Fertile Question: **How do I know what’s good and evil?**

Core Content Area 2: **The human spirit in times of chaos**

**TOPIC 2.2: Genocide in Cambodia**

**Extending Knowledge: Stories of despair and hope**

In this lesson students will explore the concept of genocide within the context of Cambodia during the years of Khmer Rouge (1975-1979).

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:**
When teaching about genocide in Cambodia during the years 1975-1979 it is important to keep in mind the following principles:

- Teach for a positive view and understanding of Cambodia and its people, separate from the story of Khmer Rouge (1975-1979). The identity of the country is not synonymous with the terrible story of this period in their history.
- Use the rule of three: teach about times before the Khmer Rouge (the rich culture of the country), during the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979) and after the Khmer Rouge (the emergence of a developing country in the South East Asian region).
- Try to use primary sources where possible (photographs, film footage, testimony).
- Avoid relying on an emotinal, in your face approach to genocide generally and the story of Cambodia in particular.
- Move from facts to faces, numbers to names.
- Teach for empathic understanding, encouraging students to consider who they are and how they are developing as individuals within the human family. We are all capable of perpetuating good and evil.

If you can devote additional time to studying genocide, then show the film *The Killing Fields*, available from most video stores. Alternatively, encourage students to watch it in their own time. Do not show this film in isolation from the activities below.

**For students to explore the concept of genocide in Cambodia select from the following activities:**

1. Explore the website, [Genocide Watch](http://www.genocidewatch.org), to clarify understandings of what constitutes genocide and how it is defined in international law. The crime of genocide had two important dimensions: intent and action. Write a short description of the eight (8) stages of genocide based on the work of Gregory Stanton ([www.genocidewatch.org](http://www.genocidewatch.org)).

2. Explore the historical background about Cambodia provided in the website, [Justice for Cambodia](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/cambodia/index.html). It will be necessary to use maps to understand the geographic location of Cambodia. The following site provides biographical information about Cambodia including maps: [www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/cambodia/index.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/cambodia/index.html). The Lonely Planets provide a simple [map of Cambodia](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/cambodia/index.html) as well. Create a timeline using the online web tool [Timetoast](http://www.timetoast.com).

3. Access a variety of blogs created by contemporary travellers to Cambodia. The following blogs provide insights about their experiences and reflections. How has the evil of the Khmer Rouge years impacted on their understandings and experiences of travelling in Cambodia? What hopeful signs about life for Cambodians do they note in their blogs? In what sense might every visit to Cambodia be more like a pilgrimage than a tourism journey?

   - [Half a Year in Cambodia](http://www.scribd.com/doc/12290363/Half-a-Year-in-Cambodia-Norwegian-traveller-s-blog) (Norwegian traveller’s blog)
   - [175 days Around the World: Cambodia](http://www.scribd.com/doc/12290363/175-days-Around-the-World-Cambodia)

4. Access the testimonies in the website [Soul Survivors](http://www.scribd.com/doc/12290363/Soul-Survivors). What do their testimonies say of the capacity of the human spirit to withstand great suffering?