



**American Immigration Law Foundation  
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan**

**Oral History  
Creating an Immigration Museum**

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

**Goal:** *Oral History – Creating an Immigration Museum* will aid students in attaining a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience through a series of Oral History projects—interviews, writing, research and art—culminating in the creation of an Immigration Museum.

**Objectives:** By the end of this project students will be able to:

- Write a narrative that includes vivid details from the interview subject's story and conveys the major life lesson of the story.
- Understand what oral history is and why it is important in offering new perspectives about immigration.
- Describe the various factors that lead immigrants to leave a country of origin and come to a new country.
- Ask probing interview questions that lead to a sense of understanding about interview subject's life.
- Curate a museum exhibit that educates the school and local community about what they have learned through their oral histories.

**Materials:**

- Chinatown Historical Society handout (attached)
- Foam board for displaying quotations from students' essays during the museum
- Tape recorders and cassette tapes for students to record interviews
- Poster board for showing the writing process and a pie chart from immigration survey
- School laptops for an oral history webquest
- School laptops for students to develop a Powerpoint slide that will be a part of the Museum display
- Large 8'x10' display boards for museum display
- Video: "[Carved in Silence](#)"
- Video: "[God Grew Tired of Us](#)" (both movies feature oral histories of immigrants).

- Rubric for project (attached)
- Handouts (attached)

#### **Timeline:**

**December** - Students are introduced the concept of Oral History. They will read a variety of oral histories, choose an interview subject who has experienced immigration, and develop questions to ask. Students will also learn about how oral histories offer a vital perspective in understanding oral history. To extend this appreciation, students will visit the Chinese Historical Society on a field trip.

**January** - Students will conduct interviews using tape recorders. They will then prepare transcripts and write detailed narratives about an immigrant experience. Students will also collect artifacts that they will display during their exhibit.

**February** - Students create artifact boxes, including pictures and objects that were important to the interview subject. The classes will curate a museum exhibit incorporating these display boxes, 2 large exhibit displays, and a slideshow incorporating student work. The exhibit will include a section covering the history and significance of oral history in the past. This exhibit will be open for the students' families, the school community, as well as the larger community. During the school's Exhibition week, the last week of May, students will each present his/her project for a panel of teachers, students, and community members.

**Extension Activities:** Webquest on oral history: (attachment)

**Culminating Activity: Immigration Museum (See pictures enclosed)**

**Assessment: See attached rubrics.** Students assessed according to the rubric according to 3 peers and a teacher.

#### **California Standards:**

1. The ability to write a narrative. **Writing Standard 2.1:** Write expository Essay"

2. The ability to reflect on the meaning of theme present in a narrative. **Literary Response and Analysis Standard 3.6:** Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters' actions and images. "

3. An understanding of what oral history is, and why it is important. **Social Studies Standard:** Continued emphasis is placed on the everyday lives, problems, and accomplishments of people, their role in developing social, economic, and political structures, as well as in establishing and spreading ideas that helped transform the world forever."

4. An understanding of scale. 1.2 Interpret and use ratios in different contexts (e.g., batting averages, miles per hour) to show the relative sizes of two quantities, using appropriate notations (alb, a to b, a:b).

*5. The use of proportions. Math Standard, Number Sense 1.3: Use proportions to solve problems. Use cross-multiplication as a method for solving such problems, understanding it as the multiplication of both sides of an equation by a multiplicative inverse.*

*6. Algebra and Functions 2.1: Convert one unit of measurement to another.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Core: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oral History Preparation

**Task:** For SSR you will read through this pamphlet about Oral History. For each bullet point, you will restate what it says in your own words. Then, you will answer the questions on your own.

### Oral History

Oral history records the living memories and feelings of all kinds of people, many otherwise hidden from history, and creates a more vivid picture of our past.

### What is Oral History?

- Oral history is the recording of people's memories. It is the living history of everyone's unique life experiences.
- Oral history records people's experiences on sound and videotape. It is a vital tool for our understanding of the recent past. No longer are we dependent only on the written word.
- Oral history enables people who have been hidden from history to be heard, and for those interested in their past to record personal experiences and those of their families and communities.
- Oral history is new and exciting because it is interactive: it is shared history and a rare chance to actually talk to history face to face.
- Oral history preserves everyone's past for the future.

### How Can Oral History Be Used?

- Oral history brings a new dimension to local and family history.
- Oral history is used in schools by young people to explore their own community: talking about the past brings young and old together.
- Oral history is used in community and residential work with older people to encourage a sense of worth and continued contribution to society.
- Oral history in museums, galleries and heritage displays is used to inform and brings displays to life.
- Oral history collections at local archives and libraries have emerged as important new sources for all those interested in history.
- Oral history is an important source for many radio and television programs.

### Answer:

What is Oral History?

How Can Oral History Be Used?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Core: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oral History Preparation

Day 1:

1. *What is an Oral History?*
2. *What is the purpose of Oral Histories?*
3. *Vocabulary:*
  - a) **Interview** -a way for one person to ask questions of a person who is knowledgeable about a specific topic.
  - b) **Interviewer** -(you) the person who has done the research and who is asking the questions.
  - c) **Interviewee** -(them) the person who has experienced the topic and is answering the questions.
4. *Interviewees and Topic Focus (besides immigration)*

	Interviewee Name and Phone Number	Possible Topics	Yes? Bio?
1			
2			
3			
4			

(Be sure to have the person fill out an Autobiographical Questionnaire to help guide you in creating your questions)

5. *Research!*

- a. When immigrated? What happened in home country then? What happened in the US then?
- b. What was the culture like in the home country? What was the culture like in the US?
- c. Push and Pull Factors (Why did the person who you are interviewing immigrate to the US?)

6. *Questions*

- a. Do not ask them yes or no questions. You do not get any information.
- b. Do not ask leading questions. It makes them uncomfortable.
- c. Ask open-ended questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How?
- d. Questions to ask your neighbor:
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  - iv.
- e. Questions to ask your interviewee:
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  - iv.

**Your homework tonight is to start calling possible interviewees. You also need to brainstorm at least 3 more questions that you would like to ask your interviewee.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Core: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oral History Preparation

Day 2:

1. *Vocabulary:*

- a. **Equipment** -for oral histories this includes the tapes, tape recorders, transcription equipment, and a computer.
- b. **Index** -this is an easy reference guide to the interview. It includes the time count number on the tape as well as the page number on the transcription. This is similar to an index in the back of a book.
- c. **Transcribe/Transcription** -this is a word-for-word record of the interview (including the urns and ahs). This is usually used for people who are writing research reports on your topic. The document usually lasts much longer than the tape and so it is important to have for the files. It also makes it so that a deaf person could also enjoy the oral history.

2. *Practice with the equipment!*

- a. Recording starts and ends after about 5 seconds.
- b. Microphones can be finicky.
- c. Getting used to hearing your recorded voice.

3. *Set up the interviews, allow at least a week in between so that you can review and reflect.*

4. *Prepare for the interview*

a. **Introduction:** This is \_\_\_\_\_. I am interviewing \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. The subject or topic for this interview is \_\_\_\_\_ for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade exhibition project at Lionel Wilson.

b. **Closing:** This has been \_\_\_\_\_. I have interviewed \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time. This concludes our first interview.

c. **2<sup>nd</sup> Interview Introduction:** This is \_\_\_\_\_. I am interviewing \_\_\_\_\_ for the second time. Today is \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. The topic for today is \_\_\_\_\_. This will conclude our interviews.

d. **2<sup>nd</sup> Interview Closing:** This has been \_\_\_\_\_. I have interviewed \_\_\_\_\_ for the second time. This concludes our interviewing sessions. Thank you for all of your help on my project.

e. Tapes

- f. Review Research and Bio
- g. Review Questions
- h. Call to confirm the appointment

5. *What you will need for the interview:*

- a. Pen/pencil
- b. Notebook for notes and names that will need to be spell checked by the interviewee.
- c. Tape recorder
- d. Tape
- e. Research information

6. *After each interview:*

- a. Write a reflection -how did it go?
- b. Review the tape to see if you missed anything important
- c. Transcribe!
- d. Index
- e. Write the research paper
- f. Have the interviewee read the transcription, index, and research paper for their help - spelling, ideas, etc.

## **Chinese Historical Society of America Museum and Learning Center**

Program Curriculum

CHSA Museum Treasure Hunt

Grade Levels: 6-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. What building does the Chinese Historical Society of America now occupy, and who designed the building?
2. What is the earliest date of Chinese presence in America?
3. There is a political cartoon that shows China as a dragon in the middle of many different animals. What do you think is the meaning of the cartoon?
4. After the 1906 Earthquake, one of the Chinese Leaders printed an article in a newspaper that outlined the three ways that the Chinese could protest the proposal to relocate Chinatown to another part of San Francisco. What was the name of the newspaper?

What were his three objectives?

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- 
5. In 1882, the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. What did this do?
  6. Chinese Americans have fought in many wars, what is the name of the Chinese American who fought in the Civil War?
  7. Most of the Chinese Immigrants came from one region in China. What is the name of this region? Bonus: What dialect do they speak?
  8. How long did the voyage take from Hong Kong to San Francisco in the 1860's?

9. What industries or jobs did the Chinese work in?

10. In 1965, Immigration laws were changed when the United states government was influenced by the Civil Rights era. How were the laws changed?

11. What is the Chinese Population in the following states from the year 2000?

California \_\_\_\_\_

New York \_\_\_\_\_

Illinois \_\_\_\_\_

Texas \_\_\_\_\_

Montana \_\_\_\_\_

Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

Hawaii \_\_\_\_\_

Florida \_\_\_\_\_

What state has the largest population of Chinese Americans?

What state has the smallest population of Chinese Americans?

What percentage of the overall population is Chinese American?

**Reflection Question:**

After looking around the museum today, what type of experience do you think Chinese Immigrants and Chinese Americans have had here in America? What hardships do you think they faced? What successes do you think they have achieved?

## Jasmine Galeana's Essay

Imagine living in a place where you would have to use the world around you and everything there was to learn you would have to learn it all by yourself. This the way of life Mario lived in. In his family of twelve Mario Perez emigrated from Guerrero Mexico. He has a family of twelve. In his family of twelve he has five brothers, and four sisters including his mom and dad. As a child his family was not too poor but he was also not rich. Mario's family didn't even have enough money to buy him the simplest toy car he'd played with rocks that he'd find in the ground. Mario's mom had no job but his dad did. His dad worked in a camp cutting grass. While his dad worked Mario milked the cows. Mario's mom wouldn't only use the milk to drink but she also to make cheese out of it. She would also make hand made "tortillas", or she would buy them at the nearest store. Mario's dad will kill a pig once in a while. Mario's dad also raised pigs from the farm land they owned. Besides, Mario's family not being rich his family owned a lot of territory. In Mario's dad territory he would gather mangos, coconuts, and a bunch of sorts of fruits. Mario thought himself to climb huge trees, and cut the coconuts. Mario would also swim under water to catch crabs. Since Mario lived near the ocean. Mario's family utilized everything around them because they believed everything has a use.

Mario had chosen to come to the United States to get a job like any other immigrant with no papers he had to cross the border. He paid a "coyote", which is a person you pay a lot of money to help you cross the border. Then the coyote and Mario walked to a house by the border. He stayed in the house for half a night he'd climbed the fence and went to the other side of the border. This was too easy for him to climb the fence because he climbed trees even taller than the border. Luckily he didn't get caught.

Mario walked from the other side of the border of Tijuana to San Diego. From San Diego Mario bought a ticket to L.A. a cousin picked him up and brought him to Oakland. In Mexico he left half of his family members back where he lived. Here in the United States

Mario had a bunch of family members here in the United States. His goal was to get a new and better job than the one he had in Mexico. Mario felt when he crossed the border the key to a new life.

One of the challenges Mario faced was happening to learn English. The way he learned English was by going to English classes. Mario only took the classes for several months but he learned a lot of English. He was learning more English by hearing people speak and watching TV by taking English classes he learned how to read in English. Another challenge Mario met was to settle. He had no place to live. Mario lived in a garage where he paid a little bit of rent. He felt lucky to have a place to sleep in.

Mario's family members were paying for him while he got a job. He asked one of his cousins if he would ask the owner of his job where he worked to please get him a job. He worked in packing bottles. He would get paid \$4.24 an hour. In a month he made about \$640 just enough to pay his rent. He paid \$200 per month as his rent. From the money he'd buy himself food. Mario would send money to his mom and dad. Getting paid \$4.25 was a lot for Mario because in Mexico he worked in a hotel and got paid .50 cents per hour.

Adapting to his new life was harder than he thought it will be. He said he actually suffered more here than in Mexico. He had to adapt to a whole new universe. For example he got used to cooking his own 'tortillas'. In Mexico he would buy them hot and better made. Mario also had to adapt to always putting his seat belt on because in Mexico it is not really a law to put your seat belt on. Adapting to the weather was another thing for Mario. Where he lived it was always hot. Right here it is cold but Mario didn't get sick because the climate didn't affect him so much. He had summer clothes and no winter clothes. The hardest thing was the language but he went to English classes. Mario said they will come in good use. If you learn some English you have better chances of getting a job. If you can't find a job do your own business. Mario also began his own business in a flea market. He said that his business really helped him get more money. Mario also

said always have faith in something you want. As Mario crossed the border he had faith in that he won't be caught and he wasn't. That's why he believes in faith after all Mario said if there is a way out there is way out.

## Exhibition Visual Display:

Due: (DATE)

- 1) Memorabilia box: Black-painted shoebox Pictures, artifacts: a collection that represents moments and lessons from the life of the interviewee. (at least 5 items)
- 2) Illustrated timeline: 11X14 illustrated timeline showing the 6 most important events in the life of the interview subject. Use color.
- 3) Family album: Create a collection of pictures and illustrations that illustrate moments in the life of your interview subject. (at least 10 pictures/copies of pictures) Decorate the cover.
- 4) Diorama: Re-create a scene from the life of your interview subject using the shoebox. Make it look good!

- Shoeboxes painted black on the outside. If you can't manage that at home, I'll have supplies at school to paint them black after school on Tues. Jan. 30.
- Typed 10-sentence caption should explain the scene/events/pictures/objects.
- Must be professional, thoughtfully done-if it's not done well, you'll bring it back.
- Be creative!