

Title: The Hmong American Migration Story: as told through a first person narrative entitled, *Dia's Story Cloth: the Hmong people's journey for freedom*, written by Dia Cha.

Overview: As a nation of immigrants, Americans have numerous tales of how we all came to be a part of this great country. Many of these stories are told through the extraordinary experiences of America's very own refugee populations. Most refugees from Southeast Asia have experienced many generations of political oppression, war, famine, and ethnic persecution. As allies to the American government during the Vietnam War (1960-1975), some Hmong were offered resettlement arrangements to the United States as a reward for their undercover work with the U.S. Army and Central Intelligence Agency. Most of Minnesota's estimated 65,000 Hmong refugees come from northern or upland Laos, where they are the majority ethnic group. Minnesota now has the largest urban Hmong population in the world.

Who are the Hmong Americans? How have they survived their journey from Southeast Asia? How do they tell their stories of survival? What role does their unique embroidered story cloth play in telling their geographic and historical trials and tribulations? These questions will be explored throughout our course of reading, *Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong people's journey of freedom*.

Objectives and Standards:

- *To reconstruct past events from the perspective of immigrants
- *To explain reasons immigrants/refugees come to America
- *To use the concepts of push and pull factors to explain patterns of human movement in migration within the U.S.
- *To use maps and atlases
- *To observe, describe and draw conclusions about migration to the U.S. by using a non-fiction text
- *To use Hmong story cloth(s) as a primary resource
- *To explain the regional distribution of the Hmong population from a local and global scale

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: Geography/U.S. History

Time: 5 days

Prerequisites:

- *Have students make up 5-10 interview questions as a group the day(s) before lesson is presented.
- *Have students interview parents, grandparents or others about a true migration experience that they or their ancestors had personally endured. Students might want to know why and how family members migrated to Minnesota, other states, or to the United States.
- *Students should find out the reasons (push & pull factors) associated with arriving to another place. A push factor causes people to leave a location. A pull factor attracts people to a new location.

Required Materials:

- *One or more copies of the book, *Dia's Story Cloth: the Hmong people's journey for freedom*, written by Dia Cha
- *One large classroom map or several smaller maps and atlases
- *Hmong story cloths or copies from a book for visual enhancement
- * Posterboards and chart paper
- *Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- *Videos on the immigration experience to America (optional)
- *Other primary resources on immigration or non-fiction text (optional)

Suggested Procedure: Opening

- *Ask students where in the world their families are originally from.
- Have students physically point to that place on the classroom map. Write down responses of places on a chart so that everyone may see these places.
- Keep these places posted throughout the week.
- Ask students to share the interview responses about their own family's migration stories in groups of 2-3. Students should also discuss the push and pull factors for which their families migrated within their small groups.

- Monitor small groups. Give feedback when needed.
- Have groups choose one person to report back to large group by giving three or more reasons for migrating to a new place.
- Record these responses on a chart as well and keep posted throughout the week.

*Ask students to consider what it would be like to move to a different country.

- Ask students to think about the problems they might face and the opportunities that moving to a new place might provide.
- Write their responses on another chart.
- Explain that millions of immigrants, just as the interviews of their families suggests, have a variety of reasons for why they immigrated to the United States.
- Point out that millions of immigrants are refugees, individuals who are forced to leave their country because they do not feel safe where they live or suffer discrimination. Most refugees leave their native lands because of a lack of religious and political freedom as well as war in their countries.

*Write the word, "migration" in the center of the classroom board and circle it. Have students come up and write other words or phrases around the term "migration" which will help to define this term for the class.

- Acknowledge all responses positively. Follow up with a true definition of migration if not produced. Use "migration" as an introduction to the Hmong migration story.

*Display story cloth(s).

- Ask students to consider the story that is being told through the Hmong story cloth.
- As they view the story cloth, record the images that they report back on a chart.
- Explain to students that the Hmong are one of the largest refugee groups in Minnesota.
- Explain to students that much of the story that we will read is told through a real story cloth that the author's aunt and uncle made and sent to her in 1991. Point out that the story cloth in the book, *Dia's Story Cloth: the Hmong people's journey of freedom*, portrays the author's real family and that of many other Hmong immigrants who came to the United States after the Vietnam War.

Suggested Procedure: Development

*As students begin to read have students trace all the countries mentioned (China, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam) onto blank sheets of paper.

-Have students color and label these areas as well as the major landforms and rivers located within or near these four main regions.

-Point out these countries as the four main areas for Hmong migration in Dia's story.

- Be sure to point out the importance of the Mekong River as the region's longest river. It flows through Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam to the South China Sea. The Mekong River also has a political significance to the Hmong refugees who were forced to cross it as a means of escaping the communist soldiers in Laos. Many died on this dangerous voyage to get to the refugee camps located in Thailand.

*While reading the story have students make a **sequence chart** or a **web** (graphic organizer) of facts that pertain to the story.

Sequence Chart Instructions:

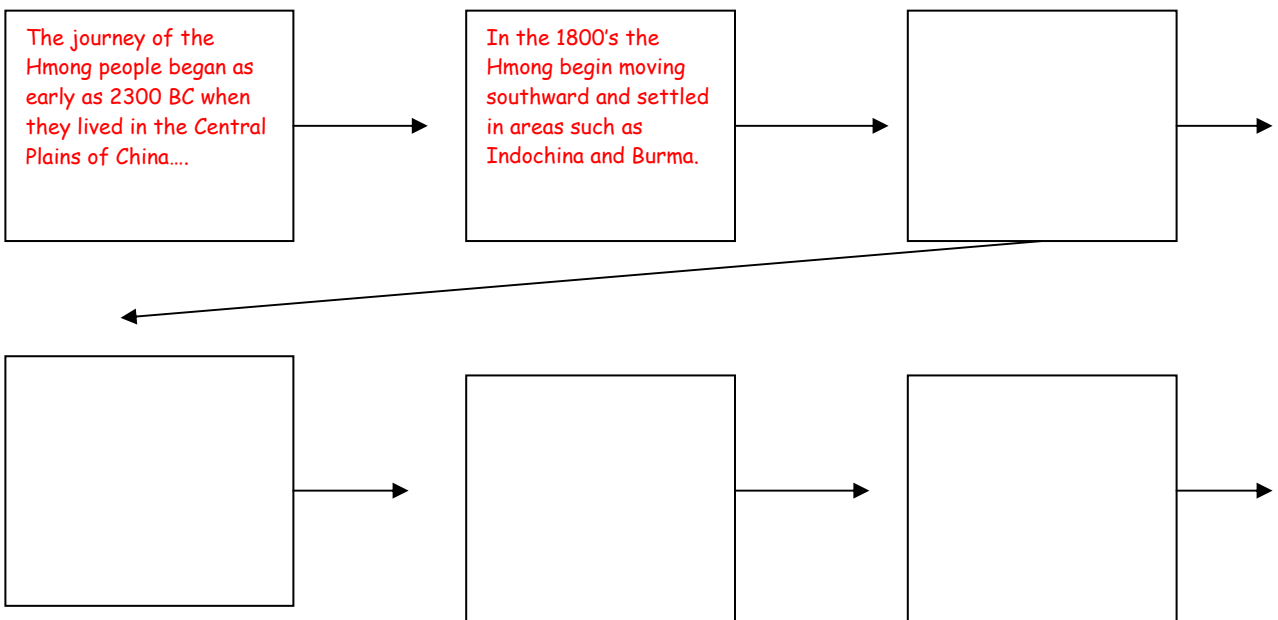
Using the sequence chart is a fantastic **during reading strategy** to use when reading about transitional stories such as the one presented in this book. It will help students capture the changes that will occur as the Hmong migration story evolves. It also keeps your learner active! For example,

Sequence Chart

Sequence Chart

Topic: Hmong American Migration

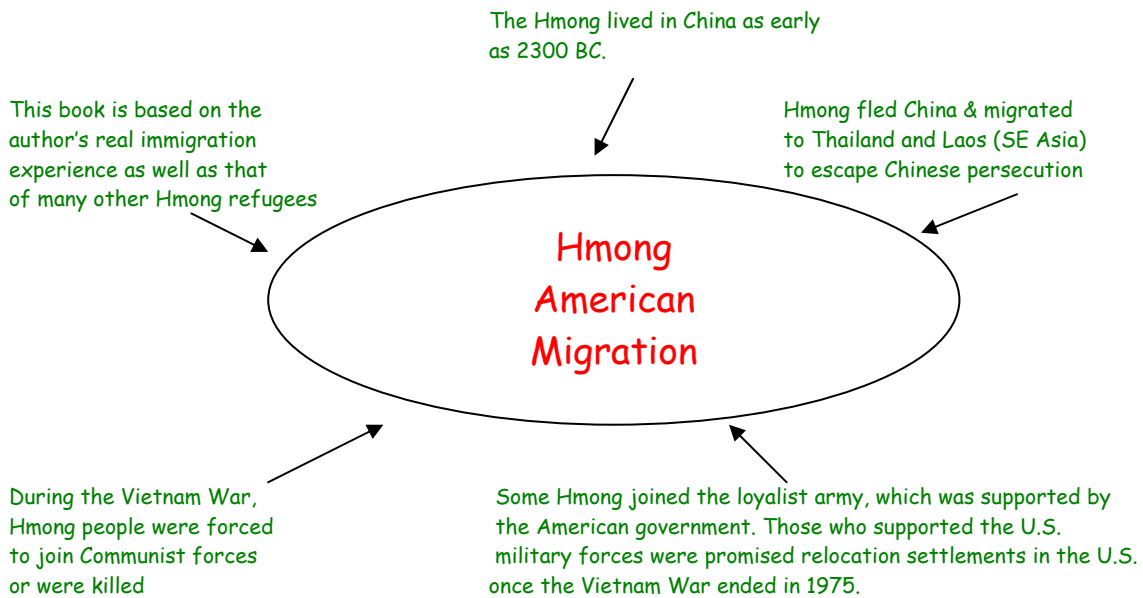
Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____



Web Instructions:

Using a web to graphically organize facts studied is a creative reading strategy that keeps students connected with the text. Have students write **Hmong American Migration** in the center of their web surrounded by various facts that are presented in the reading. For example,

Web



-Use a variety of colored pencils to distinguish between historical, geographical and personal immigration facts. *This encourages motivational reading and focus as students fill in their webs.

-Be sure to **mention** that creating a web or chart is a great reading strategy to use when learning new material. They may also be used in a multitude of subjects and assignments! Teach these tools as frequently as possible.

Suggested Procedure: Closing

*After students have finished reading the book have them synthesize the information from their charts or webs by writing a three-paragraph essay or summary based on the Hmong migration experience.

-These essays/summaries should be typed and should be written in a sequential manner.

*To help students see the authentic relevance to their learning about the Hmong American migration story and that of their own lives have them discuss and record their responses to three or more of the following questions in groups of 2-3:

Making Personal Connections

- Were you able to identify with Dia Cha's immigration experience? In what ways?
- How did you feel about Dia's story?
- How is your family the same/different from the one in this book?
- Did you make any connections with the Hmong immigration story?
- What feelings did the reading raise for you?
- What have you learned about yourself by studying this person's life?

-Post responses to questions on a chart and discuss as a large group. Or, have students pick three questions to respond to in their geography journals.

Differentiation:

- To modify this lesson to meet student's various abilities, show video clips about immigration push and pull factors.
- Expand lesson and discussion around push and pull immigration issues.
- Check out additional children's books about the Hmong migration story. Have lower level learners read these literary materials before reading

Dia's Story Cloth so that they truly develop a prior understanding of the immigration experience.

- Encourage students to bring in pictures of their own families as a visual means to learning or sharing their own migration stories.
- Make black and white copies of story cloth so that students can color the stories as they evaluate the scenes.
- Incorporate additional reading strategies.

Assessment:

*Ask students to make their own migration story cloth. Their story should relate to their family's migration story as told through their interviews. If student is not comfortable telling her own story, she may choose to make her own interpretation of a Hmong migration story cloth. -Student's posters should have at least eight or more scenes. Use established rubric scales to grade this project or informal guidelines. Or, have class decide as a whole an appropriate grading scale for this project.

Credits:

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