**Refugees and Resettlement: A Comparison of Southeast Asian and Central American Refugees**

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| **Overview:**Since World War II, U.S policy toward refugees has changed from decade to decade, often motivated by shifting international priorities and domestic concerns. On April 30, 1975, the Fall of Saigon marked the end of the Vietnam War, with the communist North taking over the anti-communist South, and unifying the country into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The end of the war resulted in a large-scale migration of nearly 130,000 refugees fleeing communist rule and retaliation in the Indochina region, to the United States. Over the next twenty years, a total of three million people would flee Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. |
| **Lesson Summary:**In this lesson students will further their understanding of historiography by writing a detailed expository paper on refugees and resettlement post Vietnam War. The focus of this historiography will be on the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Students will utilize the sources provided but should also be encouraged to research their own sources as well. This lesson will challenge students to critically think, research, and write a historiographic expository essay about refugees and resettlement. This essay should convey their knowledge of the subject and should clearly communicate that understanding through their research and written composition. |
| **Grade Level:** Secondary |
| **Content Standards:*** **National Standard 27:** Understands how the Cold War and conflicts in Korean and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics. Understands the political elements of the Vietnam War (e.g., . . . the legacy of the war).
* **National World History Standard 43:** Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up. Understands political and social change in the developing countries of . . . Asia after World War II (e.g., . . . major social and economic forces that compelled many Vietnamese to seek refuge in foreign countries).
* **California History-Social Science Standard 11.9:** Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II. Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: . . . The Vietnam War.
* [**CS.**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377297)**1:** Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
* [**CS.2**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377298)**:** Students analyze 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.
* [**US.11.6.5**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377413)**:** Trace the advances and retreats of organized labor, from the creation of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to current issues of a postindustrial, multinational economy, including the United Farm Workers in California.
* [**US.11.8.5**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377428)**:** Describe the increased powers of the presidency in response to the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War.
* [**US.11.8.8**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377431)**:** Discuss forms of popular culture, with emphasis on their origins and geographic diffusion (e.g., jazz and other forms of popular music, professional sports, architectural and artistic styles).
* [**US.11.9.4**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377444)**:** List the effects of foreign policy on domestic policies and vice versa (e.g., protests during the war in Vietnam, the "nuclear freeze" movement).
* [**US.11.10.6**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377454)**:** Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965) and the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, with an emphasis on equality of access to education and to the political process.
* [**US.11.11.1**](https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/search/?q=*&selected_facet=standard:1377457)**:** Discuss the reasons for the nation's changing immigration policy, with emphasis on how the Immigration Act of 1965 and successor acts have transformed American society.
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| **Learning Objectives:**Students will be able to:* Describe the refugee crisis, its causes, and what was done to resolve it.
* Express a reasoned opinion on whether the United States owes a special obligation to resettle refugees from countries in which it fights wars.
* To identify how our changing immigration policies have transformed the nation.
* The challenges and threats the refugees faced after America withdrew from Vietnam.
* The challenges refugees faced in America once resettled here..
* Students will analyze the history and the ongoing debate surrounding the resettlement of refugees in the United States.
* Students will reflect on the plight of refugees both past and present and evaluate how the U.S government’s treatment of refugees has changed over time.
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| **Materials:**Primary:* [The Displaced Persons Act of 1948](https://www.trumanlibraryinstitute.org/the-displaced-persons-act-of-1948/)
* [Refugee Relief Act of 1953](https://immigrationhistory.org/item/1953-refugee-relief-act/)
* [Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962](https://www.law.cornell.edu/topn/migration_and_refugee_assistance_act_of_1962)
* [Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act (1975)](https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/APA/Historical-Essays/Growing-Diversity/Refugee-Crisis/)
* [United States Refugee Act of 1980](https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/refugee-act-1980/)
* [American Homecoming Act of 1988](http://warbabies.org/amerasian-acts-of-1982-1987/)
* [In Their Own Words](https://www.unhcr.org/spotlight/2021/05/asian-american-refugees-us-resettlement/)
* [Untold Narratives](https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1627&context=scripps_theses)

Secondary:* Changing Faces of the Central Valley - The Ethnic Presence
* CALIFORNIA BECOMES MELTING POT OF 1980'S - The New York Times 8-23-1981
* A Closer Look at Fresno’s Hmong Community - The New York Times 11-20-2019
* The Demography of California Immigrants - Public Policy Institute of California 2001
* [California’s Nearly Forgotten History of Resettling Vietnamese Refugees in 1975](https://www.kcrw.com/news/articles/californias-nearly-forgotten-history-of-resettling-vietnamese-refugees-in-1975)
* [How Southeast Asian Americans Refugees Helped Shape America’s Resettlement System](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/how-southeast-asian-american-refugees-helped-shape-america-s-resettlement-n1187961)
* [Immigration](https://www.searac.org/programming/national-state-policy-advocacy/immigration/)
* [Every Culture](https://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Laotian-Americans.html)
* [Loation Americans](https://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Laotian-Americans.html)
* [The Split Horn](https://www.pbs.org/splithorn/story1.html)
* [Fresno Bee Article](https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article216807055.html)
* [How SoCal Refugees Led the Movement to Teach More Kids About Laotian History](https://laist.com/news/laotian-history-ab1393-bill-california)
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| **Introductory Activity:*** Introduce Asian American heritage through a class discussion. Ask students what groups belong under the umbrella term "Asian Americans." Prompt students to talk about the differences between these groups. Is being Hmong American the same as being Korean American? Have them explain. If necessary, have students look at a map to help them discern which countries are Asian countries. This lesson will focus on the immigration of Southeast Asian peoples to California so emphasis should be put on students understanding where these peoples are from.
* Ask students to answer the following questions in a quick write prompt: What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee? If you’re not sure, think about recent debates about whether refugees from certain countries should be allowed in the United States and make your best prediction about the difference between the two terms? Ask students to share their writings.
* Tell students that the next learning activity in this unit will focus on the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees following the Vietnam War. Discuss with students what they think the terms “refugee”and “resettlement” mean. Encourage responses similar to a refugee being a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster; and resettlement as being the settlement of people in a different place. Ask students if they can think of which peoples from Southeast Asia during/after the Vietnam War would fall into these categories. . Remind students that both groups are often motivated by forces beyond their control. Review the difference between refugees and immigrants, this could be a war (refugees) or lack of economic opportunity (immigrants).
* Give students the “What is Historiography” handout and the expository essay rubric. Go over the handout with students ensuring their understanding of writing history. Explain that they will be writing an expository historiography about refugees and resettlement focusing on the Southeast Asian region following the Vietnam War, with a specific focus on the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Loation peoples. This essay should convey their knowledge of the subject and should clearly communicate that understanding through their research and written composition. Tell students they may use the sources provided as well as sources found through their own research.
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| **Learning Activity:*** Provide students with primary and secondary sources provided. Ask students to write a historiography of the Southeast Asian immigration experience to California including the continued challenges Asian Americans face today. This essay will be in four parts:
1. Give students access to the primary and secondary resources provided. Allow students a couple days to go through the materials and determine their question. They should use the Historical Question sheet provided. Have students determine the historical question they are going to attempt to answer. Tell students they may get ideas about what question they want to answer based on the primary and secondary sources provided about the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees after the Vietnam War. Encourage students to start some initial research of their own to determine their question.
2. Have students take 3-5 days to research their question and write an outline. Students may use the expository outline sheet provided.
3. The next phase will be writing the rough draft. Allow students time to write their rough draft. Students may use the rubric provided to guide them.
4. The final stage will be writing the final draft.
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| **Key Questions:*** How have refugees historically been treated in the United States? How does the current debate about refugees relate to past refugee policies?
* What are examples of how Southeast Asian refugees faced discrimination when they moved to the United States? Why were they being treated in this way?
* Why do you think the U.S. government created laws to allow so many Southeast Asian refugees into the U.S.? What does this say about the responsibility that the U.S. might have toward people abroad who have been affected by U.S. foreign policies?
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| **Extension Activity:**As an extension activity the following lesson plans may be used either prior to or after this lesson or the whole unit.* [Human Consequences of U.S Foreign Policy Decisions](https://pov-tc.pbs.org/pov/downloads/2009/pov-betrayal-lesson-plan.pdf)
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| **Assessment:**Assessment should be made throughout the learning activity process, teachers may use the provided rubric or one of their own. |