



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

HERITAGE BOXES

Grade Level: Primary School and Secondary School (2nd -5th Grades)

Goal: Students will obtain a cross-curricular knowledge using relevant literature and information obtained through family member interviews. Students will understand the value of becoming familiar with their heritage and culture through the research of an ancestor.

NOTE: This is a project-based learning activity that requires several months and the support of families and the school community to implement. The interconnected activities will foster an overall understanding and appreciation for the diversity in your school and our nation.

Objectives: Students will:

- Listen to stories about immigration.
- Interview relatives and look at primary and secondary resource information.
- Research various factor in immigration history.
- Use a map to locate the origin of the ancestor.
- Write a narrative to describe the life of one of their ancestors.
- Create shadow boxes to represent their ancestry.

Materials: Books as recommended by the AILF booklist for appropriate grade levels. Access to the internet. 8 1/2 X 11 inch plexi-glass box frames, photocopy machine, photocopy compatible transparency paper, mat-board (cut to 8 1/2 X 11), X-ACTO knife, metallic paint, glue, hot-glue. Each student will provide photocopied family photos and “artifacts” or replicas of heirlooms.

Procedure/Schedule

November/December-The Interview

Read books related to immigration-define: ancestor, maternal, paternal, heirloom, and artifact. What is an immigrant? Why do people immigrate to other countries? Ask if the students know anybody who is an immigrant. Discuss some of the difficulties immigrants face. What is ancestry? Look at a family tree. Have students make a basic family tree.

Assign each student to interview a family member (older generation) over the Thanksgiving Break, a period when many families reunite or contact their relatives. Have the students ask the oldest family member what they remember about their grandparents (the students 4th or 5th generation). Students will ask about school, home-life, hardships, the cost of common items, and stories of immigration. This gives students the opportunity to interact inter-generationally and become familiar with primary resources. Students will share their questions and answers in late November. In December they will begin to think about which ancestor they want to investigate with the information they have generated.

January/February-The Collection

Students will collect artifacts (i.e. copies of family photos, stamps, coins, etc from their country of origin). They will color-copy or recreate the photographs. They will begin to write a narrative of their ancestry.

The ancestor I investigated was named _____.
He/She was born in (city, country) in (year). As a profession my
ancestor was a (profession). Some of the most interesting facts I
discovered were _____.

Make a geography link by having students locate their ancestor's origin on a map.

March/April-Final Draft and Preparation

The final narrative should be typed out in a 20-inch bold font, printed onto white standard paper and then photocopied onto transparency paper (photocopy specific works best). The precut mat boards can be sent home for the students to work with their families in assembling the objects they have collected.

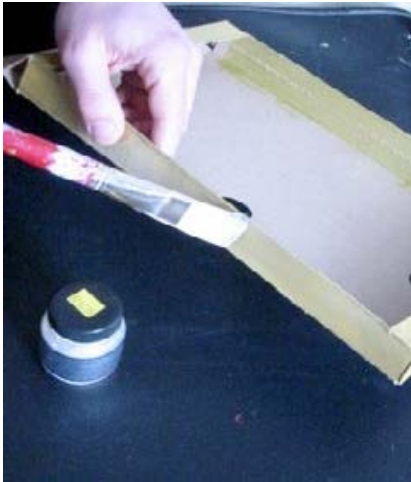


Make sure that none of the objects to be glued onto the matboard are thicker than 1 inch so that the plexi-glass can be placed over it during final assembly.



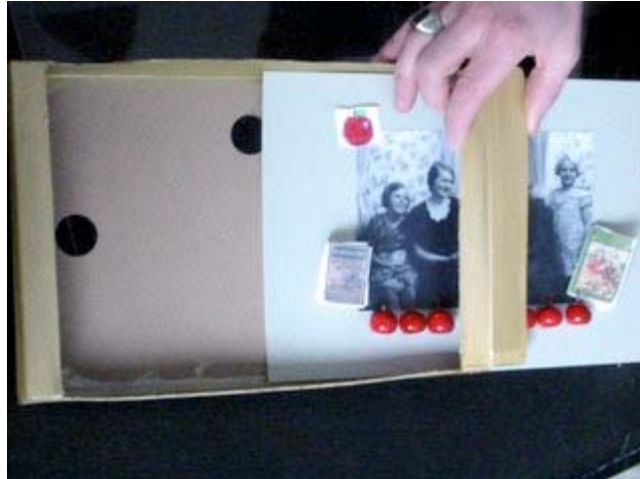
The inside of the plexi-glass frames have cardboard backing. Remove this backing and cut out the side without holes leaving 1-inch on each of the 8 1/2 inch sides. Paint the visible edges of the cardboard.

May-Assembly



Slide the mat board into the cardboard. Place the plexi-glass over the cardboard.

The mat-boards, with the objects glued on, are now ready for assembly. Warm glue the transparencies onto the edges of the cardboard backing.



Students can also use the Grandparent Project to gather information about their grandparents and as an extension in lower grades they can begin to ask their grandparents important questions about their ancestry. Many students will bring in extra materials, which can be used in the creation of a book.

Have each student share his or her final project. Display the boxes and books for the families and the school community.

