



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program, 1942 – 1964 | Poster Exhibit

Educational resources

The story of the Bracero labor program can inspire students to explore a wide range of subjects, including immigration, history, geography, economy, and world culture. Student project might range from conducting oral histories to designing murals, or from historical research on migration and labor to learning about the nation's agricultural heritage. The following collected online resources are simply suggestions for getting started!

Bracero History Archive:

Drawn from the Bracero History Archive (a project of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Brown University, and The Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso. Funding provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities): <http://braceroarchive.org/>

[Activity-Learning from Photos](#)

Description

Best for students in grades six through twelve

Students will discuss their thoughts on immigration, learn about the Bracero labor program, and use photographs to develop deeper understandings of the Bracero labor program.

[Activity-Tracing the Route of a Bracero](#)

Description

Best for students in grades six through eight

Students will examine an oral history related to the Bracero worker program and present their research on a map.

[Activity-Learning from Documents](#)

Description

Best for students in grades six through twelve

Students will examine two public laws and other primary resources related to the Bracero worker program and apply their knowledge to evaluate whether the program was carried out as intended.



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Smithsonian Resources:

The Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program is the [Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service's](#) key initiative that directly engages small town audiences and brings revitalized attention to underserved rural communities through their own Main Street museums, historical societies, and other cultural venues. Educational resources developed for this program include resources that can enhance learning about the bracero program. These specifically feature opportunities for students to develop skills in collecting oral histories, developing exhibits, and learning about the history of labor. Here are some links to those resources:

Museum on Main Street: www.storiesfrommainstreet.org

Provides oral history guidelines for students, including a free digital guide developed by the Smithsonian's Office of Folklife and Cultural Heritage:

http://www.storiesfrommainstreet.org/education/Smithsonian_Oral_History_Guide.pdf

Also provided are guidelines for students to create online exhibits:

<http://www.storiesfrommainstreet.org/pages/documentHistory.html>

www.museumonmainstreet.org has links for teachers on a broad range of humanities topics, from transportation, food, and music to labor history (*The Way We Worked* exhibit).

National Endowment for the Humanities Resources:

The bracero program was initiated to address a national need for labor during and following World War II. To help students learn more about themes of labor history, the NEH developed classroom materials for **elementary and middle school** students. Each lesson plan is available for free on the Internet, and includes information on its compliance with national standards of learning. These lesson plans utilize a multi-disciplinary approach, make use of primary source materials, and include downloadable worksheets and/or other resources to supplement the lessons.

EDSITEment

www.edsitement.neh.gov/

The National Endowment for the Humanities' EDSITEment website offers online lesson plans in literature and language arts, foreign languages, art and culture, and history and social studies.

EDSITEment has two lesson plans for **middle school** students that directly relate to the themes in the exhibition:



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Esperanza Rising: Learning Not to Be Afraid to Start Over

http://www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=739

Pam Muñoz Ryan's novel tells the story of a young Mexican girl's courage when she finds herself living in a strange new world. As students contemplate Esperanza's transition from pampered child to responsible young woman, they will also analyze the immigration and migration of farm laborers during the Great Depression.

The Industrial Age in America: Sweatshops, Steel Mills, and Factories

www.edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=430

Students will explore the working conditions that led to the Haymarket Affair, the Homestead Strike, and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, and the significance of these events to the labor movement in the United States.

Library of Congress Resources:

www.loc.gov/teachers/

The Library of Congress provides online resources that allow teachers to utilize the Library's primary source materials in the classroom.

The LOC has resources for **elementary school** students that explore themes in geography and understanding one's place in history:

Local History: Mapping My Spot

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/mapping/>

Students will examine maps and their unique insight into history and geography by creating maps of their own neighborhoods and towns. This exercise can be used to facilitate a discussion on how migrant workers during the Bracero project, as well as migrant families today, feel about uprooting from their homes, neighborhoods, and country.

The LOC has lesson plans for **middle school** students that directly relate to labor history themes:

Child Labor in America

www.memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/98/labor/plan.html

Students will explore the work of reformer Lewis Hine, whose gritty photographs helped spur the adoption of child labor laws in the United States.



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

The library also has resources for **middle school** and **high school** students that explore immigration issues, labor history, and migrant worker camps:

The American Dream/Immigration Challenges for New Americans

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/preparation.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/immigration/>

Students can utilize primary source photographs, documents, and audio files to facilitate a discussion about general immigration patterns and issues throughout United States history.

Voices from the Dustbowl

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/afctshhtml/tshome.html>

This collection contains audio recordings, photographs, manuscript materials, and publications generated during two documentation trips to migrant worker camps in California in 1940 and 1941. Lesson plans allow students to learn about migrant worker living conditions and daily activities while also gaining an understanding of migrant cultural contributions.

Immigration and Oral History

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/oral-history/>

Students are able to learn the process of oral history by identifying modern-day immigrants in their community and comparing their experience (learned through interviews) with the experiences of immigrants in United States history.

Public Broadcast Service resources:

The Fight in the Field: Caesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Struggle

<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/fightfields/>

This website allows students to examine films, timelines, and other primary sources documenting the life of Caesar Chavez and the impact he had on migrant and farm labor practices in the United States.

National Geographic resources:

National Geographic has resources for **elementary** and **high school** students that meet standards established for teaching geography.

The United States/Mexico Border (grades 9-12)

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/13/g912/usmexico.html>



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

This lesson allows students to explore both the historical and modern day conflicts along the U.S./Mexico border. They will conduct research to examine the political conflicts, daily life, and economic situation along the border. They will conclude with a presentation on their findings.

What's it Like to Live Along a National Boundary? (grades 3-5)

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/13/g35/boundary.html>

Students will discuss the concept of boundaries, both natural and human made, and examine the characteristics of the U.S./Mexico border. They will write dialogues between themselves and children their age on the other side of the boundary.