

Unit 3: Brown Amerika

Lesson 2: Packing a Suitcase

Developed by Pinoy Teach (www.pinoyteach.com)

Background

In all human societies, people want a better life, and some take the opportunity to move to a new place in search of food, shelter, safety, better education, job opportunities, and hospitable weather, to name a few. Along with those individuals and families who take on this journey, they find that there are costs and benefits to moving to a new place.

Connections to NCSS Standards

Culture: The students explore and ask questions about the nature of culture and specific aspects of culture, and the influence of those aspects on human behavior.

Time, Continuity, and Change: The students expand their understanding of the past and of historical concepts and inquiry, and recognize that interpretations are influenced by individual experiences, societal values, and cultural traditions.

People, Places, and Environments: The students relate their personal experiences to happenings in other environmental contexts and analyze human behavior in relation to its physical and cultural environment.

Individual Development and Identify: The students explain self in relation to others in the society and culture.

Lesson Objectives

The students will be able to:

- experience how it feels to make important decisions before and after moving to a new country

- validate student immigrant experiences
- compare/contrast historical immigration to present day
- examine the Filipino American immigrant experience

Time: three 1-hour sessions

Materials

- Reading on Filipino American immigration, [Pinoy Teach](#): “Across Ocean of Dreams”
- Worksheet on “Packing A Suitcase” and answer key
- Reading on [Pinoy Teach](#): “Philippine Migratory Waves to United States”
- Historical Photographs of Filipino Americans (Cordova, F. (1983), [Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans](#))
- “Packing A Suitcase: Problem Solver” (pdf)
- “Immigrant Inference Chart” (pdf)
- “Journey Through the World” Journal

Procedure

A. Opening: Across Oceans of Dreams

1. Compare the act of immigrating to the act of moving to a new school. Ask the students to reflect in their journal the following questions:
 - a. How many of you have ever moved to a new school?
 - b. Where did you come from?
 - c. How did moving make you feel?
 - d. What decisions did you and your family have to make before you moved?
 - e. How has the move affected you? In what ways have you changed or grown?
2. After the students have written their thoughts down, allow some time for them to share with the class, and to use their information to discuss the following questions:

- a. Why do people move?
- b. What decisions do people make when moving to a new place?
- c. What experiences do they have migrating (immigrating) to a new place?
3. Next, tell the class that we are going to look at how it feels to make important decisions before and after moving to a new country. We are going to specifically look at the experiences of Filipino Americans as they moved to America during the 1930's, to help us address the following questions:
 - a. How does it feel to be an immigrant?
 - b. What kinds of decisions do immigrants make when moving to a new country?
 - c. How is the Filipino American immigrant experience unique? What characteristics/qualities would you use to describe their experience?
 - d. How is this similar to the immigration experience?
4. Hand out a copy of "Across Oceans of Dreams" from the student workbook, Pinoy Teach (Halagao and Cordova, 2001), and ask the students to read the brief historical background of Filipino migration to America. Remind the students to take notes by circling or underlining key words or phrases that addresses the above questions.
5. When the students are done, have them complete the "Immigrant Inference Chart" on their own, using their key words and phrases.
6. Next, have the students share their inferences on their chart in a class discussion of Filipinos migrating to America and comparing them to other migrant ethnic groups.

B. Packing a Suitcase: A Filipino Experience

1. Ask the students to close their eyes, as you pass out the "Problem Solver" worksheet. Tell the students, with their eyes still closed,

have them listen to a fictitious account of an early Filipino who immigrated to the United States in the 1930's:

"It is the 1930's and you live in the Philippines. You are 18 years old. It has been a hard day. You've just worked 10 hours in the rice field and you are exhausted. Your shirt is dirty and sweat is dripping from your forehead. All you want to do is eat supper and sleep.

The next day, you meet a representative from the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association. You shake hands. He notices that you have rough hands and tells you about the wonderful work on the sugar plantations in Hawaii. He explains that the contract is for three years with all expenses paid to get there.

You go to bed but you can't sleep. You think about it all night. You remember the countless stories in America - "the land of milk and honey." You realize how hard your life is in the Philippines and you want to improve it. In the morning you decide to accept the contract and leave for Hawaii. You pull your one tattered suitcase from under your bed and you begin packing your things."

2. Have the students open their eyes and have the students read and answer the problem on their "Problem Solver" worksheet:

Time: 1930's

Place: Philippines

Problem: You are preparing to move to America via steamliner. You are not coming back for at least 10 years - or not at all! You have booked passage in the steerage compartment. You are allowed one suitcase to pack what you need, which you will need

to have in our possession throughout your entire trip.

- a. What 7 items will you bring with you?
- b. What 7 items would you take to survive in America?

A car is scheduled to pick you up in 15 minutes! Remember, there might be a possibility that you will not return to your home, again...

3. As the students are thinking of their seven items to pack, keep time (15 minutes), and tell the class to think on their own about the items they would bring.
4. After 15 minutes, divide the class into groups of 4-5 people, forming "families."
5. Tell the students that they are to cooperate with their family to discuss which 7 items among their individual lists, they as a family would bring in order for them to survive living in America. Encourage the families to become creative in the consensus process. Allow another 15 minutes for each group to brainstorm with each other.
6. When time is up, have a "family member" write their 7 selected items on the board and have another present the reasons for each of their selected items.

C. Closing: Migratory Waves

1. Share with the class the "Migratory Waves" of Filipinos coming to America.
2. Present historical photographs of early Filipino Americans who arrived to America in the 1930's. (Note: Fred Cordova's, Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans (1983), provides a wealth of visuals for this lesson, as well as, first hand interviews with Filipino Americans sharing their own experiences!)
3. As the students carefully view the photographs, allow the students to key in on

impressions, expressions, and observations to add to what they can infer about the Filipino American Immigrant Experience.

4. Have the students refer back to the class "Immigrant Inference Chart" to include the students' observations and their inferences.
5. When done, have each student review the class collected inferences to write up a "generalization" of their overall understanding the Filipino American Immigrant Experience:
 - a. How does it feel to be a Filipino immigrant of America?
 - b. What kinds of decisions did Filipino immigrants have to make before coming to America?
 - c. How is the Filipino American Immigrant experience unique?

Suggested Assessment

For homework, students pretend they are an immigrant today who writes a letter back home describing their lives and experiences in America.

Enrich/Extend

Compare and contrast the early Filipino American Immigration Experience with the immigrating experience of another ethnic group.

Plot your family's port of entry on a U.S. map and trace their route with a string to where they reside today.

Have the students take a citizen test to stimulate the experience of learning and exhibiting knowledge about a new place (including their home country).

Visit your local Filipino American organization or community center.

References and Resources

A Century of Challenge and Change: The Filipino American Story

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Print

1. Halagao, Patricia and Timoteo Cordova. Pinoy Teach. 2001.
 - “Across Ocean of Dreams”
 - “Philippine Migratory Waves to United States”
2. Worksheet on “Packing A Suitcase” and answer key (pdf)
3. Cordova, Fred. (1983). Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans. Demonstration Project for Asian Americans.