

Jonathan F. Yorck

“An Introduction to Thailand and Vietnam”

Grade level- Kindergarten

One Page Summary-

This cultural study is an introductory unit on Thailand/Vietnam for young children. It is my goal to offer my students exposure to the cultures of Thailand/Vietnam through many enjoyable hands-on activities.

I will begin my unit on Thailand/Vietnam in the middle of October and conclude it in the middle of November. I also do cultural units of study on Germany, China, Korea and Japan so I have many years of experience presenting global education to very young children. I feel that I will be able to make many comparisons and contrasts of different Asian cultures throughout the school year. This is especially valuable to my students because Honolulu has a concentration of these different ethnic groups. My Thailand/Vietnam Unit is an integration of my first hand experiences, of basic Thailand/Vietnam language and history, augmented by ethnic music and food. One way this is all made more tangible is to have the students make their own version of the indigenous crafts made by the students. I show my students the proximity of Thailand/Vietnam on a map to Hawaii and how they are located close to China, Korea and Japan. With the aid of maps, I also show and explain the significance of the Thailand and Vietnam flag. Subsequently the children will make their own flags of these countries. In addition, I will give the children a very general and simplistic historical overview of Thailand/Vietnam.

There will be many visual displays of photographs, postcards, and artifacts on poster board throughout the classroom. I feel very fortunate as I was able to purchase Thai posters of fruits, vegetables, flowers and animals along with other age appropriate materials for young children. The children will be exposed to various cultural and historical sites of Thailand/Vietnam. They will also become aware of traditional Thailand/Vietnam dances as I have a collection of various photographs, digital pictures, and a wonderful video. Presently, in collaboration with our art teacher, we are planning to have the children create clay elephants and conical hats as a cultural art project.

It is important to mention that I spent a lot of time compiling, arranging and editing the web link documenting my trip to Thailand/Vietnam this past summer. I will utilize this web link during my unit on Thailand and Vietnam. It is located at:

<http://www.punahou.edu/js/gradek/f/thailink/thailandvietnam.html>

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I have also compiled various web sites related to Thailand and Vietnam. These will be consistently displayed on my large screen classroom television.

<http://www.punahou.edu/js/gradek/f/websites/thailand.html>

Some of the literature I utilize are "Magic Banyan Tree", "A Sack of Gold For Some Star Fruit", "The Girl Who Wore Too Much", "Tam's Slipper", and "Leaving Vietnam" to mention a few. I will also utilize various Big Books "Snapshots of Thailand" and "Snapshots of Vietnam"

We will learn basic words and counting in Thai and Vietnamese. I will show the children a wide array of CDs and videos that I purchased before, during and after my trip this summer. I am planning to take my students on a field trip to a local Vietnamese Restaurant. In addition, I am looking into the possibilities of a field trip at a local Thai Buddhist Temple. I believe this would be very meaningful for the children to be exposed to a different religion. The culmination of this unit is a Thailand/Vietnam Celebration where I employ parental support. I implement three learning centers, which consist of making summer rolls and sticky rice, taking pictures of the children who dress up in traditional Northern Thailand clothes, and playing the Thai game "Tua-Lu". This cultural celebration will be highlighted by a wide array of Thai/Vietnamese culinary delights . As we typically have many children in the classroom with a variety of Asian ethnicity's, this gives them the opportunity to learn more about different cultures. In addition, for those students who have Thai and Vietnamese ethnic backgrounds, it bestows ethnic pride and understanding from fellow classmates.

Essential Questions- What makes life in Thailand/Vietnam different from life in Hawaii? How is life in Thailand/Vietnam similar to life in Hawaii?

Objectives- offer my students an introductory look at two Southeastern Asian countries, and also an appreciation of different cultures and a connection to them. In addition, exposing my students to another world religion is important.

Materials- CDs, videos, artifacts, books, posters, maps, web links

Strategies:

Literature connections - read and discuss folk tales from Thailand and Vietnam

Similarities and Differences between cultures

Creating a mural of a home, building a village in the block corner

Language lesson- saying a few words in Thai and Vietnamese

Music, dance - movement

Guest Speakers, field trips and demonstrations

Assessment - The assessment of my unit on Thailand/Vietnam can be reflected by the joy and excitement of my students. Being greeted in the morning by the Thai saying “Sawadee krup” or the passion that my students might express when being able to identify the Grand Palace of Bangkok or the water puppets of Vietnam will definitely demonstrate the value of this cultural unit. In my classroom, parent participation has always been very impressive. The feedback I receive from them has always been positive and grateful. I will continue to improve my cultural study of Thailand/Vietnam, knowing how many young students are offered an introductory glimpse of these very special countries. I will also administer a pre and post test questions to my students, parent survey, possible short paper by the children on what they learned about Thailand and Vietnam.

Follow Up Activities - A Thailand/Vietnam Celebration on November 22, 2002 where we will have the parents involved in classroom activities for the children. References, comparisons, and contrasts throughout the school year to our Thailand/Vietnam Unit will take place. Stay tune for online pictures of this event.