

- Following the guidance given in the program, help students to create their own good luck dragons. Needed materials include white cloth, paints (including red), a stapler, paintbrushes, red and gold tinsel, strips of fabric and wire wreath rings. Students can use their creations in a dragon dance.
- Invite Vietnamese Americans or Vietnamese citizens living in the area to visit your class and discuss their culture and heritage. Prepare for the visit by asking students to think of questions they want to ask the visitors. Encourage visitors to bring pictures or other objects from Vietnam. After the visits, students can create a class bulletin board using the information they learned.
- People from all over the world have introduced new foods to the United States. Encourage students to describe the special foods their family eats and discuss the origins of these different foods. As a follow-up, students can bring in empty packaging or pictures of their favorite foods to use to create a class grocery store.
- Share Michele Maria Surat's *Angel Child, Dragon Child* with your students (Raintree Publishers, 1983). This book describes the experiences of Ut, a Vietnamese girl, after she and most of her family immigrate to the United States. Ask students to discuss Ut's story and to identify how her experiences are similar to and different from experiences they have had. Other follow-up activities to use with this story can be found at www2.lhric.org/pocantico/vietnam/vietnam.htm.
- Rice farmers often use buffalo to help in the rice paddies. Divide your class into groups of four to find out about other kinds of animals people use to help them perform work. Share with students what is meant by domestication. Students can research horses, oxen, buffalo, donkeys, mules, camels and llamas to find out how these animals are used, what people have used them for, and why these animals are suited to a particular type of work. Students can present their findings by creating posters and preparing oral presentations.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- stmnftsc.melb.catholic.edu.au/kidseyes/vietnam/
"Kid's Eyes on Asia" was created by a class in Australia and presents their study of Vietnam.
- mcel.pacificu.edu/as/students/vietchildstory/TopLevel.html
This web site has many illustrated Vietnamese folktales for children.
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,187312,00.html
This site, designed specifically for children, has a depth of information about Vietnam.

Suggested Print Resources

- Huynh, Quang Nhuong. *Water Buffalo Days: Growing Up in Vietnam*. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, NY; 1997.
- Morgan, Tom. *In a Vietnamese City*. Benchmark Books, New York, NY; 2002.
- Parker, Lewis. *Why Vietnamese Immigrants Came to America*. PowerKids Press, New York, NY; 2003.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE
- ARAB-AMERICAN HERITAGE
- CENTRAL AMERICAN HERITAGE
- CHINESE-AMERICAN HERITAGE
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Vietnamese-American Heritage

Grades K-4

The United States has always been a country of immigrants, rich with the customs and traditions of the many countries they represent. *American Cultures for Children* introduces students to the heritage of some of the immigrant groups that make up this diverse land. Through songs, play food, holidays and history, students are provided with an understanding of and appreciation for the cultural differences they see every day in their classrooms and neighborhoods. Everyone has at least one culture to celebrate, and this series gives children a chance to explore their heritage and share it with others.



Program Summary

Vietnamese-American Heritage introduces students to the history, culture and traditions of the Vietnamese people and of Vietnamese Americans. On a brief tour of Vietnam, students are introduced to its varied landscapes, popular foods and modes of transportation. They learn about how this country was once divided into two separate countries, North Vietnam and South Vietnam, which fought each other during a long war. America also participated in this war, and many Vietnamese people came to the United States during the 1970s as refugees escaping dangers in their country. Students go on field trips to the Saigon Mall in Virginia, a Vietnamese-American supermarket and a restaurant serving *phở*, or noodle soup. They also learn about celebrating Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, and how to say several words in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese folktale “The First Dragon” tells how a carp became the first dragon to appear in the world. The Vietnamese folksong “*Lý Tinh Tang*” is sung, telling a story about a starling bird. In an arts & crafts segment, students make their own good luck dragons, like those used for the dragon dance of the Vietnamese New Year.

Vocabulary

paddies — The flooded fields where rice is grown.

lambretta — A Vietnamese taxi, which resembles a three-wheeled bicycle.

Hanoi — The capital of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh City — The largest city in Vietnam.

Tet — The Vietnamese New Year, which is celebrated at the end of January or the beginning of February.

immigrant — A person who makes a new home in a country other than his or her own.

refugee — Someone who is looking for a safe place to live.

phở — A popular Vietnamese noodle soup that is eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

chopsticks — A pair of smooth sticks used as eating utensils.

chè — A cold dessert made from coconut milk and sweet jelly.

áo dài — A traditional Vietnamese dress, which is worn over loose-fitting pants.

Words in Vietnamese

Hello = Chào

Good-bye = Tạm biệt

friend = bạn

Thank you = Cảm ơn

Numbers in Vietnamese

One = Một

Two = Hai

Three = Ba

Four = Bốn

Five = Năm

Six = Sáu

Seven = Bảy

Eight = Tám

Nine = Chín

Ten = Mười

Focus Questions

1. Name three activities people in Vietnam use boats for.
2. How is the new year celebrated in Vietnam?
3. What is a refugee? Why did many people need to leave Vietnam as refugees?
4. Describe some popular Vietnamese foods.
5. In Vietnamese legend, how did the carp become the first dragon?
6. How is rice grown?
7. Say “hello” and “good-bye” in Vietnamese.

Follow-up Discussion

- Show students the location of Vietnam on a globe or world map and point out how much of the country is on or near a coastline. Discuss with students how life in Vietnam is influenced by the country’s nearness to large bodies of water, which has a large impact on industry (fishing), diet (seafood), transportation (boats) and even housing (many people also live on boats). Ask students to think about the geography of their own community and how that geography influences their lives.
- An *áo dài* is a traditional Vietnamese outfit for women, consisting of a long-sleeved dress worn over loose trousers. Some Vietnamese Americans wear these dresses on special occasions, such as holidays and weddings. Talk with students about the clothes they wear on special occasions and how they feel when they wear them.
- During the Vietnam War, many people — both Vietnamese and American — died. Some students may know of family members or friends who fought during this war. Encourage students to express their thoughts and feelings about the Vietnam War in a safe and supportive environment.

- Following the reunification of North and South Vietnam, thousands of Vietnamese and Chinese-Vietnamese people fled the country by boat looking for safer places to live. After reaching other countries in south-east Asia, many of these people continued their journeys until they reached the United States. Help students to imagine what life was like for these refugees. Ask them to brainstorm all of the things people may leave behind when they move to a new country, from their friends and family to their language. What do students think would be the hardest adjustment to make? Why? What other challenges do these people face?

Follow-up Activities

- Help students generate a list of what they know about what life is like for children living in Vietnam. Then ask them to write letters as if they were Vietnamese children describing their culture and lifestyle. Students can also write letters back to their imaginary pen pals, describing similarities and differences between their lives.
- Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, occurs in late January or early February and marks the start of the lunar calendar year and the beginning of spring. Share information with the class about the activities of this holiday, such as decorating altars to honor family ancestors, giving away red envelopes of “lucky money,” setting off fireworks and visiting family and friends. Explain how the color red is a symbol of happiness and good luck and appears everywhere during this holiday. Ask students to compare and contrast Tet with other holidays they know. Students can also create a program to celebrate Tet with either their classes or their school. A good source for information about Tet can be found at www.vietmedia.com/culture/?L=tet.html.
- Dragons are symbols of power and nobility that often appear in Vietnamese folktales and celebrations. Talk with students about stories they have heard about dragons and what they imagine dragons to be. Students can draw their own pictures of dragons or write their own stories about how dragons came into existence.
- Vietnam is one of the world’s largest exporters of rice, and rice is an important part of the Vietnamese diet. Have the class create a recipe book of foods made with rice. Students can contribute their favorite recipes along with illustrations. Many rice recipes can be found at health.yahoo.com/search/recipe?s=name&p=rice.

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