

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 Postcard Project

Primary lesson plan - Sokphal Din



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

This lesson plan is aimed at primary school students aged seven and over. The lesson plan works alongside a PowerPoint presentation. It allows students to practice reading, writing and comprehension. Students will be introduced to Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in an age-appropriate way and will have the chance to take part in a national postcard writing project.

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 is **Torn from home**. Students will read the life story of a Cambodian boy who was forced to leave his home behind during the Genocide in Cambodia. Students will have the opportunity to write to him and get a reply back.

On HMD 2019 we mark the 40th anniversary of the end of the Genocide in Cambodia. You could add to the project by learning more about Cambodia with your students.

This one of two lessons for the Postcard Project. You can do them in either order, or just choose one. The other lesson follows a similar structure with a different story, helping students to learn about the Holocaust.



Learning objectives:

- All students will be able to give examples of what happens when people are forced to leave their homes and analyse the story using written materials
- Most students will discuss the story and draw conclusions about what we can learn from it
- Some students will consider the question of what we can do to welcome people arriving in the UK as refugees today

Notes for teachers:

Please be aware that this lesson plan asks students to consider traumatic events and 'what makes a home'. Some students may find the subject matter difficult, especially if they themselves have experienced trauma or have a challenging home environment.

You will need:

- Postcards – one per person. You can download postcards to print yourself or order printed copies for free (subject to availability) at hmd.org.uk/postcards
- Sokphal Din easy to read life story (one per pupil or small group)
- Sokphal Din life story questions worksheet (see differentiation notes - one per pupil or small group)
- The form for returning your postcards to HMDT

Background knowledge:

This activity would work well for a Key Stage 2 (or equivalent) primary school group. No background knowledge is required, although this lesson would be effective alongside our primary school assembly which introduces students to Holocaust Memorial Day.

You can download this, and other resources at hmd.org.uk/education

Slide 1 - Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day is on **27 January** every year.

It is the day when we learn about events in the past when people were treated badly, and sometimes killed, because of who they are. For example, because of their religion or the colour of their skin.

This is called a **genocide**.

The **Holocaust** was a genocide during World War Two when six million Jewish people were murdered because of their religion. Genocides have happened around the world since then, including in Cambodia, a country in Asia.

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 is **Torn from home**.

Slide 2 - Starter activity:

Discussion: Why might someone leave their home?

Answers might include:

- They are moving house
- They want to live somewhere else
- They have to go and live in a new country
- Someone in the family gets a new job
- They are in danger
- Someone steals their house
- They need to hide

Some of these reasons are because the people have made a choice to move to a new home. Sometimes people don't have a choice. When people are forced to leave their homes because they are in danger, they don't always have a safe new home to go to.

Slide 3 - Introduce Sokphal Din (pronounced sock-pal):

- Today we are going to learn the story of a boy called Sokphal, who was forced to leave his home in Cambodia when he was 17 years old.
- What is unusual about this photograph? (The wind chime is moving)
- Sokphal was born in Cambodia in 1957. **Question: Do you know where Cambodia is?**
- He lived with his mother, father, and three younger siblings.

Slide 4 - Talk through the facts about Cambodia

Slide 5 - Watch the Cambodian dance video together.

It is performed by a woman called Chanrithy Him who survived the genocide. She made it to show you some Cambodian culture.

- What do you think of the dancing? Do you like it?
- Do you think you could do these moves?
- What do you think of the music?
- What kind of clothes is she wearing?
- What kind of building do you think she is dancing in front of?

Slide 6 - Talk through the text on the slide about the Genocide in Cambodia.

Discussion: What is discrimination?

Answer:

When you treat a group of people badly and say mean and unfair things about them because of their race, religion or part of their identity, this is called discrimination.

Slide 7 - Life story and questions worksheets:

1. Show the picture of Sokphal Din and hand out the easy to read life story. As a class, read and discuss his story.
2. Hand out the *Life story questions* worksheet.

Differentiation:

This activity requires reading skills. Students are encouraged to read the life story to find the answers.

Lower ability: For lower ability students you could do this all together as a group or focus on fewer questions.

Medium ability: Put students into small groups to answer the questions together.

Higher ability: Students can answer the questions individually and can expand on their answers with their own research.

Slide 8 - Postcard writing activity:

Give each student a postcard. Talk through the below guidance before starting the activity.

1. Explain to the class that Sokphal is still alive today and that he will receive the postcards.
2. Encourage students to take the activity seriously - sometimes difficult stories like these make us want to make jokes to help us to feel better, but inappropriate postcards will not be sent on. This exercise is about letting someone know their story is being learnt and they are remembered.
3. Ask students not to repeat Sokphal's story back to him - he knows what happened.

Activity continued →

Postcard writing guidance

Give students the following structure to follow when writing their postcards to Sokphal:

Dear Sokphal,

I have read your story and...

Lower ability

- This is how it made me feel

Medium ability

- This is how it made me feel
- This is what I have learnt that I didn't know before

Higher ability

- This is how it made me feel
- This is what I have learnt that I didn't know before
- This is what I have been inspired to change in my own life after hearing your story

**Yours sincerely,
(Student name)**



End by telling the students that they will receive a reply message from Sokphal.

Important note for teachers - after the lesson:

Please complete the form below and send it to HMDT at the address provided.

This will enable us to send you a reply postcard for the class.

You are welcome to send all, or a selection, of the postcards your class has written with the form. You are also welcome to keep them for a display if you would prefer. You will receive a reply message as long as you have completed the form.

As long as the form is fully filled in:

- Our team will review the messages and send all appropriate messages on to Sokphal. We may display postcards at the UK Commemorative Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day.
- You will receive a postcard back from Sokphal with a message for the class.

Share what you and your students have done to mark HMD on our interactive map and be part of the national picture of how schools and communities are commemorating the day.

You can mark your event as private if it is not open to outside visitors.

Visit hmd.org.uk/letusknow to complete the short form.

We would love to see photographs of your displays and hear about any other HMD activities in the school. This helps us to know how our school resources are used, and your school may be featured as a case study when we talk about the range of activities taking place across the UK for HMD.

Feel free to contact us on education@hmd.org.uk if you have any questions.

Take the learning further:

There is another primary school lesson plan available as part of the Postcard Project featuring the life story of Renee Bornstein, a survivor of the Holocaust.

Why not explore that next?

Find this, along with other assemblies and lessons at hmd.org.uk/education.

Find more easy to read life stories of survivors, rescuers and people who were murdered during genocide: hmd.org.uk/resources

Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: hmd.org.uk
Order an activity pack or resources: hmd.org.uk/activitypack
Resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education

Sokphal Din life story - questions

1. What did Sokphal want to be when he grew up?
2. In what year did the soldiers knock on Sokphal's door?
3. What is a rebel?
4. What did Sokphal and his family have to give his dad?
5. What was Sokphal allowed to eat each day at the labour camp?

Sokphal Din life story - questions

6. What lie did Sokphal tell? Why did he have to do this?
7. Which country invaded Cambodia to fight the Khmer Rouge?
8. What did Sokphal's mother throw over the prison fence for Sokphal? Why did she do this?
9. Where did Sokphal and his family live after escaping from Cambodia?
10. What do you think about Sokphal's story? How does it make you feel?

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 Postcard Project

Schools return form



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Once you and your group have completed the postcard activity, please fill in the form below in order to receive response postcards.

You are welcome to include some or all of the postcards written by your group to be passed on to the survivors. However, if you would prefer to keep them for a display or similar, please still complete the form and let us know. Without this information we cannot send you a return message.

Please send your form to:

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust
PO Box 61074
London
SE1P 5BX

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Your name | | | |
| Email address | | | |
| Telephone number | | Your school, organisation or group | |
| Address to send return postcard to | | Date(s) of postcard activity | |
| | | Age group(s) of students | |

Please let us know if you have done any other activities for HMD 2019:

| Activity | ✓ | How many? | Other information (for example dates, age groups) |
|---|---|----------------------------|---|
| Assembly | | | |
| Lesson plan | | | |
| Tutor Time activities (Secondary only) | | (There are 5 available) | How many tutor groups in the school did them? |
| Other activities | | | |

Form continues overleaf

Thank you for marking Holocaust Memorial Day 2019.

Permission to store data and contact you:

☐

Please tick if you are happy for the information submitted above to be stored by HMDT on our database.

☐

Please tick if you are happy for HMDT to contact you with information about support available for schools for organising HMD activities in the future.

HMDT's full privacy policy can be viewed at www.hmd.org.uk/privacy.

Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: hmd.org.uk
Resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education

Sokphal Din

Easy to read life story



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST



Key terms:

Cambodia: A country in Southeast Asia.

Rebel: A person who refuses to accept the government's power and tries to change things.

Government: A group of people who run a country making the laws and rules.

Labour camp: A prison where people are forced to work as slaves.

Refugee: A person who has to leave their home because they are in danger.

Sokphal (*pronounced sock-pal*) was born in **Cambodia** in 1958. He lived with his parents and three younger siblings in the capital city Phnom Penh. His dad worked for the Cambodian army. Sokphal wanted to be a doctor.

In April 1975, when Sokphal was 17 years old, his dad had gone to work and the rest of the family were eating breakfast. There was a knock on the door. Sokphal opened the door to two soldiers. They were not from the Cambodian army. They pointed a gun at Sokphal and said the family had to leave their home right away.

Everyone in the city was being forced out and crowds of people were already walking to the countryside. The soldiers were from a **rebel** army who had attacked the **government** and taken over control of the country. They were called the Khmer Rouge.

Sokphal's dad was already at work, wearing his Cambodian army uniform. The Khmer Rouge soldiers were killing anyone they found from the old army, so Sokphal's family had to find him and give him different clothes before the soldiers did. Luckily a friend found him and he got changed and left with the family.

Sokphal's family was taken to a **labour camp**. Sokphal had to work on farms every day under the hot sun. He was only allowed to eat three spoonfuls of rice a day.

The Khmer Rouge wanted everyone to work on farms and not live in cities. They didn't like people who were educated. Sokphal lied and said that he could not read or write. This lie saved his life.

Sokphal's dad was taken away and told he could come back in three months. The night before he left, he told Sokphal to look after the family. Sokphal and his mother were very close. Sokphal says she was his best friend.

The family finally heard they were leaving the camp to see their father again. They were excited. But it was a lie. The family was taken into the jungle and left without any food or water. Sokphal realised that he would never see his father again.

People became sick in the jungle and there was no medicine to help them. Sokphal's grandmother and his six-year-old brother both got ill and died. The family were very sad and unhappy.

On 25 December 1978, the country next to Cambodia, Vietnam, invaded and started fighting the Khmer Rouge. Sokphal was forced to join the Khmer Rouge, but promised himself he would never kill anyone. He was captured and put in prison.

When his mother found out which prison he was in, she took his siblings and walked all the way there. She stood outside the fence and, when the guards were not looking, threw a small packet of rice over the fence for Sokphal.

Finally Sokphal got out of prison and saw his family again. But they were still not safe. They decided to escape from Cambodia to Thailand. The journey was very dangerous, but they made it to a **refugee** camp.

They lived there for many years, waiting to be allowed to move to a new country. Finally, the family were allowed to come to England. They arrived in August 1987. It had been 12 years since they last had a safe home.

Sokphal has made his home in Basingstoke in the UK and is writing a book about his experiences.

Find out more...

Genocide in Cambodia: hmd.org.uk/cambodia

Other resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/education