



Ethnic Studies Lesson 5F: Asian American Pacific Islanders

TOPIC:

ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

1. Identity
2. History and Movement
3. Systems of Power

Values and Principles:

1. Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
3. Center and place high value on the precolonial ancestral knowledge, narratives, and communal experiences of Native People/s and people of color and groups that are typically marginalized in society.
4. Critique empire building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, and other forms of power and oppression.
5. Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonial beliefs and practices on multiple levels.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)

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. (RI.11-12.2)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)

Analyze the interactions between the United States and Pacific Islander populations, including the impact of colonization, trade, and immigration on native populations. (10.4)

Examine the experiences of Pacific Islander communities in relation to American interests, policies, and stereotypes, and evaluate how these experiences challenge prevailing narratives. (10.4)

Lesson Purpose

Students will investigate the Pacific Islander experience through the dual lenses of American interests and native populations and note how understanding Pacific Islander experiences challenges stereotypes.

Essential Questions

What were American interests in the Pacific during the 1800s and 1900s?

How have Pacific Islanders responded to those interests, and how do their unique experiences challenge Pacific Islander stereotypes?

How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?

Materials

[Office of the Historian: United States Maritime Expansion across the Pacific](#)

[TED-Ed: The dark history of the overthrow of Hawaii](#) (video 5 minutes, 46 seconds)

[PBS Hawaii Statehood, Asian Americans](#) (video 3 minutes, 11 seconds)

[Office of the Historian: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902](#)

[History: How the United States Ended Up with Guam](#)

[US Department of Interior: American Samoa](#) and [Brown Political Review: Decolonizing America: American Samoa](#)

[The U.S. Army, "Soldier Stories: Filipino American Heritage"](#) (video 8 minutes, 55 seconds)

[Unit 5 KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

imperialism

Chamorro

Philippine-American War

Spanish-American War

monarchy

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they already know about American imperialism in the Pacific during the 19th century or about the Spanish-American War. Use a group reading method such as popcorn or round robin to read [Office of the Historian: United States Maritime Expansion across the Pacific](#).

As students read, have them take notes on what were the US interests in expanding across the Pacific. When students have completed reading, as a class, have them share what these early interests were.

Step 2:

- Ask students what they know about the reactions of these annexed territories to US expansionism. Separate the class into five groups. Have the groups go through five stations and take notes on the point of view of Native or Asian groups in the Pacific Island US territories.
 - [TED-Ed: The dark history of the overthrow of Hawaii](#) (video 5 minutes, 46 seconds)
 - [PBS Hawaii Statehood, Asian Americans](#) (video 3 minutes, 11 seconds)
 - [Office of the Historian: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902](#)
 - [History: How the United States Ended Up with Guam](#)
 - [US Department of Interior: American Samoa](#) and [Brown Political Review: Decolonizing America: American Samoa](#)
- When students have completed their stations, as a class, have them share the points of view for Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, the Chamorro population of Guam, American Samoans, and Asian Americans living in Hawaii.

Step 3:

- As a class, ask students to watch [The U.S. Army, “Soldier Stories: Filipino American Heritage”](#) (video 8 minutes, 55 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on what surprises them about Filipino American soldiers. They should take down details that help them answer the question, “How does understanding the stories of Filipino American soldiers change your views of any Filipino stereotypes?” When students have finished watching the video, as a class, have them share their answers.

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this lesson’s questions, “What were American interests in the Pacific during the 1800s and 1900s? How have Pacific Islanders responded to those interests, and how do their unique experiences challenge Pacific Islander stereotypes?” Also ask this unit’s question, “How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?” Make note of what was learned on this unit’s KWL chart—along with additional questions.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time allows, and for homework, have students watch [Smithsonian: Asian Pacific American: How Hawai’i Became the Most Literate Nation in the World](#) (video 12 minutes, 30 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes of what surprises them about Hawaiian literacy during the period of pre-statehood. Their notes should include details to answer the question, “How does understanding Hawaiian literacy prior to statehood change your views of any stereotypes you might have held about Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders?”

Additional Readings and Resources

“Grover Cleveland on the Overthrow of Hawaii’s Royal Government,” Digital History, 1893. https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1283

Sai, Keanu. “The U.S. Occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom.” *NEA Today*, October 1, 2018. <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/us-occupation-hawaiian-kingdom>

[Smithsonian: Asian Pacific American: How Hawai’i Became the Most Literate Nation in the World](#)

ASIAN AMERICANS

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 133-179.

Tompkins, E. Berkeley. *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 5A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

<p><i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i></p>	<p><i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i></p>	<p><i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i></p>