



# Ethnic Studies Lesson 5K: Asian American Entrepreneurs and Politicians

**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)**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. (RI.11-12.7)

**Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):****History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)**

## Lesson Purpose

---

Students will research prominent Asian American entrepreneurs and politicians in order to discover their impact on American culture.

## Essential Questions

---

*How have prominent Asian American entrepreneurs and politicians impacted American culture?*

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

## Materials

---

[Localish: Celebrating Asian American Entrepreneurship Across America](#)

[The White House: Kamala Harris](#)

[Congress.gov: Nikki Haley](#)

[National Women's History Museum: Patsy Mink](#)

[U.S. House of Representatives: Dalip Singh Saund](#)

[Forbes: Jerry Yang](#)

[Forbes: Indra Nooyi](#)

[Unit 5 KWL Chart](#)

## Vocabulary

---

CEO

Congress

## Lesson Steps

---

### **Step 1:**

- As a class, ask students if they believe that anyone in the US can start a business or change their future. Have students watch through minute 7:23 of [Localish: Celebrating Asian American Entrepreneurship Across America](#) (video 22 minutes, 27 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on how the entrepreneurs highlighted in the video are similar to the business leaders they've seen highlighted throughout this unit.
- When students have finished watching, have each student share their notes with one other student. As a class, have students share their findings. Help students see that Asian Americans have been entrepreneurs since entering the US, as laundry owners, shop owners, farmers, businesspeople, and others.
- Ask students if they remember hearing of any political leaders in this unit. Remind students of Oakland's Hmong mayor and community organization leaders.

### **Step 2:**

- Break students into the following groups. Students will research one of the Asian American political or entrepreneurial leaders and create a poster for Asian Pacific American Heritage month in May. Students may need to go outside these websites to find information, and they should be careful to cite their sources.

- [The White House: Kamala Harris](#)
  - [Congress.gov: Nikki Haley](#)
  - [National Women's History Museum: Patsy Mink](#)
  - [U.S. House of Representatives: Dalip Singh Saund](#)
  - [Forbes: Jerry Yang](#)
  - [Forbes: Indra Nooyi](#)
- When students have completed their posters, have them walk the room and put sticky notes on the posters with their questions. Have student groups present their posters and answer questions. Students may want to change their posters to reflect the questions and before placing them on display for Asian Pacific American Heritage month.

### **Step 3:**

- As a class, ask students this lesson's questions, "How have prominent Asian American entrepreneurs and politicians impacted American culture?" 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 permits and for homework, have students watch [National Portrait Gallery, Introducing...Yuri Kochiyama](#) (video 6 minutes, 9 seconds). As students watch, have them take notes on how any person can use their place in history to make a difference. Students should take notes in order to answer the questions, "What parts of Kochiyama's identity and history make her an unlikely candidate to lead a civil rights movement? What aspects of her identity and history make her uniquely positioned to lead a civil rights movement? How can ordinary people do extraordinary things?"

## **Additional Readings and Resources**

---

Arax, Mark. "Pooled Cash of Loan Clubs Key to Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs." *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1988. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-10-30-me-891-story.html>

Bonacich, Edna, Ivan H. Light, and Charles Choy Wong. "Koreans in Business." *Society Magazine*, September 1997, 54-59.

Garreau, Joel. "For Koreans, 'Keh' Is Key to Success: Financial Pools Used to Launch Businesses." *Washington Post*, November 2, 1991. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1991/11/03/for-koreans-keh-is-key-to-success/f729bffa-04f2-4c35-af88-f6914e21f5c9/>

Light, Ivan, and Edna Bonacich. *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965-1982*. University of California Press, 1991.

Light, Ivan, Im Jung Kwuon, and Deng Zhong. "Korean Rotating Credit Associations in Los Angeles." *Amerasia Journal* 16, no. 2 (1990): 35-54.

Mac Donald, Heather. "Why Koreans Succeed." *City Journal*, Spring 1995. <https://www.city-journal.org/article/why-koreans-succeed>

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

**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**

*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>