 12 to six. Start by listing each pair's images below, using a caption for each image.

<b>Pair 1 (names):</b>	<b>Pair 2 (names):</b>
<b>Six selected images</b>	<b>Six selected images</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

STEP 2 (CONTINUED)

Next, discuss, defend, dialogue, advocate for, and narrow down your combined 12 images to six. Then list them in the chart below, using captions to identify them. If the two pairs used a different caption for the same image, you should decide together which caption best fits that image.

<b>Our six images</b> (Identify with captions)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

### STEP 3

As a group, come up with a creative title that captures the significance of your group's photos. Then paste your six images on the poster paper, giving thought to how you will sequence them. You will be asked to explain the six images and their sequence. (To creatively and spatially fit images you can cut images prior to pasting.)

#### **Your Poster Title:**

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Explain how and why your group decided on your six images. What did you focus on and why? What challenges did you have in narrowing the list down to just six images? What did you consider in your decision? How did you arrive at a consensus?

## ACTIVITY 3: ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Curricular competencies: 1–8

**Question 1: Why and how did the Cambodian genocide happen?**

**Question 2: Explain how and why the Cambodian genocide happened and how it exemplifies genocide under the United Nations genocide convention.**

You need to answer one of the two essay questions with factual content, supporting detail, and sound judgment. You also need to connect your essay back to what the question is asking you. This should be a four-paragraph essay organized as follows:

**Paragraph 1:** Introduction and thesis

Underline your thesis statement. The lead-up to the thesis needs to be three quarters of a page. Do not explain your 'why' and 'how' here. You can do that in the body of your essay.

**Paragraph 2:** Topic sentence and conclusion related to *why* the Cambodian genocide happened

This can be more than a single paragraph. Different points related to why it happened can be separate paragraphs. Or there can be transitions between the points if you decide to include more than one point in one paragraph.

**Paragraph 3:** Topic sentence and conclusion related to *how* the Cambodian genocide happened

This can be more than a single paragraph. Different points related to how it happened can be separate paragraphs. Or there can be transitions between the points if you decide to include more than one point in one paragraph.

**Paragraph 4:** Conclusion

Tell what you just told by re-connecting back to the question you just answered.

## ACTIVITY 4: THE SAYINGS OF ANGKAR

**Curricular competencies:** 1–3, 5–8

During the period of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–79), the Khmer Rouge repeated the following phrases aloud and played them over loudspeakers. They also forced others to repeat them aloud. These phrases and slogans were uttered on behalf of a mysterious, faceless organization known as “Angkar.”

With a partner, read through each saying and decide whether it was used to inspire, indoctrinate, or intimidate people (or any combination of the three). Write **INS** beside those sayings you think were used to inspire, **IND** beside those sayings you think were used to indoctrinate, and **INT** beside those sayings you think were used to intimidate. When you are finished, you should be able to make the case for your classifications.

These sayings are taken from a book by Henri Locard, *Pol Pot’s Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar* (2005).

1. Useless to argue, for the Angkar’s motives are perfectly pure!
2. Beware of the people at your side; they could be secret agents!
3. Report everything to the Angkar!
4. If you have a revolutionary position, you can do anything, comrade.
5. You must destroy the visible enemy, and the hidden one, too—the enemy in the mind!



6. Long live the correct and extremely clear-sighted Communist Party of Kampuchea!
  
7. Down with the American imperialists and their lackeys!
  
8. Let's violently attack and scatter the accursed imperialist enemy!
  
9. Secretly observe the slightest deeds and gestures of everyone around you!
  
10. When the Angkar tells you what to do, you do it!
  
11. Long live the revolutionary Angkar, utterly wise and clear-sighted and ever glorious!
  
12. [If] you prostrate yourself before the Buddha, you are only grovelling before cement.
  
13. He who protests is an enemy; He who opposes is a corpse!
  
14. Absolutely everything belongs to the Angkar.

15. Be grateful to the Angkar!
  
16. Love the Angkar, sincerely and loyally.
  
17. When pulling out weeds, remove them, roots and all.
  
18. Long live the courageous, magnificent Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea!
  
19. Dedicate yourselves to renouncing and destroying all imperialist, feudal, aristocratic regimes: they are all reactionary!
  
20. Your love for the Angkar must be boundless.
  
21. The Angkar is the soul of the motherland.
  
22. If someone is very hungry, the Angkar will take him where he will be stuffed with food.
  
23. The Angkar is the mother and father of all young children, as well as all adolescent boys and girls.

24. The Angkar is ferocious only with those who provoke its wrath.
  
25. Better to kill an innocent by mistake than spare an enemy by mistake!
  
26. If you do not want to be slapped, please answer the questions!
  
27. He who does not move forward fast enough will be crushed by the wheel of history.
  
28. The wind from the East always vanquishes the wind from the West.
  
29. Feudalists and capitalists are the bloodsuckers of the nation.
  
30. Comrade, if you betray the Angkar, you have severely condemned yourself and put on shackles and irons.
  
31. You take advantage of a fall to pretend to be asleep; Instead of a cramp in the leg, you pretend you twisted your ankle; when you are a little ill, you say you are seriously sick. Comrade, keeping you is no gain, taking you away, no loss!

PART II

Next, select quotes from the list above that relate to one of the categories below.

1. What the Cambodian Genocide looked like.

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2. Examples of direct fit with the UN classifications of Genocide (a–e). (For a UN definition of genocide, see page 18.)

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3. Similarities / differences between the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide.

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4. Connection(s) to why the Cambodian genocide occurred.

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5. Connection(s) to how the Cambodian genocide occurred.

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## ACTIVITY 5: CONNECTING THE CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE TO THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF GENOCIDE

**Curricular competencies:** 1, 2, 5, 6, 8

Using the United Nations (UN) five legal classifications of genocide, match the characteristics of the Cambodian genocide to the appropriate UN classification. Using complete sentences, write how (or whether) the Cambodian genocide meets each of the five criteria.

The following is the UN's definition of Genocide:

### Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

#### *Article II*

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily harm 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 a group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Source: The United Nations General Assembly, "General Assembly Resolution 260 (III) of 9 December 1948, <http://www.un-documents.net/a3r260.htm>.

## ACTIVITY 1: QUIZ ANSWER KEY

These questions and answers are based on the background reading, *Cambodia: The Rise and Fall of the Khmer Rouge Regime* available at <http://www.asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/rise-and-fall-khmer-rouge-regime>.

1. What were the years of the Cambodian genocide?

**1975–1979**

2. What was the name of the ruling party that governed Cambodia during the genocide years?

### **The Khmer Rouge**

*The party's formal name was the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). Kampuchea is the name used locally for Cambodia. The party is more commonly known as the Khmer Rouge, which means "Red Khmer."*

3. The capital city of Cambodia was the scene of one of the largest mass exoduses in human history. What was the name of that city?
  - a. Lon Nol
  - b. Ho Chi Minh City
  - c. **Phnom Penh**

*Lon Nol was the name of the General who overthrew Prince Sihanouk in 1970, and then lost power to the Khmer Rouge in 1975. Ho Chi Minh City is the name now used for the southern Vietnamese city that was formerly named Saigon.*

4. The Cambodian genocide ended when the United States intervened in that country.

True / **False**

*It was the intervention by Vietnam in 1979 that effectively ended the Khmer Rouge rule and brought an end to the Cambodian genocide.*

5. Are the following sentences mostly accurate or inaccurate? If a sentence is inaccurate, change it or re-write it to make it more accurate.

*Example:* During the genocide years, between 150,000 and 500,000 Cambodians died from U.S. bombing.

*Option 1:* From 1969–1973 During the genocide years, between 150,000 and 500,000 Cambodians died from U.S. bombing.

*Option 2:* During the genocide years, approximately two million ~~between 150,000 and 500,000~~ Cambodians died from execution, starvation, and exhaustion ~~U.S. bombing~~.

- a. The Khmer Rouge leaders grew less ~~up poorer~~ and more ~~less~~ educated than other Cambodians.
- b. Prince Norodom Sihanouk ~~always~~ strongly opposed the Khmer Rouge until after he was overthrown in a U.S.-backed coup in 1970.
- c. U.S. bombing of eastern Cambodia created resentment that drove many Cambodians to support the Khmer Rouge.
- d. After the Khmer Rouge was overthrown, its leaders fled to the Thai border. Some were immediately arrested and brought to trial many years later. Some (like Pol Pot) died before they could be arrested.
- e. Post-genocide reconciliation in Cambodia has relied on a combination of almost entirely on the international tribunal process and local processes.

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