Lesson plan for

ANALYZE Oral Histories
Introduction
In this activity, students will view and analyze oral histories of naturalized citizens. Through interpretation of the interviews, they will develop a better understanding of recent naturalization experiences. Each oral history includes not only the record of the interview, but also incorporates an object that belongs to the informant. This can be completed mostly as homework with only an in-class summary discussion, or entirely in-class.

Objectives
The student will be better able to:

- Analyze oral histories.
- Interpret objects as connections to personal, family, and national history.
- Interpret and draw conclusions about naturalization experiences.

Time
15 minutes or more

Why Objects?
These oral histories are special because they include one of the informant's belongings, in addition to the oral record. Objects are important sources of historical information because they create enduring visual records with describable features, such as size, weight, or texture, which can be used by researchers to understand the past. They can also be tangible reminders that help bring a person back to a specific time or place, either stimulating the informant's memory or offering an entrance point for the interviewer.

Instructions

1. Have each student select an oral history they would like to view from http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/oralhistories.html or YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/video_response_view_all?v=-FT3KZ8OjDQ (the oral histories are all “video responses” to the main video and appear to the right of the main video). Selecting a variety of interviews will provide for the richest summary discussion.

2. Have students complete the Naturalization Oral History Questions sheet (page 4) while studying their selected oral histories.

3. Lead a classroom or small group (in a jigsaw format) discussion to identify commonalities and differences between the interviews that were studied.
   - What emotions did the informants express about the naturalization process?
   - What procedural steps did the informants discuss during the naturalization process?
- If you were watching these videos as an immigrant who was not yet naturalized, what are some arguments for or against going through the naturalization process?

- If you were watching these videos as a curator at a museum, which object would you select for the museum’s collections? Does that object represent the most common experience? The most powerful story?
Questions to Ask While Analyzing a Naturalization Oral History

The oral histories are online at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/oralhistories.html](http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/oralhistories.html) or on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/video_response_view_all?v=-FT3KZ8OjDQ](http://www.youtube.com/video_response_view_all?v=-FT3KZ8OjDQ). On YouTube, the oral histories are all “video responses” to the main video.

Who is speaking (also called, “the informant”)? ______________________________________

When did the informant come to the United States? ________________________________

When did the informant become a naturalized citizen? ______________________________

What did procedural steps did the informant complete to get his or her naturalization?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Does the informant reveal any emotions about naturalization such as excitement, sadness, or happiness?
______________________________________________________________________________

How was the informant affected by naturalization?
______________________________________________________________________________

How does this informant’s unique story fit into the broader story of the American experience?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What object did the informant bring to the interview? _________________________________

Briefly describe the object’s appearance, including size, color, and shape.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

If the object were in a museum, what would be a good 3-sentence label to describe the story behind that object? Write on the back of this sheet or a separate piece of paper..