

Lesson Plans: Never Again—Again

Grades: 9-12

Time: Two lessons, each 45 minutes

Subjects: History, Language Arts, Art, Media Literacy



This activity is broken up into two lessons using the same 10-minute video and some additional handouts. Each lesson has a different focus. We encourage you to do them in sequence. You will hear from six people who survived the 100-day genocide that occurred in the African country of Rwanda in 1994.

In Lesson 1, you will consider how getting to know people’s personal stories affects your feelings, thoughts and interest in the historical event they experienced.

In Lesson 2, you will build on that knowledge and go more deeply into the experiences of one survivor. You will focus on the survivors’ resiliency and what we can learn from them. You will also examine ways that art can help us to connect and communicate.

Background

Rwanda is a tiny country in the eastern part of Africa. On April 6, 1994, unknown people shot down a plane carrying the president of Rwanda. This event launched a calamity that had been developing for many years. In just a few weeks, between 850,000 and a million Rwandan men, women and children would be brutally murdered by soldiers, police and their own neighbors. The vast majority of them were Tutsi.



Name _____ Date _____

Lesson 1: How do we learn from history?

This lesson introduces the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and asks you to examine how personal stories affect your understanding of history.

Objectives

- Learn about the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda
- Consider what makes us care about a particular event, what makes things relevant
- Examine the role of personal stories in studying history

Materials

Handouts: Rwanda Backgrounder ([download here](#))

Video: [Never Again—Again](https://vimeo.com/402970610) (10 minute video) <https://vimeo.com/402970610>

The key to this activity is watching the video **after** you've completed the first part of the activity. You'll be thinking about how the video changes your experience of the information you're learning.

Read the handout “Calamity Strikes Rwanda” then answer these questions:

1. Why was there resentment against Tutsi people in Rwanda?
2. What happened to the power balance between the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda when the country became independent and was no longer a colony (of Belgium)?
3. What event provoked the genocide in Rwanda?
4. What tools and strategies did the government use to incite the massacre?



5. What (if anything) is the relevance of this historical event to you and your life?

Now watch the video [“Never Again—Again”](#) and answer these questions.

1. In the video you heard people describing their experiences. How is hearing first person stories different from reading the description of the events in the backgrounder “Calamity Strikes Rwanda”? Give a few examples.
2. What stood out to you in any of the stories that you heard? Is there a quote or idea that you want to remember? Why is that idea important to you?
3. Now that you’ve watched the video and heard first-person stories, think again about this question. What (if anything) is the relevance of this historical event to you and your life?
 - a. Did your answer change after you heard people’s testimony? If so, can you analyze why? For example:
 - i. Did you feel empathy for the people you heard from?
 - ii. Did you find you had anything in common?
 - iii. Were there insights you can use?
4. How do personal stories from eyewitnesses contribute to your understanding of and perhaps your interest in historical events?



Name _____ Date _____

Lesson 2, Part 1: Trauma and Resilience

This lesson has two parts. Part 1 focuses on the resilience that has allowed people to make happy lives after trauma. Part 2 focuses on the ways that art can help people express feelings and deal with trauma.

Materials

Video: Never Again—Again (10 minutes) <https://vimeo.com/402970610>

Survivor Biographies. These may be obtained two ways:

- [View Online](#) by typing “Rwanda” into the search box at the top left of the page.
<https://memoryprojectproductions.com/subject-gallery/https://memoryprojectproductions.com/subject-gallery/>
- Download pdfs of six two-sided Portrait Cards (download here)

Definition: Resilience is the ability to be happy and successful again after something difficult or bad has happened. Psychologists define it as the process of adapting well in the face of difficulties, trauma, tragedy or major stress. (American Psychological Association)

Watch the video “Never Again—Again” for the second time

(For link, see above) As you watch this video for the second time, look for examples of resilience in the survivors. Also pay attention to the use of art in the video. Then answer these questions.

1. What are some of the difficulties, trauma or tragedies the survivors experienced?
2. What are some ways they adapted to those experiences?
3. Who would you like to learn more about? _____



Read the brief biography of the person you chose to learn more about. Find it online or print it out. (see “Materials” above for links) Answer these questions:

1. Why did you choose this person?
2. Write down a few facts about the person’s life before, during and after the genocide.
3. What are examples of this person’s resilience? Give examples of choices the person made that have enabled them to live a happy life?
4. What is something this person experienced that is relevant or helpful for you in your life?
5. Write a letter to this person expressing what his or her story meant to you. Share it with a classmate.



Lesson 2, Part 2: Connecting through art

View the six paintings of survivors and answer the questions on the next page. You can also see them [online](https://memoryprojectproductions.com/rwanda-never-again-again/) at

<https://memoryprojectproductions.com/rwanda-never-again-again/>



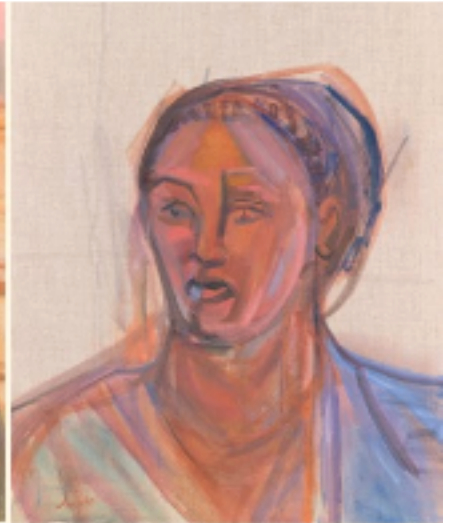
"Memories always surface but because we strive to survive, we work to move forward. You do not let yourself get caught up in sorrow."

—Juliana Umugwanya - 16 years old during the genocide.



"My message to survivors, be they young or old, is you must learn to live with yourself."

—Emmanuel Mahinda - 9 years old during the genocide



"At least when you have kids you can see the reflection of your loved ones inside them."

—Francoise Muteteli - 15 years old during the genocide



"The soldiers came to our house and they burst through our door. I was so scared!"

—Kizito Kalira - 15 years old during the genocide



"You can count 300 people you knew and not even 20 were alive. We wondered if we could smile again."

—Marie-Grace Mukabiyaghu - 32 years old during the genocide



"You have to take a decision on how you want to continue your life without hatred."

—Freddy Muzungu - 18 years old during the genocide



Name _____ Date _____

1. Look at the paintings of survivors. What words come to mind when you look at them? Choose a painting to examine more closely. What feelings does it evoke in you?
2. What role does art play in this project? How did seeing the paintings in the video affect how you understood or absorbed the survivor's testimony?
3. Did seeing the paintings in the video affect how you look at the paintings themselves? Please explain.
4. Think about the filmmaker, Roz Jacobs. What influence do you think Jacobs' background had on her decision to do this project?
5. What do you think were the filmmakers' goals in creating this project? Write a letter to Roz Jacobs telling her what this project meant to you. You can submit it, if you wish through The Memory Project Productions [website](#). She reads all the letters she receives and will respond to as many as possible.

