



## LESSON TWO

“Coolies, Sailors and Settlers: Voyage to the New World”

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Estimated Time:** Two class periods

### Materials:

- Video of ANCESTORS IN THE AMERICAS, Program One
- Television, VCR
- Computer, Internet
- “Truth of the Matter” chart, two copies
- Scissors
- Stopwatch
- Blackboard
- Some kind of “prize”

### Learning Objectives:

1. Students will familiarize themselves with the larger social, political and economic issues that influenced the first Asians’ migration to the Americas in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
2. Students will distinguish between commonly held assumptions about the first Asians in the Americas and the more historically accurate version.

### Procedure:

#### I. View Video

#### II. Activity

Students will play a game called “Truth of the Matter,” which involves pairing cards that detail widely held assumptions about early Asians in the Americas with the more truthful, historically accurate version.

1. Prior to class, print two copies of the “Truth of the Matter” chart at the end of this lesson. Cut one of charts into squares, being sure to keep the “Common Assumption” cards separate from the “Truth of the Matter” cards. The second copy of chart will serve as the game’s “master key.”
2. Ask for three volunteers. One person will be the game’s Time Keeper. The second will verify that responses are correct, as indicated by the “master key.” And the third will keep score on the board.
3. Randomly divide the remaining students into two groups. Instruct them to move their chairs so that the two groups face one another.
4. Give the “Common Assumption” cards to one group and the “Truth of the Matter” cards to the other. Tell the “Truth” group to spread their cards across the desktops, face-up so they can be read.
5. The students in the “Common Assumption” group will take turns reading from their stack of cards. After hearing the assumption, the students in the other group should locate the matching

“Truth” card as quickly as possible. They have ten seconds to find it. If they do so, they earn that round’s point. If they still haven’t located the correct “Truth” card at the end of ten seconds, then the “Common Assumption” group gets the point. The score keeper will keep a running tally of points on the blackboard. The team with the most points at the end gets the prize.

6. As a wrap-up activity, have students work in pairs to create their own set of five “Assumption/Truth” cards by consulting the companion web site at:

<http://www.pbs.org/ancestorsintheamericas/>.

### **III. Discussion**

If there is time at the end of the game, students may discuss the video’s content in more depth. Some possible questions:

1. Were you shocked by anything in the video? If so, what? Does this change how you view the history of Asians in the Americas? How does it affect your willingness to accept commonly held beliefs about the world?
2. Are you familiar with your own family’s history in America? Under what circumstances did your ancestors make their first appearance?
3. Define “white man’s burden.” What forms, if any, of “white man’s burden” still exist today?

#### **Assessment Suggestions:**

1. The teacher may evaluate student participation in playing the game and contributing to discussion.

#### **Extension Activities:**

1. Have students interview a member of their own family to determine how they first immigrated to America. Invite them to share their findings, along with any appropriate visual aids (pictures, a drawing of their family tree, letters or diary accounts, etc.) with the class.
2. Have students write a reaction piece to the following quote from ANCESTORS:  
"...So when you look at the scale and scope of their explorations and colonizations you know that Europeans always had Asia on the mind; they were always looking to Asia..."  
--Gary Okihiro, historian, Columbia University

#### **National Standards:**

This lesson addresses the following national content standards established by McREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards>.

Understands the characteristics and uses of spatial organization of Earth’s surface:

- Understands how concepts of spatial interaction (e.g., complementarity, intervening opportunity, distance decay, connections) account for patterns of movement in space (e.g., transportation routes, trade and migration patterns, commodity flows).

Understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface:

- Understands the historical movement patterns of people and goods and their relationships to economic activity (e.g., spatial patterns of early trade routes in the era of sailing ships, land-use patterns that resulted in a system of monoculture).

Understands how geography is used to interpret the past:

- Understands the ways in which physical and human features have influenced the evolution of significant historic events and movements (e.g., the effects of imperialism, colonization,

and decolonization on the economic and political developments of the 19th and 20th centuries; the geographical forces responsible for the industrial revolution in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; physical and human factors that have led to famines and large-scale refugee movements).

Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean:

- Understands social and economic characteristics of European colonization in the 17th and 18th centuries (e.g., changing immigration and settlement patterns of Puritans, Quakers, Germans, and Scots-Irish; the slave trade and chattel slavery in the Spanish, English, and French Caribbean, Louisiana, the Dutch West Indies, and Chesapeake).

## “Truth of the Matter” Game Sheet

<b>Common Assumption</b>	<b>Truth of the Matter</b>
Asians are relatively recent immigrants to the U.S.	Today, and for over 200 years, Asians have been a part of the Americas. Asians have been in North America even before America was a republic.
The Chinese are the only early Asian immigrants to the Americas.	Filipinos, Malays, Asian Indians, as well as Chinese were amongst the first large groups of Asians to come to the Americas.
The only reason Asians came to America was to get something and take it away.	Overseas migrations were part of a larger European effort to colonize Asia.
Asians were “barbarians”—largely unskilled and ignorant of modern technology. It was the West’s duty to enlighten them.	Filipino craftsmen, using native wood lanang, built Spanish galleons that successfully withstood British cannon fire—a significant technological advancement that allowed Spain to secure the Manila-Acapulco trade route and become the dominant economic force in the 17 <sup>th</sup> century.
All Asians get along and are the same.	There is a long history of the prosecution of Chinese people in the Philippines.
The motivation behind the Lewis and Clark expedition was to fulfill the promise of Manifest Destiny.	The true purpose was to find the most direct route to Asia and, along with it, wealth from global trade in textiles, spices, crafts, porcelains, silk and tea.
Chinese were mere laborers in the construction of the transcontinental railroad.	Chinese capital invested by the tea merchant Hu Kwa was a fiscal catalyst for funding the construction of the transcontinental railroad.
The practice of smoking opium originated in China.	Opium grown by British colonies in India was introduced to China in order to counteract a trade deficit with China.

Asians were never traded like slaves in America.	Chinese and Asian Indians constituted a major part of “coolie trade,” or bonded labor. Bonded labor conditions were the same as those experienced by African slaves.
Asians migrated only to North America.	Coolie trade brought Asians to Peru, Cuba, the West Indies, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), Panama, Ecuador, as well as numerous other locations in Latin and South America.
Coolies voluntarily entered into bonded labor.	Coolie recruiters frequently scammed, cajoled, extorted and outright kidnapped members of their own community to sell into bonded labor.
Chinese in America in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century were clannish and did not want to be part of the larger society.	The first Irish-Chinese marriage was documented in the beginning of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.