YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE
to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2026 Volume III: Asian American History and the Making of the U.S. Immigration System

Voices of Arrival: Asian American Immigrant Stories in California

Guide for Curriculum Unit 26.03.05, published September 2026
by Tara Holcomb

In this curriculum, “Voice of Arrival: Asian American Stories in California”, ELD students will learn about California’s Asian American immigration history. They will analyze key policies and landmark cases shaping today’s immigration system. To build foundational knowledge, students will compare and contrast critical events of Asian Exclusion (1875-1943) with the present day. Students will also examine the experiences of different Asian ethnic groups and the legacies of exclusion. In parallel, students will discover that community groups came together to advocate for the newcomers. As the unit unfolds, students will gain an understanding of the nuances among the 1st-, 1.5-, and 2nd-generation by reading excerpts from narratives, graphic novels, and poems. Subsequently, they will become introspective when comparing the experiences of immigrants they read about in class to their own 1.5-generation experience. By the end of the unit, students will grapple with materials that affirm their right to a bilingual education. Through targeted vocabulary instruction, sentence frames, word banks, think-pair-share activities, graphic organizers, and the use of visuals, students will build the English skills to write and present their California arrival poem to all their peers, regardless of cultural backgrounds.

(Developed for ELD 2, grades 9-12; recommended for ELD 3, grades 9-12)

https://teachers.yale.edu
©2026 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.
For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use