



# Ethnic Studies Lesson 5J:

## Asian American Similarities and Differences, Part 2

**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

**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.

### 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)**

Investigate the religions and political systems of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia, and analyze their impacts on Asian American communities in the United States. (12.9)

## Lesson Purpose

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Students will investigate how Asian American community organizations, museums, and cultural events promote and preserve Asian Americans' cultural heritage and quality of life.

## Essential Questions

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*What means do Asian Americans use to preserve their cultural heritage and promote their quality of life?*

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

## Materials

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[PBS: Community Organizing and Activism](#)

[Japanese American National Museum](#)

[Chinese American Museum](#)

[Asia Society: Museum](#)

[Asian Art Museum: Cultural Celebration Calendar](#)

[CBS News: Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, celebrated across America](#)

[10 Ways to Celebrate Filipino American History Month](#)

[CBS Today: Keeping Hawaii's Cultural Traditions Alive](#)

[PBS: Hmong New Year](#)

[Unit 5 KWL Chart](#)

## Vocabulary

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community organizations

benevolent

## Lesson Steps

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### *Step 1:*

- As a class, ask students how other groups that they have studied during this class have tried to preserve their cultural heritage and why. What methods were used? Why might it be important to preserve heritage and represent a specific cultural group? Let students know they will be watching the first 11 minutes, 8 seconds of a discussion among Asian American community leaders in Philadelphia. Have students watch the first 11 minutes, 8 seconds of [PBS: Community Organizing and Activism](#) (video 28 minutes, 44 seconds). As students watch, have them take notes on what types of associations have been formed over time and how they were used to support their communities. Stop the video frequently to help students see the number of organizations that worked in this one community over time.
- When students have finished watching, help them see the following large number of organizations and wide array of purposes in this one city: benevolent associations and churches to help with early Chinatown settlement, PCDC (Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation), and Yellow Seeds newspaper to help with redlining and impactful freeway development, formal and informal

organizations to maintain languages and help with new refugees and their welfare benefits, and Viet Lead to help with anti-Asian violence.

### Step 2:

- Ask students what they know about Asian American museums or cultural events. Students will work in groups to create a five-slide slideshow to highlight their topic and answer the questions of how museums and cultural events contribute to preserving heritage and improving the quality of life for Asian Americans. Students may need to go to other websites as well and should cite their sources carefully.
  - [Japanese American National Museum](#)
  - [Chinese American Museum](#)
  - [Asia Society: Museum](#)
  - [Asian Art Museum: Cultural Celebration Calendar](#)
  - [CBS News: Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, celebrated across America](#) (video 3 minutes, 22 seconds)
  - [10 Ways to Celebrate Filipino American History Month](#)
  - [CBS Today: Keeping Hawaii's Cultural Traditions Alive](#)
  - [PBS: Hmong New Year](#)
- When students have completed their research, as a class, have student groups share their slideshows.

### Step 3:

- As a class, ask students this lesson's questions, "What means do Asian Americans use to preserve their cultural heritage and promote their quality of life?" 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

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As time permits and for homework, have students watch [Asia Society: Why Do We Celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month?](#) (video 4 minutes, 49 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes of what groups fought for the Asian Pacific Heritage month and what they were hoping to accomplish to benefit Asian Americans. Students should take notes in order to answer the question, "How do cultural initiatives impact the quality of life for Asian Americans?" Students should write a short paragraph and cite their sources carefully.

## Additional Readings and Resources

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[Asia Society: Why Do We Celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month?](#)

Bernstein, David E. *Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classification in America*. Bombardier, 2022.

Qin, Amy. "They're Asian. They're American. But, They Wonder, Are They Asian American?" *New York Times*, June 1, 2024 (on Bhutanese Americans). <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/01/us/asian-american-identity-bhutanese.html>

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

Sowell, Thomas. *Migrations and Cultures: A World View*. Basic Books, 1996, chaps. 3, 5, 7.

**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**

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**KNOW**

**WONDER**

**LEARNED**

*What do we think we already know about this topic?*

*What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.*

*After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.*

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