



Ethnic Studies Lesson 5G: Asian American Hmong People

TOPIC:

ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

1. Identity
2. History and Movement

Values and Principles:

1. Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. (RI.11-12.2)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)

Lesson Purpose

Students will research Hmong immigration to the US, the Hmong culture, and Hmong individual experiences in order to challenge existing Asian American stereotypes.

Essential Questions

How are the Hmong American experiences different from those of other Asian American communities?

How does researching the Hmong people and their individual experiences challenge Asian American stereotypes?

How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?

Materials

[CCX News: Fleeing Home: Hmong Memories of the Secret War](#)

[WORKSHEET](#)

[MPR News: 10 things about Hmong culture, food and language you probably didn't know](#)

[Migration Policy Institute: The Foreign-Born Hmong in the U.S.](#)

[Hmong National Development \(HND\): Hmong Education](#)

[Hmong Independent: A Struggle to Be Seen](#)

[Hmong Archives: Resources](#)

[Unit 5 KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

Hmong
refugee

Laos

CIA

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they know about Hmong Americans. Have students watch [CCX News: Fleeing Home: Hmong Memories of the Secret War](#) (video 6 minutes, 47 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on what the push and pull immigration factors were that led Hmong people to flee Laos and immigrate to the US. When the video is complete, as a class, have students share their notes. Show students the [WORKSHEET](#) for this lesson, and help fill in a few of the boxes that are appropriate from the video.

Step 2:

- Ask students what they remember about the “Yellow Peril” and “Model Minority” stereotypes. What do they think are some Hmong stereotypes? What might be some surprising factors? Break students into five groups and have them research one topic to continue to add to the shared [WORKSHEET](#). Students should use the following sources and cite their source of information carefully.
 - [MPR News: 10 things about Hmong culture, food and language you probably didn't know](#)
 - [Migration Policy Institute: The Foreign-Born Hmong in the U.S.](#)
 - [Hmong National Development \(HND\): Hmong Education](#)
 - [Hmong Independent: A Struggle to Be Seen](#)
 - [Hmong Archives: Resources](#) (students should click on a month in the archive to select an entry)
- When students have completed their research, as a class, have them share by group what information was found and what was surprising. Remind students that Hmong is an ethnic group and not a country

of origin. How might that information and the information that most Hmong people fled with few possessions to the US help to explain some of the differences between the Hmong people and other Asian American groups?

Step 3:

- Have students watch through minute 8:20: [Washington Post: Oakland, CA, Mayor on Breaking Barriers in the Hmong community](#) (video 32 minutes, 16 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes of what surprises them about Mayor Sheng Thao and her Hmong background. Their notes should include details to answer the question, “How does understanding one Hmong story change your views of any stereotypes you might have held about the Hmong people or Asian Americans?”

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this lesson’s questions, “How are the Hmong American experiences different from those of other Asian American communities? How does researching the Hmong people and their individual experiences challenge Asian American stereotypes?” Also ask this unit’s question, “How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?” Make note of what was learned on this unit’s KWL chart—along with additional questions.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time allows, and for homework, have students read [Migration Policy Institute: Vietnamese Immigrants in the United States](#). As students read, they should be looking for points that compare and contrast the immigration of the Hmong people with Vietnamese immigration. Write a long paragraph about how these migrations are similar and how they are different.

Additional Readings and Resources

[Migration Policy Institute: Vietnamese Immigrants in the United States](#)

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, pages 133-179.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

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| TOPIC | EVIDENCE |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Immigration factors | |
| Countries of origin | |
| Settlement states in the US | |
| Education | |
| Economic level | |
| War service | |
| Cultural traditions | |

Ethnic Studies 5A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

| <p><i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i></p> | <p><i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i></p> | <p><i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i></p> |
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