

Name: _____ Period: _____

Date: _____

WWI: Armenian Genocide- Guided Reading

Genocide as defined by the United Nations in 1948: *"any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."*

http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf

Who are the Armenians? Where did they live?	
When did the genocide take place?	
Detail how the Armenians were viewed by the Ottomans:	
How was the genocide conducted? Describe 3 details of human atrocities committed towards the Armenians.	
What is Turkey's official stance on the Armenian genocide today? What reasons do they give?	
Does word choice matter? Is it enough that the Turkish president offered his condolences to Armenians? Or, is it important to recognize the events of 1915 as a genocide, since that is what most historians agree they were?	

Armenian History

For centuries, Christian Armenians primarily inhabited the mountain plateaus of eastern Turkey and shared the land with Muslim Kurds. A series of Armenian dynasties ruled in antiquity and the Middle Ages. Then in the 15th and 16th centuries the region was secured by the Ottoman Turks and integrated into the Ottoman Empire.

By the 19th century Armenians struggled against the perception that they were a foreign element within the Ottoman Empire. Some thought the Armenians would eventually betray it to form their own independent state. Anti-Armenian feelings erupted into mass violence several times in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were about 2.5 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. A significant number also lived beyond the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire, in Russian territory. Armenians did not make up a majority in any of the regions in which they lived, although they often resided in their own villages and neighborhoods within towns and cities (like Chinatown/NYC).

The Young Turks and World War I

In 1908 a small group of Ottoman revolutionaries— called the “Young Turks”—came to power. The Young Turks became more militant, and less tolerant of non-Turks. They grew increasingly suspicious of their Armenian subjects, whom they imagined were collaborating with foreign powers. In 1913 the most militant members of the party came to power in a coup d’état (take over). By 1914 the Young Turks believed the Armenians were colluding with Europe to undermine the Ottoman Empire. As World War I began in the summer of 1914, the Young Turks joined the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary). Because Armenians lived along the Russian-Ottoman front, both the Russians and the Ottomans attempted to recruit them to help fight their enemies.

Genocide

In January 1915 the Ottomans attempted to push back the Russians at the battle of Sarıkamış, only to suffer the worst Ottoman defeat of the war. Although bad leadership and harsh conditions were the main reasons for the loss, the Young Turk government sought to shift the blame to Armenian treachery. Armenian soldiers and other non-Muslims in the army were demobilized and transferred into labour battalions. The disarmed Armenian soldiers were then systematically murdered by Ottoman troops, the first victims of thousands. About the same time, forces began to carry out mass killings in Armenian villages near the Russian border.

Soon after the defeat at Sarıkamış, the Ottoman government began to deport Armenians on the grounds that their presence posed a threat to national security. In May 1915 the Ottoman Parliament passed legislation formally authorizing the deportation. Throughout summer and autumn of 1915, Armenian civilians were removed from their homes and marched through valleys and mountains towards desert concentration camps. The deportation, which was overseen by civil and military officials, was

accompanied by a systematic campaign of mass murder. Survivors who reached the deserts of Syria languished in concentration camps. Many starved to death, and massacres continued into 1916. Estimates have calculated that somewhere between 600,000 and 1,000,000 Armenians were slaughtered or died on the marches alone.

Causes and consequences of the genocide

The Armenian Genocide had both short- and long-term causes. The expulsion and murder of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in 1915–1916 was an immediate response to the Ottoman perceptions of events in World War I. The deeper causes go back to resenting Armenians' as a people, a reversal of traditional Ottoman social hierarchies that had Muslims superior to non-Muslims. Also, the growing sense on the part of Young Turk leaders and ordinary Muslims that Armenians were a foreign and dangerous element within their society.

The Armenian Genocide helped create the more homogeneous nation that eventually became the Republic of Turkey. By the end of the war, more than 90 percent of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were gone, and many traces of their former presence had been erased. The deserted homes and property of the Armenians were given to Muslim refugees. Any surviving women and children were often forced to give up their Armenian identities and convert to Islam. Tens of thousands of orphans, however, found some refuge in the protection of foreign missionaries.

As of today,

Turkey has steadily refused to recognize that the events of 1915–1916 constitute a genocide. While the Turkish government and allied scholars have admitted that the deportations took place, they maintain that the Armenians were a rebellious element that had to be pacified during a national security crisis. They acknowledge that some killing took place, but they contend that it was not initiated or directed by the government. Major countries—including Israel and Great Britain—have also declined to call the events a genocide, in order to avoid harming their relations with Turkey. In 2015 government officials in Turkey offered condolences to the Armenian victims, but Armenians remained committed to having the killings during World War I recognized as a genocide.