

Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum
California Department of Education
The Cambodian Refugee Experience
Grade: 11–12

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Area of Study: Cambodian Diaspora

Compelling Question: What is the Cambodia diaspora and refugee experience?

Lesson Question (Supporting Question): Why do people, specifically Cambodians, leave their homelands and migrate to other countries?

Lesson Materials:

Supplies:

- Handouts
 - The Decision to Leave
 - Student Handout Reading Questions
 - Link to handouts:
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/73oz2y33bk8uahnhoplzv861g8vynv6z>

Readings

- *Henry Kissinger's central role in the U.S. carpet bombing of Cambodia*
- *Chapter 1: Immigration and Immigrant Policy: Barriers and Opportunities for Families*
- *Chapter 2: From There to Here: The Journey of Refugee Families to the United States*

Videos:

- *International Migration*
- Julie Sophia Daniels
- Danielle Khim

Lesson Objective: Students will explore the waves of Cambodian immigrants to the United States, understand the causes behind each wave, consider the challenges faced by the 1.5 generation, and examine how intergenerational trauma can affect young Cambodian Americans while relating these experiences to their own lives.

Historical Thinking Skill: Chronological and Spatial Thinking. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

Students consider how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and

affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs. They will consider how resettlement for Cambodian refugees came in waves due to historical events.

Standards Addressed:

HSS.11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11–12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Lesson Assessment:

Students will be able to choose from a variety of project-based summative assessments.

- Read a memoir by a Cambodian refugee, and present the refugee's story and student takeaways. The presentation can take the form of a book report, infographic, or book advertisement.
- Conducting additional research into the experience of refugees in the Thai border camps and presenting their findings in the form of a presentation or infographic.
- Identify a 1.5 generation refugee from another community, and present their experiences to the class. Draw connections between this individual and what they learned about the Cambodian refugee experiences. The learnings may be presented in a memoir, an interview transcript, video or audio recording, etc.
- Delve into more detail about the intergenerational issues that arise in refugee communities, especially the Cambodian American community, and suggest ways in which these issues might be addressed. Students can create a pamphlet or infographic with helpful tips. The final product can also include statistics and facts gathered from researching the issues.
- Find an organization that provides support and services to the Cambodian American community. Create a brochure or infographic highlighting the organization's purpose, goals, and services provided.

Suggested Amount of Time: 60–110 minutes

Lesson Background:

Following the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia in 1979, thousands of refugees fled the country. Approximately 145,000 refugees relocated to the United States between 1979 and 2002, with the majority arriving between 1980 and 1985.

The adult refugees brought with them their children and other relatives who were born or very young during the Khmer Rouge regime, or were born in the refugee camps. Members of this group have become known as the 1.5 generation. Those born in the US comprise the second (or 2.0) generation.

Lesson Procedures:

1. Warm Up and Introduction
 - b. Ask students to think of reasons why people may leave their home or area (whether voluntarily or involuntarily) to a new place.
 - c. Students will pair-share, then have a whole class share out.
 - d. Teacher will then share lesson objectives, lesson questions, and lesson background.
 - Teachers can show this video to preface lesson content: “International Migration” video
<https://oercommons.org/courses/international-migration/view>
2. Tapping into Prior Knowledge
 - a. The instructor will begin with an overview of the background causes of the Vietnam War (only brief review). Instructor will provide some background on how Cambodia came to be involved in the war, and the way in which the narrative (and even the name of the war) has excluded Cambodia to a large extent, and that this exclusion is a form of erasure and denial about US involvement and the impact on Cambodians. This article from the Washington Post can provide some background.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/henry-kissinger-cambodia-bombing-war/>
 - b. Optional: The following chapters can be used to also help build background/review:
 - Chapter 1 “Immigration and immigrant policy: Barriers and Opportunities for Families”
<https://open.lib.umn.edu/immigrantfamilies/part/chapter-1-policy/>

- Chapter 2 “From There to Here: The Journey of Refugee Families to the United States”
<https://open.lib.umn.edu/immigrantfamilies/part/chapter-2-from-there-to-here-the-journey-of-refugee-families-to-the-united-states/>
 - Optional: Students can use the “Student Handout Reading Questions” handout to guide them through the 2 chapters.
- c. Check for understanding prior to continuing on with the lesson.
3. Interaction with sources
- a. Students will select two different immigrant stories to watch/read/learn about.
- b. Students can choose from the following sources:
- University of Minnesota’s Immigration History Research Center
https://umedia.lib.umn.edu/search?facets%5Bcollection_name_s%5D%5B%5D=Immigrant+Stories
 1. There are nearly 400 different stories; students may choose any they wish.
 - 1.5 Generation Cambodian Oral History archive
 1. Julie Sophia Daniels (<https://youtu.be/59O4MSWH5M8>)
 - a. *Julie was born in September 1972 on a farm in S’aang, a district in the Kandal Province, Cambodia. She was three years old when the Khmer Rouge took over in 1975. Her family joined with her mother’s sister in Phnom Penh after being separated from her father who was an Army officer and who died at the military base. Julie was too young to work in the child labor camps and did not have many memories from during the Khmer Rouge years. Her family entered Kao-I-Dang sometime in 1978, very soon after the Vietnamese entered Cambodia. A church group sponsored them to come to the US. Julie and her family first settled in Coal City, Illinois and moved several times before settling permanently in Long Beach, CA. She has a*

master's in business administration and works as the Academic Administrative Assistant at Long Beach City College. Julie has been involved in the Cambodia Town initiatives through volunteering and is the founder of C-NOW (Cambodians Networking Our World) whose mission is to inform, connect, and engage the Cambodian community.

2. Danielle Khim (<https://youtu.be/kJotqwDapGc>)

- a. *Danielle Khim: Danielle Khim was born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 1969. After the Khmer Rouge came to power her family members were moved into segregated labor camps. Following the arrival of the Vietnamese military, Danielle traveled with her mother to the Thai border where they gained admission into the Khao-I-Dang refugee camp. They were sponsored relatively quickly by the International Rescue Committee. Danielle's family settled in San Diego, California. In her senior year in high school, Danielle's mother and stepfather moved to Rhode Island. She joined them after graduation but returned to California two years later to attend CSU Northridge. Driven by a desire to help others to find their inner strength to overcome trauma and achieve their goals, Danielle earned a certificate in hypnotherapy at the Tom Silver Institute and is now a Life Coach. Danielle is active in various events and organizations in the Cambodian Community. She is hopeful that by sharing her story she helps to empower others.*

- As students learn about two refugee stories, they should take notes on the handout (“The Decision to Leave”)

4. Shared Learning

- a. Once students have completed their review of two stories, they will form pairs or groups of four and discuss what they have seen, heard, and learned.
- b. In the pairs/groups, have them compare and contrast their refugee stories.
- How are the stories of the individuals alike? How are they different?

- What themes and/or experiences are common to all stories?

5. Summative Assessment

- a. Students will be able to choose from a variety of project-based summative assessments.
- Read a memoir by a Cambodian refugee, and present the refugee's story and student takeaways. The presentation can take the form of a book report, infographic, or book advertisement.
 - Conducting additional research into the experience of refugees in the Thai border camps and presenting their findings in the form of a presentation or infographic.
 - Identify a 1.5 generation refugee from another community, and present their experiences to the class. Draw connections between this individual and what they learned about the Cambodian refugee experiences. The learnings may be presented in a memoir, an interview transcript, video or audio recording, etc.
 - Delve into more detail about the intergenerational issues that arise in refugee communities, especially the Cambodian American community, and suggest ways in which these issues might be addressed. Students can create a pamphlet or infographic with helpful tips. The final product can also include statistics and facts gathered from researching the issues.
 - Find an organization that provides support and services to the Cambodian American community. Create a brochure or infographic highlighting the organization's purpose, goals, and services provided.
- b. Once students have completed their summative project, provide opportunities for sharing. This can be done in the form of a gallery walk or small group/whole class presentation.

Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
 - Differentiate the degree of difficulty or complexity within which core activities can be completed
 - Display the goal in multiple ways

- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:
 - Use cues and prompts to draw attention to critical features
 - Provide written transcripts for videos or auditory clips
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
 - Provide differentiated models of self-assessment strategies (e.g., role-playing, video reviews, peer feedback)

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:
 - Writing: Teach note taking on a graphic organizer
 - 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.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
 - Writing: Provide rubrics and exemplars to scaffold writing assignments
 - Students investigate how authors of stories invite readers to make inferences about characters by showing what the character does instead of simply telling how the character is feeling.
- **Bridging:** Consider the following method to support with bridging students:
 - Writing: Hold frequent writing conferences with teacher and peers
 - Teacher works collaboratively with students to scaffold writing before they write independently. Teacher uses students' understanding of narrative stages, specific vocabulary, and grammatical structures while questioning for precision.

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-toolkit/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. Discussion and reflection on the Syrian refugee experience
 - Discussion and dialogue - think/pair/share
 - Conclusive dialogue and critical circular exchange- metacognition
 - Since 2011, a civil war in Syria displaced over 6.8 million refugees across the world. Have students conduct research using primary and secondary sources on the Syrian refugee crisis.
 - Have students compare the Southeast Asian refugee experience in general and the Cambodian refugee experience in particular with the Syrian refugee experience.

2. Create a T-chart and title it “Refugees from the Past and Present,” with the left column labeled “Syrian Refugees” and the right column labeled “Southeast Asian/Cambodian Refugees.” In each column, have students answer the following questions pertaining to the different refugee populations:
 - What caused the refugee crisis?
 - What has the United States and other countries been doing about the Syrian refugee crisis?
 - Using a general world map, map out/compare the physical journeys of refugees from Cambodia with refugees from Syria. What similarities do you see? What differences?
 - Then, have students break into pairs or groups, and compare and contrast the different refugee experiences. Students should be prepared to discuss aloud their responses to the following questions:
 - Based on the reasons that the U.S. accepted certain Southeast Asians as refugees, should the U.S. have accepted/continue to accept Syrian refugees?
 - What factors determine the U.S. government’s decision to grant legal refugee status to a person?

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