



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Assignment Description (For Teachers)

Title: Armenians in a Time of Change: Survival in the Wake of an Earthquake, War, Political Upheaval, and Economic Collapse (a high school lesson)

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Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum: The purpose of this lesson is to help students examine the development of a small country in a time of transition, in this case the breakup of the Soviet Union, which coincided with a national disaster and a war.

Overview of the Lesson: This is a cooperative learning activity in which students work in pairs. Using photographs, maps, and historical information, students write diary accounts of a teenager's life in Armenia.

Materials needed: access to a computer for the PowerPoint slides. This may be done as an entire class, or students may access the slides individually by using the CMES website from a home or school computer. (To access the lesson online, go to: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessonplans.php> and click on the middle school/high school lesson entitled "Armenians in a Time of Change.")

Time Needed: 1-3 class periods (depending on how much is assigned as homework)

Arizona Social Studies standards:

World History – Concept 9 (Contemporary World): PO1 – the impact of the fall of the Soviet Union.

Geography – Concept 2 (Places and Regions); **Concept 3** (Physical Systems): PO 3 – the impact of the earth's internal changes (eg. earthquake) on the character of places;

Concept 4 (Human Systems) – PO 2 & 3 – migration and its effect, PO 4 – globalization.

Arizona English standards:

Most writing standards, particularly **Writing, Strand 3 – Concept 1** (Expressive Writing – Personal Narrative).

Suggested Procedures:

Students, working either individually or in pairs, write 3 “diary” entries: one in early 1988 (describing life in Soviet Armenia), one in late 1989 (describing the outbreak of war with Azerbaijan, the earthquake, collapse of the Soviet Union), and one describing a 15-year-old son/ daughter’s life in the present time (more than 2 decades later). For each assigned writing, there is series of pictures and a fact sheet. (You may look at the pictures and review the fact sheets together in class and/or have the students access them individually at: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessonplans.php>.) The writing guide, which will help students to write each entry, may also be photocopied or accessed online at the above website.

Evaluation:

Students should be evaluated on:

- historical accuracy.
- the inclusion of specific facts/events.
- an analysis of the impact of events on individuals.
- creativity and clarity of writing.

Follow-Up Discussion: Many of the questions are interpretive – there is no ‘right’ answer.

- How has Armenia changed in the past few decades?
- Do you think the quality of life has improved or declined?
- Many Armenians consider themselves “European,” but geographically, they are living in Western Asia and are part of the Middle East. In what ways are Armenians European, and in what ways are they Middle Eastern?
- What do you think will happen to Armenia in the future?