

“Life in This New Land”: The Story of Immigrants and Refugees from Asia, 1924–1986



Multi-Generational Family of Lim Lip Hong aka Lim Tye by Robert F. Lim, San Francisco, CA, May 1914. (National Archives)

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

TL TEACHING LITERACY
TH THROUGH HISTORY



“Life in This New Land”: The Story of Immigrants and Refugees from Asia, 1924–1986

BY MISHA MATSUMOTO YEE (created 2023)

Misha Matsumoto Yee teaches in the Upper School Social Science Department at St. Andrew's Schools in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She was named the 2022 National History Teacher of the Year.

GRADE LEVEL(S): 3–5

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: Four 45-minute class periods

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original sources of historical significance. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on texts, graphs, photographs, and testimony.

The four lesson plans in this unit explore Asian migration to the United States in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. You will assess students' comprehension through activity sheets, oral responses, and writing assignments.

Students engaging in these lessons will

- Understand the role of laws in regulating human behavior (e.g., immigration and refugee settlement)
- Understand change and continuity over time (e.g., fluctuation in immigration numbers from Asia)
- Read, explain, and evaluate visual and textual primary sources
- Make comparisons between sources
- Answer critical thinking questions about primary and secondary sources

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did laws about immigration affect Asians who wanted to come to America?
- How has the population size (or national origin, or place of residence) of Asian Americans changed over time?
- What opportunities did Asian Americans say immigration created for their families?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1 and RI.5.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2 and RI.5.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9: Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1D: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

MATERIALS

- Teacher’s Resource: Historical Background: “The Complexities of Asian American Migrations to the Americas” by Jason O. Chang, Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies, University of Connecticut
- Source 1: Immigration Acts
 - Excerpts from the Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act) from An Act to Limit the Immigration of Aliens into the United States, and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 68-139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924). Available from the National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/5752154.
 - Excerpts from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act) from An Act to Revise the Laws Relating to Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality; and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 82-414, 66 Stat. 163 (1952), govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-66/pdf/STATUTE-66-Pg163.pdf.
- Activity Sheet 1: Understanding the Immigration Acts
- Activity Sheet 2: Immigration Act of 1924
- Activity Sheet 3: Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952
- Optional: A projector or other means to display sources and activity sheets
- Source 2: Asian Population in the US, 2000 to 2060

This graph is based on sources found on the website of the Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (September 1, 2021). The data that forms the basis for this chart is from US Census Bureau 2017 population projections for 2020–2060. For more information, see pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-09-02_asianamericankeyfacts_01/.

- Activity Sheet 4: Percentage of Asian Population in the US, 2019

This map is based on sources found on the website of the Pew Research Center Analysis of 2017–2019 American Community Survey (IPUMS) Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (April 28, 2021), [pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-04-29_asiankeyfacts_04/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-04-29_asiankeyfacts_04/).

Note from the Pew Research Center: In 2000 and after, Asians include mixed-race and mixed-group populations, regardless of Hispanic origin. Prior to 2000, decennial census forms only allowed one race category to be selected. Asians include Pacific Islanders in 1980 and earlier years. Population figures for 1870–1980 are rounded to the nearest 1,000, and for 2000–2060, they are rounded to the nearest 100,000.

- Source 3: Photograph of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, 2009, Daniel K. Inouye Institute and Hawaii Community Foundation, [dkii.org/gallery/#lightbox\[gallery_image_1\]/35](https://www.dkii.org/gallery/#lightbox[gallery_image_1]/35)
- Source 4: Daniel K. Inouye, Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees, Oahu, Hawai'i, September 5, 1986, [dkii.org/speeches/september-05-1986/](https://www.dkii.org/speeches/september-05-1986/)
- Large sheets of paper for three groups
- Source 5: “Yong Vang Yang family on their first day in St. Paul, Minnesota,” June 20, 1979, Minnesota Historical Society, [mnhs.org/library](https://www.mnhs.org/library)
- Optional: World map showing Laos
- Activity Sheet 5: Analyzing Photographs
- Activity Sheet 6: Hmong Experience: In Their Own Words with an excerpt from Mao Heu Thao, “40 Years after Arrival Minnesota Hmong Tell Their Story,” (St. Paul, MN) *Pioneer Press*, October 28, 2015, [twincities.com/2015/03/05/40-years-after-arrival-minnesota-hmong-tell-their-story](https://www.twincities.com/2015/03/05/40-years-after-arrival-minnesota-hmong-tell-their-story)
- Activity Sheet 7: Preparing to Write a Paragraph

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Complexities of Asian American Migrations to the Americas

by Jason Chang, University of Connecticut

There are many origins of Asian migrations to the Americas, some of which occurred before the United States even existed, like the arrival of the Filipino sailors who settled in the Mississippi delta thirteen years before American independence from Britain. Asian migration is a global phenomenon. Many people moved to other places, including England, France, Hawai'i, Uganda, Cuba, Canada, and Mexico, before coming to the United States. These other migrations also become part of how Asian America is defined.

It is important to recognize the pan-ethnicity of Asian Americans. There are lots of different countries of origin for the groups today identified as Asian American, and the different ethnic groups cannot be easily lumped together. Asian American pan-ethnicity must also be distinguished from Pacific Islanders, who are a distinctly different Indigenous pan-ethnicity. Despite differences between Asian Americans, they share two things in common: the experience of racism in the United States and, despite that, the creation of vibrant communities. The surge in anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a deep and hidden history of Asian American persecution, scapegoating, and exclusion as well as a renaissance of Asian American political consciousness. The notion that Asian Americans are invisible until they are scapegoated captures the way that a history of Asian Americans is reflected in their absence in our collective historical imagination.

Reconstructing an Asian American past means embracing complexities that affirm Asian American lived experiences of hardship as well as joys, of transformation as well as tradition, and of unity and solidarity as well as division. These complexities are at the heart of the Asian American experience. Asian American histories reflect the power of large forces such as war and economic change as well as the determination of individuals and the strength of community. The Spanish-American War of 1898 advanced the US imperial march into the Pacific and Caribbean, leading to direct American colonization of the Philippines for over three decades. Without the history of US colonization, it is impossible to understand why Filipinos joined Mexicans to fight for fair wages in California grape fields in 1965, thus fueling the growth of a multi-ethnic community of Mexipinos.

US wars haunt Asian American history and regularly illustrate the fact that foreign conflict leads to domestic persecution. This lesson was taught twenty years ago when Sikh and Muslim Americans faced persecution after the 9/11 attacks. The roundup of American citizens of South and Western Asian descent echoed that of Japanese Americans during World War II in 1943. Those who remembered stood up against the wartime hysteria in the twenty-first century and forged new bonds to resist this American tradition of racism. From an Asian American perspective, the US invented immigration laws in order to prohibit Asian immigration and naturalization. This process began with the 1876 Page Act and culminated in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act that treated Asian immigrants as pernicious, degenerate, and dangerous until 1943. When US laws began to shift away from Asian exclusion after WWII, influential White Americans used the opening of Asian immigration as a political message that American racism was no longer a potent force in society. Despite this message, the ravages of anti-Black racial oppression continued in the post-WWII era. Without knowledge of this period, we would not be able to understand how influential White Americans named the cultural, political, and economic behavior of Asian Americans as the “model minority” in order

to demean and discredit the growing African American struggle to end segregation and promote civil rights for all. In addition to performing this divisive role, the concept does other kinds of damage as well. When Asian American excellence is labeled “model minority” to deny claims of discrimination against other people of color, it hides the high rate of suicide, the greatest wealth disparity within a racial group, and the ongoing harassment and discrimination that many Asian Americans still face. These examples embrace complexity and reflect the everyday contradictions of our students’ lives.

The push and pull forces of migration connect individual lives to big social structures and processes, illustrating the ways that Filipino nurses, South Asian computer scientists, Hmong farmers, Korean priests, and Afghani painters made choices to build lives in the United States. One factor that too often goes unmentioned in Asian American histories of migration is how US wars and imperial conflict have shaped patterns of violence and displacement in Asia. The largest determinant of the treatment of Asian Americans is the degree to which the US is at war in Asia and whether those conflicts are cold wars, hot wars, trade wars, or culture wars. With the conclusion of the longest military conflict in US history in Afghanistan, we hear the next war drum calling the People’s Republic of China the greatest threat to our country. Teaching Asian American studies is a project of peace, of community building, and of healing.

Jason O. Chang is an associate professor of history and Asian American studies at the University of Connecticut. He is co-editor of Asian America: A Primary Source Reader (2017).

US Policy and Asian American Immigration in the Early Twentieth Century

BY MISHA MATSUMOTO YEE (created 2023)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine excerpts from the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act) and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (also known as the Walter-McCarran Act). To demonstrate their understanding, students will summarize these two acts in their own words.

Students completing this lesson will

- Understand the role of laws in regulating human behavior (e.g., immigration and refugee settlement)
- Read, explain, and evaluate textual primary sources
- Make comparisons between sources

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GRADE LEVELS: 3–5

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class periods

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original sources of historical significance. The four lesson plans in this unit explore Asian migration to the United States in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

MATERIALS

- Teacher's Resource: Historical Background: "The Complexities of Asian American Migrations to the Americas" by Jason O. Chang, Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies, University of Connecticut
- Source 1: Immigration Acts
 - o Excerpts from the Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act) from An Act to Limit the Immigration of Aliens into the United States, and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 68-139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924). Available from the National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/5752154.
 - o Excerpts from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act) from An Act to Revise the Laws Relating to Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality; and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 82-414, 66 Stat. 163 (1952), govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-66/pdf/STATUTE-66-Pg163.pdf.

- Activity Sheet 1: Understanding the Immigration Acts
- Activity Sheet 2: Immigration Act of 1924
- Activity Sheet 3: Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952
- Optional: A projector or other means to display sources and activity sheets

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute copies of Source 1, which includes excerpts from the Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act) and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act). Provide historical context using the information in the Historical Background by Professor Jason O. Chang.
 - a. “Share read” the excerpts with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin reading aloud, modeling appropriate rhythm and inflection. Ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to serve as the model for the class. This method will help struggling readers and English language learners (ELL).
 - b. As this is a legal document, many legal terms are used. After reading through the entire excerpt, define the bolded words.
2. Display and distribute Activity Sheet 1, which asks students to fill in the blanks using the words from the word bank that make the most sense.
 - a. You may choose to model the activity by filling in some or all of the responses for the 1924 act.
 - b. Once the underlined portions for the 1924 act are filled in, go over the correct answers with the class as you read the excerpts together. This exercise will help students better understand the meaning of the text.
 - c. Have the students complete the activity for the 1952 act. Then go over the correct answers with the class as you read the excerpts together.
3. Distribute Activity Sheet 2. Students will use the information in the two excerpts to answer questions about the acts.
 - a. Begin with the Immigration Act of 1924, providing students time to answer the yes/no questions. Once all students have answered the questions, review their answers as a class.
 - b. After the correct answers are provided, have students answer the free-response question. Ask for volunteers to share their responses.
4. Distribute Activity Sheet 3 on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.
 - a. After the students have answered the yes/no questions, review their responses.
 - b. Allow time to answer the free-response question. Ask for volunteers to share responses.

Timelines and Graphs on Asian American Immigration

BY MISHA MATSUMOTO YEE (created 2023)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will analyze graphs displaying statistics for Asian immigration to the United States and relate the data to the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. They will investigate the relationship between immigration regulation and the rising Asian American population.

Students completing this lesson will

- Understand the role of laws in regulating human behavior (e.g., immigration and refugee settlement)
- Understand change and continuity over time (e.g., fluctuations in immigration numbers from Asia)
- Read, explain, and evaluate visual and textual primary sources
- Make comparisons between sources

MATERIALS

- Source 2: Asian Population in the US, 2000 to 2060

This graph is based on sources found on the website of the Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (September 1, 2021). The data that forms the basis for this chart is from US Census Bureau 2017 population projections for 2020–2060. For more information, see [pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-09-02_asianamericankeyfacts_01/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-09-02_asianamericankeyfacts_01/).

- Completed Activity Sheets 2 and 3 from Lesson 1 on the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952
- Activity Sheet 4: Percentage of Asian Population in the US, 2019

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GRADE LEVELS: 3–5

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class periods

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original sources of historical significance. The four lesson plans in this unit explore Asian migration to the United States in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This map is based on sources found on the website of the Pew Research Center Analysis of 2017–2019 American Community Survey (IPUMS) Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (April 28, 2021), [pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-04-29_asiankeyfacts_04/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/ft_2021-04-29_asiankeyfacts_04/).

Note from the Pew Research Center: In 2000 and after, Asians include mixed-race and mixed-group populations, regardless of Hispanic origin. Prior to 2000, decennial census forms only allowed one race category to be selected. Asians include Pacific Islanders in 1980 and earlier years. Population figures for 1870–1980 are rounded to the nearest 1,000, and for 2000–2060, they are rounded to the nearest 100,000.

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute copies of Source 2 for students to see.
2. Provide time for students to look at the graph. Ask students to share observations about the graph. If students are stuck, here are some guiding questions to help with observations:
 - a. What trend does the graph reveal?
 - b. As the dates get closer to the present, are the numbers growing larger or smaller?
 - c. What does the dotted part of the line mean?
3. After initial observations, explain the graph to students. Identify that the bottom numbers represent the different years and the line represents the population of Asians in the United States during that year. The dotted part of the line predicts the future numbers of the Asian population in America. The graph is based on information available in 2019, so the numbers may not turn out to be accurate; the dotted line represents data scientists' best guesses.
4. Have students take out their summaries of the immigration acts from Lesson 1.
 - a. Review the Immigration Act of 1924 as a class. Have students find where 1920 would be on the graph. Estimate the Asian population in the 1920s.
 - b. Review the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 as a class. Have students find the date closest to 1952 and identify the number of Asians in America then.
5. Divide the class into groups of three or four to discuss the following questions: Between 1910 and 1960, did the population of Asians in America grow larger or smaller?
 - a. What are the possible reasons for this trend?
 - b. What evidence would you need to confirm your hypothesis?Have students come together as a class to share their answers.
6. Ask the class whether they think that the legislators who wrote the Immigration and Nationality Act of

1952 wanted to encourage or discourage immigration to the United States from Asia.

7. Remind students that the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 permitted more people from Asian countries to come to the United States and that it overturned the Immigration Act of 1924, which prevented Asians from entering the United States.
8. Connect this to the present day by asking students the following questions:
 - a. How many people with Asian ancestry lived in the United States as of 2019?
 - b. What else, in addition to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, might explain the rising number of Americans with Asian ancestry?
 - c. What evidence would you need to confirm your hypothesis?
9. Distribute Activity Sheet 4 and explain that this map shows the distribution of Asian American populations in the United States as of 2019.
 - a. The students may complete this activity independently or in small groups.
 - b. After students have been allowed time to answer the questions, review the answers as a class.

DANIEL K. INOUE, IMMIGRATION, AND REFUGEES, 1970s–1980s

BY MISHA MATSUMOTO YEE (created 2023)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will provide background information on Senator Daniel K. Inouye. Students will then read an excerpt from a speech he delivered to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees on September 5, 1986. Inouye’s comments about how immigration changed his family’s opportunities will be used to suggest key themes in a pair of documents illuminating the experiences of Hmong refugees. These refugees began arriving in the US in significant numbers in the 1970s and 1980s.

Students completing this lesson will

- Understand the role of laws in regulating human behavior (e.g., immigration and refugee settlement)
- Understand change and continuity over time (e.g., fluctuations in immigration numbers from Asia)
- Read, explain, and evaluate visual and textual primary sources
- Make comparisons between sources
- Answer critical thinking questions about primary and secondary sources

MATERIALS

- Source 3: Photograph of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, 2009, Daniel K. Inouye Institute and Hawaii Community Foundation, [dkii.org/gallery/#lightbox\[gallery_image_1\]/35](https://dkii.org/gallery/#lightbox[gallery_image_1]/35)
- Source 4: Daniel K. Inouye, Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees, Oahu, Hawai‘i, September 5, 1986, dkii.org/speeches/september-05-1986/
- Large sheets of paper for three groups

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GRADE LEVELS: 3–5

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class periods

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original sources of historical significance. The four lesson plans in this unit explore Asian migration to the United States in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

- Source 5: “Yong Vang Yang family on their first day in St. Paul, Minnesota,” June 20, 1979, Minnesota Historical Society, mnhs.org/library
- Optional: World map showing Laos
- Activity Sheet 5: Analyzing Photographs
- Activity Sheet 6: Hmong Experience: In Their Own Words with an excerpt from Mao Heu Thao, “40 Years after Arrival Minnesota Hmong Tell Their Story,” (St. Paul, MN) *Pioneer Press*, October 28, 2015, twincities.com/2015/03/05/40-years-after-arrival-minnesota-hmong-tell-their-story

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare for this lesson by learning about the life of Daniel K. Inouye. Inouye was born in Honolulu in 1924, served with the most decorated military regiment in US history (the 442nd Regimental Combat Team) for their size and length of service, and lost his arm to a grenade attack in World War II. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and was elected to Congress after the territory of Hawaii became the fiftieth state. Inouye served in this office for forty-nine years. The following sources will be helpful for further learning:
 - “The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, United States Senator, September 7, 1924–December 17, 2012.” *The Man*, The Daniel K. Inouye Institute and the Hawaii Community Foundation, n.d., dkii.org/the-man/.
 - “Daniel K. Inouye: A Featured Biography,” US Senate: Daniel K. Inouye, United States Senate, n.d., senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Inouye.htm.
2. Set up the desks/tables into three groups and place a large sheet of paper on each setup. On each piece of paper, write one of the questions from Source 4 (the speech, with discussion questions at the bottom). Each sheet should have a different question.
3. Project Source 3, the photograph of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, and summarize what you have learned about Senator Daniel K. Inouye for the class.
 - a. After providing students with this background information, ask the class, “What did you find interesting about Senator Inouye’s life?”
 - b. Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class.
4. Distribute Source 4, the excerpts from Daniel K. Inouye’s Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees. You may need to explain that this text is an excerpt from a long speech and that the ellipsis points represent text that has not been included in the excerpts.
 - a. Read the excerpts one paragraph at a time using the share-read method described in Lesson 1. At the end of each paragraph, ask students to share what they think the paragraph is about. Continue until the excerpt is read in full.
 - b. Next, divide students into three groups. Each group will work together to answer the question on one of the sheets of paper.

- c. Once groups are finished answering their question, allow them to present their answers to the class.
5. Next, project the image from Source 5 and distribute Activity Sheet 5.
 - a. Briefly explain the image to the class: state the title of the photograph and the year the photograph was taken.
 - b. Complete the activity sheet as a class. Ask guiding questions if students are unable to answer some of the questions.
6. Distribute Activity Sheet 6.
 - a. Explain the instructions to the class and read through the quotation together. Explain that the words in brackets are not in the original. They have been added to provide necessary additional information.
 - b. Optional: This would be a good time to project a world map and locate Laos with the students. You may also want to explain that Mao Heu Thao immigrated to Minnesota from Laos.
 - c. Allow students time to complete the activity sheet by themselves. As students work, walk around the classroom to see if they have any questions and ensure they are on the right track.
 - d. After students have completed the activity sheet, review answers together.
 - e. Ask for volunteers to share their answer to question 5, “Using the information from the quotation and the photograph of Hmong immigrants, what do you suspect would be the hardest part of an immigrant’s first day in a new country? What would be the most exciting part of an immigrant’s first day in a new country?”

Asian Immigrants and Refugees

BY MISHA MATSUMOTO YEE (created 2023)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will revisit the assignments they completed in Lessons 1–3. As a summative assessment, you will ask them to integrate the knowledge gained in all three lessons in a paragraph responding to a prompt.

Students engaging in these lessons will

- Understand the role of laws in regulating human behavior (e.g., immigration and refugee settlement)
- Understand change and continuity over time (e.g., fluctuation in immigration numbers from Asia)
- Read, explain, and evaluate visual and textual primary sources
- Make comparisons between sources
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ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did laws about immigration affect Asians who wanted to come to America?
- How has the population size (or national origin, or place of residence) of Asian Americans changed over time?
- What opportunities did Asian Americans say immigration created for their families?

MATERIALS

- Source 1: Immigration Acts
- Activity Sheet 1: Understanding the Immigration Acts
- Activity Sheet 2: Immigration Act of 1924

- Activity Sheet 3: Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952
- Source 2: Asian Population in the US, 2000 to 2060
- Activity Sheet 4: Percentage of Asian Population in the US, 2019
- Source 3: Photograph of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, 2009
- Source 4: Daniel K. Inouye, Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees, Oahu, Hawai'i, September 5, 1986
- Source 5: "Yong Vang Yang family on their first day in St. Paul, Minnesota," June 20, 1979
- Activity Sheet 5: Analyzing Photographs
- Activity Sheet 6: Hmong Experience: In Their Own Words with an excerpt from Mao Heu Thao, "40 Years after Arrival Minnesota Hmong Tell Their Story," (St. Paul, MN) *Pioneer Press*, October 28, 2015
- Activity Sheet 7: Preparing to Write a Paragraph

PROCEDURE

1. To complete this assignment, students will need to know something about paragraph structure. In particular, they should understand the role of a topic sentence, the punctuation for quotations, and why it is important to introduce quotations or follow them with an explanation.
2. Distribute Activity Sheet 7 and ask students to take out the sources and activity sheets from the previous lessons. Tell them that they will write a paragraph of 4–5 sentences.
 - a. Students should complete the two evidence-preparation sections of the activity sheet.
 - b. You may either review the evidence before students begin writing their paragraphs or instruct students to move immediately to writing the paragraph based on the prompt provided on the activity sheet.

Prompt

In the 1900s, what obstacles made it difficult for Asian people who wanted to move to the United States, and what motivated families to overcome these obstacles?

Source 1: Immigration Acts

Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)

Steamship Fines Under 1917 Act

Sec. 26. Section 9 of the Immigration Act of 1917 is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 9. That it shall be **unlawful** for any person, including any transportation company other than railway lines entering the United States . . . to bring to the United States either from a foreign country or any **insular** possession of the United States any **alien** . . . with any of the said diseases or disabilities at the time of foreign **embarkation**. . . . It shall also be unlawful for any such person to bring to . . . the United States any alien who . . . [is] unable to read, or who is . . . a native of that portion of the Continent of Asia and the islands **adjacent**. . . .”

Source: US Congress, An Act to Limit the Immigration of Aliens into the United States, and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 68-139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924).

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act)

Chapter 1—Quota System

Sec. 201. (a) The **annual quota** of any quota area shall be one-sixth of [one percent] of the number of **inhabitants** in the **continental** United States in 1920, which number, except for the purpose of computing quotas for quota areas within the Asia-Pacific triangle, shall be the same number . . . determined under . . . the Immigration Act of 1924. . . . *Provided*, That the **quota existing** for Chinese persons prior to the date of enactment of this Act shall be continued. . . .

Section 202 (b) . . . An immigrant who is **attributable** by as much as one-half of his **ancestry** to a people or peoples **indigenous to** the Asia-Pacific triangle **comprising** all quota areas . . . there is hereby established . . . an Asia-Pacific **quota** of one hundred [people] **annually**. . . .

Source: US Congress, An Act to Revise the Laws Relating to Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality; and for Other Purposes, Public Law No. 82-414. HR 5678. 82nd Cong., 2nd Sess, 1952.

Definitions

Adjacent: (adjective) next to something

Alien: (noun) belonging to another nation

Ancestry: (noun) past generations of a family, ethnicity

Annual: (adjective) once a year

Attributable: (adjective) a quality, character, or characteristic of

Comprising: (verb) to be made up of

Continental: (adjective) belong to a continent

Embarkation: (noun) to get on a ship or plane

Existing: (adjective) continues to be

Indigenous to: (adjective) originally from

Inhabitants: (noun) people living somewhere

Insular: (adjective) US territory that is not state or Washington DC; usually refers to an island

Quota: (noun) limited number of people allowed to do something

Unlawful: (adjective) illegal; not following the law

Activity Sheet 1: Understanding the Immigration Acts

Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)

Use the word bank below to fill in the blanks in the Immigration Act of 1924.

immigrant	separate part
next to Asia	immigrant
against the law	leaving their country
from	

Steamship Fines Under 1917 Act

Sec. 26. Section 9 of the Immigration Act of 1917 is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 9. That it shall be _____ for any person, including any transportation company other than
unlawful
railway lines entering the United States . . . to bring to the United States either from a foreign country or any
_____ of the United States any _____ . . . with any of the said diseases or
insular possession alien
disabilities at the time of _____ It shall also be unlawful for any such person to bring to
foreign embarkation
. . . the United States any _____ who . . . [is] unable to read, or who is . . . _____
alien a native of
that portion of the Continent of Asia and the island _____”
adjacent

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act)

Use the word bank below to fill in the blanks in the Immigration Act of 1924.

can trace at least	family's ethnicity
originally from	limited
limit	including
a year	yearly limit from
regulated	people living

Chapter 1—Quota System

Sec. 201. (a) The _____ any _____ area shall be one-sixth of [one percent] of the number of _____ in the continental United States in 1920, which number, except for . . . areas within the Asia-Pacific triangle shall be the same number . . . determined under . . . the Immigration Act of 1924. . . . Provided, That the _____ for Chinese persons prior to the date of enactment of this Act shall be continued. . . .

Section 202 (b) . . . An immigrant who _____ one-half of his _____ to a people or peoples _____ the Asia-Pacific triangle _____ all _____ areas. . . . There is hereby established . . . an Asia-Pacific _____ of one hundred [people] _____

Activity Sheet 2: Immigration Act of 1924

Based on the Immigration Act of 1924, circle “yes” or “no” to answer the following questions.

Was it against the law for people to bring other people to the United States?	Yes	No
Could Americans bring in people who were from another country?	Yes	No
Did immigrants have to be healthy to enter the United States?	Yes	No
Could people from Asia enter the United States?	Yes	No

Using your answers from the four questions above, explain the Immigration Act of 1924 in your own words.

Activity Sheet 3: Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952

Based on the Immigration Act of 1952, circle “yes” or “no” to answer the first four questions. For the last question, find the correct answer in the excerpt from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.

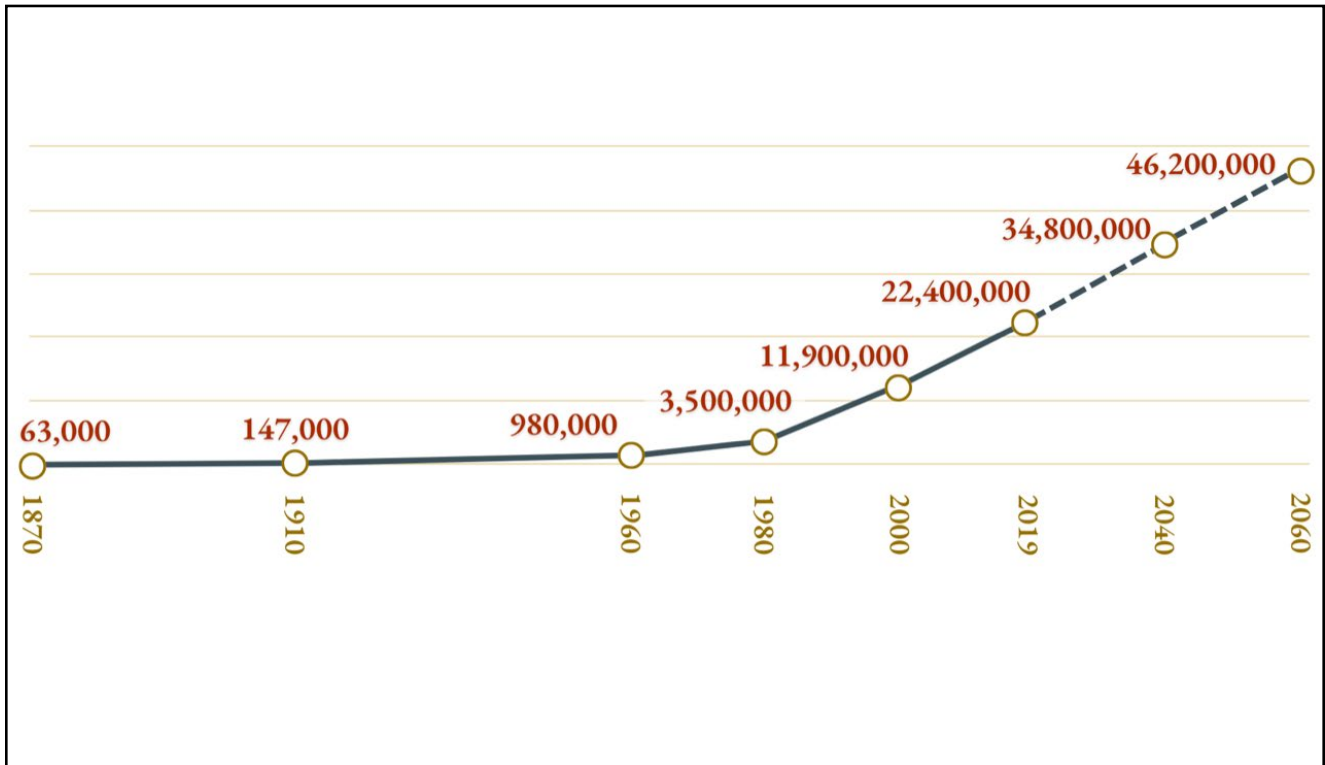
Was there a limit to how many people could come to the United States?	Yes	No
Did this act allow some people from Asia to enter the United States?	Yes	No
Did it change how many Chinese could enter the United States?	Yes	No
Were immigrants whose ancestors came from the Asia-Pacific area allowed to come to the United States?	Yes	No
How many people from Asia-Pacific were allowed to come to the United States?	Yes	No

Using your answers from the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, explain the difference between these two immigration acts in your own words.

Source 2

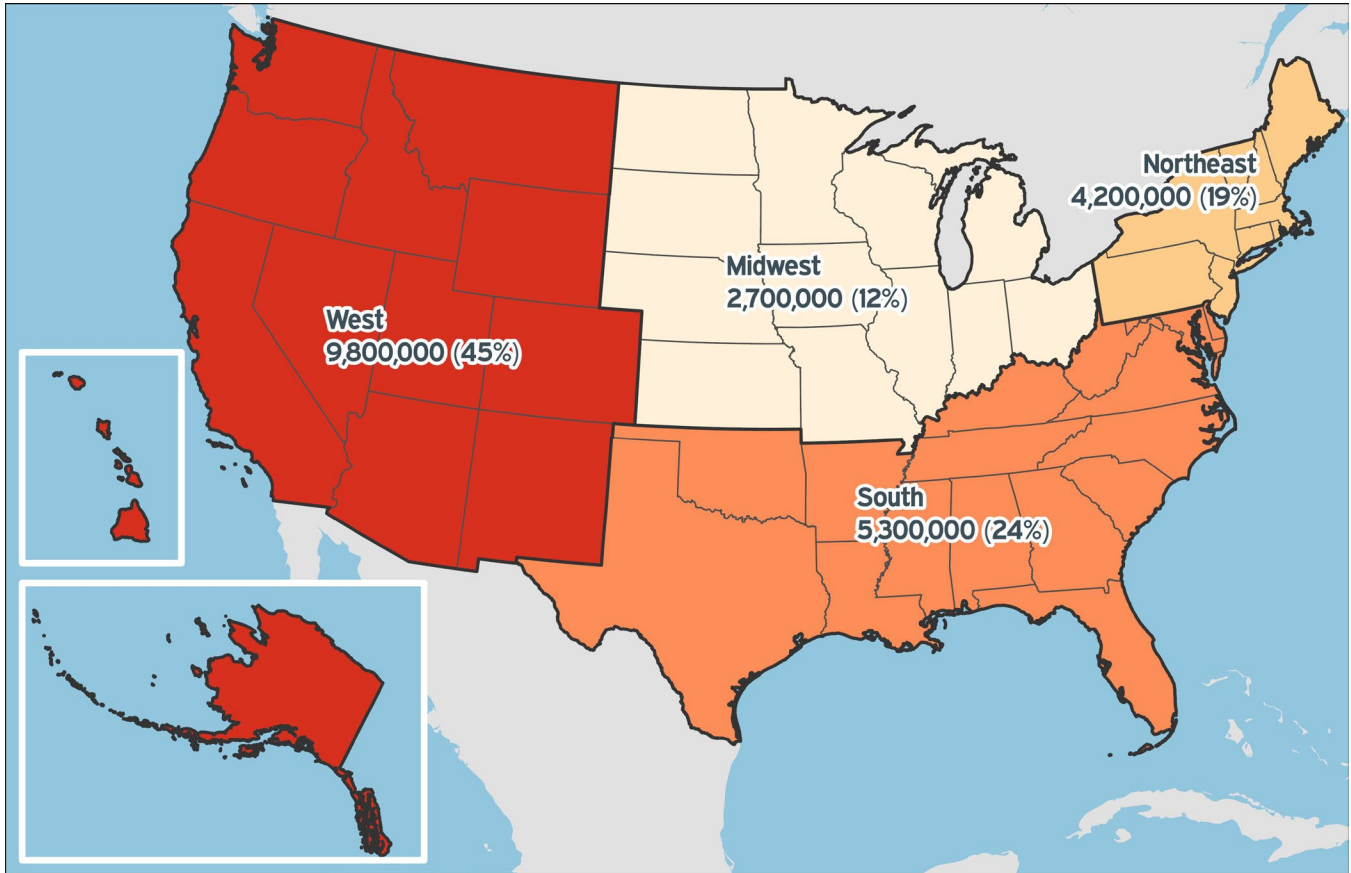
Asian Population in the US, 2000–2060

The Asian population in the US nearly doubled between 2000 and 2019 and is projected to surpass 46 million by 2060.



Based on information from the Pew Research Center and data from the US Census Bureau

Activity Sheet 4: Percentage of Asian Population in the US, 2019



Based on information from the Pew Research Center and data from the US Census Bureau

1. What percentage of Asian Americans live in the South? _____
2. Is the population of Asian Americans larger or smaller in the Midwest than in the Northeast? _____
3. List the regions of the US in order from the region where the highest percentage of the Asian American population lives to the region where the lowest percentage lives.

4. Why do you think almost half of the people with Asian ancestry in the US live in the West? What evidence would confirm whether you are correct?

**Source 3:
Senator Daniel K. Inouye, 2009**



(Daniel K. Inouye Institute and Hawaii Community Foundation)

Source 4: Daniel K. Inouye's Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees, 1986

My father and paternal and maternal grandparents were immigrants. They began life in this new land as laborers in the sugar fields. Thousands of my fellow citizens in Hawaii trace their beginnings to similar circumstances. For that matter, over 80% of the population of Hawaii trace their beginnings to immigration.

For the most part, most of us of immigrant beginnings have fared reasonably well. . . .

[America] just observed the centennial of Miss Liberty with glittering fanfare, speeches, and music—the most costly extravaganza in American history. It will be well to remind ourselves of the inscription that appears at the base of Miss Liberty. Because if these words are meaningless, and if these words do not represent America, they should be erased. These are the words:

“give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Source: Inouye, Daniel K. “Statement to the Oahu Conference on Immigrants and Refugees.” Speeches. Daniel K. Inouye and Hawaii Community Foundation, April 12, 2019.

Questions for Discussion

1. Senator Inouye started this speech by talking about his grandparents. Were his grandparents immigrants? Where did they work when they first came to America?
2. At the end of the first paragraph, Inouye talked about Hawai'i. What percentage of the population in Hawai'i had ties to immigration?
3. In the third paragraph, who is the “Miss Liberty” that Inouye was talking about? Why do you think he talked about Miss Liberty?

**Source 5: “Yong Vang Yang family on their first day
in St. Paul, Minnesota,” 1979**



(Collections Gallery Hmong Americans in Minnesota, Minnesota Historical Society)

Activity Sheet 5: Analyzing Photographs

Title of Photograph: _____

Year Taken: _____

Location: _____

1. Based on the title of the photograph, what event is this photograph showing?

2. Why do you think the photographer took this photograph? What evidence in the photograph suggests the photographer's intention?

3. Look at the faces and body language of each family member. What emotions do you see?

4. Why do you think different family members are showing different emotions? What sort of evidence would help you know for sure?

Activity Sheet 6

Hmong Experience: In Their Own Words

Directions: Use the quotation below to answer the questions.

“I saved the suitcase [I brought with me from Laos to America] because it reminds me of where I came from, who I am, and where I may go. We did not have much when we entered [America], just \$5.00 and the clothes that my mother had made.”

- Mao Heu Thao, Hmong Health Coordinator for Ramsey County Public Health, 2015

Source: “40 Years after Arrival, Minnesota Hmong Tell Their Story,” *Twin Cities*, Pioneer Press, October 28, 2015.

Questions

1. Who is the person being quoted? _____

2. What does her job title tell you about the kind of work the speaker does?

3. What country did Thao leave to come to the United States? _____

4. What items did she have when she arrived in America?

5. Why did Mao Heu Thao keep her suitcase?

6. Imagine: Using the information from the quotation and the photograph of Hmong immigrants, what do you suspect would be the hardest part of an immigrant’s first day in a new country? What would be the most exciting part of an immigrant’s first day in a new country?

Activity Sheet 7: Preparing to Write a Paragraph

Evidence about Obstacles

List legislation that limited immigration from Asia

How many people of Asian ancestry lived in the United States when each of these laws was enacted and in use?

Evidence about Motivations

Choose a quotation in which an Asian American describes or suggests a hardship their family experienced in their country of origin.

Choose a quotation in which an Asian American describes or suggests a benefit that immigration created for their family.

Prompt

Based on this evidence, respond to the question: In the 1900s, what obstacles made it difficult for Asian people who wanted to move to the United States, and what motivated families to overcome these obstacles?
