

**Vietnamese American Experiences Model Curriculum**  
**California Department of Education**  
**Sustaining Vietnamese Language and Culture in the US**  
**Grade 9–10**

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**Area of Study:** Framing the Vietnamese American Experiences Model Curriculum

**Compelling Question:** Why is it important to learn about Vietnam, Vietnamese refugees, and Vietnamese American experiences?

**Lesson Question (Supporting Question):**

- How did the Vietnamese community respond to family barriers caused by language loss?
- How did the process of acculturation change the Vietnamese family dynamic in the United States?
- How do we think about diverse definitions of culture, identity, community, history, geography, and ethnicity and how do they contribute to the framing of Vietnamese America?

**Lesson Materials:**

- Supplies:
  - Access to laptop device
- Video:
  - “Sacramento's Little Saigon: How the Vietnamese Community is Preserving Culture”
- Handouts:
  - “Why is Vietnamese Studies Needed? Oral Histories of Vietnamese American Youth”
  - Link to handouts: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/9323cy5j5tuw99rwcgi0c6af0w7sar1z>

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be able to identify and describe the changes in Vietnamese family dynamics along the acculturation process by engaging in a jigsaw activity and creating an identity collage.

**Historical Thinking Skills:** This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in *evidence*, one of Seixas’ historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). To encourage students to observe closely and make inferences. Students consider how a source should be analyzed in relation to the context of its historical setting: the conditions and world views prevalent at the time in question.

**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.

For additional guidance around ethnic studies implementation, refer to the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (2021) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>.

### Standards Addressed

HSS-10.9 Students analyze the international developments in the post–World War II world.

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.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation including footnotes and endnotes.

**Lesson Assessment:** Students will choose one of the oral history subjects that they learned about and create an identity collage of that individual. The identity collage should include quotes from their interview, as well as themes and key words that help illustrate how that individual sustained Vietnamese language and culture. The collage should be a combination of text, images, and symbols.

**Suggested Amount of Time:** 55–80 minutes

**Lesson Background:** Vietnamese refugee families faced intergenerational challenges in the United States due to external pressures including access to resources, different education systems, family separation, pressure to assimilate, and limited cultural institutions. This led to some language loss in the newer generations as well as a decline in cultural practices. Families and communities had to become proactive to retain traditional language in culture. Prior to this lesson, students should have context about the Vietnam War and the outcomes of the war.

### Lesson Procedures:

- a. Tapping Prior Knowledge (12 min)

- i. Show students this video: “Sacramento's Little Saigon: How the Vietnamese Community is Preserving Culture”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ReyuxZ9N9o>
  1. Once completed, have students pair up with a partner and share or share within groups what stood out most to them from the video and their thoughts.
- ii. Research on the background of Vietnam (15–30 min)
  1. Explain to students that in order for us to know about our Vietnamese friends, classmates, or neighbors in our community, we need to know a bit about their country, history and who they are.
  2. Inform students that they are going to work in teams of three to four to briefly research information about the country of Vietnam. Each team will be assigned an aspect of the country to research. Use the provided resources and other available resources to find fast facts about Vietnam. Divvy up the list below to various groups, it is okay if there are duplicate groups researching the same category. (Optional: Teachers can present the categories on a shared slide presentation for groups members to place their information, or have each group create their own slide.)
    - a. Vietnam Geography
      1. Shape, size, area, length
      2. Its location, neighboring countries
      3. Types of landforms (i.e: mountains, bodies of water)
      4. Anything special or interesting about its landscapes
    - b. Vietnam Rulers
    - c. Vietnamese Language
    - d. Vietnamese through History (Major events and dates)
    - e. Vietnamese in America
  3. Teams will have 15 minutes to work.
  4. Prepare a two minute informal share-out to present group findings to the class once the slide(s) are completed.
  5. Call on teams to present, or have the information displayed on an accessible document to all.
- b. Interacting with multiple sources: Jigsaw Activity (20–35 min)
  - i. Directions for Jigsaw reading: Have students form six groups, with all students who read and listened to different oral history interviews. Explain that these groups will be experts on their assigned case study for this class examination. (see handout titled “Why is Vietnamese Studies Needed? Oral Histories of Vietnamese American Youth”)

- ii. Have the groups spend 5 to 10 minutes sharing and discussing their individual responses on a notetaker that they can create. They will complete once they return to their home groups.
- iii. Some questions you might consider asking students as they examine each source.  
Optional: Prepare a handout with the questions to document their findings.
  1. What is your first impression?
  2. What is the narrator trying to show us?
  3. As we read and listen, what emotions does it trigger?
  4. What are some examples of language preservation and cultural acculturation in this narrator's life?
- iv. Have them work collectively to complete different parts that they were the experts in. As students are working, circulate among the groups to check for understanding. Each student should understand the content of the reading and should be able to discuss and fulfill the role of expert as students move into jigsaw groups in the next step.
- v. Next, jigsaw the groups so that each new group includes an expert representing each source.
- vi. In each jigsawed group, explain that each expert, in turn, will share what they had gathered. As the other students in the group listen to the expert, each fills in his or her own graphic organizer.
  1. Note: There might be a lot of overlap with responses, therefore ask students to share common factors and move onto the next source or information.
- vii. When the groups have completed the graphic organizer, dissolve the groups and have the discussion as a whole class.
  1. Some possible questions include:
    - a. How did the Vietnamese community respond to family barriers caused by language loss?
    - b. How did the process of cultural acculturation change the Vietnamese family dynamic in the United States?
    - c. How did the escape journey affect the lives of the people on the boat and the people they left behind?
    - d. What experiences and sentiments do they all seem to share?

- e. Whose voices are missing here?
  - f. What could these people do to solve some of their problems? Are there any solutions?
  - g. When looked at collectively, what argument about the refugee experience of escaping by boat do the documents allow you to make?
  - h. What else would you need to know in order to draw a wider conclusion about the impact of escaping by boat?
  - i. Can you make any connections between any current events to what happened here?
- c. Cultural Production (20 min)
- i. Students will choose one of the oral history subjects that they learned about and create an identity collage of that individual. The identity collage should include quotes from their interview sources, as well as themes and key words that help illustrate how that individual sustained Vietnamese language and culture. The collage should be a combination of text, images, and symbols. Alternatively, students can construct a song, spoken word, or poem in honor of an individual they learned about from the jigsaw activity. The written product should include themes of how that individual sustained Vietnamese language and culture. The final product can be open to a written, visual, or audio narrative.
- d. Reflection (10 min)
- i. Students will share their identity collage, or poem, with the class. This can be done as a Gallery Walk, or by posting links to the projects on a class forum for access.
  - iii. Once students have gotten a chance to view their peers' work, have them return to their original jigsaw groups. Then, have students discuss the following questions:
    - 1. How did the Vietnamese community respond to family barriers caused by language loss?
    - 2. Suggested Answer: The Vietnamese community responded to barriers caused by language loss by creating new community cultural celebrations, and through creating heritage language programs to teach the younger generation. broadcasting television and radio programs in Vietnamese, and advocating for bilingual education in schools.
  - iv. How did the process of cultural acculturation change the Vietnamese family dynamic in the United States?

1. Suggested answer: As second generation Vietnamese immigrants experienced language loss and overall loss of Vietnamese identity in the United States, the cohesion between family members worsened. This was due to language barriers and different values among generations.
- e. Exit Ticket (5 – 10 min)
- i. Have students complete a 3-2-1 exit ticket prompt
    - a. (3) new facts they learned from the lesson, (2) main takeaways from the lesson, and (1) unanswered questions or wondering they still have about the lesson.

**Scaffolding:**

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
  - Invite personal response, evaluation and self-reflection to content and activities
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
  - Provide written transcripts for videos or auditory clips
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
  - Embed prompts to “stop and think” before acting as well as adequate space
  - Provide checklists and guides for note-taking

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: Highlight key points in a text
    - In a shared or interactive writing format, chart out characters, setting, problem, and events (including orientation, complication, and resolution). Add theme, as appropriate.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:

- Reading: Provide a content vocabulary word bank with nonlinguistic 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. Present a research project about or an interview with a Vietnamese family member, youth, classmate, friend, or acquaintance investigating their family dynamic (changes within family construct, conflict among generations, cultural and/or language loss) and how the family responds to these as well as how the Vietnamese community where they live in responds to their needs.
2. Students can record and present a video reflection (suggested platform: Flipgrid or something equivalent) and share their personal experiences with acculturation as it pertains to any context (i.e: new school, new country, any new experiences). Students can be required to view at least 2–3 classmates' video reflections and encouraged to engage in dialogue with viewers.
3. Encourage students to research any local Vietnamese weekend schools and the evolution of dual language schools in California.

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### **Supplementary Sources:**

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