

Reparations & Healing

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What role can governments play in helping their own and other nations' citizens heal after human rights violations?
- Are reparations an appropriate and sufficient way for nations to make amends?
- Is there a statute of limitations on making amends for human rights violations?

Overview

In this activity, students explore the concept of reparations and watch eyewitness testimonies to learn about different individuals' experiences with and attitudes toward reparations. They then design and complete inquiry projects to understand how reparations were used in the wake of four global conflicts. Students apply what they've learned to develop and deliver presentations of their research findings.

Target Audience

High School U.S. History, Civics, Ethics, English Language Arts

Activity Duration

Two 45–60 minute class periods

Enduring Understandings

- Individuals and governments use a variety of strategies to promote healing after large-scale conflicts involving human rights violations.
- Perpetrators often must take responsibility for their actions and offer reparations to help victims of human rights abuses heal.
- Some conflicts transcend generations and require a lot of time and effort for individuals and societies to recover.

Background Information/Links

Reparations is defined as the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged. It's a strategy that has been employed by many nations throughout history, with varying levels of success.

The United States

The United States is one of those nations. Under the Civil Liberties

Materials

- Computer with Internet connection and a projector
- Reparations resources:
 - [Reparations—War](#)
 - [Six times victims have received reparations—including four in the U.S.](#)
 - [Reparations - United States History](#)
 - [The Case for Reparations](#)
- If available, devices with Internet access, one per student or student pair
- Handouts, one copy per student
 - Reparations and Healing
- Ideally, the teacher will have placed the clips in a location accessible to students prior to the lesson.

Act of 1988, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, the U.S. government apologized for Japanese-American internment during World War II and provided reparations of \$20,000 to each survivor to compensate for loss of property and liberty during that period. Currently, the U.S. Congress is holding hearings about the possibility of paying reparations to descendants of slaves.

Germany

Within a few months of the end of World War II, the Jewish Agency, the largest Jewish non-profit in the world, made its first formal claim for reparations and property reimbursement to the four Allied powers that controlled Germany: The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Israeli authorities made a claim to the four occupying powers regarding compensation and reimbursement but stressed that the Germans could never make up for what they did with any type of material recompense.

In 1952, the Claims Conference and the West German federal government signed an agreement comprised of two protocols. Protocol No. 1 called for the enactment of laws to compensate victims directly for indemnification and restitution claims arising from Nazi persecution. Under Protocol No. 2, the West German government provided the Claims Conference with designated Deutsch Marks for the “relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, according to the urgency of their need as determined by the Conference.” Agreements were also signed with the State of Israel.

Since the 1950’s, the original Reparations Agreement has been greatly expanded. In the 1990s, individual companies including Deutsche Bank, Siemens, BMW, Volkswagen, Ford, and Opel were pressured by survivor groups to compensate former forced laborers. In response, early in 1999, the German government proclaimed the establishment of a fund with money from these companies to help needy Holocaust survivors. At the close of the 1990s, discussions were held regarding compensation by insurance companies that had insured Jews before the war who were later murdered by the Nazis. On behalf of United States citizens, the U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission reached agreements with the German government in 1998 and 1999 to compensate Holocaust victims who immigrated to the U.S. after the war.



Rwanda

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the government created the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation, in addition to special chambers to prosecute the most notorious war criminals. At the community level, traditional Gacaca courts were employed to provide reconciliation and justice with over 100,000 people indicted for crimes of genocide. Internationally, the United Nations established the International Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Though Rwanda and the international community have valiantly pursued justice, financial compensation for genocide survivors has still not materialized. Many Rwandans feel that reconciliation cannot be fully achieved without financial compensation.

Sources:

- <https://www.vox.com/2014/5/23/5741352/six-times-victims-have-received-reparations-including-four-in-the-us>
- <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/german-jews-during-the-holocaust>
- https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205817.pdf
- <http://www.claimscon.org/about/history/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/mar/04/rwanda-genocide-victims-compensation>

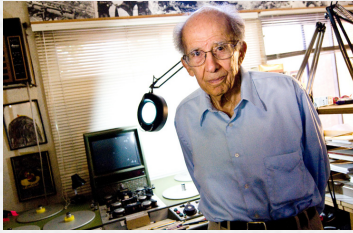
Procedure

Ask

- 1 The teacher will write the following question on the board and ask students to respond to it in writing: "Currently, the U.S. Congress is holding hearings about the possibility of paying reparations to descendants of slaves. Would providing monetary compensation to the descendants of former slaves make amends for their ancestors' experiences? Why or why not?"
- 2 After students have had a chance to consider and respond to the prompt, the teacher will solicit their ideas.
- 3 The teacher will explain that the question of how to help individuals and society heal after atrocities is a difficult one that has been answered in many different ways throughout history.

Teaching with Testimony

High School Activity | Reparations & Healing



Analyze

- 4 The teacher will introduce the term “reparations” and ask if students know what the term means. Working with students, s/he will write a class definition for the term.
- 5 The teacher will explain that throughout history, nations have paid reparations to their own citizens and to other countries in the wake of conflicts and human rights abuses.
- 6 Students will view clips of four testimonies focusing on healing from past abuses. Clips include survivors of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide.
- 7 Students will complete a graphic organizer that helps them understand the nature of each human rights abuse, what was done to make amends, and how those actions affected each individual’s ability to move forward.
- 8 The teacher will lead a class discussion to highlight the variety of ways that individuals have made or sought reparations and healed after conflicts.

Apply

- 9 The teacher will explain that human rights abuses impact both individuals and the society in which they live. S/he will introduce an inquiry project

that will enable students to learn about a variety of conflicts and how governments have used reparations to heal post-conflict.

- 10 Working in groups of four, students will research one of the following conflicts and how people and governments have attempted to make amends and facilitate healing:
 - South Africa after apartheid
 - Germany after the Holocaust
 - United States after Japanese internment during World War II
 - United States post-slavery
- 11 Prior to beginning their research, students will develop inquiry questions and hypotheses to guide their research process. Students’ research will cover: the nature of the conflict, how the conflict ended, and how governments used reparations to help victims heal.

Act

- 12 Student groups will develop and deliver presentations supported by visual aids (e.g., slides, posters) to share what they have learned with their peers.

Teaching with Testimony



- 13 After students have completed their presentations, the teacher will ask them all to do a quick write to summarize their key takeaways about reconciliation, reparations, and healing.

Connections

Connection to Student Lives	Connection to Contemporary Events	Connection to the Future
Students will explore their own attitudes toward the concept of reparations in the context of slavery in the U.S.	Students will connect the concept of reparations to four global conflicts.	Students will develop their own sense of how governments should respond to injustice, which will guide their future action.

Clips of Testimony

■ Meta Doran

Meta Doran speaks about her effort to receive reparations from the German government after the Holocaust.

■ Seymour Cywiak

Seymour Cywiak recalls efforts to get reparations from the Polish government for the value of the house his family left behind.

■ Gabriela Katz

Gabriela Katz explains that the Polish government was unable to pay reparations due to bankruptcy but that the German government has paid and continues to pay reparations in the form of a pension.

■ Emmanuel Muhinda

Emmanuel Muhinda explains why he doesn't believe reparations are an appropriate way to make amends for the human rights abuses that were committed during the Rwandan genocide.

Survivor and Witness Biographies



STUDENT HANDOUT

Meta Doran (née Kempinski), daughter of Chil and Paula, was born in Hamburg, Germany on February 1, 1926. Chil was born in Poland but moved to Germany after World War I, where he became a well-respected businessman. After the Nazis were elected into power, life for the Kempinski family became increasingly difficult. Anti-Jewish laws were passed, and antisemitism was rampant. Chil's business was confiscated in 1938, and six months later, the family was deported to the Pabianice ghetto in Poland. The family was later sent to the Lodz ghetto, where Chil died of starvation. From the Lodz ghetto, Meta was deported to Auschwitz, a concentration camp complex in Poland. Meta was later deported to Bergen-Belsen and Salzwedel, concentration camps in Germany. She was liberated by the American Army, and she spent time in a displaced persons' camp. In 1949, she immigrated to the United States. Meta never learned what happened to her mother. Meta married Gerald Doran; she has three children and three grandchildren. This interview was conducted on January 13, 1996, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Seymour Cywiak (né Simcha Cywiak), son of Alte and Sarah, was born in Wyszaków, Poland, on November 24, 1933. He had two brothers, one sister, and two half sisters. After the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Wyszaków was occupied, and the Cywiak family hid in the woods. The family went to Lomza, Poland, where they were picked up by Soviet troops and taken to Siberia with many other Jewish families. After the war, Seymour tried to immigrate to British Mandate Palestine, but the ship he was on was turned away. He immigrated to the United States, where he lived with a foster family and studied to become a pharmacist. He later went to medical school. Seymour and his wife Anita have three daughters. This interview was conducted August 25, 2015, in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Gabriela Katz (née Spinner), daughter of Nathan and Cecilia, was born on March 17, 1919, in Przemysl, Poland. Her brother, Marcel, was two years younger than she was. Gabriela grew up in an assimilated Jewish household. She was studying to become a doctor, but her schooling was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II (September 1, 1939). In 1940, she married Moses Katz. Gabriela was sent to the Przemysl ghetto and then to the Rezeszow ghetto. From there, she was deported to the Plaszow concentration camp in Krakow, Poland. Gabriela and Moses were on "Schindler's List," and this saved their lives. From Plaszow, Gabriela was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and she was later sent to the Schindler factory in Brunlitz, Czechoslovakia. She was liberated by the Soviet Army in May 1945. After the war, Moses and Gabriela went to Italy. They immigrated to the United States in 1950. The couple had two daughters and four grandchildren. This interview was conducted on May 10, 1996, in La Jolla, California.

Emmanuel Muhinda was born on February 5, 1985 in Kibungu, Rwanda to a large Tutsi family. His parents, Evariste Mushayija and Verediana Nyiratamba, were animal and agricultural farmers. He had five older siblings, all of whom were murdered during the genocide. Emmanuel remembers being discriminated against at school. During the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, survived the massacre at Ntarama church by falling to the ground during the attack. For the remainder of the genocide, he survived by hiding in swamps with extended family members. After the genocide, he lived in an orphanage, went back to primary school, and was supported through adolescence by distant relatives and kind strangers. At the time of his interview in 2011, he was in his third year of obtaining an undergraduate degree in Procurement from Uganda Christian University. This interview was conducted on September 8, 2011, in Kigali, Rwanda.

Reparations & Healing



Survivor	What conflict was the survivor a part of?	What reparations, if any, did the survivor receive?	What is the survivor's attitude toward reparations?
Meta Doran			
Seymour Cywiak			
Gabriela Katz			
Emmanuel Muhinda			

National Standards

College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

D2.Civ.7.9-12 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with other.

D2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interest and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D2.His.1.9-12 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems, instances of such problems in multiple contexts, and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

D4.7.9-12 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy, identification, and complex causal reasoning.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

R.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.