

Hmong History and Culture Curriculum
Connections to Menasha School District Social Studies Curriculum and State Standards
By Soua Lee, Gegan Elementary, and Ava McCall, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Pre-Kindergarten: Unit on families

Menasha School District Standard: Recognize that families are different

Material/Resources: All materials will be included in a kit available for teachers to check out of the Gegan Elementary School Media Center.

My family is special to me by Bao Xiong

Finding me by Jean Hanslin

Photographs of different Hmong families

Photographs of Hmong families helping each other, Hmong parents earning money and caring for families, Hmong family members eating traditional foods, such as rice, chicken, and vegetables, and celebrating the Hmong New Year

Examples of baby carrier and children's Hmong New Year clothing

Dolls showing different New Year outfits

Story cloth showing everyday life in Laos and/or the Hmong New Year

Ball for ball toss game

Blank Hmong family book with captions; one copy for each child

Page 1: My family's favorite activity

Page 2: A Hmong family eats together

Page 3: A Hmong family celebrates the New Year

Contact Soua Lee or Xee Vang at Gegan Elementary School to serve as guest speakers on Hmong families and Hmong New Year clothing and activities.

Target: I can draw my family members doing our favorite activity.

I can draw a Hmong family eating together.

I can draw a Hmong family celebrating the New Year.

Time frame: 7 days

Procedure:

Prepare a classroom display of all books, photographs, baby carrier, New Year clothing, dolls dressed in New Year clothing, story cloth, and ball for the ball toss game.

Day 1: Discuss the importance of family. What is a family? Who is in a family? Read *My family is special to me*. Have students listen for who is in the Hmong family. Discuss the book as a class. Have students draw a picture of their family. Share the drawings when done. Point out differences and similarities among families.

Day 2: Show pictures of different Hmong families (show that not all Hmong families are alike, that Hmong families value children and want them to help the family, and that parents usually live with their oldest son, if not the oldest, then a son. Sons are expected to care for their parents as they get older; use drawings from *Finding Me* or photographs from the kit). Ask students what they see in the pictures, how many family members are there, and who is in the family.

Day 3: Show pictures of Hmong parents working to earn income for their families, caring for their children, and using a baby carrier to care for a baby. Show pictures or an example of a baby carrier from the kit. Ask students how the mothers and fathers are helping their children. What do they do with the money they earn from their jobs to help their family? How do they take care of babies? How do they take care of older children? How does the baby carrier keep the baby safe (explain that the baby carrier is designed to allow the mother to keep the baby close while she completes household chores and the designs on baby carriers are meant to keep the baby safe and keep bad spirits away from the baby)? Have students compare how Hmong families help each other to how their own family members help each other.

Day 4: Show pictures of Hmong older children helping younger, grandparents caring for children, and family members caring for grandparents. Ask students what they see the family members doing and how they are helping each other. Guide students to see that older siblings may complete household chores, help younger siblings with homework, and take care of younger siblings. Grandparents may care for young children while children and parents serve grandparents food). Summarize how the parents, grandparents, and older siblings help the rest of the family. Ask students to compare how they help their siblings or their siblings help them to how Hmong siblings help each other. Ask students to compare how Hmong grandparents help their families and their families care for them to the activities they do with their grandparents.

Day 5: Show pictures of Hmong families eating together and traditional foods eaten, such as rice, chicken, and vegetables. Show pictures of Hmong families growing vegetables in their gardens. Ask students to notice the foods eaten, especially the importance of rice in Hmong families. Ask students to compare these traditional foods to food eaten and grown in their own families.

Day 6: Show pictures or examples of Hmong children's New Year clothing or dolls dressed in New Year clothing. If possible, dress students in Hmong New Year clothing. Ask children to describe the Hmong New Year clothing and how it is similar to and different from clothing they wear for special occasions. Show pictures of some of the activities of the Hmong New Year, such as the ball tossing game. Teach children how to play the ball tossing game and discuss how this game is similar to and different from other games children play with balls.

Assessment (Day 7):

Explain that the students should illustrate each page of a Hmong Family Book to demonstrate their understanding of important characteristics of Hmong families.

Page 1: My family's favorite activity

Page 2: A Hmong family eats together (include the different family members: grandparents, brothers, sisters, and parents and the types of food eaten, such as rice, chicken, vegetables)

Page 3: A Hmong family celebrates the New Year (color clothing)

Interview students individually to have them explain their drawings and determine that students drew what was required on each page.

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Kindergarten: Unit on families

Connections to Menasha School District Standards:

Compare and contrast Hmong families from the past living in Laos with Hmong families today living in Wisconsin

Describe unique characteristics of Hmong families today, variations among Hmong families, and how they are similar to many families in Wisconsin

Explain the roles of Hmong adult and child family members today living in Wisconsin

State standards:

A.4.4 Describe and give examples of ways in which people interact with the physical environment, including use of land, location of communities, methods of construction, and design of shelters

B.4.1 Identify and examine various sources of information that are used for constructing an understanding of the past, such as artifacts, documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, paintings, architecture, oral presentations, graphs, and charts

B.4.4 Compare and contrast changes in contemporary life with life in the past by looking at social, economic, political, and cultural roles played by individuals and groups

C.4.1 Identify and explain the individual's responsibilities to family, peers, and the community, including the need for civility and respect for diversity

C.4.3 Explain how families, schools, and other groups develop, enforce, and change rules of behavior and explain how various behaviors promote or hinder cooperation

E.4.3 Describe how families are alike and different, comparing characteristics such as size, hobbies, celebrations, where families live, and how they make a living

E.4.4 Describe the ways in which ethnic cultures influence the daily lives of people

E.4.8 Describe and distinguish among the values and beliefs of different groups and institutions

Material/Resources: All materials will be included in a kit available for teachers to check out of the Gegan Elementary School Media Center.

My family is special to me by Bao Xiong

Finding me by Jean Hanslin

Grandma's Hmong New Year celebration by Maiker Vang

Map of Laos

Map of Wisconsin

World map or globe

Story cloth to show life in Laos

Rules for Rubberband and Rock games

Ball for ball toss game at Hmong New Year

Pictures of homes, crops, and animals for Hmong families in Laos

Pictures of the terrain of Wisconsin

Chart showing pictures or drawings of Hmong family members and English and Hmong names for each family member; give phonetic pronunciation for Hmong names

Pictures of contemporary Hmong families showing parents working, caring for children and grandparents; grandparents caring for children and helping with cooking and caring for home; older siblings caring for younger siblings, completing chores, attending school, completing homework, helping younger siblings with homework, engaging in extra-curricular activities

Contact Soua Lee or Xee Vang at Gegan Elementary School to serve as guest speakers on Hmong families living in Laos and Wisconsin and Hmong family roles.

Target:

I can draw and write about my family members.

I can draw a picture to show how Hmong families lived in Laos.

I can draw a picture to show how Hmong families live in Wisconsin.

Time frame: 7 days

Procedure:

Make a classroom display of materials used in each lesson as a reinforcement of main ideas and concepts taught. The display should include the Hmong family names chart, maps of Laos and Wisconsin, story cloth, books used in lessons, photographs and drawings of homes, crops, and animals in Laos and families and family member roles in Wisconsin, and the ball used in the ball toss game.

Day 1: Discuss the importance of family. What is a family? Who is in a family? Why are families important? How do families help us? Read *My family is special to me*. Ask students to listen for the different family members named in the book. Name the family members in English and Hmong. Choral read the family members' names in Hmong as a class (mother, father, baby, sister, brother, grandmother, and grandfather) while pointing to the pages in the book. Discuss the book as a class. Why are the family members special to the Hmong children shown in the book? Point to the chart of Hmong family members and have the class say the name of each family member in Hmong. Have students draw a picture of their family and write the name of each family member on the drawing. Share the drawings with the class when done. Ask students to explain how the Hmong family in the book is similar to and different from their own family.

Day 2: Show students where Laos and Wisconsin are on a world map or globe. Show students a map of Laos and where the Hmong lived in Laos. Show students a map of Wisconsin. Show pictures of Laos including pictures of Hmong homes, animals, and rice fields. Ask students to explain their observations of the homes, animals, and rice fields. Do they look like homes, farm animals and fields of crops we have in Wisconsin? Point out to students that Laos is a hilly country with mountains and rocks. Show pictures of the terrain in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is flat with no mountains. Also point out that many Hmong children did not go to school in Laos. Only those with more money and could afford it were able to attend school. Hmong children stayed home to help their parents in the rice field, feed the animals, and chop wood for fire. It is the law for children in the United States to go to school, but there was no law requiring children to attend school in Laos.

Day 3: Show students an everyday life story cloth and have them observe how the Hmong grow food, care for animals, get water, chop wood, prepare food, and any other everyday activities they see on the story cloth. Describe the clothes the Hmong wear in the story cloth. Elaborate on the students' ideas. Also show pictures or drawings of Hmong homes in Laos (may use photographs included in the kit or drawings from *Finding Me*). Make a list of students' observations on chart paper. Teach students how to play the Rubberband game and the Rock game (see the rules for the games in the kit). Ask students what they do for fun in Wisconsin with their families, what foods they eat, clothes they wear, what they do every day at home and school? What chores do they complete to help their families? List these activities on chart paper. Compare and contrast the two lists on chart paper. How are Hmong family activities different from your family activities? How are Hmong family activities similar to your activities?

Day 4: Read *Grandma's Hmong New Year*. Ask students to listen for how the Hmong celebrate the New Year while they are listening to the book. Discuss how the Hmong celebrate the New Year and what the Hmong do to prepare for the New Year. Have the children identify the different tasks the Hmong families had to finish before the Hmong New Year (harvest the rice and make rice cakes and sugar cane honey and ask that bad luck goes away and good luck comes for all). Then ask the children to summarize what happens during the New Year--families visit with each other, eat, have fun, children play, each wears new clothes prepared for the New Year, and unmarried people play the ball toss game). Ball toss is a very popular game played at the Hmong New Year. Ball toss is a form of courtship where couples openly express their feelings for each other. Teach the students how to play ball toss. Ask students to explain some of the holidays that are celebrated in the United States. What are the names of the holidays? What do families do during these holidays?

Day 5: Discuss Hmong families today in Wisconsin. Introduce pictures of different Hmong families today or invite Soua Lee or Xee Vang to share pictures of their families. Ask students to notice who is included in the pictures. How many children are in the families? How many adults? Are grandparents still part of families? Explain that many Hmong families today include grandparents who often live with their son's family. Ask students why it would be helpful for the families to have their grandparents live with the children and parents? How could the grandparents help their children and grandchildren? How could the children and grandchildren help their grandparents? Explain that sometimes there is divorce and remarriage in Hmong families. Ask students to compare the Hmong families to their own. How are they alike? How are they different?

Day 6: Discuss different roles for Hmong family members in Wisconsin today. Show pictures of different family activities and have students notice how each family member helps the family. Ask students how the parents help their family (earn money for the family's basic needs and care for children and grandparents). Ask students how grandparents help the family (care for children and help with cooking and caring for home). Ask students how older siblings help the family (care for younger siblings, help with household chores, help younger siblings with homework, help grandparents and parents). Ask students to compare these different roles to the roles of their own family members. How do they help their own family? How does their family help them?

Assessment: (Day 7)

Ask students draw a picture of a Hmong family living in Laos in the past. They should show how the family members dressed and engaged in at least one activity typical for Hmong families in Laos (such as growing food, preparing food, caring for animals, and/or celebrating the New Year). Interview the students individually about their drawings to determine if they can explain at least one characteristic of life in Laos for Hmong families in the past.

Ask students to draw a picture of a Hmong family living in Wisconsin today and how each family member helps the family. Interview the students individually about their drawings to determine if they can explain who is included in the drawing (parents, children, and grandparents) and how each helps the family (earning money for family needs, caring for children, cooking food, taking care of the house, and helping with homework).

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First Grade: Unit on families and wants and needs

Connections to Menasha School District Standards:

- Describe the roles of many Hmong adult and child family members today living in Wisconsin
- Describe the rules among many Hmong families today living in Wisconsin
- Compare and contrast the basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing and wants for electronic games and cell phones of many Hmong families today living in Wisconsin
- Explain how many Hmong families earn money to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing) and some of their wants (electronics)

State standards:

- C.4.3 Explain how families, schools, and other groups develop, enforce, and change rules of behavior and explain how various behaviors promote or hinder cooperation
- D.4.1 Describe and explain of the role of money, banking, and savings in everyday life
- D.4.2 Identify situations requiring an allocation of limited economic resources and appraise the opportunity cost (for example, spending one's allowance on a movie will mean less money saved for a new video game)
- E.4.3 Describe how families are alike and different, comparing characteristics such as size, hobbies, celebrations, where families live, and how they make a living

Materials/Resources: All materials will be included in a kit available for teachers to check out of the Gegan Elementary School Media Center.

Photographs of Hmong families showing the different roles members fill (parents working to earn money, grandparents caring for children, and older siblings caring for younger siblings and helping them with homework)

Photographs of Hmong families showing different family rules (children obeying their parents and grandparents, older siblings caring for young siblings and helping them with homework, children completing homework, and children in the home before sunset)

Photographs of children obeying Hmong family rules: children must obey parents and grandparents; older siblings must complete household chores and care for younger siblings before completing homework; children must complete all household chores and homework before playing games or watching television; and children must be in the house by the time it becomes dark outside

Photographs of different kinds of food, clothing, homes, toys, objects for games, and electronic games that many Hmong families and children might have

Photographs of different kinds of homes that many Hmong families might live in

Photographs of Hmong or Asian grocery stores and gardens

Photographs or pieces of different kinds of everyday clothing that many Hmong children might wear: shorts and top, bathing suit, sandals, heavy winter coat, boots, woolen hat, woolen gloves, and New Year clothing

Ka's garden: A bilingual children's book by Maggie Lee McHugh & Bee Lo

Ball for ball toss game

Rubberbands and rocks for Rubberband game and Rock game

Examples or photographs of toys and electronic games that many Hmong children might play

Photographs of Hmong parents engaging in different types of jobs, such as teaching, running a restaurant or grocery store, building a product at a factory, or helping other families meet their needs or solve their problems

Assessment sheet templates

- Target:** I can draw a picture of a Hmong family and how each family member helps the family.
I can complete a sentence explaining how the parents, grandparents, or children help their family.
I can draw a picture of a Hmong family showing how the children are following one rule in the family.
I can complete a sentence explaining how Hmong children are following a family rule.
I can circle all the objects that are needed to live on a sheet with 10 different objects.
I can complete a sentence explaining how Hmong parents earn money to buy the family's needs.

Time Frame: 7 days

Procedure: Make a classroom display of materials used in each lesson as a reinforcement of main ideas and concepts taught. The display should include the children's book, photographs of Hmong family roles, rules, basic needs for food, clothing, and homes, sources of food, examples or photographs of toys and games, a ball for the ball toss game, rubber bands and rocks for the Rubberband and Rock games, and photographs of Hmong parents at work earning money.

Day 1: Discuss different roles for Hmong family members in Wisconsin today, the meaning of roles, why each family member has a role, and what might happen if a family member did not fulfill her or his role. Show pictures of different family activities and have students notice how each family member helps the family. Ask students how the parents help their family (earn money for the family's basic needs and care for children and grandparents). Ask students how grandparents help the family (care for children and help with cooking and caring for home). Ask students how older siblings help the family (care for younger siblings, help with household chores, help younger siblings with homework, help grandparents and parents). Ask students to compare these different roles to the roles of their own family members. How do they help their own family? How does their family help them?

Day 2: Review some of the classroom rules and ask the students the reasons for these rules. Ask for examples of rules they have in their families and the reasons for the rules. The teacher should share examples of rules in her/his family and why they exist. Ask students to speculate if they think Hmong families might also have rules and what those might be. Give examples of rules some Hmong families might have as illustrated in photographs: children must obey parents and grandparents; older siblings must complete household chores and care for younger siblings, children must complete all household chores and homework before playing games or watching television; children must be in the house by the time it becomes dark outside. Ask students to explain why some Hmong families might have these rules. How do the rules help the family?

Day 3: Show students photographs of different kinds of food, clothing, homes, toys, objects for games, and electronic games that many Hmong children might have. Ask students to classify which are needed to live and which are not necessary to live and the reasons for their answers. Have students place the photographs of objects in a pocket chart under two categories "Need to live" and "Not needed to live" or "want." Encourage students to explain their reasoning and listen for the logic in their reasoning rather than their "correct" answer. Accept different answers from students as long as they provide solid reasoning for their answers. Guide students to recognize that some foods, such as vegetables, rice, and chicken are needed to live because they provide important nutrients to give us energy for work and play and to keep our bodies growing and working properly. Candy, on the other hand, may give our bodies some energy, but it does not provide other important nutrients our body needs. Candy is not a basic need, even though it is a food. It is something we may like to eat, but we could survive if we had no candy. Ask students where Hmong families often get the food they need to live. Show photographs of Hmong or Asian grocery stores and gardens and ask students what kinds of foods they see or could be purchased from or grown in these locations. Read *Ka's garden* by Maggie Lee McHugh & Bee Lo. Tell the students to listen for what is grown in the garden (spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, and corn) and why the Hmong garden as they are listening to the book. Discuss the important ideas in the book: the Hmong garden to provide food for animals, to share the vegetables with family and friends, and to continue their family tradition of gardening.

Day 4: Show students photographs of different kinds of homes that many Hmong families might live in. Ask students to explain if a house is a need or a want and the reasons for their answer. Guide students to recognize that homes provide shelter from the hot sun, cold weather, snow, ice, rain, and strong winds. Show students photographs or actual pieces of different kinds of clothing that many Hmong children might wear: shorts and top, bathing suit, sandals, heavy winter coat, boots, woolen hat, woolen gloves, and New Year clothing. Ask students to choose which kind of clothing is needed to survive in cold, winter weather and the reasons for their answer. Place this clothing in one pile in a bag or basket with the label "Need to wear in cold weather" or place the photographs of clothing in a pocket chart under the heading "Need to wear in cold weather." Ask students which kind of clothing is needed in very hot weather and the reasons for their answer. Create another pile of clothing with the label "Need to wear in hot weather" or place the photographs of clothing in a pocket chart under the heading "Need to wear in hot weather." Ask students to explain if the Hmong New Year clothing is a need or a want and the reasons for their answer. Elaborate that the New Year clothing is important for Hmong families' cultural identity and to continue their cultural traditions, but they do not need to wear the New Year clothing to survive in very hot or very cold weather.

Day 5: Show students examples or photographs of toys, electronic games, the ball for the ball toss game, and rubber bands and rocks for the Rubberband and Rock games. Ask students to classify each picture or toy, game, or object as either a want or a need and explain their reasoning. Elaborate that each of these toys, games, or objects provide children with enjoyable experiences and opportunities to meet and play with others, but they are not crucial for life. Review the initial collection of photographs of different kinds of food, clothing, homes, toys, objects for games, and electronic games that many Hmong children might have from day 3. Ask students to classify which are needed to live and which are not necessary to live and the reasons for their answers. Have students place the photographs of objects in a pocket chart under two categories "Need to live" and "Not needed to live" or "want."

Day 6: Ask students to explain how Hmong families obtain the money they need to purchase the food, clothing, and home they need to live and some of the wants they would like to have, but don't need to live. Show photographs of Hmong parents engaging in different types of jobs, such as teaching, running a restaurant or grocery store, building a product at a factory, or helping other families meet their needs or solve their problems. Ask students to study the photographs and describe what the parents are doing in each type of job and how they believe their job helps their family and the community. If possible, invite Hmong guest speakers from the community who have different jobs to explain what they do in their jobs and how their jobs help their family and the community. Ask the speakers to bring objects they use or produce in their jobs or a picture of them at work to share with the class. Take photographs of each speaker and her/his objects for the classroom display.

Assessment: (Day 7)

Ask students to draw a picture of a Hmong family and how each family member helps the family. Underneath the picture, the student should complete **one** of the sentences (they can choose):

The parents help the Hmong family by _____

The grandparents help the Hmong family by _____

The children help the Hmong family by _____

Ask students to draw a picture of a Hmong family showing how the children are following one rule in the family.

Underneath the drawing the student should complete the sentence:

The Hmong children are following the family rule by _____

Given a sheet of 10 different examples of objects (foods, clothing, homes, toys, objects for games, and electronic games), the student will circle all the objects which Hmong children need to live. The student will explain the reasons for their selections. Underneath the pictures of objects, the students will complete the sentence:

The Hmong parents earn money to buy the family's needs by _____

Interview each student to clarify the meaning of their drawings and sentences.