

LESSON THREE

“Chinese in the Frontier West: An American Story”

Grade Level: 9-12

Estimated Time: Two class periods

Materials:

- Video of ANCESTORS IN THE AMERICAS, Program Two
- Television, VCR
- Computer, Internet access
- Blackboard
- Notebook paper

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will substantiate a generalization by providing supporting details.
2. Students will apply visual and oral information to a piece of written work.

Procedure:

I. Before Viewing Video

1. Introduce the concepts of *generalization* and *supporting details* to the students.
 - generalization- a general statement, law, principle, or proposition
 - supporting details- concrete images, shifting perspectives and vantage points, sensory detail, and factual descriptions of appearance
2. Have each student draw a line down the middle of a piece of notebook paper, forming two columns. Label one “Generalization,” and the other “Supporting Details.” This will act as a log for recording information as students watch the video.
3. In advance, students are to formulate at least **three** generalizations they think may characterize the experience of Chinese people living on the U.S. western frontier in the late 1900s. They will then pull details from the video to support their point. Encourage students to avoid vague statements such as, “The Chinese were treated badly.” Instead, suggest they use more precise statements, as in this example:

Generalization: The Chinese quickly developed strategies to help them survive and make advances even though they were targeted by discrimination.

- Support:
1. Formed community organizations. (Tongs)
 2. Held onto ties with their homeland. (Sent money home)
 3. Used land no one else wanted. (Sacramento delta)
 4. Took undesirable jobs. (Laundry workers’ guild)
 5. Maintained Chinese religious ties. (Temple of the Clouds)

4. Write the following terms on the blackboard to help students brainstorm generalizations. Invite them to make additions to the list.

- a. education
- b. religion

- c. education
- d. language
- e. legal system
- f. agriculture
- g. labor practices.
- h. work habits
- i. entrepreneurship
- j. nuisance laws
- k. nuisance taxes
- l. family life

II. View Video

III. Activity

1. Point out to the students that the generalizations they formulated are like topic sentences in a paragraph, and that the supporting details are the body.
2. As homework, ask the students to write a well-developed essay at least five paragraphs long using one of their generalizations and its supporting details. As a resource, they should incorporate information from the video's companion web site. The web site is located at <http://www.pbs.org/ancestorsintheamericas/>. The timeline would be particularly helpful.

Assessment Suggestions:

1. The teacher may evaluate student participation in class discussion.
2. Students will turn in their video logs and a completed essay that reflects development of their generalization with the use of supporting details.

Extension Activities:

1. Ask one or two students to share their essays with the class.
2. Have students choose one contribution made by the Chinese to the development of the frontier west, research it, and make a presentation to the class using a mixed media display. Possible contributions are: gold mining, the transcontinental railroad, construction of aqueducts, and the pioneering of wineries. Displays for the presentation could take the form of a map showing the route taken by the transcontinental railroad, or a diagram detailing how aqueducts are created, for example.
3. Or, have students speculate on how different history may have unfolded if all traces of Chinese involvement in the development of America from 1850-1882 were erased. They may write a short, creative piece expressing some of these differences.

National Standards:

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

United States History

Understands how various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed:

- Understands the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution (e.g., how citizenship was included, why the clauses of "equal protection of the laws" and "due process" were included, why women were excluded in the 15th amendment).

Understands how the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed American lives and led to regional tensions:

- Understands significant religious, cultural, and social changes in the American West (e.g., the degree to which political democracy influenced social and political conditions on the frontier, cultural characteristics of diverse groups, the impact of the Second Great Awakening and religious revivals on Mormon migration to the West, the lives of women in the West).

Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans:

- Understands the religious, political, and social ideas that contributed to the 19th century belief in Manifest Destiny (e.g., the influence of U.S. trading interests in the Far East on continental expansion to the Pacific, "City Upon a Hill" and subsequent Protestant belief in building a model Christian community, millennialism and the Great Awakening, Republicanism, the urge to keep foreign enemies from gaining control of the Pacific Coast, the belief in America's duty to uplift "less civilized" peoples in the West).

Geography

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 the relationships between various settlement patterns, their associated economic activities, and the relative land values (e.g., land values and prominent urban features, the zoned uses of land and the value of that land, economic factors and location of particular types of industries and businesses):

- Understands the advantages and disadvantages of international economic patterns (e.g., how land values in an area may change due to the investment of foreign capital; the causes and geographic consequences of an international debt crisis; the advantages and disadvantages of allowing foreign-owned businesses to purchase land, open factories, or conduct other kinds of business in a country).

Language Arts

Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., arranges paragraphs into a logical progression, uses clincher or closing sentences).