

Cambodia Lesson Plan: The Khmer Rouge

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Grade Level(s): 9 -11

Subject: Honors World History; Regular US History

Topic: What are the social, economic and political effects of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia? What was the response of the world community to the entire situation?

Time (duration) based on 50-minute classes:

- Introduction to take one day
- 3 days to do research
- 1 to 1/2 class days to assemble project
- 3 more days outside class to complete finishing touches to project
- 1 day to present and view projects, debrief the activity
- Finish with showing "The Killing Fields" with parent permission

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Locate Cambodia on both a world outline map and an outline map of Southeast Asia
- Identify the predominant religion, and major temple, in Cambodia
- Describe the character of Pol Pot
- Summarize the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge
- Analyze the policies of the Khmer Rouge and their effects on the people of Cambodia
- Evaluate United States and United Nations policy regarding Cambodia during this time, as well as when the Khmer Rouge was toppled, in terms of both Cambodia and Vietnam

Illinois Learning Standards:

Any category 4 would relate to early high school (world history in our curriculum), and any category 5 would relate to late high school (US History according to our curriculum).

14.B.4 Compare the political systems of the United States to other nations.

14.B.5 Analyze similarities and differences among world political systems (e.g., democracy, socialism, communism).

14.D.4 Analyze roles and influences of individuals, groups and media in shaping current debates on state and national policies.

14.D.5 Interpret a variety of public policies and issues from the perspectives of different individuals and groups.

14.E.4 Analyze historical trends of United States foreign policy (e.g., emergence as a world leader - military, industrial, financial).

14.E.5 Analyze relationships and tensions among members of the international community.

16.A.4a Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.

- 16.A.4b** Compare competing historical interpretations of an event.
- 16.A.5a** Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).
- 16.A.5b** Explain the tentative nature of historical interpretations.
- 16.B.5a** (US) Describe how modern political positions are affected by differences in ideologies and viewpoints that have developed over time (e.g., political parties' positions on government intervention in the economy).
- 16.B.4b** (W) Identify political ideas from the early modern historical era to the present which have had worldwide impact (e.g., nationalism/Sun Yat-Sen, non-violence/Ghandi, independence/Kenyatta).
- 16.B.5a** (W) Analyze worldwide consequences of isolated political events, including the events triggering the Napoleonic Wars and World Wars I and II.
- 16.B.5b** (W) Describe how tensions in the modern world are affected by different political ideologies including democracy and totalitarianism.
- 16.B.5C** (W) Analyze the relationship of an issue in world political history to the related aspects of world economic, social and environmental history.
- 16.D.4b** (US) Describe unintended social consequences of political events in United States history (e.g., Civil War/emancipation, National Defense Highway Act/decline of inner cities, Vietnam War/anti-government activity).
- 16.D.5** (US) Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.
- 16.D.5** (W) Analyze the relationship between an issue in world social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.
- 17.A.4a** Use mental maps of physical features to answer complex geographic questions (e.g., how physical features have deterred or enabled migration).
- 17.A.5** Demonstrate how maps, other geographic instruments and technologies are used to solve spatial problems (e.g., land use, ecological concerns).
- 18.A.4** Analyze the influence of cultural factors including customs, traditions, language, media, art and architecture in developing pluralistic societies.
- 18.A.5** Compare ways in which social systems are affected by political, environmental, economic and technological changes.
- 18.B.4** Analyze various forms of institutions (e.g., educational, military, charitable, governmental)
- 18.B.5** Use methods of social science inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support conclusions with evidence, report findings) to study the development and functions of social systems and report conclusions to a larger audience

Materials:

- Butcher block paper
- Computer with internet access
- Library
- Markers / Colored pencils
- Poster board
- Scissors
- Glue sticks/ glue
- Maps of world and Southeast Asia
- Television
- VCR/DVD
- Copy of the movie, *The Killing Fields*

Procedures:

I. Introduction:

- a. Because of its common border with Vietnam, as well as American movement into the country, this topic would be discussed as the class finishes covering the Vietnam War.
- b. The class would have to re-examine the anti-imperialism that was sweeping the region as the French "lost" Indochina, and the possible reactions that the class would have to being colonized.
- c. The teacher would have to remind, or introduce, the students to Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. The teacher would also only want to hint at the atrocities the Khmer Rouge, under Pol Pot's tutelage, committed.
- d. Prepare students that the research and projects they compile could create a difficult situation in regards to the human psyche. The class will conduct a compulsory "debriefing" activity when the projects are completed.

II. Strategies

- a. Teacher's responsibilities
 - i. Lead KWL and brainstorming activities before research
 - ii. Compile list of sources, books, internet web-sites for class research
 - iii. If possible, consult with librarian about bringing in extra resources for use during research
 - iv. Incorporate student-discovered research, maps, web-sites, etc. into an expanding resource list
 - v. If possible, arrange a classroom visit from someone who either survived the Khmer Rouge, or someone whose family member(s) survived
 - vi. Guide students to the best format to create their presentation both during the research period and as students are creating their projects
 - vii. Pose multi-faceted questions as students are working to keep students more focused on the *why* of their project
- b. Students' responsibilities
 - i. Participate fully in both the KWL exercise and the brainstorming activity to help prepare for the activity.
 - ii. Actively participate in the research process; i.e., do web searches, look in encyclopedias, check government information, search records for diaries or diary entries, etc.
 - iii. Ask questions of the teacher and/or librarian to narrow the research focus.
 - iv. Complete a bibliography and/or works cited for future class research opportunities
 - v. STUDENTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE EFFECTS OF THE EVENTS THAT TRANSPIRED FROM 1975-1979 AND NOT LOOK ON THE PROJECT AS JUST ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT.

III. Practice

- a. Teacher has 4 large sheets of butcher-block paper on the wall. Two sheets are labeled knowledge, and two are labeled "What I want to know."
- b. Teacher mentions Cambodia, and its place in terms of the United States in the Vietnam War. Review key facts with students. Teacher will also mention Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, without getting into any detail.
- c. Teacher then has students go to charts labeled knowledge and has students write what they either know, or think they know, about both Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge. Class also

- completes sheets saying what they would like to know about the Khmer Rouge and Cambodia.
- d. Teacher then reads every notation on the sheets of paper to the class. From this point, the teacher can lead a brainstorming session about aspects of the Khmer Rouge that would be good for student research. The teacher and the class should be able to compile a list of up to six different topics of research. (I think any more than that could be highly redundant).
 - e. Teacher should then make a sheet of butcher block paper with those six topics, and students should sign up for a topic, with the distribution varied in the class. The topics may also vary slightly from class to class if more than one class is doing the project.
 - f. Class should then spend approximately 3 days doing research in the library. Students should have at least references from various books or periodicals about their chosen topic. They can use as many web sites as they need (because of the nature of the project, there may be a limited amount of information in the library). Web sites must be reputable. Teacher and librarian can help students determine which are reputable. Research should cover the topic they have selected, with teacher approval, and should mention key points from Cambodian independence in 1954, Prince Sihanouk, General Lon Nol, the US bombing of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge's rise to power, the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese invasion and overthrow of the Khmer Rouge, and US and UN reaction to the Vietnamese invasion.
 - g. Students will be given two class days to assemble their project. All students should write a brief, 2-3 page paper about what they learned during this project. A little injection of personal opinion in this is acceptable.
 - h. Students must choose a format for their project.
 - i. Write a long paper (8-10 pages) instead of the short paper and project. Otherwise students may complete the following types of projects
 - ii. "Newspaper" about what they learned with articles, pictures, editorials, etc.
 - iii. Power-point presentations with statistics, photographs, or other information
 - iv. Comic book of what they learned
 - v. Write and perform a play (must be recorded on video)
 - vi. Complete a diary of events that transpired from 1954-1980
 - i. All projects should keep information from 1954-1975 before the Khmer Rouge's rise to power brief. This should in no way compose the majority of the project. The same should also apply to what happens after Vietnam invades, although they can allow a little more room than pre-Khmer Rouge events.
 - j. Students will be given an additional 3 days to complete any necessary revisions to their project outside of class.
 - k. Students will present these to the class.

IV. Closure

The class will share their information. This will be followed by a discussion. The class will be free to argue about American intervention, or lack thereof, in this situation. The class will also be free to discuss how a society so deeply Buddhist could allow this to happen. I think the class will be left with a general sense of unease, which is not all together bad for a situation like this.

The teacher can then reaffirm for the students how this is no longer the case today. Yes, Cambodia does have its problems, but they do not compare to those problems of 1975-1979.

The class will then finish the unit by watching the movie, *The Killing Fields*, with the appropriate parental signatures.

V. Evaluation

The evaluation will be done based on the students work while using a standard rubric for other projects. Questions will focus on accuracy of the work, neatness, variety of sources, grammar, and oral presentation. An informal evaluation will take place as a class discussion:

“What did you learn?”

“How do you think this could happen?”

“Why didn't anyone outside of Cambodia do anything about this?”

“Is it possible for this to happen anywhere else in the world?”

Bibliography

While some of these sources (books) I am absolutely certain contain the necessary information, others (periodicals) are educated guesses which I would direct students to peruse for articles.

Books

Anderson, Benedict, 1986, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Chandler, David P, 1992, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Ebihara, May, Carol Mortland, and Judy Ledgerwood, 1994, *Cambodian Culture Since 1975*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Marlay, Ross and Clark Neher, 1999, *Patriots and Tyrants: Ten Asian Leaders*. Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Neher, Clark D., 2000, *Southeast Asia: Crossroads of the World*. De Kalb, IL: Southeast Asia Publications.

Pye, Lucian W, 1985, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Smith-Hefher, 1999, *Khmer American*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Steinberg, David J, ed, 1987, *In Search of Southeast Asia*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Periodicals

(Again, I would use these titles as a starting point, and have students search for titles, with the help of the teacher and/or librarian)

The Economist

Life

The Los Angeles Times

The Nation

National Geographic
The New York Times
Newsweek
Time
The Weekly Standard

Web sites

(These are main starting-point web sites that I would use. Students may take links from them, if needed).

academicinfo.net/index.html (*Academic Info: Educational Subject Directory*)

www.ala.org (*American Library Association*)

www.askasia.org (*Ask Asia: a K-12 Resource of the Asia Society*)

asnic.utexas.edu/index.html (*University of Texas at Austin*)

www.rps205.com (*Rockford Public Schools District #205: Through the school's website, students may get to Eric documents*)

www.seasite.niu.edu (*Northern Illinois University: Southeast Asia Languages and Cultures website*)

www.seasite.niu.edu/khmer/Ledgerwood/Contents.htm (*Northern Illinois University: Cambodian Recent History and Contemporary Society: An Introductory Course*)