

Summary Description

This is the third in a series of 12 lessons that introduces the student to Asian American history.

Learning Objectives

To have the student learn a few key facts about the Chinese Americans.

Approximate Time for Lesson

50 minutes

Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

References:

"The Chinese in California 1850 - 1925", University of California Berkeley & California Historical Society - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award99/cubhtml/cichome.html>

"Chinese American Contribution to the Transcontinental Railroad", Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum - <http://cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html>

"A History of Chinese Americans in California", Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California - http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/5views/5views3.htm

Materials Needed

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
 - a. World Map (go to <http://maps.google.com/>)
 - b. Picture of present day Chinatown, San Francisco (go to http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinatown,_San_Francisco_07.jpg)
 - c. Picture of Chinatown, San Francisco in 1892 (go to <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/intro16.gif>)
 - d. Picture of a Bing cherry (go to http://www.millernurseries.com/images/products/product_568.jpg)

Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. **Teacher:** We learned about the Filipino Americans in our last lesson. Today, we are going to learn about the biggest group of Asian American people, the Chinese Americans, and how they came to the United States. The Chinese Americans gave the United States some great things like basketball stars (Yao Ming) and famous kung-fu movies (actors

Bruce Lee, Jet Li), but you're going to learn that they made gave so much more help to our country, even since the first time they came to California long long ago (late 1840's).

2. Teacher: [Pointing to China on the World Map - select the zoom out function by clicking the minus sign, then, click anywhere in the map and drag the map to the right until you see China] See, this is China, another country in Asia.
3. Teacher: [Drawing a path with your finger from China to Hawaii on the World Map via the Pacific Ocean] Even though the first Chinese Americans came here to these islands called "Hawaii", which is also part of North America today, I want to talk to you today about the first group of Chinese Americans that came this way [draw a line with your finger or computer mouse from China to California on the World Map]. These Chinese Americans came this way across the Pacific Ocean, which is the water part, and came to a city called San Francisco, in the state of California.
4. Teacher: Last time, we learned about the Filipinos of St. Malo, we talked about some of the reasons why someone would want to move. Can you tell me some of those reasons? [Discuss some of the reasons why people move: 1) for better opportunities and 2) forced to move].
5. Teacher: Unlike the Filipinos, who were escaping to the United States, the first Chinese Americans to move to California went there to look for better opportunities - let's find out about their lives.

Lesson (40 minutes)

1. Teacher: Imagine long ago, in a place called California, GOLD WAS EVERYWHERE! Why, you could see it glittering and sparkling in the rivers! There was gold in the mountains, in caves and stuck into rocks. And since there weren't too many people living in California in those days, you could make your way to California and get some gold for yourself!
2. Teacher: In fact, there was so much gold out there that EVERYONE started to hear about it in America and so people started to move to California, to look for gold and get some for themselves. This move to look for gold in California was called the "Gold Rush". Would you go to join the Gold Rush if you lived in those times? [Engage the Student in conversation about whether she would have moved to California to join the Gold Rush, but guide the conversation to make the point that people went to join the Gold Rush to find a better opportunity for themselves and their families].
3. Teacher: Well, the word about the Gold Rush spread not only in North America but throughout the world and soon, people from all over the world came to California to try to find gold. And this is how the Chinese came to America, to search for gold.

4. Teacher: Also, it didn't help much that in China, it was so hard to live since some people were so poor. And so for these people who left their own country, there was this dream for a better life - and so they moved to the land that held all this gold.
5. Teacher: Now, remember when we talked about the Filipinos, they actually were running away from their ships that landed in America, and they ran away so far that no other Americans would find them - in fact it took 100 years for the Americans to find out that there were Filipinos living in America! But with the Chinese it was completely the opposite because for them, the Chinese were running to somewhere that EVERYONE wanted to go to (to get that gold!). And so, think about if you were Chinese, only knowing how to speak in Chinese and not knowing how to speak in English, how would that make you feel? [Discuss some of the feelings that the Chinese might have felt as they first landed in America, but guide the discussion to make the point that the Chinese must have felt confused and uncomfortable in strange land, with strange food, strange clothes, and people that looked very differently than they did].
6. Teacher: And, think about how the Americans thought about the Chinese, coming to their country to take their gold. These Chinese people said things that made no sense to the Americans AND they looked different than they did. If you were one of those Americans that first saw the Chinese, how do you think that would make you feel? [Discuss some of the feelings that the Americans might have felt as they first saw Chinese people looking in your own land for gold, with those people not being able to understand a thing you say, eating strange food and wearing strange clothes, all the while looking differently than you did].
7. Teacher: And so, with both the Americans and Chinese feeling that way about each other, what do you think happened between the two people? [Discuss possible outcomes that happened between the Americans and Chinese as they met each other in the goal to find gold in California, but guide the discussion to make the point that with all those bad feelings between them, that it was hard to get good treatment as a Chinese from an American in those days].
8. Teacher: That's right. With each side NOT knowing anything about each other and not being able to talk to each other since they spoke different languages, there was a lot of confusion between the Chinese and Americans. And, since North America belonged to Americans, the Chinese were treated badly. For example, the Chinese could only dig for gold in places where the Americans gave up looking for gold. But even though they were treated badly, the Chinese knew that they would make a lot more money working in America than they did in their own country. So, more Chinese began to come to America.
9. Teacher: And so as more Chinese went to America, the Chinese missed the things that they had in China that weren't there in America, like Chinese food, clothes, a place to sleep. Soon, Chinese restaurants opened up and so did dry cleaners, shops and hotels. So, a whole town was made that had all these things for the Chinese. Since all these shops

were in one place, this place was called, "Chinatown". So after Chinatown was made, do you think it made life easier or harder to live for the Chinese? [Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that it was easier since the Chinese had some of the comforts of home available].

10. Teacher: Do you want to know what Chinatown looked like back then? [Receive Student's positive response and show the picture of Chinatown, San Francisco in 1892].
11. Teacher: This Chinatown actually was destroyed in a big earthquake, but they built it again in the same spot as the old Chinatown, and here's how it looks today. [Show Student picture of present day Chinatown, San Francisco].
12. Teacher: Remember how I said that the Chinese came to America to look for gold? Well, since more and more people went to California during the Gold Rush, there was not as much gold anywhere left. So, more and more of the Chinese that were looking for gold changed their jobs to do other stuff like help around in Chinatown. But also, they went to help Americans do work that the Americans didn't want to do since the work was just too hard to do. Can you think of some work that is just too hard to do that you would not like to do? [Engage the Student in discussion on what kinds of jobs are hard].
13. Teacher: The kinds of work you told me are really hard, and for the Americans back then, the toughest kinds of work were building railroad tracks and farming. So, a lot of the Chinese worked in these jobs.
14. Teacher: For building railroads, well, they had to build railroad tracks from California [draw a line with your finger from California on the map to the middle of the U.S. on the World Map] to about the middle of the country, where another railroad track was already built from here to here [trace a line starting from the middle of the U.S. to the East Coast on the World Map] to connect through the other end of the United States. And what was work like making those railroad tracks? Well, think about trying to put a piece of heavy steel on the ground (you would need you and your friends to just carry it!), then nail the piece of steel into the dirt.
15. Teacher: Now imagine having to do this from morning to night, over big hills and even through mountains by blasting tunnels through them. In fact, by blasting tunnels through mountains, many Chinese died in the explosions. To make things worse, Chinese workers got less money for doing the same work as other Americans. But in the end, the railroad was created, a railroad that connected the left side of the U.S. to the right side for the first time ever - the Chinese were hard workers and that showed when the railroad was built much faster than anyone thought.
16. Teacher: Now that the railroad was built, what do you think was so special about that? [Engage the Student in conversation about what the U.S. could now do since the railroad was connected from coast to coast, but direct the conversation to make 2 points: 1) trains could carry things like seeds and cattle for food, or building materials like wood and

steel, which made creating cities on the left side of the country much easier (i.e., the relatively developed Eastern U.S. could now use its resources to develop the relatively new Western U.S.), and 2) more cities were created because of the railroad system, which made more people from the right side of the country come to the left side of the country for better opportunities].

17. Teacher: This railroad that the Chinese people help build was called the Transcontinental Railroad. Can you say "Transcontinental Railroad"? [Have the Student repeat the word].
18. Teacher: Well, since people from the right side of the country were now moving to the left side, even more food was needed for the new cities on the left side of the country. But there were not enough farms to make food for the left side of the country (and railroads were not enough to carry food over to the left side anymore since so many people moved to the left side) and so, the Americans paid the Chinese workers to help make farms and grow enough food for the Americans living on the left side of the country. Although this was very hard work, most of the Chinese who were in America used to work in farms in their homeland in China so they knew how to work in farms and plant food. And because the Chinese knew how to farm, they helped the entire left half of the country by helping grow enough food for everyone there.
19. Teacher: In fact, one famous Chinese person at that time was named Ah Bing. Ah Bing was the first person to grow the red cherries that you can see in the supermarket today. These cherries were named after him and are called "Bing cherries" - next time we go to the supermarket, let's see if we can get some! But in the meantime, here's what a Bing cherry looks like. [Show the Student a picture of a Bing cherry].
20. Teacher: Ok now it's time for review. Stand up, get in front and face me. I'm going to ask you some questions about the Chinese Americans and you answer me. Ready? [Get Student's positive response and ask the following:
 - a. Why did the Chinese come to America? For a better opportunity (Gold Rush)
 - b. What did the Chinese do once they came to California? They looked for gold
 - c. After the Gold Rush, what did the Chinese do? They built railroads (Transcontinental Railroad) and farms.
 - d. When the Chinese finished building the railroads, what could the Americans do with their new railroad? They could move things (food, materials) from the right side to the left side of the country so more people could live on the left side.
 - e. When the Chinese helped grow food for the left side of the country, what was one fruit that was created by the Chinese? Bing cherries, named after Ah Bing, the first person to grow those cherries.

Help the Student review the materials and correct any errors with the Student].

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Teacher: [Clapping] You did GREAT! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the Chinese Americans? [Engage in conversation with the Student and close the lesson. If the Student asks more questions, research the Internet or go to your nearest library for answers].