Naming the Harm

How evidence and responsibility shape our response to mass violence

SS24.HOS.22 "Differentiate between the concepts of genocide and mass atrocity.* 22a Analyze the causes and effects of modern-day genocides, and identify the groups involved..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the definition of genocide, circle the groups targeted in Rwanda and Srebrenica, and number two ways people can help prevent violence. These marks will help you separate what happened, why it happened, and what people can do.

When Does an Atrocity Become Genocide?

1. In 1948, after the Holocaust, countries adopted the Genocide Convention. It defines genocide by intent: perpetrators must seek to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. Killing members of that group is one possible act of genocide. Mass atrocity is a broader term for large-scale violence against civilians, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and some war crimes. The number of deaths alone cannot tell you whether an atrocity is genocide. Investigators also ask whom perpetrators targeted and what they intended to do. Both terms describe grave harm, but they answer different questions.

2. In Rwanda in 1994, extremist leaders among the Hutu majority had prepared militias and spread messages portraying Tutsi people as enemies. The shooting down of the president's plane helped trigger a planned campaign of killing. Extremists targeted the Tutsi minority because of its ethnic identity; they also killed Hutu people who opposed the violence. In about 100 days, roughly 800,000 people were murdered, most of them Tutsi. Neighbors were turned against neighbors, and many survivors fled their homes or lost family members. The organized targeting of Tutsi people shows why this mass atrocity is also classified as genocide.

3. In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured Srebrenica, a town in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the United Nations had designated a safe area. They separated Bosniak men and boys from women and children, then murdered more than 8,000 men and boys. International courts ruled that these killings were genocide against Bosniaks, an ethnic group. After the Holocaust, the idea of responsibility expanded beyond punishing perpetrators after a crime: the 1948 convention commits states to prevent and punish genocide. Individuals also have a role, such as checking claims that portray neighbors as threats and speaking against calls for violence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the number of people killed not, by itself, show whether a mass atrocity is genocide?

2. What helped cause the genocide in Rwanda, which group was targeted for its identity, and what was one effect?

3. How did the actions in Srebrenica identify a targeted group, and how did the violence affect it?

4. How did the understanding of responsibility change after the Holocaust? Give one duty for states and one for individuals from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A post spreads a false rumor about a religious minority in your town and calls for its families to be expelled. In four sentences, advise a student council: identify the targeted group, explain why the post is a warning sign rather than proof of genocide, and propose one personal action and one civic action that could help prevent harm.

ANSWER KEY

Naming the Harm

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.22

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the definition of genocide, circle the groups targeted in Rwanda and Srebrenica, and number two ways people can help prevent violence. These marks will help you separate what happened, why it happened, and what people can do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the number of people killed not, by itself, show whether a mass atrocity is genocide?	**Genocide requires intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group. Investigators must examine whom perpetrators targeted and what they intended.**
2	What helped cause the genocide in Rwanda, which group was targeted for its identity, and what was one effect?	**Hutu extremist leaders prepared militias and spread messages portraying Tutsi people as enemies; the president's plane crash helped trigger the killings. Tutsi people were targeted for their ethnic identity. Many people were murdered, fled, or lost family members.**
3	How did the actions in Srebrenica identify a targeted group, and how did the violence affect it?	**Bosnian Serb forces separated Bosniak men and boys from women and children, then murdered more than 8,000 men and boys. International courts ruled the killings were genocide against Bosniaks.**
4	How did the understanding of responsibility change after the Holocaust? Give one duty for states and one for individuals from the passage.	**Responsibility came to include preventing genocide, not only punishing perpetrators afterward. States committed to prevent and punish it; individuals can check threatening claims or speak against calls for violence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The post targets a religious minority and calls for its families to be expelled. This is a warning sign of possible violence, but the post alone does not prove intent to destroy the group or that genocide has occurred. Personally, I would check the claim and refuse to share the rumor. The student council could publicly reject the threat and ask local officials to protect the families.

Accept other accurate effects and prevention actions supported by the passage. For the open task, distinguish a warning sign from evidence that genocide has occurred.