

Lesson 1: 1984 Introduction

Watch the video "[1984 Sikh Holocaust and Genocide in Amritsar](#)"

What shocked you about this clip?

What are the causes/consequences of such violence?

Write down any other thoughts you may have after watching this video

Article: "[Punjab Solution now seen as far off](#)"

Know	Wonder	Learn



Lesson 2: Exit Slip

When describing the events of June 1984, in your opinion which term would be the most accurate? Operation Blue, Battle of Amritsar or Ghalughara. Give reasons for your choice.



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Lesson 3: November 1984

Read through the source that you received and complete the following graphic organizer.

	Notes
Who	
What	
Where	
When	
Why	
How	
Additional comments	

In 1-2 sentences, summarize what happened during November 1984. Be sure to identify who was responsible and why it happened.



Do the other people in your group have the same understanding of the events as you? What sorts of sources did they receive?

Can the events of 1984 be considered a genocide according to the UN definition of Genocide?

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
 - o Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
 - o 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; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group



Lesson 4: Diaspora and Youth Activism

Do Now

Why do people immigrate?

If you were to move to a new country, what would you be looking for?

Knowing what you know of the events leading up to and including 1984, why might Sikhs feel unsafe in India?

Impact of the Events – [1984 – Why Should I Care?](#)

1. What was the elderly man's response when asked about photographing 1984? How did the author feel after hearing the elderly man's response?

2. Why did the author question why they should care about the violence of 1984?

3. According to the author, why did local Sikhs in Vancouver march in 1984?

4. What does the author suggest was the significance of the violence in Punjab in 1984 for Sikhs?



5. What does the author believe is the challenge for Sikhs in the diaspora in connecting with their history?

6. How does the author suggest Sikh youth can maintain their identity and connection to their heritage?

7. How does the author use Michel Foucault's ideas to explain the challenges faced by Sikh youth?

8. Why does the author believe it is important to create spaces for Sikh youth to express their ideas?

9. How does the author connect the experiences of Sikhs in 1984 to other instances of violence and oppression?

Exit Slip: What are 3-5 reasons why Sikhs move away from their homeland?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Youth Advocacy

1. What is youth advocacy?

2. Why is youth advocacy important in addressing social issues?

3. What are platforms that you can use to participate in advocacy? How affective are they?

Case Study:

Choose an advocate (Rupi Kaur, Harman Kaur or Sidhu Moosewala) and explore articles, videos or social media posts that relate to their advocacy around 1984 and the rights of Sikhs and Punjabis. Use the space below to make notes of what you find.

- a. What are the key messages and themes in the advocate's work?
- b. How does the advocate use their platform to raise awareness and advocate for change?
- c. What strategies and approaches does the advocate use to engage with their audience and effect change?

Exit slip: how can you as high school students participate in activism and advocate for social justice issues that are important to you?



Lesson 5: Activism

Jaswant Singh Khalra's Last Speech at Dixie Road Gurdwara in Ontario, Canada

Translation adapted from [25th anniversary of the disappearance of Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Human Rights Activist #IfWeDoNotRise - Kractivism \(kractivist.org\)](#)

As you read or listen to the speech, highlight or underline any parts that stand out to you.

“Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh¹

There is a fable that when the sun was setting for the first time, as it was completing its journey, the light was decreasing. The light was decreasing and the signs of darkness were appearing. It was said, lamentation ²was rife amongst the people that sun will set darkness will spread. No one will be able to see anything. And what will happen to us? Everybody was worried. But the sun settled. To show its strength Darkness set its foot on the earth. But it is said- far away, in some hut, one little lamp lifted his head. It proclaimed “I challenged the darkness. if nothing else, then at least around myself I will not let it settle. Around myself, I will establish light.” And it is said, watching that one lamp, in other huts, other lamps arose. And the world was amazed that these lamps stopped darkness from expanding so that people could see.” I believe, today, when darkness is trying to overwhelm truth with full strength, then if nothing else, self-respecting Punjab, like a lamp, is challenging the darkness. And I pray to the Guru³, who identifies with truth, to keep this light lit.

I have come to this country (Canada) on a specific mission – it is a very small mission. You have chosen a large mission as today's agenda (Sikh sovereignty), and mine is a very small part of it. Give me a small part of human rights. I have come to Canada to talk about a report. That report describes the story of the oppression of the past ten years. And when we started that report, we had before us a hundred reports, but there was one question to which none of those reports provided the answer. The question was: thousands of mothers await their sons even though some may know the oppressor has not spared their sons' lives on this earth. But mother's heart is such that even if sees her son's dead body, she doesn't accept that her son has left her. And those mothers who have not even seen their children's dead bodies, they were asking us- at least find out, is our son alive or not? Those sisters' brothers!! Those sisters were awaiting their brothers with rakhis⁴ in their hands. We stopped some of our sisters from leaving their homes (for marriage) because the boys to whom they were engaged the police picked them up and we don't know what happened to them. It is our tradition that our daughter belongs to him but we don't know if he will come or not.

When we started this story, we first collected statistics on how many sons, how many brothers, how many husbands and how many children disappeared. But when we started talking about this issue then countless mothers and countless sisters weren't ready to say that their beloved ones were disappeared. They said “Son if you talk this issue further, and our son is still alive, they will kill them, don't talk about this. We are not going to tell you. So, we produced a rough estimate for the public that in Amritsar district alone, 2000 children disappeared and govt must tell us where they are. The govt was quiet. Then, we filed petitions before the High Court on behalf of some families, asking the court to tell us where the children are. The govt gave an affidavit denying any knowledge about these children.

When the issue progressed, the person in charge of the oppression, KPS Gill said in a press conference in Amritsar, “the human rights wing folks are doing nothing on human rights. They have one motive to prop up their agenda, so there is no peace in

¹ Sikh greeting. The Khalsa belongs to Waheguru and so too the victory

² The passionate expression of grief or sorrow; weeping

³ Spiritual leader; mentor. There are 11 Gurus in the Sikh faith

⁴ Rakhi is a string or ribbon that sisters tie on their brothers' arms and in return, brothers pledge to protect them.



Punjab. They are ISI agents. They are hatching a conspiracy to discourage police machinery to revive militancy.” KPS Gill went to the extent of saying “I’ll tell you where those kids are”. He said “these kids are in Europe, in Canada and in America where they are earning their daily wages. And these human rights groups are saying that thousands of kids have disappeared.” This was a challenge to us; this was a challenge to the truth which we sought to bring forward.

Then, brothers, to bring this truth to the public accompanied by evidence, we put ourselves on arduous⁵ risk where we had to confront certain dangers, but we went where our brothers had gone. We went to the cremation grounds. We went and asked the employees just tell us this much that during this time, how many dead bodies did police give you? Some said we burnt 8-10 every day, some said there was no way to keep an account; sometimes a truck full of bodies came and sometimes 2-4 dead bodies. When we said we need an account, they told us we could get the account from one place. The police gave us the dead bodies, and the municipal corporation gave us the firewood.”

Because the municipal corporation’s policy if they receive an unclaimed body in the city, then the city’s municipality will cremate it on its own expense. So then, Guru’s beloved ones, through divine’s grace we found the way. We went there and saw the full account of our disappeared brothers written.

What we saw when we reached there were records of how much firewood was issued daily. It was written how many dead bodies were left by which police officers. And when we went beyond that, it was also recorded which head officer brought how many dead bodies there. And beyond even that, when one gets too arrogant, we say he has forgotten almighty, and he takes such actions that he does not even know these actions will expose the truth about him. Or how we say colloquially the robber leaves his marks. And these robbers left so many marks that we were amazed that just in Amritsar district’s three municipal cremation grounds 6017 dead bodies were clearly recorded as the dead bodies of Sikh youth between the ages of 15 and 35. And our brothers were not only recorded in the list, but women’s dead bodies were also recorded. And we were amazed that the records included the dead bodies of the elderly, even if it was only a small percentage. And there, the dead bodies of our mothers were also recorded.

There we found the dead body of Mata Gurmej Kaur, the mother of Baba Manochahal. There, we found the dead body of Bibi Mohinder Kaur who gave birth to Paramjit Singh Panjwar. And there we found the body of Harminder Singh Sultanwind’s uncle, Baba Piara Singh.

So, brothers, when we received this truth, we went to that country’s (India) High Court. We knocked on the door of Punjab and Haryana High Court, and asked, “Oppressors, at minimum, give us the detail of which dead body belongs to whom. So, we can tell each mother and sister, so we can tell each father, so they can say their prayers to Almighty which they have been keeping in their hearts, “Almighty, please let my son rest at your feet.” This is our tradition, we ask for a child by praying to Almighty, we say farewell to our family members while praying to Almighty to give them refuge. When we made this request to the High Court that we don’t want anything, but just tell us which home’s diamond you burned in which cremation ground and when. Because the law says that the photos of an unclaimed dead body must be kept. The law says that the clothes of an unclaimed dead body are preserved until the survivors claim them. But the country, that calls itself the largest democracy and lover of justice, its Hight Court told us, “This is not a Public Interest Litigation. This creates a huge issue. Instead, do this, send each family to whom the dead bodies belong. We will give them the information.”

A mockery has been made of the law. Mockery has been made with the Sikh community. And a mockery has been made of those people, who are not asking for anything other than a death certificate. Because we asked the High Court for information on the identity of dead bodies of our brothers., they (the judges) are telling us to only approach the court about those people for whom we already have information. This is the answer the Punjab and Haryana High Court gave us. If desired, we will go to the Supreme

⁵ Involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult and tiring

Court now. If desired, we will try another legal action. But the biggest court of all is the people's court. And we want to go to the people's court on a worldwide level and say to the world, "You have called us terrorists. You have called us communalists. But those whom you regarded as the redeemers of peace, those whom you called the prophets of democracy, recognize their reality, and then tell us who is ultimately the terrorist and who is righteous?"

We can say often that we have suffered much oppression. But we have not had the practice or training of keeping a complete record of that oppression. About 50 thousand, about one million, we say all of that. The educated people of the world do not trust that. They want exact figures. And for that, I also say, that you all should unite on this issue. This issue is not just the families' issue. This is the Sikh nation's issue, humanity's issue. You should present this issue, in whatever way you can. Condemn that govt, that machinery, that justice system, and tell the truth to people. Please, brothers, help us in this work.

So, my brothers, pray to the Guru that we maintain our self-respect. We must safeguard the work for which we were created. And earn the pleasure of the Guru. We ask the Guru for everything. But afraid, we don't ask the Guru for that one gift. The Guru has many gifts, but what is the greatest gift the Guru has? The greatest gift is not milk, it is not a son. And now the Guru does not even pass on the Guruship to anyone. The Guru cannot make any saint a Guru now. When the Guru gave the Guruship to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Guru kept one special gift which any Sikh could invite. And after the time of the ten Gurus, Sikhs paid so much respect to that special gift. And that special gift, which the Guru possesses, is the gift of martyrdom. Those who receive this gift, they don't get to be Guru but after the Guru, they are the most respected people of our (Sikh) nation.

I am not a political leader, who could give you some political line or pull a political antic- from a forum of human rights platform, I will definitely say this to you that the Khalsa was inaugurated to protect the human rights, the human rights of the world. And if you cannot protect your own human rights, you will not be able to give any definition of the Khalsa in the world. I request you- please don't just learn how to take from the Guru. Learn how to fulfil the instructions given to you by the Guru also. That will encompass everything. You will obtain all joys. With these remarks, join me in the victorious greetings

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh"

What do you think Khalra's mission was?



Reflection Activity

Think about the fable Jaswant Singh Khalra mentions in the beginning of his speech about light and darkness. Now, write down what this drawing brings up for you. "What was the first thing that you had thought of when you observed it, in connection to the speech? Does the drawing have a story? What is it trying to communicate?" (*Healing Through Words*, Rupi Kaur, pg. 17)"



Jaswant Singh Khalra

What were some of the specific risks or challenges that Jaswant Singh Khalra encountered as an activist?

How did Khalra's advocacy work threaten those in power?

What lessons can we learn from Khalra's story about the dangers that activists face in advocating for social justice?

Despite knowing the dangers of activism, why do you think some activists continue their advocacy work?



Lesson 6: The Present Day

Visit each station and answer the question: In what ways is the 1984 Sikh genocide a current and ongoing issue?

Station Title: [Library removes Sikh memorial after criticism from India | The Seattle Times](#)

Station Title: [Rajnath Called 1984 Killings 'Genocide', Now MEA Objects When Canada Does the Same \(thewire.in\)](#)

Station Title: [U.S. indictment alleges multiple Indian assassination plots across North America | CBC News](#)

Station Title: United Nations https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4008951/files/A_HRC_52_NGO_187-EN.pdf



Station Title: [Sikh written testimony.pdf \(uscirf.gov\)](#)

Station Title: ['Punjab '95' Based on Indian Activist Removed From Toronto Lineup \(variety.com\)](#)



Lesson 6: 10 Stages of Genocide

Adapted from Gregory H. Stanton's definition for Genocide Watch

Go through your notes and review all the resources that we have looked at thus far and fill in the following organizer for the events leading up to, including and post 1984.

Remember that these stages are not linear and can occur simultaneously or overlap. They serve as a framework for understanding the process of genocide and the warning signs that can help identify and prevent genocide from occurring.

Classification: People are divided into "us and them" based on ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality.
Symbolization: Names or symbols are given to the classifications to differentiate them.
Discrimination: The dominant group denies civil rights or even citizenship to the identified group.
Dehumanization: The targeted group is equated with animals, vermin, insects, or diseases.
Organization: Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, often using militias to provide deniability.
Polarization: Extremists drive the groups apart, creating the "us versus them" mentality.



Preparation: Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity.
Persecution: Victims are intentionally harmed, often in a legal or systematic way.
Extermination: The genocidal process is carried out, and the mass killing is the end result.
Denial: The perpetrators deny they committed any crimes or seek to justify their actions.

Can the events of 1984 and the subsequent years be considered a genocide? Explain.

Argumentative Writing Organizer

Can the events of 1984 and the subsequent years be considered a genocide? Explain.

Introduce Topic:

State argument:

Reason #1	Reason #2	Reason #3

Address opposition:

Conclusion:



Lesson 8: Commemoration


Do Now: How should events as tragic as 1984 be commemorated?

Parliament	Candlelight Vigils	
	How are the events of 1984 being commemorated?	
Lessons in Solidarity	Lapata Exhibition	



CBC Fifth Estate: Inside an alleged plot by the Indian government to kill Sikh activists in Canada

As you watch the CBC Fifth Estate episode, fill in the chart below.

Summary	
3 key takeaways	2 questions
1. 2. 3.	1. 2.
Draw an image inspired by the episode	I would rate this  because
Did CBC do a good job in explaining the assassination and the concerns that the Sikh community has around Indian interference? Why or why not?	



This episode referred to numerous events and people that are relevant in the to understanding the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Choose one of these and research it further. Use the chart below to organize your research.

Topic: _____

Who/ What	
Where	
When	
Why	
How is it important?	
Other information	



Three things I learnt...

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



Three things I learnt...

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



Three things I learnt...

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



Three things I learnt...

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

