

Lesson Plan Title: Legal Struggles of Chinese Americans in Arkansas: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

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Rationale and Explanation:

This lesson plan aims to explore the legal challenges faced by Chinese Americans in Arkansas, connecting historical events with contemporary issues. By examining national policies like the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 alongside Arkansas-specific experiences, students will gain a nuanced understanding of how federal and state actions have impacted Chinese communities.

This lesson is beneficial because it promotes critical thinking, engages students with primary and secondary sources, and fosters discussions on civil rights, immigration, and the ongoing impact of historical legislation on minority communities.

Lesson Objectives:

- **Knowledge:** Understand the historical legal challenges faced by Chinese immigrants nationally and within Arkansas.
- **Analysis:** Compare and contrast national policies with state-specific experiences affecting Chinese Americans.
- **Application:** Connect historical exclusionary practices to contemporary discussions about legal restrictions and civil rights.
- **Critical Thinking:** Evaluate the impact of legal struggles on the Chinese American community's social and economic status.

Materials:

- **Primary Sources:**
 - **Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882** (Full text in second half):
 - <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act>
- **Secondary Sources:**
 - **Encyclopedia of Arkansas – Chinese Entry:**
 - <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/chinese-5971/>
 - **U.S. State Department – Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Act:** <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/chinese-immigration>
 - **National Archives – Chinese Exclusion Act Overview** (Secondary at top):
 - <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act>
- **Supplementary Materials:**
 - **Court Records or Case Studies** involving Chinese Americans in Arkansas (could contact Arkansas State Archives: <http://archives.arkansas.gov/research/requests>).

Lesson Plan Outline:

1. Introduction:

- **Hook:** Present a brief overview of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 using the National Archives summary.
- **Discussion:** Ask students, "What do you know about immigration laws in U.S. history? How might national policies affect local communities differently?"

2. Exploration of National Policy:

- **Activity:** Students read excerpts from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.
- **Guided Questions:**
 - What were the main provisions of the act?
 - How did this law affect Chinese immigrants nationwide?

3. Economic Challenges and Exclusionary Practices:

- **Presentation:** Introduce the economic restrictions faced by Chinese Americans due to exclusion policies, referencing the **U.S. State Department resource** on Chinese immigration.
- **Group Activity:**
 - Divide students into small groups.
 - Assign each group to analyze how economic restrictions affected Chinese Americans, comparing them with modern discussions on immigration policies and economic barriers.

4. Arkansas-Specific Experiences:

- **Reading & Group Discussion:** Students remain in their small groups to read the *Chinese* entry from the **Encyclopedia of Arkansas** and discuss how exclusionary policies specifically impacted Chinese immigrants in Arkansas.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How did Chinese immigrants come to settle in Arkansas?
 - What unique challenges did they face in the state?
 - Were there any state laws or local ordinances that impacted them?

5. Critical Analysis and Discussion:

- **Class Discussion:**
 - Each group shares their findings from both the national policies and the Arkansas-specific experiences.

- Open the floor for a debate on the implications of exclusionary economic policies and their long-term effects.
- **Key Points to Address:**
 - How did national exclusionary laws impact the ability of Chinese immigrants to establish businesses and own property?
 - How do these national laws compare to Arkansas-specific policies restricting Chinese economic and social mobility?
 - Were there any Arkansas-specific challenges that went beyond national exclusion laws?
 - How did Chinese immigrants in Arkansas navigate legal restrictions compared to other states?
 - What are the similarities and differences between past exclusionary policies and present-day policies affecting immigrants in Arkansas?

6. Application Activity:

- **Research Assignment:**
 - Students research another historical or current event where legal actions affected a minority group's rights in Arkansas or elsewhere.
 - They prepare a short presentation or essay on their findings, drawing parallels to the lesson's content.

7. Conclusion and Reflection):

- **Exit Ticket:**
 - Students write a brief response to the question: "How do historical laws and attitudes toward Chinese immigrants influence present-day policies and perceptions?"

Assessment:

- **Participation:** Engagement during class discussions and group activities.
- **Group Analysis:** Quality of insights during the group activity connecting past and present events.
- **Research Assignment:** Evaluation based on the depth of analysis, connections made, and understanding of the legal and social implications.
- **Exit Ticket:** Assess for thoughtful reflection and grasp of the lesson's core themes.

Extensions:

- **Debate:** Host a formal debate on the balance between national security and protecting the rights of minority groups.

- **Research** similar laws in other states or compare the treatment of other minority groups facing property ownership restrictions (e.g., Japanese Americans, African Americans).

Additional Resources:

- **Arkansas State Archives:**
 - For accessing historical records, land deeds, and court cases involving Chinese immigrants.
 - Research requests can be made here:
<http://archives.arkansas.gov/research/requests>
- **Library of Congress – Chinese Immigration:**
 - Offers primary sources and teaching materials:
<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/chinese.html>

Relevant Arkansas State Standards:

1. **Arkansas History (7-8):**
 - **Strand: Civics - Process, Rules, and Laws**
C.1.ARH.6: *Analyze the response of state government and the role of public policy on social concerns in Arkansas such as unemployment, education, poverty, immigration, and culture.*
 - This standard can be addressed by analyzing how Arkansas state policies, such as historical land laws and the recent event with Governor Huckabee, reflect on immigration and public policy concerning Chinese-Americans.
 - **Strand: Arkansas History - Chronology, Change over time, Contextualization**
H.1.ARH.7: *Discuss social events and issues in Arkansas surrounding discrimination and marginalization, including Jim Crow laws, rise of the Ku Klux Klan, Elaine Race Massacre, and school segregation.*
 - The lesson plan can explore the history of Chinese exclusion and discrimination in Arkansas, connecting this to broader patterns of marginalization and race relations in the state.
2. **Arkansas History (9-12):**
 - **Strand: Era 5-6**
H.4.ARH.10: *Examine the effects of social and economic transformations on various regions and segments of the population, including the rise of various industries (e.g., oil, mining), prosperity, transportation networks (e.g., railroad growth), migration/immigration, and education reform.*

- This standard can be tied into the discussion of Chinese immigration and their role in Arkansas's economic development, particularly through land ownership and small businesses.
- **Strand: Era 7**
H.5.ARH.1: *Investigate social, economic, and political reforms of the Progressive Era in Arkansas, including women's suffrage, growth and development of railroads, industrialism, reform of the convict lease system, and establishment of educational institutions (e.g., land grant colleges, founding of the University of Arkansas and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff).*
- The lesson plan can incorporate how these reforms impacted Chinese immigrants during the Progressive Era and how their exclusion from certain reforms mirrored or diverged from other marginalized groups in Arkansas.