**Chinese Immigration and Exclusion
in the 19th Century American West**

Lesson Information
Subject: US History & English Language Arts
Grade Levels: 9-12
Time: 2- 60 minute periods

Common Core Standard(s)
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Objectives
- Students will describe the push & pull factors that prompted Chinese immigration in the 19th century.
- Students will describe the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants and their contributions to this country.
- Students will identify the factors that led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
- Students will be able to interpret primary source documents to support historical claims and make judgments about the past.

This lesson includes an accompanying **Prezi Presentation** that you can use to guide your class through the lesson.

Enduring Questions: Why were the Chinese excluded from immigrating to the United States after 1882?

Check Student's Prior Knowledge of the topic: Have students complete a KWL chart (**Hand Out 1**) about the Chinese in the 19th century West. Ask the students what they already know about the topic (K) or what they think they know about it. Ask what they want to know (W). Then, after the lesson and ask them what they learned (L).
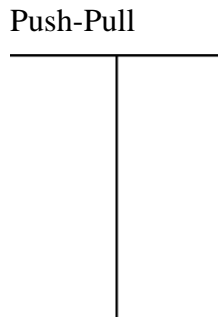
Setting the Stage:

1. Show the class the editorial "Throwing Down the Ladder by Which They Rose" by Thomas Nast. Ask the class what the main idea of the political cartoon is? What is your evidence to support your claim?

2. Explain that Thomas Nast (1840-1902) was an illustrator and cartoonist for *Harper's Weekly* from 1857 (1862 full time) to 1887. In his 30-year career with the magazine, Nast drew approximately 2,250 cartoons. When Nast died in 1902, *New York Times* eulogized him as the "Father of American Political Cartoon," Most noteworthy for his caricatures of William M. Tweed, who ran New York City's Democratic political machine at Tammany Hall. Nast brought attention to a variety of topics, including immigration, religion, and labor.

Principal Learning Activity(s)

Day One

1. Point out that there are "push" and "pull" factors that help to explain why immigrants leave their home country (push factors) (see **Resource 2**) and come to a new country (pull factors). Create a T chart and label it Push and Pull, either as individuals or in small groups. Have students brainstorm and complete the chart.

Push-Pull

2. Review the Timeline of Chinese Immigration and Exclusion (**Handout 2**)

3. **Mining**
   Display the images of Chinese Laborers-miners (**Resource 3**) and railroad laborers (**Resource 4**). In a whole-class discussion, explain that the first ethnic group ever formally barred from entering the United States was the Chinese. In 1848 with the discovery of gold at Sutter's mill along the banks of the American River in Coloma, California, the California Gold Rush drew hundreds of thousands of prospectors from around the world looking to make it rich in the California goldfields. Like many other immigrants, the Chinese poured into California in the hopes of quick riches. However, as their numbers significantly increased in the 1850s, calls for baring their entry into the United States began to take traction. The anti-Chinese sentiment was because they were seen as a threat to white laborers, working long hours without complaint and little pay, and lowered the working wage. In addition, because of their religious beliefs, many accused them of being immoral, many whites characterized them as heathens, making them pariahs in their communities. Due to discrimination, the Chinese lived in segregated communities known as Chinatowns and often took jobs that no one else wanted, such as agricultural and industrial work.

   The Transcontinental Railroad
   The first transcontinental railroad stretched 1,776 miles from Nebraska to California and was built by two railroad companies. The Union Pacific built westward from Omaha, Nebraska, while the Central Pacific built eastward from Sacramento, California. The two companies met at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869, completing the nation's first coast-to-coast rail network. The Chinese played an integral role in building the Transcontinental Railroad. Due to the backbreaking and dangerous work on the Central Pacific Railroad, white workers were hard to come by. Work required The Chinese numbered 10,000 to 15,000 during high points of construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, and they perhaps amounted up to 20,000 in total between 1865 and 1869, composing as much as 90 percent of the workforce for much of the construction. The Chinese often performed the most dangerous tasks like blasting through the Sierra Nevada Mountains and laying track in the most challenging terrain. After completing the railroad in 1869, many Chinese laborers went to work in the mining industry throughout the American west. Anti-Chinese sentiment reached its zenith with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred most Chinese from immigrating to the United States.

4. You may wish to show students the YouTube video "Remembering Chinese Rail Workers" (4:26) https://youtu.be/OspEUdi4a4g

5. Have students examine "Comments by Leland Stanford, President of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, 1865" (**Handout 3**). Ask students why Stanford desired to employ Chinese laborers?

6. **Homework:** Have students research some of the push factors that caused the Chinese to begin immigrating to the United States.

Day Two

7. Explain to the class that Mary Cone, a resident of Marietta, Ohio, spent two years in California. In 1876, she published her memoir *Two Years in California*, which described her experiences. Have students read an excerpt from the book beginning on pages 177-195. (**Resource 5**). Depending on the level of the class, you may want to cut down the reading to a more manageable length. Ask the students
    a. What was Cone's view of Chinese immigration? (students must use textual support in their response, how do we know?)
    b. What was the central argument concerning the Chinese?
8. Next, read Robert W. Pitkin's letter to his parents (**Resource 6**).
    a. What can you infer from Pitkin's letter about the reasons for American hostility towards the Chinese?
    b. Why do you think Pitkin objected to the action taken by other miners?
    c. How successful were most prospectors in California during the gold rush?
    d. How did the gold rush experience impact the Chinese immigrant experience?
9. Working in small groups provide students with the political cartoons "The Chinese Question" (**Resource 7**) and "The First Blow at the Chinese Question" (**Resources 8**). Have students analyze the political cartoons using the National Archives cartoon analysis worksheet (**Resource 9**). Have students compare and contrast the meanings of the political cartoons, paying particular attention to bias and how the Chinese have been portrayed.
10. In a whole-class discussion, explain that in the spring of 1882, the US Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act and was signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur. This act provided an absolute 10-year moratorium on Chinese immigration. For the first time, Federal law prohibited the entry of an ethnic group on the premise that it endangered the good order of certain localities. Have the students analyze the Chinese Exclusion Act (**Resource 10**), paying close attention to Section 1.
    a. Ask students why the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed?
    b. Who might have been primarily responsible for the passage of the act, and why?
    c. How can the US claim to be a nation of immigrants and yet bar entry to the Chinese?
11. **Homework:** Have students write a well-developed paragraph that answers the lesson's essential question "despite the fact that the United States has been called a nation of immigrants, why hasn't the nation always welcomed strangers to our shores?" Have students share their responses with the class.

Summative Assessment
- Have students do a 3-2-1 assessment. 3) things they learned from the lesson; 2) things they want to know more about; and 1) questions they have.

- Students will write an argumentative essay arguing against the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The essay must have the following (see the rubric Handout

  - Claim
  - Development
  - Awareness of Audience
  - Cohesion
  - Style and conventions

Resource List:

Resource 1: "Throwing Down the Ladder by Which They Rose," by Thomas Nast, July 23, 1870, https://thomasnastcartoons.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/throwing-down-the-ladder-by-which-they-rose-7-23-1870.jpg

Resource 2: Push/Pull factors of immigration
https://images.app.goo.gl/HnmwJzKmXBgeNnRw8

Resource 3: White and Chinese miners hoping to strike it rich during the California Gold Rush at Auburn Ravine in 1852 (California State Library [Daguerreotype collection #912]).
https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/california-gold-rush/sources/1910

Resource 4: John Chinaman on the railroad: Union Pacific Rail Road: From Miscellaneous Selections: Chinese and Westward Expansion.
https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb9r29p03d/?brand=oac4&layout=metadata

Resource 5: Two Years in California by Mary Cone published in 1876
https://archive.org/details/twoyearsincalifo01cone/page/76/mode/2up

Resource 6: Robert W. Pitkin letter to his parents
https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb867nb2mv/?order=6&brand=oac4

Resource 7: "The Chinese Question": From Harper's Weekly: Harper's Weekly, Vol. 15
http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb6199n7pm/

Resource 8: "The First Blow at the Chinese Question" [cover]: From The Wasp: v. 2, Aug. 1877- July 1878 http://cdn.calisphere.org/data/13030/cn/hb9m3nb3cn/files/hb9m3nb3cn-FID4.jpg

Resource 9: National Archives cartoon analysis worksheet
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/cartoon_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Resource 10: The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47
Other Resources

The following websites contain primary source materials related to the Chinese Exclusion Act and Chinese immigration.

- [Chew Heong v. the US: Chinese Exclusion and the Federal Courts](#) The materials on this website are presented by the Federal Judicial Center. In this case, a Chinese immigrant's petition to reenter the United States divides a California federal court and forces the Supreme Court to decide if immigrants' rights are protected by the nation's treaties.
- [The Chinese-American Experience: 1857-1892 External](#) This site presents articles and images from the pages of *Harper's Weekly* related to the Chinese-American experience in the late 19th century.
- [Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion External](#) This online exhibit from the New-York Historical Society chronicles the complex history of the Chinese in America, from the early days of the China trade to the history of Chinese immigration and the life of Chinese Americans.
- [Chinese Exclusion Laws: A Selective Annotated Bibliography of Federal Public Documents External](#) This annotated bibliography contains selected United States Federal public documents relating to the Chinese Exclusion laws. These laws which prohibited the immigration of Chinese into the United States, were in force from 1882 until 1943.
- [The Chinese in California, 1850-1925 External](#) This digital collection illustrates nineteenth and early twentieth-century Chinese immigration to California through about 8,000 images and pages of primary source materials. Included are photographs, original art, cartoons, and other illustrations; letters, excerpts from diaries, business records, and legal documents; as well as pamphlets, broadsides, speeches, sheet music, and other printed matter. The materials in this online compilation are drawn from collections at The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley; The Ethnic Studies Library, University of California Berkeley; and The California Historical Society, San Francisco.
- [DOCSTeach External,](#) This site from the National Archives and Records Administration and the National Archives Foundation contains primary sources related to the Chinese Exclusion Act and Chinese immigration.
- [Early Chinese Immigration to the US External](#) Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Primary Source Set on Chinese immigration.
- [Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930 External](#) The digital collections of the Harvard University Library document voluntary immigration to the United States from the signing of the Constitution to the start of the Great Depression, including Chinese immigration.
- [Our Documented Rights: Thinking about Chinese Exclusion](#) Educational resources from the National Archives and Records Administration.
- [Our Documents: Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)](#) National Archives and Records Administration
- [Research Our Records: Chinese Heritage](#) National Archives and Records Administration
- [Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad](#) A virtual reconstruction of the key historic sites
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Handout 1 The Chinese Immigration and Exclusion in the 19th Century West KWL Chart

What I already **know**	What I **want** to know	What I **learned**

Handout 2 Timeline of Chinese Immigration and Exclusion (adopted from SHEG)

1842 China lost the First Opium War to Britain. The Qing Dynasty signed a treaty favorable to British trade interests and ceded Hong Kong Island to the British Empire.

1848 Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, California; thousands of Chinese immigrants departed from Hong Kong to mine for gold in California.

1850 California instituted the Foreign Miners' tax, which targeted Chinese and Latino miners. The Taiping Civil War began in China. 20-30 million died as a result, and millions more were displaced by its end in

1863. 1852 Approximately 17,000-25,000 Chinese in California.

1854 California Supreme Court ruled that Chinese did not have the right to testify against white citizens in People v. Hall.

1860 United States trade with China tripled from 1845 levels. China lost the Second Opium War to France and Britain. The Qing Dynasty signed a treaty favorable to Western interests, including the legalization of the opium trade.

1865 Central Pacific Railroad recruited workers directly from China.

1868 China and US signed the Burlingame Treaty. It guaranteed Chinese immigration to the US, protection of Chinese citizens, and helped US trade interests in China.

1869 First transcontinental railroad completed.

1871 A white mob tortured and hanged 17 to 20 Chinese in Los Angeles.

1873 Panic of 1873 led to a major economic depression in the US. The effects of the depression were felt into the 1880s.

1877 A white mob rioted against Chinese in San Francisco, killing several and extensively damaging Chinese-owned property.

1878 A US federal court ruled in *In re Ah Yup* that Chinese were not eligible for citizenship.

1879 New California State Constitution forbade corporations and governments offices in California from employing Chinese.

1880 Approximately 105,000 Chinese in America (less than 10% of California's population); California passed anti-miscegenation law (Chinese and whites could not marry).

1882 Chinese Exclusion Act restricted Chinese immigration (in one year, the number of new lawfully admitted Chinese immigrants dropped from 40,000 to 23)

Handout 3 Comments by Leland Stanford, President of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, 1865

"A large majority of the white laboring class on the Pacific Coast find more profitable and congenial employment in mining and agricultural pursuits, than in railroad work. The greater portion of the laborers employed by us are Chinese, who constitute a large element in the population of California. Without them it would be impossible to complete the western portion of this great national enterprise, within the time required by the Acts of Congress.

As a class they are quiet, peaceable, patient, industrious and economical—ready and apt to learn all the different kinds of work required in railroad building, they soon become as efficient as white laborers. More prudent and economical, they are contented with less wages. We find them organized into societies for mutual aid and assistance. These societies, that count their numbers by thousands, are conducted by shrewd, intelligent business men, who promptly advise their subordinates where employment can be found on the most favorable terms.

No system similar to slavery, serfdom or peonage prevails among these laborers. Their wages, which are always paid in coin, at the end of each month, are divided among them by their agents, who attend to their business, in proportion to the labor done by each person. These agents are generally American or Chinese merchants, who furnish them their supplies of food, the value of which they deduct from their monthly pay. We have assurances from leading Chinese merchants, that under the just and liberal policy pursued by the Company, it will be able to procure during the next year, not less than 15,000 laborers. With this large force, the Company will be able to push on the work so as not only to complete it far within the time required by the Acts of Congress, but so as to meet the public impatience."

"Central Pacific Railroad Statement Made to the President of the United States, and Secretary of the Interior, on the Progress of the Work." Sacramento: H.S. Crocker & Co., Printers. October 10 1865. Pg. 990.

Handout 4

ARGUMENT

Description	5 Exceptional	4 Skilled	3 Proficient	2 Developing	1 Inadequate
Claim: The text introduces a clear, arguable claim that can be supported by reasons and evidence.	The text introduces a compelling claim that is clearly arguable and takes a purposeful position on an issue. The text has a structure and organization that is carefully crafted to support the claim.	The text introduces a precise claim that is clearly arguable and takes an identifiable position on an issue. The text has an effective structure and organization that is aligned with the claim.	The text introduces a claim that is arguable and takes a position. The text has a structure and organization that is aligned with the claim.	The text contains an unclear or emerging claim that suggests a vague position. The text attempts a structure and organization to support the position.	The text contains an unidentifiable claim or vague position. The text has limited structure and organization.
Development: The text provides sufficient data and evidence to back up the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both the claim and counterclaim. The text provides a conclusion that supports the argument.	The text provides convincing and relevant data and evidence to back up the claim and skillfully addresses counterclaims. The conclusion effectively strengthens the claim and evidence.	The text provides sufficient and relevant data and evidence to back up the claim and fairly addresses counterclaims. The conclusion effectively reinforces the claim and evidence.	The text provides data and evidence to back up the claim and addresses counterclaims. The conclusion ties to the claim and evidence.	The text provides data and evidence that attempt to back up the claim and unclearly addresses counterclaims or lacks counterclaims. The conclusion merely restates the position.	The text contains limited data and evidence related to the claim and counterclaims or lacks counterclaims. The text may fail to conclude the argument or position.
Audience: The text anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases about the claim. The text addresses the specific needs of the audience.	The text consistently addresses the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases about the claim. The text addresses the specific needs of the audience.	The text anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases about the claim. The text addresses the specific needs of the audience.	The text considers the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases about the claim. The text addresses the needs of the audience.	The text illustrates an inconsistent awareness of the audience's knowledge level and needs.	The text lacks an awareness of the audience's knowledge level and needs.
Cohesion: The text uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, creates cohesion and clarifies the relationship between the claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims.	The text strategically uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text. The text explains the relationships between the claim and reasons as well as the evidence. The text strategically links the counterclaims to the claim.	The text skillfully uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text. The text identifies the relationship between the claim and reasons as well as the evidence. The text effectively links the counterclaims to the claim.	The text uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text. The text connects the claim and reasons. The text links the counterclaims to the claim.	The text contains limited words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text attempts to connect the claim and reasons.	The text contains few, if any, words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text does not connect the claims and reasons.
Style and Conventions: The text presents a formal, objective tone that demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics while attending to the norms of the discipline (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.).	The text presents an engaging, formal and objective tone. The text intentionally uses standard English conventions of usage and mechanics while attending to the norms of the discipline (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.).	The text presents a formal, objective tone. The text demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics while attending to the norms of the discipline (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.).	The text presents a formal tone. The text demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics while attending to the norms of the discipline (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.).	The text illustrates a limited awareness of formal tone. The text demonstrates some accuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.	The text illustrates a limited awareness of or inconsistent tone. The text demonstrates inaccuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.