

The New Houston: My Community, My City, and My Hometown

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Landing on the tarmac at William P. Hobby Airfield, I deplane and walk through the arrival gate at Houston's Hobby Airport. As I walk through its vast corridors, I descend the stairs leading to the baggage claims area.

The aromas of the vendors tantalize my nostrils, and the colorful apparel of other passengers, workers, employees, and airline personnel satiate the hunger of my fleeting eyes.

The murmurings of many voices in many languages, and the reunions of many people surround my persona as I rescue my luggage and exit through the electronically controlled doors.

Humidity, joy, and the sensation of a freed spirit engulf my being, while the entire scene romanticizes my arrival to Houston, Texas, my hometown.

INTRODUCTION

Located near the port of Galveston in southeastern Texas, the city of Houston is the county seat of Harris County, the third most populous county in the United States. (Until 1840, it was known as Harrisburg County). Ranking as the fourth largest city in the United States, and the largest city in the South, it sprawls into a five-county region of 5,436 square miles. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 1,558.4 (601.7 mi²). 1,500.7 km² (5.79.4 mi²) of its land and 57.7 km² (22.3 mi²) of it is water. The total area is 3.70% water. A portion of far Southwest Houston also extends into Fort Bend County. The July 1, 2002 census estimate placed Houston's population at 2,009,834. It is one of the newest and fastest growing major cities in the country (*Houston, Texas*).

Houston, Texas, my hometown, is known for its energy industry, aeronautics industry, and ship channel. Our Port of Houston is the busiest port in the United States, and ranks second in the world as far as foreign tonnage. Because of the economic trades, many residents have moved in from other U. S. states, as well as hundreds of countries worldwide (*Houston, Texas*).

Officially, Houston has been nicknamed Space City, probably because "Houston" was the first word uttered on the moon, as Neil Armstrong reported back to NASA from space. The locals lovingly refer to it as Bayou City (*Houston, Texas*).

The climate of my city is classified as subtropical. Its geographical location is the gulf coastal plains biome, and the vegetation is classified as temperate grassland. It has a hot and humid climate because the winds from the Gulf of Mexico pick up a lot of moisture and deposit it in the area. The air tends to feel still, especially in the summertime; and the humidity tends to make the air feel hotter than it really is. It is not uncommon for afternoon rains and thunderstorms to occur regularly in the summertime. Our winters are cool and temperate, but not as cold as those in North Texas (*Houston, Texas*).

Three bayous pass through Houston. Buffalo Bayou, which runs downtown; the Brays Bayou, which runs along the Texas Medical Center; and the Sims Bayou in the south of Houston come together downtown and lead into the Houston Ship Channel. The ship channel goes past Galveston, Texas into the Gulf of Mexico. Most of Houston is very flat and is about fifty feet above sea level; the Houston Heights area has the highest elevation in the city. Hurricanes have slammed into the Texas Gulf Coast on numerous occasions (*Houston, Texas*).

The ethnic influences on Houston's population have changed many times over the years since this city was established on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Throughout its history, our Founders have always visualized it as an international gateway, a cosmopolitan metroplex, and a preview of what the world will eventually become (Von Der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups* 3). Houston's population in terms of ethnicity falls into four basic types today: the foreigner, the immigrant, the American ethnic, and the assimilated. The past two decades have enticed an increasing number of foreign-born people to the city. Visitors come here to trade or invest, to make a buying trip to our Galleria shopping center, or as patients to our famous medical center. Included in this number are the temporary residents, medical center staff, and consular officials. Many newcomers have made Houston, Texas their home, drawn by the same economic motives that attracted its early immigrants (Von Der Meheden, *The Ethnic Groups* 5).

Among the largest groups of newcomers are the Asians and Hispanics. One just needs to visit our annual Asian Festivals, see the performing arts, and taste the delicious cuisines of Thailand, Vietnam, India, China, Japan, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos in order to appreciate the Asian influence in Houston. While driving through certain parts of the city, one cannot help but recognize the Asian population from the street signs, which are printed in Asian characters as well as in English (Von Der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups* 5). The Hispanic influence is shown in our choices of restaurant menus and in the labels on grocery store items, which are clearly printed in both Spanish and English.

Houston's turbulent history dates back to the original Orcoquisac Indians. As early as the 1600s, German, French, and Spanish explorers inhabited this area. This city's beginning was in keeping with the period of Texas history and largely reflected the conflicts that existed throughout the United States (*Tomball Area Information Page*). The Allen brothers moved to Texas in the winter of 1831-1832, arriving first in Galveston, then settling in San Augustine, and finally moving to

Nacogdoches. In 1836, the Allens moved to what is now called Houston, Texas. Texas history records August 30, 1836, as Houston's founding date, coming after the end of the Texas War for Independence from Mexico. The name Houston came from the first president of the Republic of Texas, General Sam Houston. Charlotte, Augustus Allen's wife, suggested the use of Houston's name. The General was the commander of the Texas army that won Texas' independence from Mexico at the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. John Kirby Allen (1819-1838) and his brother, Augustus Chapman Allen (1806-1864), who were from Chittenango, New York, purchased 6,642 acres of land along Buffalo Bayou (then known as the John Austin Half League, and now called Allen's Landing) as a lucrative real estate venture. Being the shrewd businessmen they were, they realized the commercial advantages afforded by the area surrounding Buffalo Bayou (Von der Mehden, *The Indochinese*). This land was purchased from the widow (Mrs. Elizabeth Parrott) of John Austin (one of the colonists accompanying Stephen F. Austin). Their cost was approximately \$1.40 per acre. The venture was financed by an inheritance received by Augustus' wife Charlotte (*Tomball Area Information Page*).

Even before the Allen brothers chose the banks of Buffalo River as a place to build a settlement, it was special. American Indian Legend has it that a great white buffalo lived on the banks of the bayou. One day, it was killed. The very next day, a tree with show-white flowers appeared along the bayou. The Indians thought it was a sign that the buffalo was not angry about being killed. Thus, this land became Buffalo Bayou (Chapman 1).

On these same banks of the Buffalo River, the Allen brothers staked out a settlement where there was little more than marshland and the lazy Buffalo River. John and Augustus Allen advertised this settlement as a planned community with access to the sea. At the turn of the century, after the Great Storm of 1900 that left thousands dead in its path, and the discovery of oil, Houston was brought into national prominence (*Born on the Bayou*).

Houston, Texas has been my hometown for the last 40 years. During these years, I have completed college, married, raised a family, and enjoyed 25 successful and rewarding years of teaching. I have lived the history of new immigrants, ethnicities, and new inter-group relations. These years have been fascinating, rewarding, and educational, as I have witnessed the city polish and groom itself into a metropolis that attracts people and businesses from all over the world. To date, over 100 ethnic groups live in the Houston area. Here, you can take a trip around the world just by driving through the different neighborhoods – or towns within my town – that are inhabited by specific ethnic populations.

It is my belief that children should be made aware of and involved in the study of the background, roots, and history of their existence. They should know why their city and community is the way it is and understand the circumstances and events that paved the way for the enjoyment of their lives today. A good number of the children that I teach

have no real concept or the way their existence as an American first, and a Houstonian second, began. Because of their parents' and grandparents' refugee and immigration histories and backgrounds, they live their lives with the freedom this country guarantees, with no concept of the difficulties their ancestors endured. Those struggles, fears, and sacrifices have no meaning for them, except in terms of the stories handed down from earlier generations, documentaries, and daily newscasts. These children are *true Americans*.

Other students, however, make daily efforts to simply survive. They are new immigrants to this country who don't speak the language and are involved in a daily maze of trying to understand the culture. Sometimes, these children have never been to school before and are placed in classrooms with students who are more advanced than they are.

Because of the circumstances surrounding my students' settling in my hometown, I want to involve them in the study of their own rich cultural backgrounds as well as those of the other immigrants who make this city such a tremendously enriching place to live. I want them to see for themselves and experience how our little swampland has become the monumental melting pot it is now. We will take a trip around the world without leaving our little hometown. We will see through our own "looking glass" those specific ethnic communities that make each cardinal and intermediate direction of Houston unique.

Some efforts are made on behalf of students in Houston (and those in other cities and states) because the Houston Independent School district provides bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for them. In these classes, students are prepared to merge into our school system, and they eventually exit these special programs when their standardized test scores (Stanford 10 and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills TAKS) are passing. These students also have to make a passing score on the English Language Assessment Scales (LAS). Test scores are not the only part of the students' complete immersion into Houston society. I believe these students should be given the tools to understand their culture within a diverse culture; therefore, I have decided to write this unit as a resource for other teachers in ESL and regular education classrooms to use as a supplement to their curriculum.

As a third grade teacher, it is my responsibility to implement the Houston Independent School District's third-grade CLEAR (Clarifying Learning to Enhance Achievement Results) social studies curriculum, which focuses on local, national, and world communities. The objectives for mastery of the study will be driven by the TEKS and Essential Learner Outcomes (ELO) objectives specified by CLEAR. Teaching these lessons will empower the boys and girls by involving them in a study of the history and development of their own communities and city as well as those of others. It will satiate my hunger for learning more and more about this great city and thrill and delight me to share and pass this information on to others. Included in the development of our city is the awareness of the immigration of people of many different cultures who have settled

here for many reasons and circumstances. Analyzing, researching, studying, discussing, and dramatizing incidents involving these immigrants as well as the founders will be the focus of our studies.

When I began studying with my peers in the Houston Teachers Institute group, one of the things that I finally internalized about immigrants was the difficulties that they faced in integrating into our society. It finally dawned on me that not speaking the language; not understanding the monetary system, the public transportation system, or the employment system; not knowing what to do if you are ill; failing to grasp immigration laws; and taking jobs that were far beneath their educational level were really challenging problems. I am sure I had the same “Pollyanna” concept of immigration as some of my students. To these immigrants, there is no “happily ever after” ending upon arrival into the United States; that is, not without a whole lot of hard work, continuing education, sacrifice, blood, sweat, and tears. Another revelation is that it is not always easy to learn the English language and American customs when the primary goal is to keep a roof over one’s head and food on the table. These are only the bare essentials, because clothing, school supplies, utilities, and transportation are also obvious needs of every family.

After the researching and studying about these different immigrants, my students and I will have more empathy and understanding for their parents and grandparents and for other children who are going through the same things as them. This will be my students’ first completely independent experience with a curriculum-based course of study using a textbook as a resource. They have already been introduced to primary and secondary resources and research skills with their teachers’ and parents’ assistance in prior grades. This year, as third graders, they will apply and use these resources without as much guidance and supervision. Social studies will be introduced as an in-depth study of our own city and ethnicities. We will study our own communities and the immigrants who established them. It is impossible to give equal attention to all of Houston’s immigrant ethnicities, so we will concentrate on those groups that involve the population of the students in my class.

My class is populated with children of second- and third-generation immigrants from China, Vietnam, Mexico, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Colombia, and Africa. This richly diversified mix will enable us to simulate travel all over the world. These Vanguard students are highly self-motivated and work-oriented. My students are the direct descendents of the refugees and immigrants who settled here more than a century ago!

Finally, we will expand into an overview study of the communities in our state, nation, and world. We will compare and contrast our own city’s history with that of the other cities, states, and continents we study in our third grade social studies curriculum.

Houston’s immigrants have brought about a rich cultural experience and made our city into another historical melting pot with an international population. Bringing about cultural awareness for my students by involving them in simulated and actual

celebrations will be enriching for them and for me. Using primary and secondary resources for research will strengthen the students academically and socially. The students will internalize an historical awareness of Houston and its inhabitants. It is my goal to use the theme, “My Community, My City, My Hometown,” to bring about an awareness and create an atmosphere so that the students will desire to learn more about their city’s and community’s history. The unit will be implemented in the context of researching the city’s immigration heritage. We will take field trips to museums, cemeteries, and related communities in order to enhance the experience and provide concrete models for the students to enjoy. While the students are gathering information, they will understand why the major focus of their study is “The New Houston.”

The students will display and share their studies by writing poems, essays, and stories; communicating by email and regular mail with their pen pal class from Argentina; and reenacting simulated dramatizations, including the major project of recreating events using the theme “Their stories.” Students will also develop and create photo essays, interviews, plays, and documentaries. They will keep scrapbooks and diaries, and they will collect current newspaper clippings about the issues in immigration to Houston. I will require students to research their personal immigration family tree.

This unit will integrate all eight of the social studies strands required by the TEKS and CLEAR curriculum of HISD, including history, government, geography, technology, science, society, economics, citizenship, culture, and other skills (communication in oral and visual forms, using problem-solving and decision making skills, applying critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources, including electronic technology). The lessons in this unit can be incorporated into the language arts CLEAR curriculum and satisfy the TEKS and TAAS objectives in that discipline, too.

We will begin our year with a geography-based study of the globe and world map, pointing out the countries of our ancestors. We will establish the fact that each of us in the western hemisphere has direct ties to ancestors in the eastern hemisphere. “Their stories,” “Mystories,” and “Others’ Stories” will allow the students to make collages of their ancestors’ travels, and of *their* travels, first to the United States, and then to Houston, Texas. Sharing their histories with each other will create in students an interest in the subject matter more intense than would reading in textbooks. Maps will become based in reality instead of pieces of paper showing state and country borders, continents, and bodies of water. The students will “live” the map instead of filling it out with map pencils and labeling important parts.

Throughout this course of study, we will focus on each student’s heritage as we use the TEKS and HISD CLEAR curriculum for third grade. This study will be a yearlong project. When applicable and relevant, field trips will be planned to visit specific community areas. Cemetery and museum trips will be planned during the summer so that they can be scheduled at just the right time. Students will keep a journal of the classroom

activities, the discussions we share, and the trips we take. The entries will include what they learned, what they saw, and the feelings they experienced. Follow-up discussions and activities will be implemented after each field trip. Guest speakers will be contacted to further enhance the students' experiences.

As a comparative analysis study, my class will correspond by email and regular mail with a partner class in Trenque Lauquen (Round Lagoon), Argentina. We will exchange immigration research about our families and our countries. We teachers will pilot the implementation of the lesson plans in this unit and compare the progress of our classes. It will be quite an enlightening experience to compare notes with a teacher from a completely different continent and school system.

Another way of "living" our research will involve collaborative lessons with the music teacher. In her class, we will research musicians who are immigrants to the United States and focus on popular artists in Houston and throughout Texas. We will study immigrant artists with the art teacher, athletes with the physical education teacher, and share our lessons in art, physical education, and music with our hearing-impaired grade-mates. Those teachers and I will collaborate and pilot the lessons together. Of course, they will have to align them to their own curricula.

Films, music, books, and movies will be incorporated in the lessons to bring about realism. Many of the lessons' outcomes will depend on the information students bring to class and the types of presentations they choose. Students will be graded for each project using rubrics they design. Lesson plans and materials will be added as the work of the unit progresses. Parental input and involvement will play a major part in helping to make the project successful. The standardized test scores of these students should soar even higher because of their actual involvement and input in their course of study. The bibliography list will increase as we continue to research. At the end of the unit, I have provided a list of teacher and student references as a start for in-depth studies of different immigrant groups and the history of Houston.

For a finale, the students will host a campus international festival. They will invite the school's community as well as special guests to witness their creations and presentations. We will commission the students from our middle school KRAM television station to videotape these events so that we can send the recording to our pen pals in Argentina. This event will be their way of sharing history and passing it on. The students will conclude that their lives too, are part of American history.

Overview of Houston's Immigration

Historical records for immigration to Texas date back to the early 1800s. The town's international flair was established in its first beginnings. About one-third of its citizens came from abroad, principally from Germany, Ireland, England, and France (Von der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups*).

During those early years, Houstonians watched as hundreds of Chinese passed through to work on railroads to the west and north. There was a sizeable German population, and the first German-Jewish congregation of Beth Israel was established in 1859. There was continuous foreign immigration throughout the 19th century (Von der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups*).

By 1915, many changes had been made to our city. Refining and shipping oil had become big business, and railroads stretched from Houston to other cities in all different directions. Ships traveled up the ship canal from the Gulf of Mexico to Houston. These significant changes brought many more people to the city. The population doubled between 1900 and 1915. Finally, Houston began to look like a city. “Skyscrapers” (the tallest being 16 feet high) began to appear on Main Street. Union Station was built for railroad travelers, and the new Harris County Courthouse opened. The historic Rice Hotel (now renovated and made into expensive loft apartments) was built and boasted of being the largest hotel in the South. Streets and bridges were improved, and a new, long, arched bridge allowed traffic to cross Buffalo Bayou (Chapman 22).

During the first half of the 20th century, smaller communities of Japanese, Greek, Scandinavian, and Chinese grew, and by 1950, Texas had a population of approximately 7 million foreign-born residents (NPG State Facts).

Houston’s growth boasted of new ethnic identities and self-awareness heightened by the arrival of 50,000 to 60,000 new Houstonians a year dating back to 1982. Some of the largest groups of immigrants (past and recent) are Asians and Hispanics. Asian immigrants have arrived from Thailand, Vietnam, India, China, Japan, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos (Von der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups*).

Included in the group of immigrants are Jews, Hungarians, Cubans, Mexicans, English, Irish, Czechs, Cubans, non-Mexican Hispanics, and ethnicities from other Latin American countries (Von der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups*). The groups that follow will be the focus of my students’ research.

People of African heritage were brought to Texas 300 years before the founding of Houston. They were aboard Cabeza de Vaca’s ship, which ran aground at Galveston Island. During the period of Spanish rule, most blacks in Texas were free as Texas’ borders were opened to colonists from the United States. In 1820, Moses Austin came to San Antonio, bringing a black servant. Many other settlers either brought slaves with them or supported slavery. Mexican law prohibited slavery, but this law was never effectively enforced, and slavery eventually became common in Texas. Blacks and Mexican prisoners-of-war cleared the land for the original town site in 1836 (Van Der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups*)

People of Mexican origin emerged in Houston in the 1910s and 1920s. By 1900, approximately 180,000 people called Houston their home (Melville). Many settlers from

Mexico and Americans of Mexican descent from small Texas towns had been arriving since the 1890s. There is no archival record of these early contributors to the building of the original town (Melville).

A community began to develop and the Mexicans found places to live that were closest to their work and formed barrios. These barrios exist today and are still predominantly inhabited by Mexican-Americans. Today, El Crisol (Denver Harbor) is located close to the Southern Pacific railroad yards; it was given its name because of the chemicals used to preserve the railroad ties. Melville discusses the history of some of Houston's original neighborhoods and sections, including the barrios:

Second Ward was settled along Buffalo Bayou from the center of town by the 1920s and Magnolia (southwest) was located along the ship channel and became a barrio by 1915. The Mexicans also populated Houston Heights, an area to the north of the downtown district (Melville).

The Indochinese came to Houston because of many different circumstances. This group of people is composed of three major elements: the Cambodians, the Laotians, and the Vietnamese. Each of these groups varies within its own cultural and social heritage. They were joined together by a brief period of French colonial rule. All have endured the postwar conflict and imposition of communism. They are not a single society, but several communities with separate heritages (Von Der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups* 83)

The Vietnamese who arrived prior to 1975 came voluntarily, accompanying their servicemen husbands, and in search of better jobs. It was easier for this first group to assimilate into our culture because of their family relationships, education, and professional ties. Another group came after the communist victory in 1975. Some of the people in this group were able to fly directly to the United States because they had families or immediate sponsors here. The largest number of this group of refugees came to centers such as military camps prior to their arrival in Houston (Von der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups* 83).

The Laotians came from a land divided by warring factions. The country was poor, primarily agricultural, and strongly committed to tradition. It was influenced less by the West than were most other parts of Southeast Asia. Even though there was much diversity in the country, any individual refugee from Laos had the potential to be quite different from another (Von Der Mehden, *The Ethnic Groups* 84)

One of the pioneer Chinese immigrants in Houston was Harry Gee, Sr., who arrived in 1915. In 1919, Gee brought his bride to Houston from China and became one of the city's outstanding attorneys. He even served as assistant attorney general in the state capital.

The students will research other immigrants as they focus on the ancestors who are the roots of their personal family trees. They will correspond through email and regular mail with their pen pals in Argentina. Both groups of students will share their history of their countries, their cities, and immigration in general.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS

The students will use the following questions as a guide for their research:

1. What country did your ancestors and relatives come from?
2. Why and when did they arrive?
3. What circumstances caused them to choose Houston as their hometown? Have they lived in other Texas cities?
4. In what specific areas or communities of Houston do they currently live?
5. Have they made a specific contribution to Houston's history?

Introduction of E-Pals

Before we begin our unit of study, we will establish email communications with a third grade ESL class in Argentina. We will complete the e-pal set up for communication with the computer lab teacher on the students' designated computer lab day. The entire lesson for this portion of the unit will be planned by the computer lab teacher, using my lesson plans as a reference. (Making sure that all the students are set up properly may take more than one 45-minute class.)

We will complete the rest of this lesson when we are finished in the computer lab. The rest of the lesson will continue in our classroom. The background information for this lesson will come from the Scott Foresman's *Social Studies Communities* textbook for third grade (18-23). For the culminating activity, we will send picture post cards to our e-pals. The post cards will tell about our city, our school, and our lives. The Argentinean students will respond with the same.

The teacher from Argentina and I will collaborate on our lessons and the students' correspondence. When we can coordinate our computer lab times, the students will send emails and, if possible, instant messages.

Before we begin our map and globe lessons, we will set up our journals. Each journal will need a fly page and a title page. The students should be allowed to write in their journals without penalties for incorrect spelling and punctuation. They should be able to draw to further express themselves. I will monitor the journals by reading their entries and making comments. I will gently remind them of proper punctuation and capitalization. At the end of each week, during the students' independent work time, we will have one-on-one writing conferences. This way, we can go over punctuation and capitalization. This weekly meeting will give the student an individual writing tutorial

session. Hopefully, the student will look forward to our individual instruction time together.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson I: Introduction/ Overview/ Review of the Globe

Objectives

To introduce the globe and show that it is a replica and show that the world is round. To generate curiosity among the students about geography. To show that the water bodies and land masses called continents are represented. To point out the Equator, the Prime Meridian, and other latitudinal and longitudinal lines.

Materials Needed

Globes
Global outline maps
Pencils or erasable pens

Procedure

The students should be grouped in fours. Each group should have a globe and each student an individual map. The teacher will model those specific points on the globe that she wants the students to be aware of. As she points out the continents, oceans, and latitudinal and longitudinal points, the students will locate them on their own globes. After the oral global tour, the students will label their world outline maps collaboratively. They will summarize the lesson in their journals and read their entries to the class.

Lesson II: Learning About the World Map

Objective

To introduce and explore the world map.

Materials Needed

Globes
Student atlas
Desk world maps (blank)
Red ballpoint pens (erasable)
Pencils
World wall map

Time Allocation

Continuous as the unit progresses.

Procedure

Students should again be grouped in fours. The teacher will introduce basic map reading vocabulary to the students. At the end of this lesson, the students will label their personal desk maps with the following points and places: Europe, Australia, Antarctica, Asia

(China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand), Africa (Nigeria), South America (Colombia, Argentina Tenaque Lauquen), and North America (the United States, Texas, and Houston). We will keep this map posted in the classroom as our base and fill in other countries and cities as it becomes necessary.

Vocabulary

The teacher will introduce the following vocabulary words and their derivatives. These words will be used throughout the unit:

- Globe, globes, global, globalization
- Map, maps
- Cardinal directions (North, South, East, West)
- Continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Antarctica, North and South America)
- Latitude, latitudes, latitudinal
- Longitude, longitudinal
- Equator
- Prime Meridian
- Compass rose
- Legend
- Degrees

Lesson III: My Connection to the World

Objectives

To locate the students' ancestors' countries. To mark a permanent representation of an immigrants native country.

Materials

- Wall-sized world maps (This lesson will require two wall maps, one to use for teaching purposes and one to be marked with thumbtacks)
- Atlas
- Thumbtacks
- Student maps (previously labeled by each student)

Procedure

The teacher and students will explore the world map. A KWL (What I Know, What I Learned, What I Want to Know) chart will be made to generate the students' prior knowledge of maps. After this part of the lesson has been completed, the students will place thumbtacks on the countries of their ancestors' origins.

Closure

After the countries are marked, the students will write about this lesson in their journals.

Lesson IV: “Mystories”

Objective

To engage the students in the creation of a collage representing their autobiographies.

Materials Needed

- 8 ½ x 14 white construction paper
- Magazines
- Scraps of fabric (anything that can be glued to paper is okay)
- Sticks
- Spools
- Pipe cleaners
- Glitter
- Artificial flowers
- Pens
- Pencils
- Assorted colored construction paper
- Markers
- Blue
- Notebook paper

Procedure

The students will make a collage using these items to symbolize significant events in their lives. Once the items are laid out and glued, the finished product should depict their autobiographies.

The students will write their autobiographies. Both items can be displayed on bulletin boards or a table. The finished written product can be in the form of a book or composition.

Lesson V: Multicultural Book Club

Materials Needed

A classroom library of assorted books with multicultural themes and plots

Book list of multicultural books and authors

Note: The school librarian can assist with this activity. One or two 45-minute library sessions can be allotted at first so that the students will know where to look for the books in the library independently.

Objectives

To introduce the students to multicultural books and authors. To establish book study groups.

Procedure

The students and teacher will meet as a group to browse and peruse the books available in the classroom. At the end of the browsing period, (approximately 30 minutes) the students will decide which books interest them. They will form their book study groups according to the books they choose. The teacher will list the groups and their books. Weekly meetings of the groups will be set. At the end of the time allotment for the completion of reading the books, the groups will write individual reports on the books, and the biographies of the authors. The groups will present their books to the class via skits or videotapes.

Lesson VI: The Recipe Exchange***Objective***

To share and learn about the culinary cuisine of other countries.

Materials Needed

- Recipe books
- Family recipes
- Recipes cut from newspapers and magazines
- Recipes from the Internet

Procedure

The students will share the recipes with each other. At the end of the sharing time (approximately 30 minutes, or more if necessary), the students and teacher will vote on the most popular recipe. We will schedule a time slot for the kitchen on our campus and prepare the recipe as a class. We will ask the Parents-Teachers Organization to donate the ingredients and to share this experience with us. The previous activities will begin our unit of study.

Each month in HISD, a specific group is spotlighted and studied. March, for example is delegated to women's history. Engaging in the research and study of their specific family groups, the students will relive history. They will develop an appreciation for their own world and the way it is.

As we continue our studies during the months of this school year, the students and I will learn to appreciate and respect each other and our various cultural differences. We will contribute and communicate our knowledge to The New Houston. We will look at Houston Texas with unbiased, unprejudiced, and more respectful eyes. We will exude this newly found self in the way we walk, talk, look, and commune with our fellow man.

Culminating Activity***Objectives***

To bring closure to the unit of study. The students will assemble a collage/mural, which will show their work at a glance. The completed mural will hang as the focal for advertising the end-of-year International Festival.

Materials

- Paint (water-based)
- Butcher paper
- Markers
- Paper towels
- Water (in containers for clean-ups)
- Magazines
- Newspapers containing specific articles focusing on immigration

Procedure

When the mural is completed and hung, each student will write an essay explaining their connection to the mural and their growth gained from the study. These papers, along with the “Mystories” and “Theirstories,” will be on display during the festival. This collaborative effort will cultivate even more pride when we say, “Houston, Texas is my hometown.”

Implementing this unit will be challenging and time consuming. Sometimes, midnight oil will need to be burned so that I will be ready for the students’ questions, and so that I can direct them to the right resources for research. The students will have to be carefully monitored when they are surfing the web because of certain undesirable information available on the Internet. Parents should be cautioned to supervise their children for inappropriate materials also. Class time should be allocated for the student’s presentation of their research. Parent volunteers should be encouraged to come on specific days to help. All of the efforts by teacher colleagues, guest speakers, parents, students, and the teacher will be rewarding and informative.

APPENDIX

The following poem is a culmination of the feelings that I felt after completing all the research and writing of this unit. I wrote the poem to express those feelings and to give a personal touch to the unit. It can be used as an analytical tool for the students when they have completed their research and study. They can even write their own.

The New Me

As I open my eyes today
The world has a new meaning
My community has a secure and strong position in my heart
In my mind
In my soul
In my Being
No longer as I skeptical about my place here
I know
I learn
I research
I seek
I find
More and more about myself
My ancestors
My journey
My purpose

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Cultural information about immigrants is contained here. You can also access other websites for more facts.

Foresman, Scott. *Social Studies Grade 3 Communities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003.

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Immigration and its history are the forte of this book. This book gives detailed facts and statistics about Houston's immigration history.

Von Der Mehden, Fred R. *The Ethnic Groups of Houston*. Houston, TX: The Houston Center for the Humanities, Rice University, 1984.

A local historian shares his research in this book. The book explains the different ethnic groups that have settled in Houston.

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This website gives an even more in-depth parcel of information on the history of the Indochinese refugees in Houston, including the Vietnamese after the communist's victory in 1975.

Supplemental Resources

Books for Teachers and Students

The Anglo American Texans. San Antonio: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1975.

Information on Anglo Americans can be used in lecturing from this book. The establishment of German, Swedish and other specific Anglo races are spotlighted.

Dumoulin, Barbara, and Sylvia Sikundar. *Celebrating Our Cultures*. Pembroke Publishers Unlimited, 1998.

This is an activity book filled with resources to supplement language arts and social studies. The activities include lessons and crafts on special holidays in the United States and other countries.

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Specific historical information is included as immigration relates to Texas specifically, including Houston and the establishment and building of the Chinese communities.

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Emphasis on Indians in Texas is specified in this book. Specific tribes are discussed.

Nesmith, Samuel P. *The Mexican Texans*. San Antonio, TX: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio. 1975.

This book will give information that will help with the chronology of ethnic groups' immigration to Houston.

Simons, Helen and Catherine A. Hoyt. *The Spanish Texans*. San Antonio: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1975.

Detailed information on Hispanics and their immigration to Texas is outlined. This book includes immigration history of the Hispanics from South America, re: Guatemala, Colombia, etc.

Websites

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Lesson plans galore are contained on this website. The plans can give ideas for the development and extension of lessons for your unit.

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<<http://www.houstontravelguide.com/history/>>.

Field trip information to historic and entertaining sites can be researched from this site. Brief historical summaries are found here also.

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This site contains a database of marriage, birth, and death records. There is a learning center link which gives information on the history of Houston.

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New York City Plans To Paint 'Black Lives Matter' In Bold Letters In Front Of Trump Tower New York City plans to paint the words "Black Lives Matter" in front of Trump Tower, which the city's mayor said is a message meant directly for the president. The city on Wednesday announced it will paint the words on Fifth Avenue between 56th and 57th streets, directly in front. inquisitr.com

Houston's newest RV resort opened just as RV rentals and sales are skyrocketing due to pandemic travel — take a tour of the 10-acre property Shannon O'Hara Eric & Jay's RV Resort has launched in Houston, Texas just a few miles away from the Houston Zoo, the Museum District, and Texas Medical Center.

You are sharing My Hometown news page. Tweet. About My Hometown. Have you ever compared your hometown with any of the other cities that you may have ever been to? If not, than what things can you think about that are similar and different in your hometown and other city you are comparing with? In the same way I am going to compare my hometown with the city where I am living currently. These cities are different and similar form each other in various ways but there are three main factors that distinguish Houston from my hometown (Lahore) such as, costs of living, Economy and standard of life. First of all, the most obvious and striking difference of course,