

Darfur: Violence and the Media

Objectives:

Students will: Explore the situation in Sudan using multiple sources.

Develop media literacy skills and evaluate the effectiveness of different online resources.

Assess the argument over whether Darfur is a conflict or a genocide.

Consider the international response to events in Sudan and assess possible consequences.

Required Reading:

Students should have read “Violence in Darfur, Sudan.”

Handouts:

“Online Resources”

“Evaluating Internet Sources”

Note:

This lesson relies on using the internet to conduct research. The work can be done either in class or as homework. Teachers may want to review with students their guidelines for internet usage ahead of time.

In the Classroom:

1. Introduction—Have students consider the previous night’s reading. You may wish to show students the video clip “South Sudan Referendum” from In Focus. Ask students to consider the challenges in Darfur today. Why is the tension between northern and southern Sudan important? Why is there a conflict in Darfur? What factors are at the root of this conflict? What kind of violence is being perpetrated? By whom? What is the role of the international community in the conflict?

2. Evaluating Online Resources—Distribute the “Online Resources” and “Evaluating Internet Sources” handouts. Divide the class into seven groups and assign each group the task of exploring one of the websites. Have

one member of each group record their group’s responses to the questions.

3. Sharing Conclusions—After the groups have completed the worksheet, invite groups to share their conclusions. Were some websites more effective than others? Why? What types of sources were the most effective? Which websites had the most variety in their sources? Which had the least? Why might this be the case? Why might some organizations use certain types of sources? Do the websites have a particular point of view? Do the sources presented on the websites change the way students feel about Darfur? Why or why not?

4. Assessing the Situation in Darfur—Have students consider what they know about Darfur. To help students understand the concept of genocide and the challenges of interpreting the Genocide Convention, there are a number of free videos available from Choices at <http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtn_darfur2010.php>, including:

“When do human rights abuses become genocide?” “What is ethnic cleansing?” and “What is the difference between ethnic cleansing and genocide?” answered by Susan Allee, senior political affairs officer, United Nations,

“What are the challenges of interpreting the Genocide Convention?” answered by David Kennedy, vice president for international affairs, Brown University.

Do students think the conflict in Darfur is genocide? What might be the motivations for calling the conflict a genocide or not calling the conflict a genocide? How should the United States and the international community respond? By declaring the conflict a genocide, what is the United States obligated to do according to the Genocide Convention? Has it fulfilled that obligation?

What would be the consequences of different types of U.S. involvement? For people in the United States? For people in Darfur? For the international community? For the principles of the Genocide Convention?