



Lesson Guide

Waves of Immigrants: The Asian American Journey

Vocabulary List (*list of words or phrases that are related to the topic for which the lesson guide is being created.*)

1. **Amnesty:** *The act of an authority (such as a government) by which pardon is granted to a large group of individuals.*
2. **Asylee:** *A person seeking or has been granted political asylum.*
3. **Asylum:** *protection from arrest and extradition given especially to political refugees by a nation or by an embassy or other agency enjoying freedom from what is required by law for most people.*
4. **Emigrant:** *A person who leaves their own country to settle permanently in another.*
5. **Eugenics:** *Also known as “racial improvement” or “planned breeding”, this study aims to increase the chances of desirable characteristics or preventing the reproduction of said undesirable traits. Eugenics have been widely discredited in the 20th century as racially biased and unscientific. Examples include the Nazis and their goal to eliminate Jews, disabled people, and other minority groups.*
6. **Immigrant:** *A person who comes to live permanently in a new country.*
7. **Imperialism:** *A state policy or practice of extending power and control, especially by taking over one’s land or gaining political and economic control of other areas. This may include international propaganda to also discredit the opponent.*
8. **Indentured Servitude/Labor:** *a person who came to America and was placed under contract to work for another over a period of time, usually seven years, especially during the 17th to 19th centuries. Generally, indentured servants included redemptioners, victims of religious or political persecution, persons kidnapped for the purpose, convicts, and paupers.*
9. **Interracial:** *Members of different races.*
10. **Intraracial:** *Members of the same race.*
11. **Miscegenation:** *The marriage, cohabitation, or sexual intercourse between two people of different races. This is especially prevalent in the United States with historical laws against interracial marriage. The laws that banned interracial marriage were finally allowed by law in 1967 with the Loving v. Virginia case.*
12. **National-Origins Quota System:** *The Immigration Act of 1924 limited the amount of immigrants allowed into the United States. The quota provided visas to “two percent of people of each nationality in the U.S. as of the 1890 national census” as a way to favor immigrants from northern and Western Europe. This was overturned in 1965 with the prioritization of skilled workers and family reunification.*
13. **“Picture bride”:** *A common practice in the early twentieth century when parents or relatives chose wives for single migrant men in the U.S. and Hawaii. Through a series of*

photographs and screening processes (genealogy, wealth, education, and health), families would arrange eligible daughters for engagement and marriage.

14. **Red Scare:** *A hysteria posed by Communists in the U.S. during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. This fear was only intensified in the late 1940s and early 1950s.*
15. **Refugee:** *A person who has been forced to leave their country as a result of war, violence, conflict, persecution, or natural disaster. Often, they have crossed international borders to find safety in other countries.*
16. **Treaty:** *A formal agreement between countries.*
17. **Xenophobia:** *fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign*
18. **Yellow Peril:** *The perception that Asians were a political or military threat to the western world.*

Suggested Discussion Topics

- Why were the first immigration laws implemented? Who were the decision makers? Who benefited? Who were negatively affected and how?
- Given the different circumstances under which immigrants entered the United States, how do you think that affected their experience going forward?
 - Was one group more forced to enter into forced labor than the other?
 - Was one group's personhood ignored in America while the other's was respected (eg, freedom to end the contract and go back home?)
 - Were the conditions of travel less deplorable for one than the other?
 - Discuss the path for each community from then to today's "model minority vs. victim of systemic discrimination."
- Why were there so few Asians coming to America before the Gold Rush? Where were they emigrating to and why?
- What caused the immigration experience to be so different at Angel Island vs. Ellis Island? What was the process upon entering the United States and what ultimately decided if they could stay? What were "Paper Sons" and "Paper Daughters"? What do you think their life was like?
- While not ratified, what were the circumstances leading to the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1907?
- What is the connection between the Bachelor Societies and Chinatowns? Why didn't these bachelors go back to China? Why were Chinatowns so important to the Chinese?
- What are the 7 preference categories for the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965? What importance did these preferences offer to the United States?
 - Research the term "Model Minority Stereotype." What aspects seem to be influenced by the preference system?
 - Do you think the preferences played into Asian stereotypes? What other influences may have played into the stereotypes?



- If the Immigration Act of 1924 (aka Johnson-Reed Act) was Initially aimed at limiting undesirable Southern and Eastern Europeans:
 - How did it effectively bar all Asians?
 - What did President Coolidge mean by “America must remain American.”
 - Where did the National Origins quota of this Act emanate from?
- Words affect perceptions. Discuss the controversies associated with using the following descriptive names: Illegal immigrant, unauthorized immigrant, undocumented immigrant, illegal alien, and undocumented noncitizens. Are there any other names that have been used? Do you have a suggested name?
- With each wave of immigration:
 - Who was at an advantage? Who was at a disadvantage? Why?
 - What caused the rise, or decline, of each immigration wave?
 - Who is at an advantage or disadvantage now? Why?
- Which parts of our immigration history inspired you? Troubled you? Surprised you?
- What are some push and pull factors that enter into your daily decisions?
- What is the [Homestead Act](#)? Were there any loopholes? If you were applying for a homestead under the Homestead Act, what were the requirements? What were some unforeseen challenges?
- Do you feel discriminated against, how does that affect your daily life? What do you do to cope with the situation? How does that affect how you treat others?
- How do immigration laws act as a tool in supporting foreign and domestic policy? Choose 3 immigration laws that supported foreign policy objectives. What were the objectives? How did the law support the objectives? Did they also address any domestic objectives?
- Different immigration laws were aimed at different Asian ethnicities.
 - Choose an Asian ethnicity and discuss which laws hindered their immigration to the U.S. and which laws ultimately helped them gain entrance to the U.S.
 - Do the laws target specific ethnicities today?

Suggested Activities

- You could be sixth generation Americans or the latest newcomers. Or have a mixture in your family. Some of you may be multiracial. With first generation being the first immigrants to America, second generation being the first U.S- born children of immigrants, etc., find out which generation your classmates are and their ethnicities, if they know.
- Make a video with your parents and grandparents (if they are alive) asking them about your family’s American immigration story to the United States.
- Sometimes laws have unintended effects. Choose 2 Immigration Laws that encouraged immigration and 2 that discouraged immigration. Include all their aliases, state the law, discuss the intent of each of the laws and some unintended effects (e.g., “Treaty Regulating Immigration from China” (aka Angell Treaty of 1880), “American Homestead Act” of 1862, “[An Act to Encourage Immigration](#),” “[Burlingame-Seward Treaty](#),” Page Act



in 1875, “Chinese Exclusion Act,, Geary Act, “Gentlemen’s Agreement,” Immigration Act of 1924 (aka Johnson-Reed Act), Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act of 1943 (aka Magnuson Act), Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (aka McCarran-Walter Act), “Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965” (aka \ Hart-Cellar Act of 1965), Refugee Act of 1980, Immigration Reform & Control Act of 1986).

- If you have your DNA results, research into which parts of your ethnic makeup may have been contributed after your family’s arrival to the U.S. On which immigration wave did your first family members arrive?
- If you were to immigrate to the U.S. as a non-white immigrant, which wave would you choose, who would you choose to be, and why?
- In the video, historical political cartoons, illustrations, and film stills are used to explain the circumstances of the time. Draw a political cartoon, illustration, or silent film depicting current events.