

Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
Using Oral Histories to Understand the Cambodian Genocide
Grade 9–10

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Area of Study: Genocide in Cambodia

Compelling Question: What were the conditions, development, and lasting effects of the genocide in Cambodia?

Lesson Question (Supporting Question): How can using oral histories help build an understanding of the Cambodian Genocide?

Lesson Materials:

Videos:

- Ugly History - Cambodian Genocide
- Oral History 1 Dan Durke from minutes 00:54 - 17:00
- Oral History 2 Bonavy Som from minutes 12:30 - 40:00
- Oral History 3 Clark Tang from minutes 34-49
- Oral History 4 Sophy Khut from minutes 5 - 32

Lesson Objective: By working with firsthand accounts, students will develop empathy and will develop critical thinking skills to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the Cambodian Genocide.

Historical Thinking Skill: This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in the *ethical dimension*, one of Seixas’ historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). To consolidate thinking about how we should remember and respond to the past. / To recognize the ethical stance in a museum exhibit.

A fair assessment of the ethical implications of history can inform us of our responsibilities to remember and respond to contributions, sacrifices, and injustices of the past. Students will consider the ethical implications of the Cambodian Genocide.

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>.

Standards Addressed:

HSS10.9.3 Understand the importance of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which established the pattern for America's postwar policy of supplying economic and military aid to

prevent the spread of Communism and the resulting economic and political competition in arenas such as Southeast Asia (i.e., the Korean War, Vietnam War), Cuba, and Africa.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9–10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9–10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Lesson Assessment: Students will reflect on what they learned about the different refugees and adopt an alignment. For their assessment, students will write a journal entry as if they were taking on the persona of a refugee.

- The journal entry should be a page and it should also include any similarities and differences from the oral history synopsis shared by other students in the class.
- The journal entry should be in the first-person point of view.
- An alternative assessment is for students to pair up with a student and create a dialogue story in the perspective of two refugees.

Suggested Amount of time: 50 Minutes

Lesson Background: The Cambodian Genocide took place between 1975 and 1979. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge gained control of Cambodia after the civil war and tried to create an agrarian utopia. Citizens were forced to move to the countryside where they endured forced labor, starvation and mass killings. Nearly 2 million Cambodians lost their lives during this period.

This lesson contains content that may be sensitive for some students. Teachers should exercise discretion in evaluating whether the resources are suitable for their class and provide a content warning to their students at the beginning of the lesson.

Lesson Procedures:

1. The teacher begins class with a check-in:
 - Teacher asks students to reflect on a time when their life changed quickly due to an unforeseen circumstance.
 - Students will journal for at least three minutes on the event and how it changed their lives.
 - Teacher asks for three volunteers to briefly share highlights from their journal entry. (Please do not require all students to share as the event they chose might be difficult for them).

2. Teacher asks the class watch Ugly History: Cambodian Genocide
https://www.ted.com/talks/timothy_williams_ugly_history_cambodian_genocide
 - While watching the video students will take notes where they should identify causes and major events of the Cambodian Genocide and respond to the the question: how can using oral histories help build an understanding of the Cambodian Genocide?
 - After the video, the teacher will have students share their findings aloud.
3. The teacher will tell the students that they will be watching an oral history.
 - Students are divided up into four groups and assigned an oral history to watch.
 - i. Oral History 1 Dan Durke from minutes 00:54–17:00
<https://youtu.be/cwH0r12yKgU?t=54>
 - ii. Oral History 2 Bonavy Som from minutes 12:30–40:00
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQwRJPMmYHM>
 - iii. Oral History 3 Clark Tang from minutes 34:00–49:00
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pbSibb72uA>
 - iv. Oral History 4 Sophy Khut from minutes 5:00–32:00
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PoNCb9mTrs>
 - While watching the oral history, students will write down how the person in the oral history experienced the start of the Cambodian Genocide. They should also write down a brief sequence of events the interviewee experienced during the Cambodian Genocide.
4. Using their notes, the students will discuss the oral history they viewed and select one member from their group to share what they learned from watching the oral history.
5. Each group will share the highlights from the oral history they watched with the rest of the class.
6. Students will reflect on what they learned about the different refugees. For their assessment, students will write or record a journal entry explaining how one person experienced the Cambodian Genocide, how their life was impacted by the killing time and how it made them feel .
7. Once the assessment is completed, have students link their document to an online platform where other students can click into their document and read their entries.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Prompt learners to identify the type of feedback or advice that they are seeking
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
 - Provide descriptions (text or spoken) for all images, graphics, video, or animations
 - Provide templates, graphic organizers, concept maps to support note-taking
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support
 - Provide differentiated feedback (e.g., feedback that is accessible because it can be customized to individual learners)

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:
 - Listening: Introduce cognates to aid comprehension
 - Students study the forms of words/word structure; draw words and phrases from the text that students will encounter and show them how shifts in word structure (i.e. suffix converge to convergent; diverge to divergent) affect meaning.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
 - Listening: Check comprehension of all students frequently
 - Teacher paraphrases student responses as they explain their thinking in effort to validate content learning and encourage the use of precise language.
- **Bridging:** Consider the following method to support with bridging students:
 - Listening: Extend content vocabulary with multiple examples and non-examples
 - 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.

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. Students can research additional oral histories from the USC Shoah Foundation Cambodia Survivors channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWIFgIFN2QqgNKTEPB5pkAAUV3X8v5tGp>
2. Students can view additional survivor testimonies from Cornell University.
<https://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=968985&p=7001546>

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