

Japantown – An Immigrant Community

Sharon Hughes
Meadow Glens
1150 Muirhead Ave
Naperville IL 60565

Promoting Geographic Knowledge Through Literature Workshop
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Throughout history, groups of people have moved from one location to another.

These moves offered immigrants a chance to pursue a better way of life.

Purpose of Lesson

This activity asks students to research, process, and report information about the Japanese people and their immigration to the United States. **An Immigrant**

Community of the 1900's by Gare Thompson gives the perspective of a Japanese boy growing up in San Francisco at the turn of the century. It explains the affects of the 1906 earthquake and how he and his family help to rebuild the city.

Suggested Grade Levels

Grades 3-5

Time:

3-5 class periods (depending on extensions)

National Geography Standards

1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.

4: The physical and human characteristics of places.

9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Materials:

1. Text Set - **An Immigrant Community of the 1900's** - Gare Thompson -
National
Geographic Society ISBN 0-7922-8686-3
2. Chart Paper
3. Maps, Atlases
4. Graphic Organizers # 1 and # 2

Procedure

Day One:

Book Introduction – **An Immigrant Community of the 1900's** - Gare Thompson -

National Geographic Society ISBN 0-7922-8686-3

Introduce the topic of migration of people. Introduce the words migrate and immigration. Discuss difference in definitions (migrate means “to move from one country or place to another” and immigration means “to move into a new country to settle there and make a new home.”) Look at the base word and discuss other word derivatives.

Discuss how one would feel moving to a country where the culture and customs are different from your own.

Ask students to share their ideas about why people leave one place and are attracted to another. Make a list of these reasons on chart paper.

List categories such as political, economic, social, religious, climatic, or other. Briefly clarify each category and have students decide which category each reason fits best.

Read the introduction on page 4 and 5. Compare the class-generated reasons listed on the chart with the text Introduction.

Locate San Francisco on a political map. Discuss with students the geography of the area such as:

- § Located on a peninsula
- § The Pacific Ocean is connected to San Francisco Bay by the Golden Gate Strait
- § Built on and around more than 40 hills
- § Some of the steepest streets (376 feet high) in the world are in downtown San Francisco
 - Nob Hill and Russian Hill
- § Cable cars are used as transportation.

Ask students to read Chapter 1- Meet Toru and His Family 1905 and fill in the graphic organizer #1 - Geography Determines How People Live.

Looking at the information the students have collected on their organizers, ask them to summarize or make a generalization.

Day Two:

Ask students to read Chapter 2 Earthquake! 1906 and Chapter 3 Rebuilding the Community 1906-1908. After reading and class discussion, ask students to write a journal entry: How did geography affect the way Japanese people live now?

Day Three:

Ask students to read Chapter 4 New Arrivals 1908-1910 and Chapter 5 The New Year 1913. During silent reading of the text, students complete graphic organizer #2 – Culture in Japantown. As a class, ask them to share and discuss aspects of the Japanese culture they have listed.

Extensions:

1. Map Routes of Travel- Use desk maps (laminated or paper copies), atlases, wall maps, and globes to show migration routes for Japanese immigrants. Include Japanese immigrants who worked on the Hawaiian Sugar Plantations.
2. Compare the Chicago Fire to the San Francisco Earthquake.
3. Research the community of San Francisco.
 - As a class, make a community history kiosk. Using shoeboxes, students will make dioramas of an important event in the history of San Francisco.
4. Research Angel Island and compare it to Ellis Island using the book **Angel Island** by Larry Dane Brimner.
5. Compare and Contrast the American Communities Across Time Text Set - **A Whaling Community of the 1840's** and **A Homesteading Community of the 1880's** with **An Immigrant Community of the 1900's** by National

Geographic

Society. .

Teaching Resources:

An Immigrant Community of the 1900's – by Gare Thompson - National Geographic

Society ISBN 0-7922-8686-3

The City by the Bay: A Magical Journey Around San Francisco

by [Tricia Brown](#), [the Junior League of San Francisco](#), [Elisa Kleven](#) Chronicle Books;

ISBN: 0811820122

Earthquake in the Early Morning - Treehouse Mysteries

Random House (Merchandising); ISBN: 067989070X; (July 24, 2001)

Angel Island (Cornerstones of Freedom)

by [Larry Dane Brimner](#)

Children's Press; ISBN: 0516215663

A Whaling Community of the 1840's by Gare Thompson - National Geographic

Society ISBN 0-7922-8672-3

A Homesteading Community of the 1880's by Gare Thompson - National Geographic

Society ISBN 0-7922-8680-4

San Francisco Cities of the World by Deborah Kent ISBN 0-516-20467-X

The San Francisco Earthquake Lucent Books, Inc. ISBN 1-56006-003-4

Name _____

Geography Determines How People Live

People/Characters	Landforms	Natural Resources	Economics	Customs

Organizer # 1

Name _____ Date _____

Culture in Japantown

Culture is the shared way of a group of people. It consists of the language, foods, clothing, customs, beliefs, education, recreation, holidays/celebrations, and consumer goods. As you read Chapters 4 and Chapter 5, list the aspects of culture you read about:

Language <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Foods <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Clothing <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Customs <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Beliefs <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Education <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Recreation <hr/>	Holidays & Celebrations	Consumer Goods

Organizer # 2