

Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
Picturing the Khmer Refugee Family
Grades: 11–12

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Area of Study: Cambodian Diaspora

Compelling Question: What is the Cambodian diaspora and refugee experience?

Lesson Question (Supporting Question): What were the initial challenges of the Khmer Refugee experience in the United States and why does this matter?

Lesson Materials:

Readings:

- Cambodian 1975-1979: Introduction
- *Cambodian Refugees*
- Photograph of My Mother on Her Wedding Day” / Bunkong Tuon (poem)
- *Our Neighborhood in Revere, MA*
- “As It Ought To Be Magazine.”

Photos:

- Displaced: The Cambodian Diaspora

Lesson Objective:

Students will consider and analyze the aftermath of the Cambodian displacement and immigration experience. Students will analyze photographs as well as poetry on the experiences of Cambodian refugees with focus on initial challenges as well as long term effects.

Ethnic Studies Theme: This lesson connects to the ethnic studies theme of *reclamation and joy* from the Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework (Asian American Research Initiative, 2022). Students explore the ways that communities reclaim histories through art, cultural expression, and counternarratives.

Students will explore how Khmer American families maintained their culture and connection during the challenges for resettlement.

For additional guidance around ethnic studies implementation, refer to the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (2022) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>.

Historical Thinking Skill: This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in *historical perspectives*, one of Seixas' historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). To demonstrate the use of evidence to write historical fiction that accurately conveys the beliefs, values, and motivations of historical actors.

An ocean of difference can lie between current world views (beliefs, values, and motivations) and those of earlier periods of history. Students consider generational differences in Cambodian American families.

Standards Addressed:

HSS 11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11–12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11–12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Lesson Assessment:

Students will complete a written or recorded quickwrite on the day's lesson, focusing on the following questions.

- How did the history of Cambodia's genocide create refugees?
- How did their entry into the U.S. affect their long-term resettlement?
- Why does this matter?

Suggested Amount of Time: 60 minutes

Lesson Background: Students should have had some background knowledge on the Cambodian Genocide prior to this lesson. This is necessary to tie into the understanding of why there is such a wide diaspora of the Cambodian people.

Lesson Procedures:

Tapping into Prior Knowledge:

1. Have students think about a time when they have faced something challenging.
 - a. Have students partner up and share what strategies they used to overcome the challenges.

- b. When both partners have shared the teacher can ask for one or two volunteers to share their response.
2. Review: Teachers should review what students have learned about the Khmer Rouge time in Cambodian history to help students begin to understand why so many Cambodians had to leave their home country.
3. Students can review by completing a written or recorded quick write of all the information they can recall about the Khmer Rouge time in Cambodian history. Alternatively, review can take the form of an open class discussion of key events in Cambodian history. As students share in the discussion, teachers can write major events and details on the board.
 - a. The following are sources of information to help with review:
 - i. Brief history on Cambodian genocide “Cambodian 1975–1979: Introduction” / US Holocaust Memorial Museum
<https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/cambodia/case-study/introduction/cambodia-1975>
 - ii. Students should write down responses to the following text dependant questions:
 1. What were the primary goals of the Khmer Rouge when they came to power in Cambodia in 1975, and how did they attempt to achieve these goals?
 2. What were some of the major impacts on Cambodian society during the Khmer Rouge regime, including examples for family structures, religion, and ethnic minorities?
 - iii. “Cambodian Refugees” / Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI) <https://www.cerieastbay.org/cambodian-refugees>
 - iv. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/cambodia/rescue-and-rebuilding-lives/>
 - v. Students should write down responses to the following text dependant questions:
 1. What challenges did Cambodian refugees face upon arriving in the refugee camps in Thailand?
 2. How did the other countries respond to the crisis of Cambodian refugees?
 - vi. Teacher can also summarize: The Cambodian people “faced a country in ruins” where homes were lost, places of worship destroyed, finding family and friends was challenging, and a severe famine further wrecked the country in 1979 and 1980. Refugees fled the Khmer Rouge to camps along its country’s borders to Thailand and Vietnam. The United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR camps admitted refugees then, to “US, Australia, France, Canada, and several other countries.”

4. Teachers should guide students to consider the main question for the lesson: “What were the initial challenges of the Khmer Refugee experience in the United States?”
 - a. Students should define what a refugee is by using a dictionary.
 - b. Students should also define what an immigrant and a migrant are in the dictionary to further understand the differences.
 - i. Teacher may guide students to the following website for definitions:
 1. <https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference>
 2. <https://www.dictionary.com/e/immigrants-vs-emigrants-vs-migrants/>
 3. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>
 - c. Teachers should ask students to reflect on why they believe Cambodians immigrated to the United States as refugees. This can be done as a written or recorded quick write, then shared aloud in small groups.

Interaction with visual sources:

1. Teachers should guide students to observe and analyze photographs of Cambodian refugees.
 - a. Some examples can be found with text captions at the beginning of Pete Pin’s article on Time Magazine:
<https://time.com/3785818/displaced-the-cambodian-diaspora/>
 - b. Students can review the photos individually or in small groups. In small groups, students should be guided to focus on connecting what they understand about the Cambodian displacement from their home country and the experiences of immigrants, to the specific experience of the Cambodian diaspora. With each set of photographs, students should pause and discuss their findings with one another. If this is done individually, students can be tasked with journaling their thoughts on the photographs.
 - c. After viewing the photographs, the teacher should guide students to consider the main question once again: “What were the initial challenges of the Khmer Refugee experience in the United States?”
 - d. Then, the teacher can guide students to consider what initial challenges the refugee may have faced, finding evidence through the photographs. This can be shared on the board or a shared digital document where all students have access.

Interaction with textual sources:

1. Teachers should then guide students in reading poetry from Cambodian refugees. Teachers can have students choose one of Bunkong Tuon's poems in the collection from his book, "Gruel," to analyze, then present to the class. As with the photographs, students should focus on the Cambodian refugee experience and the aftermath of this displacement.
 - a. <https://asitoughttobemagazine.com/2018/03/27/our-neighborhood-in-revere-ma/>
 - b. <http://misfitmagazine.net/archive/No-12/tuon.html>
2. On copies of the chosen poem, students can annotate the poem for connections to prior lessons, researching when necessary to understand certain symbols in Cambodian culture. They should also refer back to the discussions with the photographs to guide their annotations/connections.
 - a. Students should answer the following questions as they annotate the poems
 - i. How does Bunkong Tuon use imagery and symbolism in his poem to convey the emotional and physical experiences of Cambodian refugees?
 - ii. In what ways does the poem reflect the challenges and resilience of Cambodian refugees as they navigate life in a new country?

Presentation of Learning:

1. After analyzing their chosen poem, students should share their findings in small groups, with students who have chosen other poems. Through discussions, they can add to their initial annotations if needed. They should read aloud their poem to their small group, then point out five important symbols or connections in the poem. The rest of the students should listen, then question or add information to what they hear.

Reflection on Learning:

1. Teachers should guide students to consider what they have learned through the photographs and poetry about the Cambodian refugee experience.
2. Students should further consider:
 - How did the history of Cambodia's genocide create refugees?
 - How did their entry into the U.S. affect their long-term resettlement?
 - Why does this matter?
3. Students can complete a final reflective written or recorded quickwrite on the day's lesson, focusing on the questions above.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Provide tasks that allow for active participation, exploration and experimentation
 - Provide prompts that guide learners in when and how to ask peers and/or teachers for help
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
 - Provide sentence starters or sentence strips
 - Provide electronic translation tools or links to multilingual glossaries on the web
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
 - Provide guides and checklists for scaffolding goal-setting
 - Embed prompts to “stop and think” before acting as well as adequate space

For additional ideas to support your students, check out the UDL Guidelines at CAST (2018) <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>.

Multilingual Learner Supports:

- **Emerging:** Consider the following method to support with emerging students:
 - Reading: Use choral reading or shared reading
 - Teacher reads text aloud, modeling fluency and expression, inviting students to engage in extended conversations in response to text-dependent questions. Teacher uses strategically planned stopping points to highlight vocabulary and prompt student thinking and discussion about text. Students use vocabulary from the text when talking and writing about text collaboratively and independently.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
 - Reading: Provide a content vocabulary word bank with non linguistic representations
 - Students use a Frayer graphic organizer to support understanding of a key word or concept. Place the target word in the center amid four surrounding quadrants to support different facets of word meaning.

- **Bridging:** Consider the following method to support with bridging students:
 - Reading: Use focused questions to guide reading
 - Students use inquiry posing their own questions and wonderings to guide shared research experiences.

For additional guidance around scaffolding for multilingual learners, please consult the following resources:

- *English Learner Toolkit of Strategies*
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/ujkdc2xp1dqjzrlq55czph50c3sq1ngu>
- *Providing Appropriate Scaffolding*
<https://www.sdcoe.net/educators/multilingual-education-and-global-achievement/oracy-toolkkit/providing-appropriate-scaffolding#scaffolding>
- *Strategies for ELD*
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/dcp15ymah51uwizpmmt2vys5zr2r5reu>
- *ELA / ELD Framework*
<https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/6537/ela-eld-framework>
- *California ELD Standards*
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/vqn43cd632z22p8mfzn2h7pntc71kb02>

Enrichment Opportunities:

1. As a supplement, students can be introduced and shown excerpts from the documentary of a refugee teenage, Sokly Ny:
 - *A.K.A. Don Bonus* / Spenser Nakasako, Sokly Ny (documentary, vlog)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxcCcbC-vJY> (excerpts, beginning to 14:25)
 - Zhu, H. (2013, October 24). *A.K.A. don bonus: The life of a Cambodian refugee in USA*. YouTube. Retrieved August 27, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxcCcbC-vJY> (excerpts, beginning to 14:25)
2. Students can be tasked to relate Sokly Ny's experience with the poem of their choice as well as the photographs that they analyzed in this lesson.

Works Cited

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Supplementary Sources

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