

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative 2020 Volume I: American History through American Lives

"Boxing" Asian American History

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Introduction

This social studies unit is motivated by my beliefs that social justice must be successfully taught to children at an early age, both at home as soon as appropriate, and in school starting with kindergarten. As the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) rightly noted, teaching "hard history" is one effective way to "dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people."¹ Our history textbooks promote a deeply embedded culture of white supremacy, and teach students that marginalized groups like Asian Americans, NOT ONLY, did not contribute to the progress of America, but that their narratives literally DO NOT exist in our textbooks, therefore, DO NOT really matter. After reviewing nearly 3,000 U.S. history textbooks from 1800 to 1980, Professor Donald Yacovone of Harvard University wrote: "The assumptions of white priority, white domination, and white importance underlie every chapter and every theme of the thousands of textbooks that blanketed the schools of our country."² One textbook even began with the title: "The White Man's History." In these textbooks, history is old and took place in Western colonization, revolution, constitution, party politics, and nowhere else. I echo the sentiments of Barack Obama's John Lewis eulogy: "This idea that any of us ordinary people... can stand up to the powers and principalities and say, 'No, this isn't right; this isn't true; this isn't just. We can do better.'"³ Teachers have the duty to instill in their students the powerful message that when ordinary people stand up to wrong-doings, false narratives, and injustices, WE are constructing a better vision and future of our shared history.

Hatred and Xenophobia against Asian Americans

I was motivated to write this unit when I read the news that a man stabbed a 2-year old inside a Sam's Club in Texas on March 14, 2020.⁴ The accused man allegedly tried to kill a Burmese family of four because he thought they were Chinese infecting Americans with the coronavirus.⁵ I was furious at the violent act. Soon, I became very afraid for my own American family of Chinese descent, my then-thirteen (13) Asian American 4th graders and their families, and all of my Asian American friends. I also started to worry about the safety of my Hispanic students who could have easily been mistaken as Asians; I said this because as a Chinese American, I had been mistaken as Hispanic a few times in my life. In America, people of color are the interchangeable minority, the interchangeable others, sometimes the forever foreigners, the undocumented and the illegal aliens, intellectually and culturally inferior, and so filthy and diseased that it has warranted being spit at while waiting for a city bus, to being sprayed with air freshener in a New York subway car, to being threatened with a baseball bat in the parking lot.

My race and Chinese ethnicity had made me an immediate target of fear and hate once I stepped foot on American soil in 1977. I remember that day - my parents solicited a willing friend who had a car to drive them to pick up my younger brother and me from the JFK international airport in Queen, New York. I remember sitting in the back of a family sedan looking over my shoulders as the Statue of Liberty faded into the background. My parents tried to shield us from racial discrimination by renting a one room apartment in the heart of Philadelphia Chinatown.

Was I then a part of the United States? Am I still? Is my life an integral part of American History? The answers have NOT always been a resounding "yes"; it took decades for me to feel a sense of belonging in this country. Now I can rejoice in my right to call myself American. As an immigrant student, I didn't learn about the lives of Asian Americans in elementary or high school. It was through my own initiative that I started to read about events and issues concerning Asian Americans while I was in college. More specifically, I took a student-led seminar on nonviolence and social change, and devoted that semester to educating myself about the plight of Asian American women.

My curriculum unit is written not only for Asian American students and teachers. It is titled *Boxing Asian American History* because good teaching is personal as well as highly political. Great teaching sets the stage for students to be self-directed and regulate their own moral compass. Students of all races need to be challenged with American history that is inclusive, diverse, complex, difficult, and sometimes unpleasant. America is a land of immigrants from all over the world, but in our textbooks "American" mainly meant white and male. Most teachers, myself included, teach Social Studies with little to no resources and materials. My 20-year old textbook that is based on a history of "White Supremacy" is a disservice and an insult. One goal of this unit is to teach American history with narratives of real human beings who are rarely or have NEVER been included in our elementary school curriculum. American history has great achievements as well as great deprivations due to racial discrimination, hate, gender inequality, and brutality. Teaching "hard history" will help students to learn from our past's mistakes as well as encourage them to face the despicable and morally repugnant events of our American history.

Rationale

Race and Racism in America

Our social world is stratified by race from the way we talk, the way we wear our hair to what we eat. Kids are NOT too young to learn about racial justice, discrimination, prejudice and bias; teachers just have to learn effective ways to teach them. Recently, I interviewed my 8-year old nephew about racism, and he bravely and vividly recounted two racially charged incidents. In Pre-K, four boys shouted the racial slur "Ching Chang, Chinese boy" at my nephew; they cornered him in the playground with other intimidations. When I asked if he had told his teacher, he replied: "Yes, but she didn't do anything. She just told me to stay away [from them]." Obviously, my nephew was taught to solve the race problem with invisibility and silence. When asked, how many times did this happen, he shouted: "Everyday!" That was at daycare when he was only 4-year old. In 2nd grade, during lunch, a white male student ridiculed my nephew with: "You are black! And you are a slave!"; this incident happened AFTER a class lesson and discussion about slavery. This time the teacher did talk to both parties, but again the same solution which had now become ingrained in my nephew's head was: "I just stay away when I am faced with racism." Today when asked if he wants to do it differently and talk to them, he continues to say: "No!"

No wonder in most high school cafeterias, all the black kids eat together, all the Latinx kids sit together, all the Asian kids eat together, and all the white kids sit together. In a research study (2014), 200,000 participants ranked their own racial group most positively, but the overall result - somewhat predictable, but dreadfully discouraging - conveyed the following racial hierarchy: Whites > Asians > Blacks > Hispanics.⁶

Teachers must recognize that race and racism profoundly impact our students from infancy to adulthood. I believe no one is born a racist, but everyone is born with an innate fear of the unfamiliar, and we all are taught to be biased toward people who are not like us. Racial hierarchy has been cemented in our American psyches and everyday lives. I am hopeful that if more students and more teachers study and value the American lives of people of color, the American school system and society will move toward greater equity for all people. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), 50.7 million students were enrolled in American public schools; below is a chart that compares the percentages of teachers to students by race.⁷ While American schools are becoming more diverse, teachers are still mostly white.

	Teacher Percentage in 2017	Student Percentage in 2017
White	79%	48%
Black	7%	15%
Hispanic	9%	27%
Asian/Pacific Islander	>3%	5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	1%
Two or More Races	2%	4%

The Chinese Virus

If you are Asian American, you may have encountered a few of the following explicit racist insults and implicit microaggressions: "Why do you people eat cats and dogs and bats and...? Go back to China! Why are you always so quiet? Don't you speak? Don't you speak English! Wow, you speak English so well. Who taught you English? You are so articulate. You are so smart in math. Why are you so loud? You talk like you are in a Kung Fu movie, do you know Bruce Lee? You are so cute and small! Where you are from, I mean, where are you REALLY from? Where is the best Chinese restaurant around here?"

As the world struggles with the death toll caused by COVID-19, countries like the United States, Canada, South Korea, Malaysia, Italy, France and Spain are reporting the surge of anti-Chinese racist attacks and xenophobia with signs like "NO CHINESE ALLOWED."⁸ Parents in Ontario, Canada signed a petition to force families who recently returned from China to self-quarantine;members of its school board urge parents to not make assumptions that could fuel xenophobia and racism against the Chinese community because such request runs the risk of "demonstrating bias and racism," even when made in the name of safety.⁹ It is only human to want to protect yourself, your family, your livelihood and your country, but singling out a particular group of people (based on race or ethnicity) from going to schools, work, restaurants, and supermarkets is not addressing how a pandemic is spread from human to human contact. In the United States, a score of violent incidents (near 1,900 reported as of June 9, 2020) against Asian-Americans has been recorded in the website Stop AAPI Hate, a tracking site launched by Russell Jeung, a professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University.¹⁰ The website continues to be managed by the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) and Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) to allow community member to report incidents of hate. Such xenophobia is reminiscent of the racism faced by American Muslims, Arabs and South Asians after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The senseless murders of Vincent Chin (1982), Thong Hy Huynh (1983) and Balbir Singh Sodhi (2001) were all racially motivated; these attacks show the xenophobia for Japanese, Vietnamese, Southeast Muslims, and all other "un-American" Asian Americans.¹¹ Other historical injustices include the detainment of immigrants at Angel Island, the internment of 127,000 Japanese Americans during WWII, the racial slur "gook" to describe Vietnamese refugees in public archives, and the displacement of 150,000 Cambodian refugees (1975-1994) in poor urban communities without inadequate financial and mental health support.¹² The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first law that excluded an entire group from entering the U.S., and it lasted for 61 years (1882-1943).¹³

At a White House press conference (March 18, 2020), President Donald Trump defended his habit of calling COVID-19 "the Chinese virus" by saying: "It's not racist at all... it comes from China."¹⁴ His staff jokingly referred to the pandemic as the "Kung Flu" virus. These racist labels reject the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO). Viruses don't care about national borders. Using geographic locations when naming illnesses is harmful because it incites hate and fear towards people who live in those locations. Past names like MER, West Nile Virus, Ebola and Spanish Flu have provoked a backlash of racial profiling. On May 2, 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made this blanket statement on *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*: "China has a history of infecting the world."¹⁵ The fear of the COVID-19 pandemic is regenerating a surge of racism and fear of Asian-Americans that existed as early as the times of the Chinese Exclusion Act. These recent political bashings between the United States and China demonstrated the highest degree of Anti-Chinese sentiments since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. China government officials were so outraged that some threatened the start of war with the United States.¹⁶ At home and in school, adults need to teach our children that the "China government" is a communist, one-party regime that should NOT be synonymous with "the diverse people of China" or "the diverse people of Chinese descent" living around the world.

My School Demographics

My school demographics represent a highly diverse community with a wide span of cultural and language backgrounds. The languages spoken by this diverse group of multilingual students, teachers, administrators, parents and other community members had included: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, Hindi (India), Italian, Khmer (Cambodia), Korean, Laos, Malays, Nepali, Pashto, Poqomchi (Guatemala), Spanish, Swahili (Republic of Congo), Turkish, Vietnamese, and other Indigenous languages. In 2020, my school is comprised of 43% Asian, 33% Hispanic, 12% White, 9% Black and 4% Multi-Racial.¹⁷ About 50% are English Language Learners (ELL), 10% had exited out of ELL services, and 20% are children of immigrants who were born in the United States (these students are not classified to receive ELL services, even though a language other than English is primarily spoken at home). That's an estimated total of 80% of the student body is comprised of recent immigrants or children of immigrants. I believe I have a huge responsibility to teach all students in a culturally responsive way that is compatible with – as well challenging to – how their brains function in a language other than English. It is important to teach history without marginalizing our diverse learners. As teachers, we often underestimate our students, especially the ELL, Special Education students, and students of color, by giving them below grade level work. When a struggling reader is able to read texts two or three years below his grade level, it is NOT time to celebrate, but it is time to set higher goals. Teachers should stop promoting a false sense of accomplishment that may cripple the growth of all learners. Primary sources from this unit can level the playing fields for all learners and at the same time, present students with new challenges and ways to think critically and imaginatively their rightful place in history.

Content Objective

Primary Sources: The Importance of Historical Thinking and Fact Checking

My curriculum unit will help students to reconstruct American narratives through the lives of Black and Asian Americans. Primary sources such as letters, speeches, news articles, advertisements, political cartoons, law documents, photographs, testimonies, interviews, viral videos, and artifacts will be studied. Students are encouraged to "think" like a historian as teachers guide their "fact checking" in search for the truth. Students will also discuss the relationship between primary v. secondary sources, the philosophical inquiry of what is the truth, how a fact is constructed, how to prove a fact has validity, and other research skills. Students will be given a short timeline of American history with turning point events such as the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Immigration and Nationality Act (1952 and 1965), the Korean War, the Vietnam War and 9/11. After familiarizing students with a brief American History timeline, students will be presented with boxes of treasures, a collection of mainly primary sources. Each box will also have a debatable claim(s) such as "Men should have short hair, and women should have long hair." Teachers will then relate these primary sources to discuss historical topics such as The Queue Ordinance which forced Chinese prisoners to cut off their hair.

Why Teach American History through Asian American Lives?

Asian American history is often an afterthought, a sidebar or a footnote in our history book Because most textbook authors did not deliberately search for primary sources of Asian Americans, Asian American history is falsely portrayed as a fractured history in our textbooks. "Sanitized narratives" like the Chinese were hard-working people who helped with the transcontinental railroad erased so much anti-Chinese violence, injustice and sentiments during that time; most history books exclude tragedies such as the Rock Springs massacre of 28 Chinese miners on September 2, 1885.¹⁸ Racism was also legalized throughout American history. For instance, Congress passed the Naturalization Act of 1790 limiting naturalized citizenship only to "free white men of good character;" the law excluded not only Chinese-Americans at that time, but also women, and all non-white groups.¹⁹ In 1868, the 14th Amendment did overturn the decision of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) to guarantee citizenship to African American men and women.²⁰ But little is known about the landmark decision, *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898, 30 years later), that set the precedent in its interpretation of the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment making a child born in the United States automatically a citizen at birth.²¹ The U.S. population is becoming more diverse, but how and what we teach our students leave a lot to be desired. Today's Asian American students need to be supported with tools and knowledge to resist harmful

labels and stereotypes such as the model minority myth. Asian American students must be made visible, and that can only happen in a safe, inclusive environment with the support of teachers, students, parents, administrators and law-makers. American students – Native American, African American, Latinx, and white – will all gain from an inclusive, complex, multicultural, and difficult curriculum.

Materials on Asian American history are NOT easy to find and often "buried" and waiting for the fate of being discovered or being discarded. I read an eye-opening article about a Vietnamese American author, Long T. Bui, who wrote a book titled *Returns of War: South Vietnam and the Price of Refugee Memory*.²² When he was in the U.S. Archive, he was unable to find anything valuable searching with the word "Vietnamese." Then an archivist told him to search the racial slur "gook," only then did he find boxes and boxes of refugee applications which he later used as a "cultural text" to reconstruct the Vietnamese American narrative. In his words, each application was a "microhistory in a small paragraph," and archives are not just documents, but a political institution that can reinforce racist discourse.²³ Asian Americans like the Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Nepali and all the "Archival Others" remain as the "absent presence" in historical records until someone digs these documents up.

Who Are Asian Americans?

According to W.E.B. Du Bois, African Americans live with an identity of "twoness" or "double consciousness" with a self that is Black, and a self that is American.²⁴ The term "Asian American" conjures a similar concept of a self that is Asian and a self that is American. Yuji Ichioka, a historian and civil rights activist, coined the term in 1968 to help Americans of Asian descent to galvanize collective political standing and power against unjust laws and treatments.²⁵

Asian Americans politics embrace a pan-ethnic identity, less focused on national-origins and more grounded in a multicultural context. Even though Asian Americans are unlikely to constitute a majority of the U.S. population, Asian American history is also American history.According to the Pew Research Center (2020), Asian Americans come from more than 20 countries, 40 different ethnic groups, more than 100 different languages and dialects, and are now the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group of eligible voters in the United States.²⁶

According the 2017 Census, the Asian American population is only 5.6% of the nation's population (18.2 million people), but Asian American teachers are less than 3% of the total teaching force.²⁷ Studies have concluded that the lack of Asian American teachers is largely due to the following: some feel inadequate to work with students of different races; some fear discrimination from students, colleagues, and parents; some face parental pressure to secure a high-paying career and; some don't see that their ethnicity plays an important role in teaching.²⁸ While these studies imply that Asian under-representation in teaching is the result of personal choice, the polarized Black-White way of thinking about race also sends implicit and explicit messages that Asian Americans are mainly invisible in our existing American school systems.

Furthermore, teachers of all races often struggle with issues of cultural appropriations and cultural appreciation. As a teacher, I find it problematic and racist to celebrate "exotic Asian holidays" like Chinese New Year with chopsticks, fortune cookies and costumes without a clear understanding. Don't get me wrong, I love Lunar New Year. In the past, I had conducted lessons and passed out red envelopes to my students for good luck. Another problem that teachers of all races face is the harmful practice to designate one month to celebrate each group of people of color: September 15 to October 15 for Hispanic Heritage, November for Native American Heritage, February for Black History, and May for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)

Heritage. Why May for AAPI Heritage month? The reasons are actually quite arbitrary, but were written on a 1992 resolution (Public Law 102-450) passed by Congress. The resolution designates the month of May as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month" for these reasons: "(1) on May 7, 1843, the first Japanese immigrants came to the United States; (2) on May 10, 1869, Golden Spike Day, the first transcontinental railroad in the United States was completed with significant contributions from Chinese pioneers…"²⁹ As Professor Kyoko Kishimoto of Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State University rightly noted that multicultural celebrations that work to exoticize people of color is NOT the same as anti-racist pedagogies that promotes historical thinking and guide students to question the power of authority and how race is used to rationalize inequity.³⁰

#1 Boxing Hair: Queue (辫子) and Dredlocs [unique spelling explained below]

For the 1st box collection of primary sources which include photos, political cartoons and viral videos, I have chosen two distinct hairstyles - the queue and the *dredlocs* - to set the stage for critical conversations about hair identity politics in American history. Black hair is a controversial topic in our current national discourse of cultural appropriation, appreciation, and policing at work and in school. America has a long history with the mindset that white hair is normal, and black hair must be ironed, flattened, cut down and controlled. Hair is what the world looks at when trying to determine what race you are; it's a public declaration of identity politics. Therefore, without doubt, hair discrimination is a form of racial discrimination.

The queue - a male hairstyle originally worn by the Manchu in China - is a good example of hair discrimination. In America during the 1800s, anti-Chinese immigrant laws were created to force Chinese men to cut off their queues. To understand why the queue is so political, you need to know that in China, after the Manchus took over and established the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912) as the ruling class, any man who refused to wear the queue hairstyles would be executed.³¹ The new law demanded that men in China must shave the hair on the front of the head every 10 days, while leaving the remaining hair was grown long and braided. The queue policy targeted the Han Chinese (the previous ruling class) to submit to the Qing Dynasty rule. In the 1890s, cutting the queue was an overt act of rebellion against China.³²

Similarly, dredlocs is a highly political symbol of black resistance as well as oppression. Because of the negative connotations that matted hair is "dreadful" and un-sanitized, the letter a and letter k are dropped, and "*dredlocs*" is used; yet the term continues to signify the fear of unholy people as they face "the dreadful power of the holy people."³³ Discriminatory rules against "black hair" were used to ban swimmers with locks from a North Carolina pool, sent employees or students home for violating the dress codes, and "color in" a black teen's haircut with a Sharpie.³⁴ In recent years, a law known as the CROWN Act is gaining traction to end hair discrimination. More and more people are beginning to understand that when black people wear dredlocs, they immediately face discrimination because the hairstyle is heavily criticized and associated with Rastafarian, reggae music, marijuana, and black culture as negative. But many people still refuse to understand that when white or Asian people wear dredlocs or cornrows, it is a form of cultural appropriation, an act of stealing from a minority culture, especially when white people find the hairstyle stylish while they ignore all of the discrimination black people are often subjected to. In short, black people with dredlocs face discrimination, while white people with the same hairstyle do not. That is why it is considered offensive and even racist when white or Asian people wear dredlocs. Proponents like the writer Andre Kimo Stone Guess states: "Cultural mockery - the exploitation of a culture for the benefit of members of another culture, or to the detriment of the members of the culture itself - is something else and should be called out and avoided at all cost."³⁵ There is a counter argument that it is acceptable for people of any race to wear dreads, because throughout world history, almost every group of people including Egyptians, Indians, Romans, Vikings, and

Celts, had word the hairstyle in their tradition.

Before I continue to discuss about topics of queue and dredlocs, I want to explain a few important cases involving the rights of Asian Americans. If you ask any American citizen to name such a case, most people (regardless of their racial backgrounds) would have absolutely NO idea. If you ask a high school history teacher, they may cite the famous cases: *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) or *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943); these two landmark cases ruled that mass internment and exclusion of Japanese Americans from joining the military during World War II were both constitutional. ³⁶ In 1983, the Korematsu's decision was overturned on the basis that our government intelligence agencies hid documents from our Supreme Court; these documents showed no Japanese Americans had committed any acts of treason to justify mass internment. ³⁷ In 1998, Korematsu received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and in 2010, California passed a bill to name January 30th Fred Korematsu Day. ³⁸ In 2018, Chief Justice John Robert wrote in his majority opinion for the case *Trump v. Hawaii* that the Korematsu decision was explicitly repudiated.³⁹ In my words, the Korematsu's decision was completely racist.

Even less known are the following 4 cases from the late 1800's: *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan* (1879), *Tape v. Hurley* (1885), *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886), and *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898). All four cases were victories for the rights of Asian Americans as well as immigrants. I have made up a mnemonic for teachers and students to be able to easily distinguish and remember these 4 cases: **Ho hair, Tape school, Yick non-citizen rights, Wong natural born citizen.** For 4th to 8th grade students, a more challenging way to remember could be: **Ho** cubic air & queue, **Tape** "separate not equal" doctrine for schools, **Yick** writ of habeas corpus non-citizen and 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, **Wong** jus soli children and 14th Amendment's the Citizenship Clause, Throughout my unit, I will explain these 4 cases in more details.

Returning to the topic of queue, the case Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan (July 9, 1879, California) was a victory for Chinese American immigrants against hair discrimination. Ho Ah Kow was a Chinese laborer in San Francisco, and one of the first civil rights fighters of racist laws. On July 18, 1879, The New York Times published an article titled The Tale of a Chinaman about the conviction of Mr. Ho who violated the Cubic Air Ordinance.⁴⁰ This law was established to target Chinese from living in large number; residents must be 500 cubic feet (14,000 L) of air apart to prevent "poisoning themselves by the imperfect ventilation," and if convicted, the person had to pay a fine of \$10 to \$50 or be imprisoned for 5 days.⁴¹ Because a large number of convicted were Chinese and most chose imprisonment over paying the fine, another law called the Queue or Pigtail Ordinance was passed, under the pretense as a sanitary regulation, forcing prisoners to cut their hair within an inch of the scalp. Mr. Ho failed to pay his fine levied under the Cubic Ordinance; in jail, his queue was cut off under the order of Sheriff Matthew Nunan. Mr. Ho filed for damages citing that the Queue Ordinance had taken away his right to return to China because China's penalty for not wearing a queue was execution for treason. On June 14, 1879, Circuit Court Judge Stephen J. Field ruled in Ms. Ho's favor, stating that the law was "unconstitutional" and violated the Equal Protection Clause. Furthermore, the law was NOT done to "promote discipline or health", but to demean and torture Chinese prisoners. Mr. Ho was awarded \$10,000 in damages, and part of the ruling reads: "The cutting off the hair of every male person within an inch of his scalp, on his arrival at the jail, was not intended and cannot be maintained as a measure of discipline or as a sanitary regulation."42

More importantly, the case *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan* served as precedent for another important landmark case *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886, San Francisco) about a Chinese laundromat.*Yick Wo v. Hopkins* was the first case where the Supreme Court ruled that a law that is race-neutral on its face, but then administered in a prejudicial manner is an infringement of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment regardless of citizenship.⁴³ Yick Wo (益和) was a laundromat owned by a man named Lee Yick who immigrated to California in 1861, not a U.S. citizen. After 22 years of operating his laundry facility, Lee Yick was told that he could not continue to run his business in a "wooden" building without a city permit.⁴⁴ Even though two-thirds of the wood-structure laundromats were owned by Chinese, NO Chinese was granted a permit while virtually all white applicants got a permit. Lee Yick continued to operate his business without a permit; he was fined \$10, but refused to pay the fine which led to his imprisonment by the city's sheriff, Peter Hopkins. Lee Yick sued for a writ of habeas corpus (wrongful imprisonment).⁴⁵ In a unanimous decision the Supreme Court ruled that laws with discriminatory intent were unconstitutional. The case *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* had little application for almost 65 years after its ruling, and it was NEVER used to counteract segregation legalized by the "separate but equal" doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and Jim Crow laws in the South. However, since the 1950s, this landmark case *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* has been cited in over 150 Supreme Court cases to strike down attempts to limit the rights of Blacks.⁴⁶

Similarly, the landmark case *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898) ruling was based on the 14th Amendment's Citizenship Clause. Mr. Wong was born in the United States but his parents are not U.S. citizen. Because his parents were not employed by the Emperor of China, the U. S Supreme Court in the opinion of 6-2 majority established the concept of jus soli which grants citizenship to anyone who is born on the soil of the United States, including children of non-citizen parents. ⁴⁷ In recent years, there were many legal attempts to overturn the *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* because of the fear that U.S-born children of undocumented immigrants would help more undocumented immigrants to gain legal status to remain in the country.

Wrestler Andrew Johnson (Dredlocs Controversy): In 2018, the world watched the humiliating haircut of a high school wrestler Andrew Johnson, and overnight he turned into a symbol of hair discrimination and racial injustice. Johnson, a 16-year-old mixed race American was given an ultimatum before a wrestling match by a white referee: Cut your dreadlocks or forfeit. A white female trainer cut off Johnson's hair. This racially charged moment was caught on video and soon went viral on Twitter and other social media. The referee Alan Maloney told Johnson and his coaches that *dredlocs* are "unnatural."⁴⁸ The rulebook says: "hair, in its natural state, shall not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back; and on the sides, the hair shall not extend below earlobe level; in the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows."⁴⁹ In a photo of Johnson just before the match, he did not violate this rule. A state civil rights investigation is underway. Even though Johnson identifies himself as Puerto Rican rather than black or white, mixed-race identities are often determined by how the world see them.⁵⁰



Above: photos of artworks by Lisa Yau, the author of this YNI curriculum unit. Left (1998): a collage depicting the intimacy of a Chinese man braiding another Chinese man's queue. Center (2020): five shoe boxes labelled with the social issues: 1) Hair; 2) Race; 3) Gender; 4) Hate, 5) Problem. Right (1998): a collage depicting the exotic objectification of a Chinese woman and her lotus feet. The practice of foot binding originated among upper class court dancers in the 10th century China, popularized during the Qing Dynasty and ended in the early 20th century.⁵¹

#2 Boxing Race: Letters from Saum Song Bo and Robert Leon Bacon

The 2nd collection is labelled "Boxing Race" and focused on citizen activism with public letters, political cartoons, photos of public spaces, and law documents. Letters like Saum Song Bo's and Robert Leon Bacon's were acts of resistance against human injustice in America. These acts of resistance motivated future generations to use letter campaigns, sit-ins, marches and protests throughout U.S. history.

In 1885, Saum Song Bo wrote a letter to the editor of *The Sun* with the following sentiments: "...the word liberty makes me think of the fact that this country is the land of liberty for men of all nations *except* the Chinese. I consider it as an insult to us Chinese to call on us to contribute toward building in this land a pedestal for a Statue of Liberty."⁵² The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France, but its pedestal needed public funding. Fundraising advertisements urged citizens to donate money to this national symbol of freedom. Three years prior, Congress passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act which stopped all Chinese from immigrating to the United States. Saum Song Bow as an American citizen of Chinese descent thought the public request was an insult to Chinese American citizens. He went on to argue how Chinese Americans were being discriminated against in regards to their citizenship rights, education opportunities, and career options. Since U.S laws and the majority of its people excluded the rights of Chinese Americans, he argued America could claim the Statue of Liberty (the stature) as a symbol of freedom for all (the idea); the stature is a false pretense. Towards the end of his letter, Bo also criticized the French, who donated the Statue of Liberty to the U.S. for colonizing Vietnam, home of the Annamese and Tonkinese people. Bo wrote: "What right have the French to deprive them [Annamese and Tonkinese people] of their liberty?"⁵³</sup>

During this time in the 1800s, violent acts against Chinese Americans were common and under reported. For

instance, on October 24, 1871, a mob of around 500 white and mestizo persons entered Chinatown and attacked, robbed, and murdered Chinese residents; the massacre took place on "Negro Alley" in Los Angeles, and is arguably the largest mass lynching in American history.⁵⁴ After hearing that a policeman was shot and a rancher was killed by a Chinese, an angry mob gathered and hanged an estimated 20 Chinese immigrants (some were already shot dead).⁵⁵ Ten men were prosecuted for the crimes, and eight were convicted of manslaughter, but the convictions were overturned due to technicalities.⁵⁶

Seventy years later, on December 2, 1955 (one day after Rosa Parks' famous civil protest against bus segregation), Robert Leon Bacon wrote a similar letter to Virginia's Governor Thomas B. Stanley exposing America's hypocrisy in its claim of democracy.⁵⁷ Bacon outlined how legal segregation set by Jim Crow laws in the South denied him from enlisting in the Virginia National Guard, prevented him from going to restaurants and hotels of his choice, and forced him to sit at the rear of a bus OR face being arrested, jailed and fined by a judge.⁵⁸ He couldn't look at a "white girl" without the fear that she might scream "rape" OR he would be "lynched, beaten up, arrested or electrocuted" for being black.⁵⁹ In his powerful words: "Virginia is the home of presidents but it is not the home of democracy. It is the home of white supremacy. The colored people (most of them) can hardly live decently in the South."⁶⁰

Teachers may want to explain the origin of the term "Jim Crow" and how it refers to laws that restrict Black rights. In the early 1830s, the white actor Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice was propelled to stardom performing as "Jim Crow," a fictional caricature of a clumsy, simple minded black slave.⁶¹ Jim Crow's popularity eventually died out, but in the late 19th century, the phrase became a blanket term for anti-black laws after the Reconstruction. Jim Crow laws included restrictions on voting rights, bans on interracial relationships, and supported clauses that allowed businesses to separate the black and white customers. The 1896 landmark case *Plessy vs. Ferguson* gave Louisiana the right to require different railroad cars for blacks and whites. This decision led to segregated schools, water fountains, restaurants and bathrooms. "Separate but equal" was eventually overturned in the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, but Jim Crow's legacy would continue in the Southern states until the 1970s.⁶²

Remarkably in 1885 (when anti-Chinese sentiments were exorbitant, 9 years before *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, and nearly 70 years before *Brown vs. Board of Education*), a Chinese-American couple named Joseph and Mary Tape sued a principal named Jennie Hurley for refusing to admit their 8-year-old daughter Mamie to an all-white school in San Francisco. The less well-known but landmark case, *Tape v. Hurley* (1855), went to the California Supreme Court, the Tape family won and desegregated schools in California.⁶³

#3 Boxing Gender and Intersectionality: Afong Moy and Henry "Box" Brown

For the 3rd box of primary sources, students will discuss the themes of gender and intersectionality using the narratives of Afong Moy and Henry Brown. I have included a suggested list of illustrations, newspaper articles, a fictional narrative by the author Maxine Hong Kingston based on her Chinese American experiences, excerpts of Henry "Box" Brown's autobiography written with the help of a Boston publisher, and a children's book about Brown. When speaking about gender, it is vital that teachers expand the discussion to include the "intersectionality" framework. The concept of intersectionality will help students to identify the advantages and disadvantages felt by people due to a combination of factors like race, gender, age, class and marital status.

A person's social and political identities creates a unique mode of discrimination and privilege. For example,

an Asian American woman might face discrimination from starting her own business that is due to combined factors of her race, gender, age, class and marital status. An LGBTQ identified person with disabilities may face oppression at the cross section of their identities, and not just as an LGBTQ *separately* from their disabilities. Intersectionality comes from an understanding that identities, privilege, and oppression are intimately connected and cannot be segmented from each other. Advantages work in a similar way; the privileges of a wealthy, heterosexual, white male are compounded in our society to give the person every asset imaginable. Even though there are armies of movements to address social injustice, climate changes and education reforms, these smaller movements have not morphed into "a mass movement" that unite people across lines of identities. "Intersectional mass movements" address systems, not just a specific issue like gender, but rather how people can change the dynamics of power and privilege to serve a multifaceted constituency.

The public life struggle of Afong Moy is a great starting point to discuss how women have to face gender inequality and the commodification of their femininity on a daily basis. From 1815 to 1840, Chinese immigrants were mainly men; some sources suspected woman prostitutes accompanied these men through illegal channels.⁶⁴ In 1834, Afong Moy, at age 16, was the first recognized Chinese woman immigrant to the United States; she travelled across oceans from Guangzhou to New York City.⁶⁵ The traders Nathaniel and Frederick Carne used her as an advertisement to increase sales of their Chinese furnishings; they hoped that an exotic Chinese woman with her unusual hairstyles, clothing, language, and four-inch lotus feet would attract public interest. Upon her arrival, *The New York Sun* and the *New York Daily Advertiser* identified Moy as "Juila Foochee Chin-Chang King," the daughter of a wealthy man named "Hong Wang-Tzang Tzee King."⁶⁶ After one month, she adopted the name "Afong Moy."

In the beginning, Moy was basically voiceless because she could not speak English, and had to communicate through an interpreter. Nonetheless, she was overwhelmingly well received by the general public as the promoter of Chinese goods, a trendsetter for hairstyles and new fashion, and a lucky name for winning horses. She travelled from city to city across the country, met President Andrew Jackson at the White House, and moved in high society.⁶⁷ But her fame was short-lived. Moy's cultural exceptionalism was increasingly objectified by the public who paid 50 cents a ticket to see her sitting on a throne of costly materials set against a fake oriental scene.⁶⁸ For 17 years, she gradually transitioned from being a marketer of goods to a public spectacle, comparable to a billboard, a theater performer, and a circus act. She was no longer a human, but became an object of Chinese-ness, a Western perception of an exotic East and a symbol of commodification of femininity for future Chinese American women. Moy's last recorded public performance was in April 1850; some sources claim that she married a Chinese man, and left the United States to tour Europe.⁶⁹

At age 33, Henry "Box" Brown escaped from slavery in a brilliant and magical act of resistance. Many elementary school children may already be familiar with this famous slave narrative, but most people don't know the fact that Brown had to move to Europe fearing he might be recaptured after the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1850, a pair of federal laws that allowed for the capture and return of runaway enslaved people.⁷⁰ Brown was a 19th century slave in Virginia who arranged to have himself mailed in a wooden crate to abolitionists Passmore Williamson, James Miller McKim, William Still, Cyrus Burleigh, and members of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee. Starting on March 29, 1849, Brown's box travelled for 27 hours by wagon, railroad, steamboat, wagon again, railroad, ferry, railroad, and finally delivery-wagon arriving on March 30th at the headquarters of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society.⁷¹ Even though the box was labelled with "handle with care" and "this side up," Brown was thrown and placed upside-down numerous times, but he survived the trip,

avoided detection, and escaped from slavery.72

In some odd pairings, both Moy and Brown were public figures during their times with very powerful and unique narratives. Brown's experiences became a popular slave narrative in elementary schools. After his historical escape from slavery, Brown decided to publicize his experience. Some abolitionists agreed that this would encourage other innovative escapes. Others like Frederick Douglass heavily criticized Brown for not keeping his escape confidential, and possibly jeopardizing innocent lives of slaves who decided to use the same method of escaping. Shortly after his escape, Brown appeared before the New England Anti-Slavery Society Convention in Boston, and later toured the region performing his story. In 1849, Brown published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown*, with the help of Charles Steams, a Boston publisher.⁷³ In 1850, Brown performed publicly a one-man show titled "Mirror of Slavery" with a moving panorama about slavery. After the passing of the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1850, Brown moved to England and lived there for 25 years. In 1875, Brown returned to the United States with his new English wife and daughter.⁷⁴ While Moy became an accidental performer, Brown chose to perform as a magician to make his living. As part of his stage act, he emerged from the original box in which he had traveled to freedom.

#4 Boxing Hate: Activism from Mothers of Vincent Chin and George Floyd

For the 4th box of primary sources which include photos, posters, collages, and viral videos, students will focus on how activism and mass movements are often a by-product of hate, xenophobia, and racial injustice like the murders of Vincent Chin and George Floyd. More specifically, their tragic deaths were instrumental in uplifting their mothers, brothers, relatives, friends as well as the nation to become activists for much needed social change. The June 23, 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, 27 years old, galvanized the first Asian American Movement, and one of the leading activists was his mother, Lily Chin. Vincent Chin was a Chinese-American who was beaten to death by Ronald Ebens and stepson Michele Nitz, two white auto workers in Detroit during the decline of the Big Three (automobile manufacturers: General Motors, Ford Motor Company, and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles US).⁷⁵ Ebens and Nitz assumed Chin was of Japanese descent, using racial slurs as they attacked him with a baseball bat. Chin was taken to the hospital and died 4 days later due to brain injuries. In 1983, Ebens and Nitz pleaded guilty and were sentenced with a fine of \$3,000 and three-year probation, and no jail time.⁷⁶ After the shocking verdict, Lily Chin met at her son's former workplace with lawyers, representatives from the city's Chinese community and a Japanese-American at a community meeting. While Vincent Chin's fiancée withdrew from public life, Lily Chin attended meetings, marches, protests, and spoke publicly to thousands of people at press conferences, community gatherings, rallies, demonstrations, and television interviews. Lily Chin was often featured on newspapers, flyers and posters holding a picture of her son with the following quote: "I hope no other mother will have to suffer as I have. Justice for my son is justice for all Asian-Americans and minorities."77 Lily Chin has been referred to as the "Rosa Parks of Asian Americans" for her activism. On June 22, 2020, the Asian American Salute Frontline Heroes (AASFH) livestreamed an award ceremony to recognize two heroes, Zach Owen and Bernie Ramirez for defending the Cung Family from being stabbed, a hate crime during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁸ The award was named the Lily and Vincent Chin Advocacy Award and a panel discussion of Asian American activists spoke about the brutal killings of Vincent Chin and George Floyd, and how both moments continue to sustain a mass movement against racial hate and discrimination.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, 46 years old, was murdered while being arrested by the Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin who restrained Floyd by pressing his knee on the dying man's neck. Floyd's last moment was caught on video; he was pleading for air and repeatedly cried out: "I can't breathe," and

"Momma! I'm through."⁷⁹ The June 15, 2020 cover of *Time Magazine* was inspired by Floyd's mother, Larcenia Floyd as well as all Black mothers. Larcenia Floyd, died in 2018, was a mother of five children, worked at a burger stand and served as a leader in her neighborhood. The cover features an image titled *Analogous Colors* depicting a black mother holding a silhouette of a child that the artist Titus Kaphar made by cutting into the canvas.⁸⁰ The names of 35 black men and women who were killed by police or racial brutality were printed on the iconic red frame surrounding the image. This special issue includes a special report dedicated to the nationwide protests erupted in the wake of Floyd's murder. Kaphar told *Time*: "In her expression, I see the black mothers who are unseen, and rendered helpless in this fury against their babies... I paint a black mother... eyes closed, furrowed brow, holding the contour of her loss."⁸¹ According to Civil War battlefield records, hospice nurse reported that almost every dying soldier called "Mommy" or "Mama" with their last breath, sometimes referred to their nurses as mothers.⁸²

After the 8 minutes and 46 seconds video of Floyd being murdered by police brutality went viral, the world took to the streets with a month-long series of protests against social injustice. Scholar Ibram X. Kendi uses the phrase "movement v. moment" to describe this moment of history with echoes of our past.⁸³ At that time, I was constantly worrying about the fate of four black students (all boys) whom I was still teaching remotely. Every year I have addressed the issues of race and racism in my classroom, but I know I have to do more and better. My curriculum unit puts the issue of race and racism at center stage as students investigate and construct American History through a magnifying lens looking closely at the plights of Asian American men like Vincent Chin and Black men like George Floyd as well as Asian American mothers like Lily Chin and Black mothers across America. I believe children should be taught to speak out against racial injustices by studying the lives of the marginalized people unlike or like themselves.

#5 Boxing "The Problem": Double Consciousness & the Model Minority Myth

The 5th/last box of primary sources is designed for a whole class collaborative inquiry. Students will investigate writings of W. E. B. Du Bois and the historical 1966 article titled "Success Story: Japanese American Style" to contextualize the false narratives: "The Negro Problem" and Asian Americans are the "model minority." The goal is to have students summarize the curriculum unit, revisit previous learned ideas, and identify a collective social issue ("The Problem") that every single member of the class wants to take actionable steps toward. This inquiry process is based on a service-learning program from Need in Deed (NID), a Philadelphia non-profit organization, where students will brainstorm a list of social issues, do in-depth research, agree on ONE problem through debate, and pair with a community partner (experts of the social issue) to architect a service-learning project.⁸⁴ For each debate, teachers should choose a strategy (Socratic seminar, Philosophy Chair, mock trial, etc.) that the class is familiar with. For the past three years, I had started the NID inquiry on the first day of school, and engaged students to work on it collaboratively throughout the academic year. Examples of service-learning projects from NID include: food drives, letter campaigns, public murals, published books, and informational videos.

In American history, the term "Negro" was used to denote persons of Negroid heritage (an outdated historical grouping of people indigenous to Africa). Students should be made aware that the term can be considered offensive, inoffensive, or completely neutral depending on what region of the United States and world it is used. In his essay *Strivings of the Negro People* (1897), W. E. B. Du Bois asks the question: "How does it feel to be a problem?"⁸⁵ Throughout most of American history with a few exceptional moments, the Black community is often depicted as "a problem of self-infliction." In another essay *The Talented Tenth* (1903), Du Bois suggests education can be part of the race problem: "The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved

by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst."⁸⁶The Atlantic Archive produced a great short video with animations for a younger audience and excerpts from the essay *Strivings of the Negro People*; the full essay is also included in the website.⁸⁷ Du Bois wrote about the internal conflict of black people; his idea of double consciousness and "two warring ideals in one dark body" are synonymous with terms like Asian American, African American, Latin American, Native American and other hyphenated names.People of color like Asian Americans have to deal with the tension and conflicts with two different consciousness – the Asian self and the American self. In a white dominant society, people of color are compounded with the additional burden and accusation that "You are THE Problem."

The term "model minority" was first coined by sociologist William Petersen in his 1966 article for *The New York Times Magazine* titled "Success story: Japanese American style."⁸⁸ The article highlights the educational and financial success of Japanese Americans, relative to other immigrant groups. The harmful conclusion was Japanese Americans were able to overcome discrimination as a whole. In addition, the Model Minority Myth puts a racial wedge among minority communities forcing them to compete against each other over crumbs produced by racist policies. For example, the 1992 LA race riot between blacks and whites decimated the Korean American community. By the time the riots ended, 63 people were killed, 2,383 injured, more than 12,000 arrested, and property damage was estimated to be over \$1 billion, much of which disproportionately affected Koreatown.⁸⁹ People of color are forced to fight over a SMALL and LIMITED portion of the BEST opportunities in the areas of jobs, where their children can go to school, admission to universities like Harvard, power and leadership roles in the government, the ability to secure business and mortgage loans to determine where they can work and live, or just the peace of mind to be able to walk home safely.

The Model Minority Myth can lead teachers to assume ALL Asian American students are whiz kids who study hard and do well on their own. This misconception falsely portrays Asian American students as having NO academic, social and emotional needs. In fact, Asian Americans are also failing in schools, being harassed, profiled by the police, confronted with a school-to-prison pipeline as well as a school-to-deportation pipeline. The Model Minority Myth is a blanket solution; it over-simplifies the complexity and diversity of Asian Americans. Any evaluation that lumps together the achievement of the 48 ethnic groups labeled Asian-Americans will give a false picture. High achievement scores in a group can mask the issues of individual students who are struggling. People of Asian ancestry, especially the economic disadvantaged, continue to face discrimination, harassment and prejudice - just as it's been over the past two centuries when the first wave of Chinese stepped foot in America in 1815. Asian Americans exist in a society that the majority see them all as ONE, looking the same, and being the same. Some may think: "it's getting better," but Asian Americans are still very much invisible on television, film, popular culture, political representation and in our school leaderships. In Philadelphia, according to a 2014 report by a consortium of Asian-American organizations, about 41% of Cambodians, 33% of Chinese, and 31% of Vietnamese are in poverty. In contrast, according to an estimate by the Census Bureau (2006-2010), the poverty rate for Philadelphia as a whole is about 25%.90 In addition, an estimated 47% of Asian-Americans, or more than 43,000 people, have limited English proficiency. Chinese (61%) and Vietnamese (58%) have higher rates of limited English proficiency than other ethnic groups in the city.91

As an Asian American, the prevailing narrative of the Model Minority Myth has become my lifelong "Problem." In order to establish meaningful personal connections and a high level of trust in the classroom, I have found that it is critical and necessary to create a safe environment where risk-taking, being vulnerable, and willingness to learn from failures are appreciated, encouraged, and honored. I have written a poem with the title *How to Be American: Lessons from Mother and Father* as a dedication to my parents: Siu Yu Yau and Lai Ying Lee who taught me how to deal with being "The Other" in a white-dominated society. My poem was inspired by songs such as The Shireles' *Mama Said*, Luka Graham's *Mama Said*, Madonna's *Papa Don't Preach*, as well as youth culture like "Yo Momma" jokes to include expressions ranging from filial piety, to love, to defiance.

Mama Said we're heading to America, where everything's fine high on a jumbo plane flying up, up, up... the sky

Papa Preach books are Gold, keep them crisply folded know your place, rise to the top don't breathe a sound, study hard

Mama Said we live on Race Street where girls can dream boys wear boots with hats and suits and Chinatown has its own school

Papa Preach don't work in a restaurant keep your hands soft and your head bowed low we lost our country, but now we're home.

Teaching Strategies

Teach Historical Thinking by "Boxing" Primary Sources

Due to the current pandemic crisis, I decided to modify the physical boxes of primary sources into virtual sharing documents for students to collect images and hyperlinks. When in-person instructions safely return, students can physically collaborate in collecting primary sources. For remote learning, primary sources don't need to be printed on paper literally and made physically. Teachers can easily set up web-based shared documents on Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Jamboard, Pear Deck or other online sharing platforms; this approach will allow each group to work synchronously or asynchronously as they search, copy and paste images or hyperlinks of primary sources. Remotely, students can still categorize, interpret, interact with each primary source as they engage in group decisions. This type of collaborative and interactive activity demands group interpretations and supports learner-led inquiry as students critically discuss biases, contextual meanings, evidence of certainties or ambiguities, different points of view, etc. The goal is to encourage students to use historical thinking, research-based inquiry and fact checking as they analyze the primary sources online.

Organization and preparation are keys in preparing students for a positive learning experience. I have designed the first 4 boxes for students to work collaboratively in small groups. (Please note: The 5th box labelled *#5 Boxing the Problem* is designed for a whole group inquiry.) For the small group activities with the first 4 boxes, divide the class into 4 small groups (6 to 8 students) and pair each group with a labelled shared document. For instance, Group 1 is responsible for document *#*1 Boxing Hair, Group 2 is responsible for document *#*2 Boxing Race, Group 3 is responsible for document *#*3 Boxing Gender, Group 4 is responsible for document *#*4 Boxing Hate. Each shared document should be clearly labelled. For instance, teachers can set up a 6-page document on Google Slide for Group 1 (who is responsible for collecting primary sources for hair discrimination) with **Page 1:** Things People Make Relating to Queue. **Page 2:** Things People Say about Queue. **Page 3:** Things People Write about Queue. **Page 4:** Things People Make Relating to Dredlocs. **Page 5:** Things People Say about Dredlocs. **Page 6:** Things People Write about Dredlocs. For suggestions and ideas of primary sources, please refer to *Classroom Activities, Lessons for Social Issues #1 to #5, Google Search Suggestions.*

Timelines as Visual Reference Points

A timeline is an effective teaching strategy to help students understand sequence of events over a time period in an organized and chronological order. For in-person learning, create a clothesline timeline by marking some well-known events as points of reference (*See Timeline #1*). Post the clothesline timeline horizontally or vertically in a classroom wall to serve as a visual tool throughout the year. For remote learning, students can make a class and/or individual virtual timeline on Google Jamboard, Excel (Gantt Chart), Padlet, and Microsoft Word (insert SmartArt). A few software comes with historical photographs and images, as well as the ability to import images from the Web, add movies and sounds, and convert timelines into a slide show. Office Timeline is an interactive timeline maker for professionals who need to build stunning visual project plans, schedules and Gantt charts.

Present students with two timelines similar to those below: one with major events (*See Timeline #1*), and one with focused events based on social issues like race chosen by teachers or researched by students (*See Timeline #2*). Use a line format with tick marks to get students to integrate all the events to make a composite timeline by decades or centuries. Have students debated on the exact dates of these events and the limitations of timelines.

Timeline #1 (Textbook American History Events)

- 1607 English settlers arrive in Virginia
- 1616-1699 Jamestown serves as the colonial capital
- 1776 Declaration of Independence
- 1848 Gold Rush in California
- 1861-1865 Civil War, Emancipation Declaration (1863)
- 1865 Reconstruction
- 1869 First transcontinental railroad completed
- 1882-1892 Chinese Exclusion Act, extended multiple times until 1943

1907 Gentleman's Agreement between U.S. and Japan

1917 U.S. enters WWI

1920 19th Amendment ratified

1920's Immigration Act of 1924 (2% quota per nationality excluding people from Asia)

1929-1938 Great Depression

1941 U.S. enters WWII

1943 The Magnuson Act permits a quota of 105 Chinese immigrants annually.

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 changed the ethnic makeup of the U.S. with increased numbers of immigrants from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the West Indies.

1980 The Refugee Act define created a policy with the United Nations' definition of refugees and raised the limitation from 17,400 to 50,000 refugees admitted each fiscal year

2010 or 2011 the year 4th grade students were born

2019 COVID-19 pandemic gains global attention

2020 Philadelphia public schools resume remotely in September

Timeline #2 (Boxing Asian American History)

1834 (Gender) Afong Moy's arrival to the U.S.

1849 (Gender) Henry Box Brown's escape

1879 (Hair) Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan

1885 (Race) Saum Song Bo's letter

1955 (Race) Robert Leon Bacon's letter

1982 (Hate) Murder of Vincent Chin

2018 (Hair) Wrestler Andrew Johnson's viral video

2020 (Hate) Murder of George Floyd

Graphic Organizer(s) to Analyze Each Social Issue

For each boxing topic (social issue such as race): Have students use a KWHL Chart to generate ideas and questions for the following categories: K stands for what students already KNOW about race, W stands for what students WANT to know, H stands for HOW students will get their questions answered, L stands for what students LEARNED after their research. Other graphic organizers to consider include: concept web or cluster diagram for brainstorming, mind map to capture a flow of relating thoughts, and top-down web to organize

main ideas and details.

How to Analyze Primary Sources: Things People Make, Say and Write:92

For **"Things People Make"** primary sources such as photos, drawings and videos: Have students use a basic graphic organizer called "I Notice & I Wonder" chart. Fold a piece of paper in halves. Label "I Notice" for what students notice as they observe a primary source, and "I Wonder" for questions students may have about that primary source.

For **"Things People Say"** primary sources such as audio or written transcripts of speeches, testimonials and interviews, make sure to listen to the recordings or read aloud the written transcript multiple times, use the following list of questions to help students to analyze: 1) Who is the speaker? Is the speaker reliable? 2) Who is the key audience (students, parents, teachers, experts)? How many people listen to this? Why are people listening to the speaker? 3) What is the message or theme? What is the speaker's purpose? To entertain, motivate, persuade, inform, narrate a story? 4) When and where did the speaker deliver this? What is the historical content and context? 5) How does the speaker make you feel? 6) What are some rhetorical devices? 7) What is the overarching tone of the speaker? Humorous, serious, positive, negative? 8) Did the speaker visual aids like charts and maps? 9) Did the speaker use gestures and eye contact? 10) Is the speaker effective?

For **"Things People Write"** primary sources such as letters, autobiography, and poetry, use close reading. This strategy will guide students to read a complex text multiple times to uncover deeper meanings and understanding, the kind of careful reading the Common Core State Standards demand in order to be college and career ready. Close reading is meant for all types of classrooms with ALL students from kindergarten to high school and college. There are many ways to conduct a close reading; it can be done in one day or a week. Most teachers like to reread with some elapsed time between each reading of the same text. What is most important is for students and teachers to read a little, then critically think, talk and write about the text. When students actively interact with difficult text with teacher's support, they understand better what the author is saying, the author's craft and how to interpret precise meanings with textual evidence. Support students with additional and intentional teaching of academic vocabulary, annotation, textual dependent analysis, and other research-based strategies will increase the impact of the close reading method. Textual dependent questions will guide students to decipher multiple meaning words, difficult sentences, and complex ideas from its literal meaning to the subtext, symbolism, bias, and values.

The order of these steps may be switched based on teacher knowledge of their student needs. There are no right set of steps to conduct for a close reading. In general, most close readings begin as a cold read without a great deal of background knowledge. Students read independently in silence. Then the teacher read aloud the text to demonstrate fluency as students listen and follow along. During the next reading, the teacher can focus on a single question at a time as students collaboratively or independently search the text for evidence to support their answers. Teachers may want to gather the whole class to share their answers, and probe students to provide sufficient supporting details from the text for each answer. Questions are intended to build knowledge over the course of the reading.

Writer's Workshops for Narrative, Informational and Opinion Writings

Use writing assignments before, during and after each close reading. Writing allows the teacher to assess individual student understanding, and formatively diagnose the literacy gains and needs of students. From my experience, even struggling readers perform well with close reading because they can find evidence directly

in the text rather than depending heavily on their prior knowledge and experiences. It is essential that students engage in writing about the text throughout each lesson and also as a culminating activity. Student writing can vary in length, with the expectation that all students are learning and practicing their writing skills with textual evidence. Beside textual dependent analysis, teachers might afford students the opportunity to revise their papers after classroom discussion or teacher feedback. This will allow students to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.

Whole Group Discussion: Socratic Seminar, Philosopher's Chair and Mock Trial

To add complexity to each social issue, include claim statements (opinions, biases, stereotypes) for students to practice their argumentative skills. Discussion is essential in helping students to decipher primary sources, and construct their own interpretations. In a Socratic Seminar, students help each other understand the difficult ideas, issues and values reflected. Philosopher's Chair is a strategy to force students to asset their opinions to come to a "majority rules" consent about an opinion or a fact. Primary sources like a court decision are great roadmaps for mock trials.

Classroom Activities

Hook and Opening Introduction:

"My Treasure Box" Instruction: On the first day of school, assign students the task: a) Find a shoebox for the treasure box project; b) Collect 5 to 7 personal items (such as photos, favorite toys, a souvenir, etc.) to put them inside the box; c) Write at least one paragraph to introduce themselves and their personal items. Some questions to consider include: Who are you? What can someone learn about you from these items? d) Optional (Extra Credits): Decorate the outside and the inside of the treasure box by painting and collaging magazine pictures. Give students at least one week. Encourage students to be creative and take risks. To introduce this project during remote learning, teachers can do a quick icebreaker, and ask students to quickly look around their house to find an object that represents who they are. Then have a quick show and tell.

Prerequisite Lesson on Primary v. Secondary Sources:

Explain to students that "primary sources" are created by someone with firsthand experience of a historical event; primary sources can be found anywhere – in your home, a museum or a public space. Therefore, primary sources are original records of the cultural, political, economic, artistic and scientific thoughts and achievements of specific historical periods. In contrast, "secondary sources" are second-hand, something created using information from primary sources. After the distinction between primary and secondary sources, use a T-chart and brainstorm examples of primary sources and secondary sources. Examples of primary sources can be divided into 3 basic groups: 1) Things people say; 2) Things people write; 3) Things people make. Examples of secondary sources include textbooks, Wikipedia, dictionaries, articles, books with endnotes, bibliographies, book review, biographies, literary criticism, opinion pieces, and other works that interpret the primary sources.

Establish a Shared History with Word Walls and Vocabulary Journals

Before, during and after each lesson, evaluate the need to address (Tier 3) complex and content-specific

words. The goal is to build a collaborative "shared" vocabulary in the formats of a word wall and/or individual student journals. Teachers can replicate classic word walls virtually by adding hyperlinks, and videos to help with the pronunciation and definition. Most words can be understood by students through a careful close reading and textual dependent analysis. When context clues are absent and the difficult word is essential to understanding, teachers can define the word briefly for students. Some "difficult" terms associated with injustice include: bias, bigotry, discrimination, equal, ethnicity, exclusion, gender, heritage, injustice, minority, nationality, prejudices, race, racism, segregation, separate, slurs, stereotypes, etc.

In the process of creating a shared vocabulary against social justice, teachers need to model and facilitate open communication to address each other's shortcomings, misconceptions, and biases. Challenge the destructive power of biased language, bigoted words, and distinguish hurtful slurs v. joking words. Here is a short list of racially charged words (some extremely hurtful and derogatory to Asian Americans) to begin the conversations with students: ABC stands for American-Born Chinese, bamboo ceiling, brownie, chee-chee, Chinamen, Chink, coolie, FOB for Fresh Off the Boat, gook, Jap, Nip, oriental, raghead, yellow face, and Yellow Peril. When confronted with a hurtful word, one strategy is to have a deep dive to understand the historical context of the word. For example, the word "Orientalism" was used by the Western colonialism, hegemony and imperialism to rationalize the East and its people as exotic, mysterious, inferior, strange and in need of being rescued by Western religion, culture, law and value. In 2016, President Barack Obama signed a bill that bans the usage of the term "Oriental" in federal law. Similar examples are everywhere in our popular culture, music and paintings.

Lessons for Social Issues #1 to #5

The basic framework for each box or shared document contains the following steps. First, brainstorm a list of social issues with your students and through discussion, narrow the list down to the most important four or five social issues for further investigation. Label the physical box or filename the "virtual box" with the social issue (example: Hair). For grades K to 3rd, have students identify two general topics relating to the social issue. Examples: queue and dredlocs. For grades 4th to 8th, have students identify more specific topics. Examples: *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan* court decision overturned the Queue Ordinance, and a viral video of wrestler Andrew Johnson having his dredlocs cut before a match. Collect primary sources through google searches. For grades K to 3rd, teachers may want to collect the primary sources. For grades 4th and 8th grades, teachers can set up collaborative platforms such as Google Slides, Google Jamboard, etc. for students to search for primary sources online. Organize your primary sources by the following three catalogues:

 "Things People Make" include artifacts, clothing, maps, tools, inventions, weapons, gravestones, memorabilia, pictures, photos, posters, advertisements, paintings, sculptures, videos, and films. Lastly, have students brainstorm a list of opinions (biases and stereotypes) about each social issue. See my suggestions of primary sources, secondary sources, and claim statements listed below for each box. 2) "Things People Say" include speeches, conversations, interviews, lectures, songs, and oral histories transcribed into text or recorded in audio or video format. 3) "Things People Write" include diaries, letters, memoirs, poems, autobiographies, news articles, legal documents, court decisions, treaties, laws, statistics, scientific studies, reports, recipes, blogs, tweets, emails, text messages, and other social media formats.

If desired, divide students into 2 general teams (just queue and dredlocs) for grades K to 3rd. For grades 4th to 8th, divide students into 6 specific teams. For example, set up 3 teams for things people make, say, and write in regards to queue and *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan*, and another 3 teams for things people make, say, and write in regards to dredlocs and wrestler Andrew Johnson.

Google Search Suggestions for Social Issue #1: Boxing Hair

Claim Statements (opinions) about hair discrimination: 1) Man should not have long hair; it is too feminine. 2) Only black people should wear dredlocs. 3) Hair is ... 4) Hair is not...

Related Topic A: Queue and *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan* court decision. **Things People Make:** Photos of: 1) a Chinese man braiding another Chinese man's queue; 2) Chinese men with queue hairstyle at work, social gathering or at home; 3) a sculpture titled Cutting off the Queue (2012) at Pak Tsz Lane Park, Hong Kong. **Things People Say:** Political cartoons of Chinese Exclusion Act and Chinese men wearing queue from: 1) Pacific Chivalry (1869) and other artworks by German-born American cartoonist Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*; 2) The George Dee Magic Washing Machine Company (1886); 3) The Coming Man (1881) by George Keller, *The San Francisco Illustrated Wasp*. **Things People Write:** 1) Court transcript of *Ho Ah Kow v. Nunan*.

Related Topic B: Dredlocs and the high school wrestler Andrew Johnson. **Things People Make:** 1) Viral video of Johnson's coach cutting his hair; 2) Photo of Jeremy Lin (Asian American basketball player) wearing dredlocs, 3) Photo of Justin Bieber (singer) wearing dredlocs; 4) Viral video of Cory Goldstein on college campus. **Things People Say:** 1) TED Talks "Loc'd and Coded: The Politics of Dreadlocks" by R. Matthews. **Things People Write:** 1) Tweets about hair discrimination, example hashtags: #dreadlocks, #naturalhair; 2) Statement issued by parents of Andrew Johnson on Instagram (Dec. 25, 2018); 3) Interview of Dale and Sherine Virgo on Jamaica's Supreme Court ruling, CNN (Aug. 4, 2020).

Google Search Suggestions for Social Issue #2: Boxing Race

Claim Statements (biases and stereotypes) about race: 1) Asian Americans are quiet and good in math. 2) Black people are good athletics, singers and dancers. 3) All men are created equal. 4) The Race Card Project is a website where people can submit a six-word sentence to distill their opinions, ideas, experiences or observations about race.

Related Topic A: The Chinese Exclusion Act. **Things People Write:** Saum Song Bo's letter (1885), see websites Digital History for a transcript, or Newspaper.com for a newspaper clip.

Related Topic B: Jim Crow Laws. **Things People Write:** Robert Leon Bacon's letter (1955), visit Education @ Library of Virginia for handwritten letter (three pages) and transcript.

Google Search Suggestions for Social Issue #3 Boxing Gender and Intersectionality

Claim Statements (stereotypes) about gender, race, class, age, and marital status: 1) Girls should act like ladies. 2) Boys should be tough. 3) Asian American women are meek and shy. 4) Black men are aggressive and violent or Black slaves are "Magical Negro" (a term popularized by Spike Lee in 2001) who selfishly helps white people. 5) Rich people are more educated, competent and hardworking than poor people. 6) Young people can move, think and remember better than old people.7) Unmarried and childless women are unhappy and lonely. 8) Men are afraid of marriage and commitment.

Related Topic A: Afong Moy. **Things People Make:** 1) A black and white newspaper drawing (1835) of Afong Moy sitting on a chair in an exhibit called "The Chinese Saloon." 2) Photos by Michael C. Palma of a play titled "The Chinese Lady" on the website Stage and Cinema (2019). **Things People Write:** 1) Newspaper advertisement of the exhibition of Afong Moy, refer to the website South China Morning Post. 2) A Chinese woman's narrative titled "Tongue-Tied" published in 1976 as the first chapter of Maxime Hong Kingston's

novel *The Woman Warrior* based on the author's account of her childhood and Chinese family history. 3) The informational book "The Chinese Lady" by Nancy E. Davis on the life of Afong Moy and how 19th century Americans perceived China and Chinese people.

Related Topic B: Henry Brown. **Things People Make:** A black and white illustration on a poster from a magical show in Shrewsbury, England which refers to Brown as the Native Prince depicting him emerging from the box (Image courtesy of Martha Cutter). **Things People Write:**

1) Brown's 1849 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown*, in which he described his escape. 2) Children's book titled *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine.

Google Search Suggestions for Social Issue #4 Boxing Hate

Claim Statements (opinions) about hatred, xenophobia, violence and police brutality: 1) The COVID-19 pandemic is a Chinese virus from Wuhan, China. 2) Black people are law breakers and perpetrators of violence. 3) All Asians look alike. 4) Freedom of speech means I have the right to say whatever I want.

Related Topic A: Vincent Chin. **Things People Make:** photos of 1) Lily Chin holding a picture of her son Vincent Chin (Richard Sheinwald, AP). 2) Lily Chin speaking at a news conference in 1983 at historic Cameron House in San Francisco's Chinatown with Reverend Jesse Jackson in the background. 3) Lily Chin lamenting the death of her son (Bettmann Archive, Getty Images). 4) Public protest after the verdict. **Things People Say:** 1) Feature film titled "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" (1989); 2) A documentary titled *Vincent Who? The Murder of a Chinese-American Man* produced by Curtis Chin. **Things People Write:** Reports of hate crimes on Stop AAPI Hate website.

Related Topic B: George Floyd. **Things People Make & Write:** 1) Public murals of George Floyd, photos and videos of street protests in Minneapolis and other major cities. 2) Collage and testimonials at the website: "Black Lives Matter Help by Desire" https://3a8e964b-31d3-4c43-aceb-3f26f53a9d4b.godaddysites.com; 3) Time magazine covers and articles: May 11, 2015 photo by Devin Allen of a Baltimore protest after the death of Freddie Gray; June 5, 2020 photo by Devin Allen of a Baltimore protest after the death of George Floyd depicting a protestors lying down on the ground; and June 15, 2020 painting by Titus Kaphar inspired by Floyd's mother, Larcenia Floyd. **Things People Say:** 1) Public speeches by Floyd's younger brothers: Terrance (June 1, 2020) while visiting a memorial in Minneapolis, and Philonise (June 10, 2020) before the House Judiciary Committee. 2) Documentary titled *8 Minutes and 46 Seconds: The Killing of George Floyd* (2020) produced by Sky News.

Google Search Suggestions for Social Issue #5: Boxing "The Problem"

Claim Statements (biases and stereotypes) about "the Minority's Problem": 1) Asian American students are the model minority because they are good students who work hard and don't really need a lot of help from teachers. 2) Black students are low achieving with behavioral issues more than the most other students. 3) Black and Asian American kids cannot get along. 4) The 1992 Los Angeles race riot and the Model Minority myth created a wedge and continue to the racial tension between the two communities.

Related Topic A: "The Negro Problem," a collection of seven essays by Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Charles W. Chestnut, Wilford Horace Smith, H. T. Kealing, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and T. Thomas Fortune. **Things People Make:** The Atlantic's YouTube video. **Things People Write:** 1) Poem "I, Too, Am America" by Langston Hughes. 2) Essays written by Du Bois: *Strivings of the Negro People*, and *The Talented Tenth*. 3) essays from the book "The Negro Problem."

Related Topic B: The Model Minority Myth. **Things People Make:** August 31, 1987 Time Magazine's cover, a photo by Ted Thai titled Asian-American Whiz Kids. **Things People Write:** Article titled *Success Story: Japanese American Style* by sociologist William Petersen (1966, *The New York Times Magazine*).

Student-Created Primary Sources and "Let's Celebrate!"

At the end of this unit, it is a good idea to have a cumulative activity to showcase and share students' artworks, writings and other accomplishments with the school community including parents and community leaders. The ability to "create" new and original work is fundamental for students' developmental growth and future learning. Throughout this unit, there are numerous opportunities for students to bring in artifacts from home to describe who they are, interview family members to preserve family history, and produce original writings such as poems, personal narratives and argumentative essays. In general, encourage ways for students to create their own primary sources based on the concepts: things people make, things people say, and things people write. The final goal of the whole group inquiry (#5 Boxing "The Problem") is to have students collaboratively innovate a real-life solution with a service-learning project. It is important to set a date and a designated space (physical and virtual) for students to celebrate, share, and "publish" their historical knowledge, understanding, analyses, and innovations. Our students' victories and reversals are the living manifestation of our current mass civil rights movement. I want to end the unit with a quote to encourage teachers to participate in an ongoing "undefeated but unfinished revolution" from Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's essay *The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past*:

"Both the victories and the reversals call us to action as citizens and as historians with powerful stories to tell. Both are part of a long and ongoing civil rights movement. Both can help us imagine - for our own times - a new way of life, a continuing revolution."⁹³

Appendix in Implementing District, State and National Standards

In 1994, the National Standards for History (NCHS) published a list of national history standards at the University of California with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the U.S. Department of Education. These standards immediately came under fire as being too liberal. Some criticisms included: 1) The standards were excessively multicultural, politicized, and focused too much on the lives of "ordinary people"; 2) Major historical figures and events were shortchanged; 3) The study of people who had been victimized or exploited throughout history was excessive.⁸⁶

Today, I think the nation needs to revisit the NCHS history standards as a better model than the State Standards and the National Councils for the Social Studies (NCSS C3) Framework. Gary Nash, author of *Reflections on the National History Standards*, defended the NCHS approach stating: "...it is not possible to recover the history of women, African Americans, religious minorities, Native Americans, laboring Americans, Latino Americans, and Asian Americans without addressing issues of conflict, exploitation, and the compromising of the national ideals set forth by the Revolutionary generation."⁸⁹ The NCHS standards are divided into three sections: U.S. History (grades 5-12), World History (grades 5-12), and National Standards (grades K-4). I have decided to highlight the NCHS History Content and History Thinking Standards for grades K-4.

NCHS History Content Standards (K to 4th):

Standard 2: History of students' communities and how communities in America varied long ago.

Standard 5: The causes and nature of various movements of large groups of people into and within the United States, now and long ago.

NCHS History Thinking Standards (K to 4th):

Standard 1: The student thinks chronologically: Therefore, the student is able to: Interpret data presented in time lines and create timelines by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.

Standard 2: The student comprehends a variety of historical sources: Therefore, the student is able to: Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations but acknowledge that the two are related; that the facts the historian reports are selected and reflect therefore the historian's judgement of what is most significant about the past. Draw upon the visual, literary, and musical sources including: (a) photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings; (b) novels, poetry, and plays; and, (c) folk, popular and classical music, to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

Standard 3: The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation: Therefore, the student is able to: Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences. Hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to changes.

Standard 4: The student conducts historical research: Therefore, the student is able to: Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

The School District of Philadelphia follows the Pennsylvania Social Studies Standards and the National Councils for the Social Studies (NCSS C3) Framework. I have chosen standards from the Pennsylvania and NCSS C3 Framework that are similar to those of the NCHS to highlight the difference in term of rigor and depth.

PA Social Studies 4th Grade Standards:

History Standards: 8.1.4.B Distinguish between fact and opinion from multiple points of view and primary sources related to historical events. 8.1.4.C Identify specific research topics and develop questions relating to the research topic. 8.3.4.B Locate historical documents, artifacts, and places critical to United States history.

Civics & Government Standards: 5.2.4.A Identify needs and rights in the classroom, school, and community. 5.2.4.B Describe the sources of conflict and disagreement and different ways conflict can be resolved. 5.3.4.F Explain how different perspectives can lead to conflict.

National Councils for the Social Studies and College, Career and Civic Life Framework:

I have selected "BY THE END OF GRADE 5" NCSS C# History Standards (pp. 45 to 51). Most of these standards require the use of timelines, differences of perspectives, and primary sources.

D2. His.1.3-5 Create and use a chronological sequence of related events to compare developments that happened at the same time. D2. His.2.3-5 Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today. D2. His.3.3-5 Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities. D2. His.6.3-5 Describe how people's perspectives shaped the historical sources they created. D2. His.10.3-5 Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past. D2. His.13.3-5 Use information about a historical source, including the maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose to judge the extent to which the source is useful for studying a particular topic.

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