

Hmong History & Cultural Studies Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
Hmong Family Practices and Values - Death and Funeral Rituals
Grade(s): 11–12

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Area of Study: Hmong Ways of Knowing

Compelling Question: How do we understand the varied worldviews of peoples in Hmong communities?

Lesson Questions (Supporting Questions):

- What do Hmong practices tell us about what is important in Hmong family and society?
- What does it tell us about Hmong values around family?
- How do beliefs and practices help us understand Hmong beliefs about life and death?

Lesson Materials:

- **Supplies:**
 - Access to laptop device
 - Image of Hmong Heaven & Hmong Soul
 - Pencils / highlighters for note-taking
 - Projector
 - Poster boards / markers
 - Supplies for digital art, photography, painting, drawing, charcoal, mixed media, etc.
- **Reading:**
 - “What is the Hmong Soul” article (22, 23, 26, 28, 30) from *Txhawb Magazine*
- **Video:**
 - *The Rising Cost of Hmong Funerals* on YouTube

Lesson Objective: This lesson is the last of four on Hmong Family Practices and Values. This lesson explores Hmong beliefs about death and reincarnation through an examination of ceremonial practices and oral traditions. Students will gain an understanding of the connections between birth, marriage, and funerals.

Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11–12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

WL.CM1.A Demonstrate understanding of the main idea and supporting details in major time frames on most informal and formal topics of general public interest. Demonstrate understanding of authentic texts using paragraph-level discourse that is spoken, written, or signed.

Lesson Assessment:

Students will choose one of the three options for the assessment:

1. Write a short two to three paragraph essay answering the following questions: What are the main components of a Hmong funeral? What challenges do Hmong communities face in maintaining cultural practices around funerals in the United States?
2. Create a flow chart sequencing the main components of a Hmong funeral.
3. Draw a visual representation of a traditional Hmong funeral with text captions to identify the main components and practices.

If teachers plan to teach the connecting lessons (Hmong Family Practices and Values - Intro, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Birth, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Marriages, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Death and Funeral Rituals), the *(optional)* Culminating Assessment is as follows:

- My Family Practices Presentation: Students will choose one of the following life events (birth, marriage, death, and funeral rituals), and create a poster that shows the practices, traditions, and/or celebrations associated with it. Students will then use a creative method of their choice (digital art, photography, painting, drawing, charcoal, mixed media, etc.) to create an image or visual representation.

Suggested Amount of Time: 45–50 minutes

Lesson Background: For Hmong people, family is an important social unit. The importance of families can be seen in ceremonies and rituals that celebrate important milestones throughout a person's whole life cycle (birth, marriage, and death). If time permits, teachers can conduct the other lessons prior to this one: Hmong Family Practices and Values - Intro, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Birth, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Marriages.

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. Teachers should provide content warning to students and inform them that this lesson will contain the topic of death and funerals.

Lesson Procedures:

This is the last of four lessons from the unit Hmong Family Practices and Values.

Complete mini unit for Hmong Family Practices and Values:

- Hmong Family Practices and Values - Intro
- Hmong Family Practices and Values - Birth
- Hmong Family Practices and Values - Marriages
- Hmong Family Practices and Values - Death and Funeral Rituals

I. Cultural Energizer

A. Teacher asks: What are some of the rituals you have noticed at funerals you have attended or have seen in popular media?

1. Students share with a partner (take two to five minutes):
What similarities did you notice? What were some of the differences between you and your classmates' notices?
2. Have student volunteers share with the whole class.

B. Now, think of your family's practices:

1. Does your family have any traditions they practice when there is a death of a family member? (Examples: prayers, ceremonies, difference in meals or diet).
 - a) Teacher shares some of their family practices.
 - b) Have student volunteers share with the whole class.

II. Interaction with first source:

A. We are going to explore some practices of Hmong families around death.

B. Hand out copies of the article *What is the Hmong Soul?* (22, 23, 26, 28, 30) written by Michelle Xiong:

<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/7ebuavd068tgs6o9ouvbszb5pkwub2um>.

- C. Teacher can read aloud the first few pages and model annotations for Hmong funeral rituals.
- D. Have students pair up with a partner to read the following pages and continue annotations for Hmong funeral rituals.
- E. Once most students have finished reading, have them share details regarding Hmong funeral rituals from the reading.
 - 1. Allow students to discuss the connections between birth, marriage, and funerals.

III. Interaction with second source:

- A. Teacher projects the images Hmong Heaven (30) and Hmong Soul (22).
- B. Teacher asks the following questions:
 - 1. *What objects do you notice in these pictures?*
 - 2. *What do you notice about the location of people in the pictures?*
 - 3. *What do you think the people are doing in these art pieces?*

IV. Interaction with third source:

- A. Teacher shows short video *The Rising Cost of Hmong Funerals* resource (11:41 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICZLmI3v7RQ>.
- B. Discuss “What challenges do Hmong communities face in maintaining cultural practices around funerals in the United States?”

V. Lesson Assessment Options:

- A. Write a short two to three paragraph essay answering the following questions: What are the main components of a Hmong funeral? What challenges do Hmong communities face in maintaining cultural practices around funerals in the United States?
- B. Create a flow chart sequencing the main components of a Hmong funeral. This can be hand created or digitally curated.

- C. Draw a visual representation of a traditional Hmong funeral with text captions to identify the main components and practices. This can be hand created or digitally curated.

VI. (Optional) Culminating Assessment

- A. If teachers plan to teach the connecting lessons (Hmong Family Practices and Values - Intro, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Birth, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Marriages, Hmong Family Practices and Values - Death and Funeral Rituals), the (optional) Culminating Assessment is as follows:

My Family Practices Presentation: Students will choose one of the following life events (*birth, marriage, death, and funeral rituals*), and create a poster that shows the practices, traditions, and/or celebrations associated with it.

1. Students will talk with parents, guardians, or community members to learn about family practices around that particular life event.
2. Students will then use the creative method of their choice (digital art, photography, painting, drawing, charcoal, mixed media, etc.) to create an image or visual representation.
3. Teachers will provide opportunities for students to share their product with the class: whole class/small group presentation, Give One/Get One, Lines of Communication, etc.
 - a. Teachers use the Give One/Get One strategy as a way to have students share their work or ideas with their peers. Students practice being active listeners as they take turns sharing ideas and recording the thoughts of others.
 - b. Teachers can use A Lines of Communication method to get students sharing and receiving information from a number of students in an organized fashion. The class is divided into two rows of students facing each other. After sharing has taken place, one row moves over one position to repeat the process.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Create expectations for group work (e.g., rubrics, norms, etc.)

- 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:
 - Embed support for vocabulary and symbols within the text (e.g., hyperlinks or footnotes to definitions, explanations, illustrations, previous coverage, translations)
 - Provide templates, graphic organizers, concept maps to support note-taking
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
 - Provide sentence starters or sentence strips

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: Use physical gestures to accompany oral directives
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
 - Listening: Give two step contextualized directions
- **Bridging:** Consider the following method to support with bridging students:
 - Listening: Confirm students' prior knowledge of content topics
 - With a focus on meaning-making, students are prompted to think about what they already know in effort to help them learn something new.
 - Students find connections between familiar vocabulary related to content learning, explaining how their words are connected. (Our words are connected/linked/related because _____.)

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-to>

[olkit/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. Watch the video “Bee Cher Teng Yang - Hmong Funeral Customs”
<https://vimeo.com/974457099> (29:08 minutes) and have discussions around the process of a Hmong funeral.
2. Dive into the concept of *Nyiaj tshav ntuj* sunshine money to give to the family of the deceased.
3. Students can prepare questions to ask family members about funeral rituals and practices.
 - a. Students can create a multimedia visual showing different rituals in their family.
 - b. Students can have a gallery walk and class discussion on the multitude of rituals and funeral practices in their local community.

Works Cited:

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Supplementary Source:

Hmongstory Legacy. 2024, July 2. *Bee Cher Teng Yang - Hmong funeral customs* [Video].
Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/974457099>