



**What's In My Trunk?**  
*Teacher's Resource Packet*

For use in conjunction with the What's In My Trunk? program at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and State of Michigan curriculum standards.

## What's In My Trunk?

### ***Teacher's Resource Packet Contents***

Have you ever traveled to a place with restrictions of space? Imagine the conflict individuals face when they pack up their entire lives into a trunk. What do they take? What do they leave home? Have you ever been faced with a similar dilemma when you cannot decide between “needing” to take something and “wanting” to take something?

This comprehensive teacher's packet contains several resources the teacher can use to enhance classroom learning of the overall immigration or ethnic history themes. It is also designed to complement the Public Museum's guided tour for this grade level.

#### ***Pre-Visit Materials***

- Michigan Department of Education Curriculum Links
- *Newcomer's* Exhibit Description
- Vocabulary List
- “What's In My Trunk?” Book List
- *Story Time* Group Activity and Discussion
- *Pack a Bag* Individual Activity
- Highlighted Personal Stories from the Exhibit

#### ***Post-Visit Materials***

- *Family History* Individual Activity
- *What's In My Trunk* Individual Activity
- Project Extensions

These materials cannot be reproduced for use beyond the classroom without the written consent of the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

#### **Curriculum Links**

The *What's in My Trunk?* program is designed to fit with the Curriculum standards of the Michigan Department of Education. The specific links covered are listed below.

#### **History**

- **K – H2.0.3** Identify the beginning, middle, and end of historical narratives or stories.
- **K – H2.0.4** Describe ways people learn about the past (e.g., photos, artifacts, diaries, stories, videos).
- **1 – H2.0.1** Demonstrate chronological thinking by distinguishing among past, present, and future using family or school events.
- **1 – H2.0.3** Investigate a family history for at least two generations, identifying various members and their connections in order to tell a narrative about family life.

- **2 – H2.0.3** Use an example to describe the role of the individual in creating history.
- **2 – H2.0.6** Construct a historical narrative about the history of the local community from a variety of sources (e.g., data gathered from local residents, artifacts, photographs).

### **Geography**

- **K – G5.0.1** Describe ways people use the environment to meet human needs and wants (e.g., food, shelter, clothing).
- **1 – G4.0.1** Use components of culture (e.g., foods, language, religion, traditions) to describe diversity in family life.
- **2 – G4.0.3** Use components of culture (e.g., foods, language, religion, traditions) to describe diversity in the local community.

### **Economics**

- **1 – E1.0.3** Using examples, explain why people cannot have everything they want (scarcity) and describe how people respond (choice).

### **Language Arts**

- **R.WS.00.10** in context, determine the meaning of a few words, familiar and repeated phrases including objects, actions, concepts, content vocabulary, and literary terms, using strategies and resources including picture clues, prediction, and other people.
- **R.CM.00.02** retell up to three events from familiar text using their own words or phrasing.
- **R.WS.01.10** in context, determine the meaning of words and phrases including objects, actions, concepts, content vocabulary, and literary terms, using strategies and resources including context clues, mental pictures, and questioning.
- **R.NT.01.05** respond to individual and multiple texts by finding evidence, discussing, illustrating, and/or writing to reflect, make connections, take a position, and/or show understanding.
- **W.GN.01.01** write a personal narrative using illustrations and transitional words such as before, after, now, or finally to indicate a sequence of events, sense of story (beginning, middle, and end), and physical descriptions.
- **R.WS.02.11** in context, determine the meaning of words and phrases including objects, actions, concepts, content vocabulary, and literary terms, using strategies and resources including context clues, mental pictures, and questioning.
- **R.IT.02.04** respond to individual and multiple texts by finding evidence, discussing,

illustrating, and/or writing to reflect, make connections, take a position, and/or show understanding.

- **W.GN.02.03** write an informational piece including a magazine feature article using an organizational pattern such as description, enumeration, sequence, or compare/contrast that may include graphs, diagrams, or charts to enhance the understanding of central and key ideas.

### **Newcomers Exhibit Description**

The Newcomers exhibit educates students about the personal journeys, struggles and accomplishments of the immigrants who have settled in West Michigan throughout its history. Artifacts and personal narratives help to bring the exhibit to life for students.

The exhibit is organized thematically around universal human experiences. These themes serve as the framework for the stories of representative individuals from different ethnic groups and racial backgrounds.

- The “**Introduction**” launches the major themes of the exhibit. It explains that ethnicity is subject to constant change and gives an overview of the various groups and ethnicities that have made their homes in West Michigan over time.
- “**Leaving Home**” explains the push and pull factors which lead people to leave home and experience an often-difficult journey towards a new place. It also captures the difficult decisions people must make about what they can bring with them and what they must leave behind.
- “**Coming to This Place**” illustrates why people choose to come to Grand Rapids and what happens after they first arrive in West Michigan.
- “**Settling In**” depicts how each group adjusts to its new environment and impacts the community it has joined.
- “**Making a Living**” focuses on the importance of work. It explores employment options available to different groups once they settle in Grand Rapids.
- “**Building a Family**” emphasizes how family is usually the most important purveyor of ethnic traditions in the U.S. It shows the tension many families face between holding on to traditions and losing language and customs after years or decades away from their homeland.
- “**Creating Community**” demonstrates how newcomers, when first arriving in a new place, often seek out people who speak the same language, practice the

same religion and hold to the same customs. This section illustrates how different groups recreate institutions that strengthen the ties between members and help create a shared identity.

- “**Realizing Identity**” investigates how all people are influenced and ultimately changed by where they live. This section explores the ideas that a diverse and ever-changing community influences those who live within it.
- “**A New Place**” summarizes the complex and dynamic exchanges that occur when groups of people are negotiating and re-negotiating community and identity. All the people shown in this exhibit went through universal experiences that ultimately helped them create the particular community and traditions of *this* place—Grand Rapids.

### What’s In My Trunk Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
1. immigrant	A person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another.
2. immigration	To enter and settle in a country or region to which one is not native.
3. refugee	One who flees in search of refuge, as in times of war, political oppression or religious persecution.
4. evacuee	A person who has to leave a dangerous place.
5. tradition	The passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation.
6. traveler	A person who goes from one place to another.
7. newcomer	One who has recently arrived in a new place.

### What’s In My Trunk? Book List

These are some recommended books for you to use to help supplement your classroom instruction as you prepare for your field trip.

Author	Title	Publisher
Tarbescu, Edith	<i>Annushka’s Voyage</i>	Clarion Books
Maestro, Betsy	<i>Coming to America</i>	Scholastic

Lasky, Kathryn	<i>Dreams in the Golden Country</i>	Scholastic
Bierman, Carol	<i>Journey to Ellis Island</i>	Hyperion
Polanco, Patricia	<i>The Keeping Quilt</i>	Aladdin Paperbacks
Hesse, Karen Cohen, Barbara	<i>Letters from Rifka</i>	Henry Holt and Co. Lothrop, Lee & Shephard Books
Hest, Jesse	<i>Molly's Pilgrim</i> <i>When Jessie Came Across the Sea</i>	Candlewick

### Story Time

- **Objective:** Students will hear about diverse experiences and connect with the stories related to the “What’s In My Trunk” themes.
- **Materials:** books

### Procedure

1. Read a story to your students (see suggested book list) before they come visit the Museum.
2. Ask your students the following discussion questions:
  - What was the story about?
  - Describe the main character.
  - Why did they leave one place and go to another?
  - What did they bring with them? (Ex. Objects, skills or stories)
  - How do you think they felt as they came to their new home?

### Pack a Bag

- **Objective:** Students will experience the thought processes of someone who was leaving his/her home.
- **Materials:** trunk or box to serve as a trunk, objects students bring from home

### Procedure

1. Ask the students the question, “If you had to leave your home town and travel to a new place, what would you take with you?”
2. Invite students to bring one object from home that they would like to pack in the class trunk.
3. Have the students take turns packing their item in the trunk, stating why they chose it.

4. Unpack the bag as a class and classify the objects into various groups. For example: things to wear, things to keep clean, things to pass time, things that are useful, things that remind me of home.

### **Highlighted Stories**

*These stories can be used for reading aloud in class prior to the museum visit.*

#### **John Ball**

John Ball came to Grand Rapids in 1836 looking for trees to cut lumber. He liked what he saw and decided to stay. He brought other settlers to Grand Rapids. He organized the public school system and started what is now the Public Museum of Grand Rapids. John Ball Park is his gift to the people of Grand Rapids.

John Ball's journey began in New York, starting with the newly-completed Erie Canal which brought him from Albany to Buffalo. There, he boarded a boat that took him across Lake Erie to Detroit where he bought a horse and other supplies needed for his travel. Among the things he brought with them were this saddlebag and hand forged frying pan.

Here is what he had to say about the things he brought with him. "I brought a horse and saddle and saddlebags, and transferred to the latter from my trunk things most necessary, but omitted to take along a brace of pistols I had purchased in Troy to please my friends, they thinking that I was going into not only a wild but a wicked country."

**If you were John Ball, what would you have brought?**

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#### **Le Duc Su**

Le Duc Su (Su Le) worked for the US Army in South Vietnam for almost twenty years. When war became worse and the US army lost the city of Saigon to its enemies, Su Le faced a difficult choice. Should he staying in the country of his birth or should he move to the United States?

Su Le decided to try and come to America but did not realize how hard it would be to get there. He incorrectly assumed that the American army would airlift him out. Su le and his family boarded a small fishing boat with 200 other people and crossed the South China Sea in three days. They landed in Malaysia and found that the people there did not really want them to land on their shores. All the “boat people” were sent to one island where there was very little food or water. Pictured below is a refugee boat.

Su Le had a friend in Grand Rapids who contacted the Freedom Flight Refugee Center, a place that helped many “boat people” from Vietnam. The Freedom Flight Center helped Su le and his family come to Michigan.

Pictured below is the bell of a fishing boat like the one Su Le and his family used to get out of Vietnam. This bell hung in the Freedom Flight Refugee Center and was rung every time a new family came to Grand Rapids. It is the same bell that rang to welcome Su le and his family. It has sounded many times since to welcome other refugees.

### **Family History Interview**

**Directions:** Find out about your individual or family immigration story. Ask a member of your family the questions below to find out more about your family story. Students with indigenous backgrounds can research their family story. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

Who was the first member of our family to move to America? Grand Rapids?

When did they come?

Why did they come here?

How old was this person at the time?

How did they travel here?

Where did they settle?

What stories do we know about them?

Did they bring anything special when they came?

### **What's In My Trunk?**

**Directions:** What would you put in your trunk? Draw in this trunk what you would bring with you if you had to move to a new place.

**Pick one object and write a sentence about why you chose to pack it in your trunk.**

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### **Project Extensions**

- **Family History Interview**

Have the students write a story using the facts they gathered in the family history activity. Stories can be displayed in the classroom as personal exhibitions.

- **Trunk Activity**

Collect and have students collect shoeboxes for this project. Give each student a shoebox and have him or her decorate it. Ask the students to draw the object they would take on a new journey and write a few sentences about why they would take them. The objects can be taped into the boxes and used as a display.