

Common Ground Teacher Resource: Photography Analysis

Created by David Martinez, Portland Public Schools Multicultural Curriculum Curator, and April Slabosheski, Manager of Museum and Holocaust Education, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, in conjunction with the Portland Art Museum exhibition *Common Ground: Photographs by Fazal Sheikh, 1989 – 2013* (February 24 – May 20, 2018).

I. Preparation for your visit:

Introduce students to possible “big ideas/ enduring questions” of this exhibit.

- What is home?
 - What makes something a home?
- What is belonging?
 - What does it mean to belong to a place/community
- What does it mean to belong “here”?

II. During your visit

Students complete the visual organizer (below).

Or utilize one of the many resources to help students analyze and reflect on photographs:

- [Engaging students with Primary Sources](#): Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- [Library of Congress Teacher’s Guide & Analysis Tool](#)
- [National Archives Photo Analysis](#) (6-12)
- [National Archives Photo Analysis](#) (3-5)

III. Common Ground: Portland

Consider the displaced voices and histories of Portland. Consider one of the following projects:

- Students photograph what “home” means to them. This may include neighbors, classmates, physical places, or something else. Students caption their photographs and curate them to tell a story of home. Consider holding an exhibition or [pop up museum](#) with these photographs for a broader audience.
- Create a gallery exhibit of your own students. Have students reflect on what is home to them? What makes them feel belong? What makes them feel part of a community? Have students take photos of themselves in places they feel safe. Have them create their own “captions” reflecting on the questions.
- Students create a map of their or their school’s neighborhood. Consider [this example that looks at Portland’s Japantown](#) using [StoryMapJS](#). Students should reflect on the role this history plays in their feelings of belonging in this space. What does it mean to belong “here”? Do they see their stories

reflected? What historical examples are easy to find, and which are more difficult? Why is this? Who has been at “home” in this place in the past? How is this the same or different in the present?

- Create a student-led walking tour based on students’ StoryMap. Students guide their classmates or others through the tour, highlighting histories that have become “displaced” by time. Students reflect on their own stories in this place, bringing their own experiences into the walking tour. What has it meant to belong to this community? How has this changed over time? What remains the same? Tools like [JuxtaposeJS](#) may be brought in to enhance visual comparisons.

Additional Resources:

[The Oral History Project at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education](#) contains hundreds of interviews of Oregon’s Jewish community, many from Holocaust survivors and/or people who came to Oregon as refugees. These interviews are digitized and accessible online.

[Core exhibits at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education](#) interpret primary sources, including photographs, documents, and testimony, of Jewish immigrants and refugees to Oregon, alongside a consideration of discrimination and resistance in Oregon, and Holocaust history.

[Portland Gentrification and Displacement Study](#): This paper is the starting point for raising questions and a community discussion about what the City of Portland can do about gentrification.

[An Examination of Gentrification and Related Displacement of Black Residents in Portland's Boise Neighborhood, 1990-2010](#)

[Oregon History Wayfinder](#): Interactive map of Oregon’s history. Have students look at the community the school is in, the neighborhood they live in, the areas they hang out in. What used to be there? Who used to be there?

[Portland Refugee Center](#): Support and resources for refugees

Student Name: _____

Choose three images in the exhibit that speak to you. Answer the following questions about them.

| Questions to reflect on | Photo 1 Title: | Photo 2 Title: |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| What stands out to you first? | | |
| Describe what you see in this photograph. | | |
| Where & when was this photograph taken? How do you know? | | |
| What are some things that you cannot know by looking at this photograph? | | |
| If this photograph was in Portland in 2018, what would be different? The same? | | |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Questions to reflect on | Photo 3 Title: |
| What stands out to you first? | |
| Describe what you see in this photograph. | |
| Where & when was this photograph taken? How do you know? | |
| What are some things that you cannot know by looking at this photograph? | |
| If this photograph was in Portland in 2018, what would be different? The same? | |

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