When Divisions Turn

Investigating the origins and lasting effects of conflict

MWH.C.7.7.A "Examine the religious, ethnic, and political origins and the lasting effects of ethnic conflict, modern genocide, and atrocities (e.g., Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, Northern Ireland's "Troubles", Rwanda's civil war..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline political actions or policies that helped lead to violence, circle references to ethnic or religious identities, and put a star beside one lasting effect in each paragraph. Use your marks to distinguish identities from the decisions made about them.

Identity, Power, and Violence

1. In Rwanda, colonial officials reinforced divisions between Hutu and Tutsi by putting ethnic labels on identity cards and favoring Tutsi in government. After independence in 1962, political power shifted to Hutu leaders, and violence drove many Tutsi into exile. In 1990, a rebel force made up largely of exiled Tutsi invaded, beginning a civil war. In April 1994, after Rwanda's president was killed when his plane was shot down, extremist Hutu leaders organized the genocide of Tutsi and the murder of Hutu opponents. About 800,000 people were killed. Survivors faced trauma, and Rwanda later used community courts to try many suspects.

2. In Northern Ireland, many Protestants wanted to remain in the United Kingdom, while many Catholics favored a united Ireland. These labels also marked unequal access to housing, jobs, and political power; beliefs alone did not cause the violence. In the late 1960s, civil rights marches challenged discrimination. Confrontations grew into the Troubles, a conflict involving republican and loyalist armed groups and British security forces. Bombings and shootings killed more than 3,500 people. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement set up power sharing and helped end most violence. Yet disputes over identity and Northern Ireland's political future continue.

3. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s turned competing political plans into war. Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats had different national identities, often linked to Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic backgrounds. Leaders seeking territory used those differences to justify attacks on civilians. Serb forces expelled many Bosniaks and Croats from their homes in campaigns of ethnic cleansing. In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces murdered more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys at Srebrenica, an act recognized as genocide. A peace agreement ended the war in 1995, but displacement and a divided political system remained.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did political events before 1994 help set the stage for genocide in Rwanda?

2. In Northern Ireland, how were religious identities connected to political aims and unequal treatment?

3. How did a political goal contribute to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and what was one lasting effect?

4. Compare how two places responded to violence. What problem persisted in each place?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum exhibit label comparing two places in the passage. In 75 to 95 words, explain why identity alone does not account for the violence, name one political action and one lasting effect in each place, and end with a question for visitors to consider.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.7.7.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline political actions or policies that helped lead to violence, circle references to ethnic or religious identities, and put a star beside one lasting effect in each paragraph. Use your marks to distinguish identities from the decisions made about them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did political events before 1994 help set the stage for genocide in Rwanda?	**Colonial policies reinforced Hutu-Tutsi divisions. After independence, a shift in power drove many Tutsi into exile; an invasion by exiled Tutsi then began a civil war.**
2	In Northern Ireland, how were religious identities connected to political aims and unequal treatment?	**Many Protestants wanted to remain in the United Kingdom, while many Catholics favored a united Ireland. The groups also faced unequal access to housing, jobs, and political power.**
3	How did a political goal contribute to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and what was one lasting effect?	**Leaders seeking territory used national differences to justify attacks, and Serb forces expelled Bosniaks and Croats. Displacement or a divided political system remained.**
4	Compare how two places responded to violence. What problem persisted in each place?	**For example, Rwanda used community courts to try suspects, but survivors still faced trauma. Northern Ireland established power sharing, but disputes over identity and its political future continued.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Rwanda and Bosnia, group identities became targets, but identity alone did not make violence inevitable. In Rwanda, colonial officials strengthened divisions through identity cards, and later leaders organized genocide during a civil war. Survivors faced trauma. In Bosnia, leaders seeking territory used national differences to justify attacks and expulsions. Many people remained displaced after the war. These histories show how choices by people in power can turn divisions into atrocities, with effects that outlast the fighting. What responsibilities do leaders have when they speak about differences between groups?

Accept other passage-supported political actions, responses, and lasting effects. For the exhibit label, look for a comparison that distinguishes group identity from political choices and ends with an original question.