

Vietnamese American Experiences Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
Experiences of Vietnamese Women
Grades: 11–12

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Area of Study: Vietnamese Resettlement and Community Building

Compelling Question: What is Vietnamese America?

Lesson Question (Supporting Question):

- How did adapting into a new culture in the US impact Vietnamese gender roles and familial relationships, especially for women?

Lesson Materials:

- Supplies:
 - Access to laptop device
 - Graphic Organizer, suggested text in lesson
 - Oral History of Nguyễn Thị Hạnh Nhơn
- Videos:
 - “#NAILEDIT” Trailer
- Handouts:
 - Vietnamese Women in Entrepreneurship
 - Femininity and the “Vietnamese” Nation - Áo Dài and Beauty Pageants
 - Link to handouts: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/atqrno7xzxjk1e2wbd174h4dxr8csbq>

Lesson Objective: Students will compare and contrast the identities of Vietnamese women from the past to present by analyzing sources and creating visual representations. In doing so, they will find how some gender roles have evolved, while other factors have remained consistent.

Ethnic Studies Theme: This lesson connects to the ethnic studies theme of *identity* from the Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework (Asian American Research Initiative, 2022). Students will explore their own identities, as well as the ways that society engages in stereotyping and discrimination. Students consider gender roles and multiple aspects of how family and culture shape perceived and experienced identity.

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 *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. Students consider how an ocean of difference can lie between current world views (beliefs, values, and motivations) and those of earlier periods of history.

Standards Addressed:

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

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.11-12.8 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 on any one source and following a standard format for citation including footnotes and endnotes.

Lesson Assessment: Students will hand draw and create two symbols to represent their understanding of Vietnamese women gender roles as it pertains to the past and present. Each symbol will be accompanied by a short paragraph to explain the connection between the symbol and their understanding of the Vietnamese women experiences for the past and present. Students can create symbols digitally as well. This can be in the format of a short form video (using applications such as YouTube, Canva, CapCut, or other social media platforms. If digitally created, students have option to create an image (or collection of images) or scene to depict their perspective

Suggested Amount of Time: 60–75 minutes

Lesson Background:

Vietnamese tradition, culture, and family dynamics are based on Confucian principles, emphasizing social hierarchy and gender roles. The traditional family structure involves multiple generations living together, with collective decision-making and male dominance. Vietnamese women historically had economic involvement due to inheritance rights and work, giving them a relatively better economic position compared to Chinese women under similar Confucian norms.

However, women remained subordinate to men despite economic roles. Ancient Vietnamese laws treated offenses by wives against husbands similarly to crimes committed by children against parents. Husband beating was punished more severely than wife beating. The husband's dominant position was evident through the ability to repudiate the wife for various reasons.

Western feminist ideas brought change, particularly among Vietnamese immigrants in the US. Increased opportunities for women's economic contributions shifted power dynamics, with women contributing more to the family budget. Women in the US were less accepting of patriarchal family traditions, although some maintained traditional gender ideology due to anticipated rewards within the patrilineal family system.

Resettlement in the US led to shifts in traditional family life, gender roles, and economic opportunities for men and women. Men were traditionally head of household, but overtime, women were equalized and that resulted in conflicting family dynamics. This lesson explores some aspects such as women's economic roles, cultural adaptation, gender roles, perceptions of divorce, and family decision-making authority.

Bùi, H. N., & Morash, M. 1999. Domestic violence in the Vietnamese immigrant community: An exploratory study. *Violence against women*, 5(7), 769-795.

Lesson Procedures:

- a. Cultural Energizer (5 minutes)
 - i. Prompt students with the following question: Who is a woman figure in your life you look up to, and why? Have students elaborate on the impact that figure has had on their life.
 - ii. Before proceeding with the lesson, have students create a graphic organizer to compare and contrast ideas from sources that they will read in the lesson. Some examples are: double bubble map or Venn diagram.
 1. A double bubble map is made by drawing two large circles. Then write the topic names or words of the two things you want to compare. Next, draw middle bubbles for the words or phrases that show similarities. Lastly, add the outside bubbles for the words or phrases you want to contrast.
 2. Topic words to go into large circles: (1) Vietnamese Women in the Past (2) Vietnamese Women in the Present
- b. Interaction with first source: #NAILEDIT Trailer
 - i. Teacher will model how to complete the double bubble map using the #NAILEDIT trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDEDorWikSc>). Remind students to use information from the video in their responses as well.
 1. Suggested Response

- a. Side 1: Vietnamese women in the Past
 - i. Family encourages Vietnamese female children to work in the nail industry as many salons are Vietnamese owned. Many refugees assimilated into the US through the nail salon industry, as it was painted as a glamorous occupation.
- b. Side 2: Vietnamese women in Present
 - i. Vietnamese women continue to thrive in the salon industry and create an empire of businesses that thrive with the nail industry that appeals to all Americans.
- c. Interactive with second source: Vietnamese Women in Entrepreneurship (see handouts). Read and use different annotation strategies that you're familiar with. Be sure students are able to answer the following questions after they're done with reading (15–20 minutes)
 1. What is unique about Vietnamese American entrepreneurship compared to other groups in the United States?
 2. According to the article, what percentage of Vietnamese entrepreneurs are women, and how does this compare to other groups?
 3. Why are Vietnamese women more likely to incorporate their businesses compared to white women?
 4. Why do the authors suggest that Vietnamese women can easily integrate into local ethnic economies or niches in the United States?
 5. What motivates female Vietnamese entrepreneurs in both Vietnam and the United States, according to the article?
 6. What challenges do Vietnamese female entrepreneurs face, especially in the context of the United States?
- d. Interaction with multiple sources: Use different text annotation strategies to interact with the texts. Teachers can decide to assign both sources, or just one. (20–30 minutes)
 - i. Femininity and the “Vietnamese” Nation - Áo Dài and Beauty Pageants (see handouts):
 1. What is the significance of the ao dai dress in Vietnamese American beauty pageants, and how does it relate to the concept of preserving cultural heritage?
 2. Why did Vietnamese refugees choose to organize beauty pageants in the diaspora, and how do these pageants differ from those in Vietnam?
 3. How does the ao dai symbolize both class and gender distinctions within Vietnamese culture and diaspora communities?

4. How do beauty pageants help construct ethnic and national identities among Vietnamese American women, and what debates and issues do they engage with?
 5. In what ways do beauty pageants challenge dominant constructions of gender and femininity, especially in the context of immigrant communities?
- ii. Oral History of Nguyễn Thị Hạnh Nhơn - Nguyễn Thị Hạnh Nhơn was born in 1927 in Huế. She served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and was later imprisoned in a communist reeducation camp for five years. In this excerpt, Hạnh Nhơn talks about her life in the prison camps as a woman. You can read her full oral history at: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/xookav4mxkg09a9xe0z9k6evexl7cr85> or original source <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/81235/d8gv99/?order=2>
1. Could you explain the conditions in which the women soldiers lived during their imprisonment?
 2. How did the experiences of the sisters in the Vietnamese diaspora shape their perspectives on loss, resilience, and survival?
 3. How did traditional Vietnamese expectations for women's behavior influence Anh's response to traumatic events in her life?
 4. Can you describe the traumatic experiences and challenges faced by the young girl who attempted to escape on a boat and was captured by Thai pirates?
- e. Community Collaboration (10–20 minutes)
- i. Allow students time to review their responses with the class. Whole class discussion can be facilitated by the teacher to clarify any misunderstandings or add on to any ideas.
 - ii. As students are hearing from peers, encourage them to add onto their double bubble map any missing points.
 - iii. Have students come up with at least four similarities that they can draw a connection between the Vietnamese women perceptions in past and present.
- f. Cultural Production (20–30 minutes)
- i. After students have reviewed each of the sources and added onto their double bubble map, they are to use the information and synthesize each side into a symbol.

- ii. On a clean sheet of paper, have students fold the paper in half.
 1. On the left side, have them draw a symbol (no text symbols allowed) that best represents Vietnamese women in the past as it pertains to gender roles.)
 - a. The symbol must be neat and colored in.
 - b. At the bottom of the symbol, they are to construct a four to five sentence paragraph that explains the meaning of this symbol and why it serves as a reflection of the past.
 2. On the right side, have them draw a symbol (no text symbols allowed) that best represents Vietnamese women in the present as it pertains to gender roles.)
 - a. The symbol must be neat and colored in.
 3. At the bottom of the symbol, they are to construct a four to five sentence paragraph that explains the meaning of this symbol and why it serves as a reflection of the past
 - a. Up to teacher discretion if student needs to reference one of the sources from the lesson.
- iii. Optional: Students can create symbols digitally as well. The final product can be open to a written, visual, or audio narrative.
 1. This can be in the format of a short form video (TikTok, Instagram Reel, Youtube), Canva, ProCreate.
 2. If digitally created, students have the option to create an image (or collection of images) or scene to depict their perspective.
- g. Class share and reflection (5–10 minutes)
 - i. Have students share in small groups of four to five students on what they did for their project. Reflect on what they learned by turning in a ticket out the door at the end of class.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Provide alternatives in the permissible tools and scaffolds
 - Use prompts or scaffolds for visualizing desired outcome
 - Allow learners to participate in the design of classroom activities and academic tasks

- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
 - Highlight or emphasize key elements in text, graphics, diagrams, formulas
 - Introduce graduated scaffolds that support information processing strategies
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
 - Provide sentence starters or sentence strips
 - _____ represents _____ because _____.
 - In my opinion, this symbol is representative of _____ due to the fact that _____.
 - Based on the article titled _____ by _____, I learned that _____.
 - In conclusion, this is symbolic of _____ because _____.
 - Based on _____, I believe that _____.
 - Because of _____, _____ has changed significantly.
 - To further understand _____, we need to delve deeper into _____.

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: Pair students to read one text together
 - Students turn to their designated partners to discuss prompts posed by the teacher. Partnerships are organized in teams of two.
 - Students read with a partner and concisely summarize text together using critical content vocabulary, but limiting summary to essential words. Begin in pairs of two, but move to partnerships of four for more practice.
 - Teacher deliberately partners specific students for conversations.
- **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-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. Interview a Vietnamese or Vietnamese American Woman - Have students find a community member that belongs to the Vietnamese or Vietnamese American community. In this interview, students can ask about their personal experiences as a female in the community and touch upon topics regarding expectations, standards, and pressures.
2. Socratic Seminar - Students can participate in a discussion surrounding the topics of expectations, pressures, and standards held to their many identities. Possible prompts include: What societal or parental expectations do you feel in your everyday life? Of these expectations and pressures, which ones impact you the most? What are some ways you try to overcome some of the pressures put on you? Why do you think these societal pressures exist? What societal or cultural gender norms exist then and now, and do they play a large role in your life?

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