

Vietnamese American Experiences Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
Overview of Refugee Law and Immigration Terminology
Grade 11–12

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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 do the legal definitions and informal definitions of immigration status affect attitudes, policies, or discussions about Vietnamese immigrant groups in our society?
- What is the difference between a Vietnamese refugee and a Vietnamese immigrant?

Lesson Materials:

- Supplies:
 - Access to laptop device
 - Vocabulary Terms Slide deck
- Readings:
 - “Refugees/Asylum”
 - “From Refugees to Americans: Thirty Years of Vietnamese Immigration to the United States”
- Handouts:
 - “Refugee Law Key Terms List“
 - “Refugee Law”
 - Vocabulary Terms Slides and Text
 - Link to handouts: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/lzzn4n8kqz3dwikffl4wyyutncbr8aoj>

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to describe how immigration law and immigration terminology has impacted the Vietnamese refugee community by creating a reflection.

Ethnic Studies Theme: This lesson connects to the ethnic studies theme of *power and oppression* from the Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework (Asian American Research Initiative, 2022). Students will consider war, migration and imperialism as contexts shaping citizenship and racialization. Students explore immigration laws and processes that excluded certain groups and how it shaped Vietnamese experiences.

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>.

Historical Thinking Skills: This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in *cause and consequence* one of Seixas' historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). To help students to understand that there are short-term and long-term consequences of events. Students consider how historical actors cannot always predict the effect of conditions, opposing actions, and unforeseen reactions. These have the effect of generating unintended consequences.

Standards Addressed:

HSS-11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

HSS-PoAD.12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance of any one source and following a standard format for citation including footnotes and endnotes.

Lesson Assessment: Students will answer the lesson question by constructing a journal entry in the point of view of a Vietnamese refugee.

Suggested Amount of Time: 90–105 minutes

Lesson Background:

Immigration and refugee law have played a substantial role in the experiences of Vietnamese and Southeast Asian refugees who came to the US through many different legal

processes and procedures. Specifically focusing on Vietnamese American refugees, the legal pathways provided by US immigration laws have shaped their experiences. However, the geopolitical nature of certain laws played an important role in the decisions of who was classified as a refugee to be able to come to the US. Other laws and procedures classified Vietnamese refugees as immigrants, creating challenges for many who could not meet the criteria for citizenship or refugee status. Some challenges included abandoning family members in Vietnam, cutting off access to public services in the US, and putting some refugees on grounds for deportation. Deportation laws significantly affected individuals who committed offenses before obtaining citizenship, as they could be reclassified as undocumented immigrants and subsequently deported.

While US law is technically color-blind, its application can disadvantage certain ethnic and racial groups. For Vietnamese refugees, the strict legal definitions can exclude many who fled their country due to dire circumstances but did not meet specific refugee criteria. Furthermore, certain legal requirements, such as public charge rules and affidavits of support, disproportionately impact immigrant communities of color, demonstrating the law's inherent biases. The term illegal alien, often used in immigration law, can create negative perceptions of immigrant groups, adding to their disadvantage. This lesson aims to introduce refugee and immigration law and identify how such laws have been applied to Vietnamese refugees.

Lesson Procedures:

Accompanying slides for this lesson may be found here:

<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/j1yg5k53sxj6efwipwmw9jac4igqvq2q>

- a. Cultural Energizer (5 min)
 - i. Ask students to share with a peer where home is for them, or where home is for their family.
 - ii. Solicit student responses to the whole class. Follow up by asking if anyone considers home out of state or out of country?
 - iii. Teachers to review lesson questions and objectives. Teachers can also review the lesson background to provide context.
- b. Vocabulary Building (15 minutes)
 - i. Teachers should distribute handout: “Refugee Law Key Terms List”
 - ii. The teacher will show the vocabulary words on a slideshow in successive order: See slide deck, “Vocabulary Terms Slides and Text” at <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/j1yg5k53sxj6efwipwmw9jac4igqvq2q>.

- iii. For each term displayed, students will write down related words, definitions, or questions using their background knowledge related to the term. Students will try their best to write down:
 1. A simplified definition based on their understanding. Students can paraphrase the definitions found on the handouts.
 2. Questions or wonderings they would like to clarify.
 3. Terms: refugee, immigrant/legal permanent resident, non-immigrant, undocumented immigrant/illegal alien
 - a. Example: I think a refugee is someone who escapes war, such as a Vietnamese refugee who came here by boat. Question: Can you be a refugee if you did not escape war?
 - iv. Pair/Share: After students write down their interpretations, students get into pairs and discuss what their interpretations of the term was and from what experiences in their life did they use to make those interpretations.
- c. Discussion and Introduction into Refugee Law (15 min)
- i. At this point, the teacher should distribute: (1) a key terms list for important vocabulary regarding immigration/refugee law (see handout “Refugee Law Key Terms List”, and (2) the following excerpt:
 1. “Since 1948, international law–The Universal Declaration of Human Rights–has guaranteed the right to seek and receive asylum in other countries. Since 1965, refugee admissions have been the smallest of the three main paths for legal admission to the United States, along with preferences for family unification and skilled employment. To receive refugee visas, applicants must demonstrate their endangerment and inability to return to their homes and undergo extensive vetting while abroad. The U.S. government retains authority to set standards and manage approval processes, which usually emphasize political considerations.” “As early as 1917, immigration law had exempted asylum seekers from general immigration restrictions. Unlike refugees, asylum seekers arrive at the United States without pre authorization and request permission to enter and gain safety. The

United States is obligated to evaluate their applications and on the principle of non-refoulement should not force refugees or asylum seekers to return to a country in which they are liable to be subjected to persecution.”

a. Sourced from:

<https://immigrationhistory.org/lesson-plan/refugee-asylum/>.

ii. Based on the key terms handout and slides, the teacher will briefly introduce the legal definitions for each of the terms related to immigration status.

1. Students can be encouraged to find a visual representation of each key term. Recommended for teachers to share the presentation with discussion. Teachers can screencast the presentation so students can pre-watch and re-watch or interact with them independently. Ask students to explain what the content means after each slide.

iii. Teachers will prompt students to share how the legal definitions and their own definitions may affect attitudes, policies, or discussions about Vietnamese immigrant groups in our society.

1. Potential questions to consider:

2. Is the law color-blind? Why or why not?

3. Does a law’s meaning change depending upon the individual?

d. Interaction with first source (15 min)

i. Based on the website excerpt, the teacher will introduce the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.

1. Students can make inferences of how this foundation may affect Vietnamese refugees. It may be beneficial to work through the descriptions as a class, and paraphrase each one.

a. 1951 Refugee Convention: “This UN Refugee Convention set international standards for refugee rights and resettlement work. It is administered by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. Wary of international obligations,

President Truman refused to sign the U.S. government on to the convention.”

(<https://immigrationhistory.org/lesson-plan/refugee-asylum/>)

- c. 1967 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Refugee Protocol: “The UNHCR issued this protocol in 1967 to implement the goals of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which set forth the key principle of refoulement, or that persons in flight from persecution and danger cannot be forced to return to places of danger.”

(<https://immigrationhistory.org/lesson-plan/refugee-asylum/>)

3. If time permits, teachers can encourage students to read further both. Additional content can be found on the slides: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/j1yg5k53sxj6efwipwmw9jac4igqvq2q>. The teacher can mention that refugee law in the US has geopolitical roots and was created at the height of tension with the Soviet Union.

f. Interaction with second source (15 min)

- i. Teachers will share the source: “From Refugees to Americans: Thirty Years of Vietnamese Immigration to the United States” and direct student attention to page 2, section “The Vietnamese Impact on US Refugee Policy”.
(<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/bkt4nd68am3xwxio93y0r95ddvj3tz>)
- ii. Students will read the section with a peer while annotating and answering the lesson question: How do the legal definitions and informal definitions of immigration status affect attitudes, policies, or discussions about Vietnamese immigrant groups in our society?

g. Vocabulary Practice (20 min)

- i. Teacher will give students a handout showing a list of scenarios of Vietnamese refugees. Refer to handout: “Refugee Law”.
- ii. Students get into groups of four to five and together, complete the worksheet detailing ten scenarios of students or other people of various immigration backgrounds.

1. Task: Students will practice identifying which category each individual belongs to, and explain why based on details from the scenario.
 2. Students will continue to reflect on the lesson question: How do the legal definitions and informal definitions of immigration status affect attitudes, policies, or discussions about Vietnamese immigrant groups in our society?
- iii. The class will come together, and representatives of each group will share their answers to each scenario.
 - iv. The teacher will facilitate conversation and ask students to discuss the fairness of the legal classifications and the disparities between legal classification and their own gut definition.
 1. Some of the handout answers are purposely made to evoke cognitive dissonance (ex: a man who fled Vietnam at the age of eight and convicted of selling weed at the age of 14 before obtaining citizenship is reclassified as an undocumented immigrant, not a refugee or immigrant. This allows for his deportation).
- h. Lesson Assessment (25 min)
- i. Students will answer the lesson question in a journal entry from the point of view of a Vietnamese refugee: How do the legal definitions and informal definitions of immigration status affect attitudes, policies, or discussions about Vietnamese immigrant groups in our society?
 - ii. The final product can be open to a written, visual, or audio narrative.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Create cooperative learning groups with clear goals, roles, and responsibilities.
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
 - Present key concepts in one form of symbolic representation (e.g., an expository text or a math equation) with an alternative form (e.g., an illustration, dance/movement, diagram, table, model, video, comic strip, storyboard, photograph, animation, physical or virtual manipulative).

- Teachers can include visual representations and symbols on the refugee key terms handout, or have students draw their own to help them develop an understanding of the definitions for each.
 - Use outlines, graphic organizers, unit organizer routines, concept organizer routines, and concept mastery routines to emphasize key ideas and relationships.
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
 - Use story webs, outlining tools, or concept mapping tools

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: Provide additional multi-level texts matched to reading level
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
 - Reading: Teach skimming for specific information
- **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-toolkits/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 engage in a group activity to outline steps for the following actions: (1) be able to immigrate into the US, (2) the steps needed to become a citizen, and (3) the conditions in which someone is deported. This can be created on a slide deck, flow map, or storyboard. Students can utilize the following website sources:
 - a. Immigration/inadmissibility (link <https://www.usa.gov/green-cards#:~:text=Find%20out%20if%20you're,be%20val id%20for%2010%20years> and link <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-eligibility-categories>)
 - b. Naturalization (link <https://www.usa.gov/become-us-citizen>)
 - c. Deportation (link <https://www.usa.gov/deportation>)
2. Students can conduct quantitative research on data regarding current (Vietnamese) immigrants. Research topics may include but are not limited to: geographic distribution, size of immigrant population, age and education level, employment, income, English proficiency, immigration pathways, unauthorized immigrant population, and more.
3. Family Based Immigration - Students can read about family based immigration and how that impacts the Vietnamese community at the following source. The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center. (2018). “How Family-Based immigration benefits Southeast Asian Americans – Standing up for our families & our rights.” In Southeast Asia Resource Action Center: Fact Sheet.
<https://www.searac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Family-Based-Immigration-brief-1.pdf>

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