
GENERAL ETHNIC STUDIES

Sample Lesson 1: Migration Stories and Oral History

Theme: History and Movement

Disciplinary Area: General Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies Values and Principles Alignment: 1, 3, 6

Standards Alignment:

CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Historical Interpretation 1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10.1, 3, 8, 10; WHST.9–10.2, 4, 6, 7; SL.9–10.1, 4, 5, 6

CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.9–10.1, 5, 9, 10a

LESSON PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW:

As part of a larger unit on migration, this lesson guides students to explore their personal stories around how migration has impacted their families. The students will learn about how their own family migration stories connect to their local history.

Key Terms and Concepts: oral history, migration, interviewing, archive, memory

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to ...):

- Conduct oral history interviews, transcribe narratives, develop research questions, and build upon interpersonal communication skills
- Learn from each other by being exposed to the unique migration stories of their peers
- Strengthen their public speaking skills through interviewing and presenting their research findings

Essential Questions:

1. How does your family and/or community's story connect to your local history?

Lesson Steps/Activities:

1. Develop an electronic visual presentation for the lesson opening that highlights several major waves of migration (both voluntary and forced). The slides should also include data on migration to the local community and racial and ethnic demographics.

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2. Introduce the oral history project to the students by letting them know that they will have an opportunity to learn more about their family's and/or community's migration histories. Task each student with interviewing one family member (preferably an elder) and one community member. The interviews will focus on the interviewee's migration stories, childhood, and memory of the area. The interviews should also seek opinions on how changes in policy, institutions, and community attitudes could (have) improve(d) the interviewee's experience. You may want to show a clip of an interview from a digital oral history archive (see recommended sources for examples) to provide students an example. Teachers should be sensitive to varying family dynamics and have alternative assignments or activities for students that may have difficulty identifying a family member to interview.
 3. After introducing the project, provide an overview of the mechanics of oral history. Discuss the types of equipment and materials students will need (an audio or video recording device or application, a field notebook); help students come up with questions, discussing the differences between closed and open-ended questions; and begin to introduce transcribing.
 4. During the next few class sessions, allow students to engage in peer interviewing. Students should conduct mini oral history interviews (no more than seven to ten minutes) with each other. After each interview, give students time to reflect on the interviewing process, what they learned, memory, and storytelling. Using the "think, pair, share" method, have students write their own reactions to the interviewing process on a sheet of paper, then have them share with a peer, and finally to the larger class. Alternatively, students can add their ideas to a whole-group virtual discussion board, or write their ideas on a slip of paper as an exit ticket or as a warm up to prepare them for a whole-class discussion at the beginning of the next class period.
 - If students have access to headsets and computers in the classroom or nearby, they can use the remaining time to practice transcribing their mini oral history interviews. After two to three mock oral history interviews with their peers, students should be prepared to carry out their own full interviews with a family elder and a community member.
 5. For the overall project, students are expected to conduct a 30-minute oral history interview with their interviewees and transcribe at least one interview. This is given as a homework assignment and should be completed over two weeks. Students are also encouraged to ask their interviewees for copies of old pictures, images of relics that hold some significant meaning or value to them, and/or other primary sources that speak to their migration story.

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6. After completing the interview and transcribing, students take excerpts from the interview, as well as pictures or other primary sources they may have from their interviewee, and create a three to five minute presentation (either a video, electronic visual presentation, Prezi, or poster board) discussing their interviewee's migration story, connection to the area, and a brief reflection on their experience conducting the interview. Students are allotted three days to work on their presentations in class and as a homework assignment. Students are given an opportunity to practice their presentations with peer-to-peer and peer-to-small-group sessions before their presentation to the whole class.
 7. Before students begin their presentations, teachers review or establish norms about presenting and audience expectations. During the presentations, students in the audience should be active listeners, taking notes and asking follow-up questions at the end of each presentation. Presenters should use this time to demonstrate their public speaking skills—maintaining eye contact, using “the speaker’s triangle,” and avoiding reading slides or poster boards.
 8. As part of the culmination of this project, using these guiding questions students make broader connections among all the migration stories represented in the classroom.
 - How are our migration stories similar?
 - How are they different?
 - How does knowing the shared migration stories of your peers impact how we relate to one another?
 9. After completing the assignment, teachers and students can share the projects with the broader student body, their families, and communities by posting them on a class/school website, displaying poster boards around the class, or by coordinating a community presentation event.

Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection:

- Peer assessments are used to help students refine their oral history presentations prior to presenting them to the class. The teacher should visit the practice groups and provide constructive feedback to students who are having difficulty with the assignment.
- During the student presentations, the teacher can evaluate the students' presentation skills in the context of the grade-level expectations in the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, especially the standards for Speaking and Listening.
- Teachers can use the students' graphic organizers to determine how effectively they have absorbed the key concepts and connections from the student presenters.

Materials and Resources:

- Oral History Association, “How Do I Engage Students in Oral History Projects?”: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link1>
- Online Archive of California: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link2>
- SNCC (The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) Digital Gateway: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link3>