

The Evacuation of Saigon: One Million Cold War Refugees Mark a Nation's End

Course Description

“The Evacuation of Saigon: One Million Cold War Refugees Mark a Nation’s End,” is an audio/visual educational unit accompanied by well-developed research opportunities appropriate for grades 10 through 12, Social Studies classes. The compact study of Operation Frequent Wind explores the major push and pull factors that resulted in the migration of over One Million Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians to the United States, beginning in 1975.

This course is particularly appropriate for teachers of U.S. History, World History, American/World Studies, and AP courses containing units concerning U.S. foreign policy and its effects on population migration. Because of its compact structure, this course lends itself well to curriculum requiring minimal time to address this important episode in American history.

The course includes a series of seven, 7-to-10 minute videos discussing events beginning with the United States government’s decision to assist the French in their reoccupation of Indochina in 1945 and ending with the fall of Saigon on April 29 and 30, 1975. A museum instructor who has received special training in this historical era will use original source documents such as war maps, photographs, and official video to narrate the flow of events. These videos can be downloaded and shown in the classroom or accessed by students individually as homework. Each video is accompanied by a Viewing Guide that can be used by the teacher as an indication of student involvement.

The focal point of the program is a 50-minute interactive electronic broadcast to the classroom where students will learn of the final events during the fall of the South Vietnamese government on April 29 and 30, 1975. The instructor will provide immediate feedback via a two-way data link, providing students a unique insight into this important historical event. At the end of the unit, students will be able to answer four Essential Questions concerning the role of nations in the international political arena and the effects of those actions on civilian populations in this particular instance. Free pre and post-lesson materials will supply students with both geographical and political information, including access to original source documents, to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the events presented.

This unit meets the California Common Core Content Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies in grades 11 and 12, Key Ideas and Details, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.