



Instructor's Manual Lesson 2

Genocide Through Colonialism

This instructor's manual has been made with the following in mind;

- **To provide the instructor with maximum flexibility to edit and adopt the material based on his/her classroom requirements and audience.**
- **The audience is between the ages of 14 -18.**
- **The lesson would be between 45 to 60 minutes long.**

Learning outcomes for this lesson:

- (i) Learning about historical acts of genocide in North America
- (ii) Learning about genocide as part of colonial processes
- (iii) Learning about historiography and looking for pluriversal (re)sources
- (iv) Thinking about different ways of describing events

Slide 2:

The instructor should provide students with 1-2 minutes to reflect on these questions. Their answers and their thoughts should simply be based on what "discovery" means broadly.

After allowing students 1-2 mins of contemplation the instructor should open the classroom for a 3-5-minute discussion about "discovery." **(See classroom discussion options at the end of this document).**

The instructor should introduce students to how the word "discovery" has distorted historical accounts of what actually took place in the colonization of the Americas.

It is here where there can be a discussion of how language can erase historical acts of violence (i.e. if the Americas were "discovered" by Europeans, **this means no one was there**).

Slide 3:

After there has been some discussion the instructor can ask students if they can think of any other words that function similarly to distort reality.

Allow students to provide other examples of how certain words or phrases can differ from how they operate in reality.

For example, Indigenous people often being referred to as “savages” vs. “settlers” (what does the word “savage” connote? What does the word “settler” connote?); contemporary

examples: “freedom fighters” vs. “terrorists” (whose violence is justifiable?); “progress” (whose definition of progress? Progressing toward what?); “rioting” (often used to describe peaceful protest).

This thought process should assist students in understanding how discourse works insidiously in contemporary and historical accounts of violence (Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest”).

For younger students this can introduce the idea of historiography acknowledged by both those involved in framing the dominant discourse (e.g. Churchill’s quote: *“History will say the Rt. Hon. Gentleman is wrong in this matter. I know it will, for I shall write that history.”*¹)

Slide 4:

Allow students 4-5 minutes to reflect on these questions. Students should write down their responses and think about what their formal education has taught them about the answers to these questions.

The instructor should avoid telling students in this moment about the history of genocide.

Slide 5:

The instructor should now introduce students to the devastation of Hispaniola after the point of contact between Christopher Columbus and the Taino people.

Instructor should inform students of Christopher Columbus’ journeys. Columbus arrived in 1492, and returned in 1493 to the Island he referred to as “Hispaniola” (present-day Dominican Republic and Haiti). He instituted slavery and began a process of extermination of the Taino people of the island. It is estimated that he reduced the population from as high as eight million to three million in four years. In 1500, it was estimated that there were only 100,000 Taino people left. His policies of enslavement and extermination remained in place even after he was no longer the governor and viceroy. By 1514 the Taino population was approximately 22,000, and by 1542, approximately two hundred (Churchill 86).

The Taino were worked to death, bled to death through mutilation, exposed to disease, starvation, and massacred (through various brutalities).

¹ **Leave the Past to History**, THE CHURCHILL PROJECT, October 19, 2016, <https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/leave-past-history/>

If the instructor wishes, a detailed account of this can be found in the work of Samuel de Las Casas. Such acts of violence were justified through the argument that Indigenous people “lacked souls” (Churchill 88) (see also [Grosfoguel, 2012 \(video\)](#)).

It is estimated that the whole Indigenous population of the Americas was over 100 million and had decreased by 90 percent within two centuries and continued to fall.

Slide 6:

Students can be introduced to how genocide continued for the purpose of making land available.

After students are given 2-3 minutes to reflect on the questions the instructor can introduce them to some of the reasons genocide was necessary for the creation of North American and many Caribbean states.

1. European colonialists wanted the **lands for resources**, settlements, territorial expansion and to **produce capital**.
2. Because settlers were not “from” the Americas, it was necessary to kill off the population, or at least devastate their numbers and sequester them, so that land **would be “available”** for the taking **without contestation**. Killing, removing, and assimilating the local population was necessary to Europeans who wanted to stake a claim to the land.

Slide 7:

Allow students to compare and contrast what they think some of the similarities and differences are between settler colonialism and other forms of colonialism.

Instructor should inform students about how settler-colonialism differs, and how genocide is often necessary to establish settler colonial states, particularly in the case of Canada, the United States, and Australia.

Different from other kinds of colonialism, settler colonialism requires a replacement of the Indigenous populations with a settler population which institutes its own cultural, social, religious, and linguistic identity.

In settler colonial states, it is not just government officials and military that come into Indigenous territories, colonizers come into Indigenous territories and stay there and populate.

Settler colonialism requires continuing acts of colonization such as maintaining a colonial state and asserting sovereignty over Indigenous lands. Settler colonialism relies on maintaining political and social structures that assert colonial power by eliminating

Indigenous peoples; settlers frame themselves as the natural owners of the land and resources.

Slide 8:

Allow students 1-2 minutes to provide feedback as to why they think Columbus Day remains a celebration.

Part of what makes settler colonialism so effective is its ability to maintain a narrative of history that overwrites acts of violence, including the genocide on which the settler colonial state is built. This often means celebrating those who committed acts of violence against Indigenous populations.

Introduce dissenting voices and materials around Columbus Day e.g.

VIDEO: 2 mins 49 secs. [Christopher Columbus | Native Americans | One Word | Cut](#)
(please note unedited expletives contained in this video)

Slide 9:

Students should take 1-2 minutes to discuss what they think the term “whitewashing” refers to.

Whitewashing history requires historical facts about people of colour to either be glossed over, omitted, or misrepresented in popular historical narratives. If we take this definition into consideration, we can see how acts of genocide committed by Europeans are often left out of broader historical accounts. The word “genocide” isn’t often used to describe the histories of Canada and the United States, for example.

Such understandings of “whitewashing” historical accounts will lead into the next lesson which focuses on genocide through the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Culminating Activity for Lesson 1.

The instructor may provide reading materials of the history of settler-colonial genocide in the Americas, Australia, or parts of Africa. The instructor should ask the students to formulate two 150 – 200 word responses to the questions below after completing their readings.

Case 1:

Students should look for one or two examples that overtly distort a history of genocide in the Americas (particularly settler colonial states such as Canada, the United States, or Australia).

Case 2:

Students should look for one or two examples of whitewashing a history of genocide in the Americas (particularly settler colonial states such as Canada, the United States, or Australia).

Discussion Activities Suggestions (Can be applied to any discussion questions in the lesson):

1. **Think-pair-share:** Students think about the question themselves and develop a response, they pair with a partner, and finally share their ideas with their partner.
2. **Small Groups:** Students get into groups of four and discuss the issue, the groups are then switched and two students from one group are moved to another group to discuss the new questions or expand on the previous questions.
3. ***Snowball:** Two students discuss the question and join with another two students to discuss their ideas in a group of four. Then the group of four joins another group of four to form a group of eight and this continues until a whole class discussion is formed.
4. **Teach-ok:** Students pair up and reteach main concepts to the class after the teacher has given a brief introduction to the topic.