

# Mini Lesson: Migrants & Refugees

## Harry Evan-Stein & Phansy Peang

**Subject Area:** ELA/Social Studies

**Grade Level:** 9 – 10

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Standard Addressed:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

**Testimony:**

Phansy Peang  
Cambodian Survivor



(3:57)

**Testimony:**

Harry Evan-Stein  
Jewish Survivor



(1:27)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**Learning Aim:** Students will identify the meaning of “migrant” and “refugee” and demonstrate their differences and similarities, as well as reflect on personal perspectives on the refugee experience through close reading of testimony.

### CONSIDER

- Start the lesson by showing the interactive map on refugees and their movement around the world. It is available from The Refugee Project: <http://www.therefugeeproject.org/#/2015>
- When the map timeline ends, discuss the following questions: What does this map show? What does it mean? Why is this happening? How do you feel about this?
- Following the discussion, tell students that they will learn about refugees – as well as the differences from other migrant groups. The differences are significant and important to understand. Pose the following questions for pairs to discuss: What is the definition of a refugee? Immigrant/migrant? Allow students to share what they know.
- Distribute the student handout. Create small groups and direct each one to read either the definition of “refugee” or definition of “migrant (immigrant).”
- Discuss the similarities and differences.

### COLLECT

- Tell students that they will watch clips from the testimonies of Harry Evan-Stein, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, and Phansy Peang, a Cambodian Genocide survivor. Both can provide an individual perspective on the refugee experience from two different points in time, but with remarkable similarities. Explain that both Harry and Phansy were refugees fleeing violence, Harry from Nazi-controlled Austria and Phansy from Khmer Rouge-controlled Cambodia.
- These perspectives can give a face to the plight of refugees we are seeing around the world today.
- Tell students why you are using survivor testimony in this lesson and ensure the proper context for both the Holocaust and the Cambodian Genocide is provided. More information on both here: <https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/cambodia/introduction/cambodia-1975> and <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143>
- Tell students that they will be asked to practice reading audiovisual text, reflect on it, and generate ideas about it.
- Direct students to read Harry’s and Phansy’s biographies or project them on the board.
- Viewing 1: Direct students to simply watch Harry’s testimony all the way through.
- Viewing 2: Next, tell students that they will watch the clip a second time. During this viewing, students should pay attention to the story, body language, facial expressions, voice and tone, as well as the background and time when the testimony was given (date available in biographical details). Noticing these details can help the “reader” obtain information that could help them identify the central idea of the audiovisual “text.”
- Repeat Viewing 1 and 2 for the clip from Phansy’s testimony.
- When they finish watching the clip, discuss the following questions in whole group: Why did Harry and Phansy flee their homes? How were they marked as different in the countries to which they fled? How did this impact them?

### CONSTRUCT

- In whole group, distribute large, blank slips of paper, markers and tape to pairs of students.
- Direct each pair to write words or a phrase on the slip of paper that reflects their learning.

### COMMUNICATE

- Direct students to combine all slips of paper into one “found poetry” piece and tape to the wall as one stanza of poetry. Read aloud and discuss the meaning of the poem.
- Encourage students to post a copy of the found poem on their preferred social media site using the hashtags #BeginsWithMe and #100Days4Respect.

# Mini Lesson: Migrants & Refugees

## Harry Evan-Stein & Phansy Peang



### Student Handout

#### Harry Evan-Stein Biography

Harry Evan-Stein was born in Vienna, Austria on February 8, 1924 to Jacob and Paula Stein. He fondly remembers celebrating religious holidays with his parents and his brother, Sascha, which continued to inspire his religious observance later in his life.

In early 1938, Harry participated in public marches in the streets of Vienna promoting Austrian autonomy and independence. However, on March 13, 1938, the Anschluss took place and Nazi Germany annexed Austria. People again flooded the streets, but this time they were cheering for Hitler. Harry hid during these marches, fearing attack. The Stein family resolved to leave Austria. They moved around western Europe and eventually went into hiding in France.

In France, Harry joined the French resistance. His group received orders to harass retreating German units and destroy their heavy weapons. Their raids were successful, and the group captured 25–30 German prisoners. Harry, as the only German speaker in his outfit, was put in charge of a small group guarding the prisoners.

After retreating Germans ambushed and killed some of Harry's resistance colleagues, a few of the survivors wanted to exact revenge on Harry's prisoners. Harry refused. He stood between the fighters, and their prisoners, even after his comrades leveled their rifles at him. Harry convinced the fighters to get orders from their commanding officer before hurting the prisoners. While briefing their CO, an American jeep came into town, signaling the future arrival of the American army. Harry handed over unscathed the prisoners, thus concluding his part in the war.

After the war, Harry and Sascha moved to British Mandate Palestine (now Israel) to start new lives. He served in the Israeli Defense Forces. He met his first wife, Mira Evan Stein, in the service. They had two children before she died of cancer. He married Tseira Trifon and raised his large family.

He was interviewed on October 2, 1996 in New York, New York.

#### Phansy Peang Biography

Phansy Peang was born on December 12, 1948 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Phansy was the youngest of 11 siblings. The Peangs were an ethnically Khmer family, as well as practicing Buddhists. Phansy's parents owned a flower shop and the family was affluent, with connections to the royal family.

As a child, Phansy attended a French school. At 18, she married and dropped out of school, intending to take a year break, because of a severe migraine condition. Her husband did not allow her to continue education, but she continued to read Balinese, French, and English at home. Phansy and Ham moved to Kampot Province for Ham's job as a director of a fertilizer factory. They lived at the factory during the week and returned home to the city for weekends. Their second child was born in 1970 as the Khmer Rouge was beginning their revolution. Like many younger Cambodians, Phansy supported Marshall Lon Nol and the Khmer Republic.

On April 20, 1975, Phansy and her family were forced to evacuate Phnom Penh and relocate to the Russei Kraing commune in Pursat Province. Six months after evacuation, Phansy's daughter Munichahda died from convulsions. Young babies were prone to infectious diseases because the victims had to live among corpses. Without a currency or market, daily life was sustained with a bartering system among trusted commune inhabitants for clothes, food, and gold. Phansy's forced labor took place on the "frontline" -- constructing canals, digging rice paddies, and demolishing buildings. In late 1977, she discovered from an acquaintance that her husband had been shot dead by the Khmer Rouge because of his job as a factory director under Lon Nol.

Phansy was liberated in July 1979 and was able to move back to Phnom Penh. She returned to the city alone, as by that time all of her family members had died. Shortly after, Phansy migrated to the Khao-I-Dang and Nong Samet refugee camps in Thailand. While in Thailand, Phansy converted to Christianity and became a Catholic. The Church eventually sponsored her visa to France, where she remained for a short time working as a Catholic clergyperson. Phansy immigrated to the United States and settled in Long Beach, California.

Phansy was interviewed on April 11, 2009 in Los Angeles, California, USA.

# Mini Lesson: Migrants & Refugees

## Harry Evan-Stein & Phansy Peang



### Definition of "Refugee" (from UNHCR)

Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution. There were 21.3 million of them worldwide at the end of 2015. Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as "refugees" with access to assistance from States, UNHCR, and other organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as well as other legal texts, such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, remain the cornerstone of modern refugee protection. The legal principles they enshrine have permeated into countless other international, regional, and national laws and practices. The 1951 Convention defines who is a refugee and outlines the basic rights which States should afford to refugees. One of the most fundamental principles laid down in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom would be under threat.

The protection of refugees has many aspects. These include safety from being returned to the dangers they have fled; access to asylum procedures that are fair and efficient; and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected to allow them to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution. States bear the primary responsibility for this protection. UNHCR therefore works closely with governments, advising and supporting them as needed to implement their responsibilities.

Source: "UNHCR Viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?" 2016. <http://www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html>

### Definition of "Migrant" (from UNHCR)

Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.

For individual governments, this distinction is important. Countries deal with migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. Countries deal with refugees through norms of refugee protection and asylum that are defined in both national legislation and international law. Countries have specific responsibilities towards anyone seeking asylum on their territories or at their borders. UNHCR helps countries deal with their asylum and refugee protection responsibilities.

Source: "UNHCR Viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?" 2016. <http://www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html>