

Summary Description

This is the ninth in a series of 12 lessons that introduces the student to Asian American history.

Learning Objectives

To learn a few facts about Vietnamese American history and culture.

Approximate Time for Lesson

40 minutes

Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

References:

"From Refugees To Americans: Thirty Years Of Vietnamese Immigration To The United States",
<http://www.ilw.com/articles/2006,0313-campi.shtm>

"Tran Becomes Rosemead's First Vietnamese Mayor", Angela Pang, *AsianWeek*, April 4, 2007 -
<http://www.asianweek.com/2007/04/04/tran-becomes-rosemeads-first-vietnamese-mayor/>

Materials Needed

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
 - a. World Map (go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>)

Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Last lesson we learned about the Japanese Americans. What was one thing that the Japanese Americans brought over to America (hint: it has to do with the art of folding paper)? [Engage the Student in discussion and arrive at the conclusion that origami was brought over by the Japanese Americans].
2. Teacher: Today, we're going to learn about another Asian American people, called the Vietnamese Americans.
3. Teacher: [Pointing to Vietnam on the World Map - use the zoom out function by clicking on the minus sign] Vietnamese Americans came from here, a country called "Vietnam".
4. Teacher: The Vietnamese Americans didn't first go to Hawaii like the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Americans. They had a very different situation from other Asian Americans. Their country was at war.

Lesson (30 minutes)

1. Teacher: The first big group of Vietnamese Americans came to the United States in 1975, that was about 30 years ago. They moved here because, like I said before, their whole country was fighting a war not against another country, but against themselves. Do you know what it is called when groups of people in the same country is fighting a war? [\[Get Student's response\]](#).
2. Teacher: It's called a "civil war". Vietnam was in civil war - the north part of the country against the south part of the country. In fact, Americans were helping South Vietnamese fight the civil war. But in the end, North Vietnam won. And as the North Vietnamese were catching all the South Vietnamese who tried to fight the North, these South Vietnamese had to leave their country or else end up as prisoners.
3. Teacher: Since the Americans were helping the South Vietnamese, these people became refugees. Refugees are people who leave their country to go to another country for protection. Anyway, the South Vietnamese came to California and Texas with the help of the Americans. Now, if you just left your country and landed in a new country that spoke a different language and ate different foods, how would you feel about that? [\[Engage the Student in discussion, but ultimately make that point that it would be uncomfortable living in a new and foreign country\]](#).
4. Teacher: What was probably the toughest thing was that the South Vietnamese were considered enemies by the North Vietnamese and so the South Vietnamese couldn't go back to their home country. Remember the Chinese, Korean and Japanese Americans? At least they could go back to their countries if they wanted. But the South Vietnamese were no longer welcome in their home country.
5. Teacher: Well, things got even worse for the South Vietnamese in Vietnam. The South Vietnamese people were put in prisons, but at the same time, China (remember them?) declared war on Vietnam. Well, this created a second big group of Vietnamese to come to the U.S. - these Vietnamese were mostly South Vietnamese who escaped from prison and those running away from the Chinese.
6. Teacher: But the Vietnamese Americans were a strong people. They didn't let even a war get in the way of their dreams of being happy here. And they found out that, in the United States, that going to school and learning was the best way for their children to be happy in this new country.
7. Teacher: And the children of Vietnamese Americans also knew that their parents expected them to be one of the smartest in class. So the children studied hard because the terrible lessons of the past of war were still so close to them. Now, what do you think the mommies and daddies did to make money for the family? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
8. Teacher: Well, let me put it this way, when you are in a place where people speak a different language, do you think it's easier to work with someone who speaks a different language, or to work by yourself by opening up a small shop? [\[Engage the Student in](#)

conversation but make the point that the communication barrier made it so that Vietnamese Americans, opened up small shops].

9. Teacher: And so, the mommies and daddies opened up small shops like places to fix your car and nail salons (where mommies and other grown up girls go to make their nails pretty). In fact, the Vietnamese were so good at running nail salons that one Vietnamese American man named Charlie Ton helped open up over 940 of his nail salons in Wal-Mart Superstores across America (*note to Teacher: His nail salons are called Regal Nail Salon*).
10. Teacher: And now, because the Vietnamese Americans worked so hard and were very smart, there are many important Vietnamese Americans living here. Some examples are John Tran, first Vietnamese American to become a mayor of a city in the United States (*note to Teacher: John was named mayor of the City of Rosemead in California in 1997*), CNN news anchorwoman Betty Nguyen, US astronaut Eugene Trinh, and TV actor Dustin Nguyen.
11. Teacher: One other final happy thing about the Vietnamese Americans, they can now go back to their country to visit so I bet many of them are happy about that.
12. Teacher: There are now over one million Vietnamese Americans in this country and in a couple of years, Vietnamese Americans will be the second largest Asian American group in America (first place going to the Chinese Americans).
13. Teacher: OK - time for some review questions. Stand up and get in front of me. [Wait until the Student goes in front of you and asking the following:
 - a. Why did the Vietnamese come to America? Any one of three reasons: 1) to escape the civil war, 2) to escape the prison camps after the civil war, and 3) to escape during the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.
 - b. Once the Vietnamese left for America, what was probably one of the hardest things that was true for them (hint: could they every go back?)? They could not go back to their country.
 - c. What kind of shop did the Vietnamese Americans like to start? Nail salons.
 - d. Can Vietnamese Americans now go back to Vietnam? Yes.

Help the Student review the materials and correct any errors with the Student].

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Teacher: [Clapping] You did AWESOME! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the Vietnamese Americans? [Engage in conversation with the Student, research questions on the Internet, and close the lesson].