

# National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute

“The Immigrant Experience in California through Literature & Theatre”

San José State University - Summer 2022

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Topic/Theme	Angel Island Immigration Station
Institute Text Inspiration	<i>Island</i> Edited by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, Judy Yung
Student Grade Level	High School
Lesson Plan Length	1 class period (60 min) (May go longer depending on adaptations)
Unit Overview	Westward Expansion and the Industrial Revolution
Essential Questions & Skills	Essential Question: How do the inscriptions on Angel Island’s walls help us to better understand the experiences of the people detained there?
Key Student Learning Objectives	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contextualize the accounts of people who experienced detention at Angel Island in 19th and 20th century US immigration history.</li><li>- Compare the variety of experiences people had on Angel Island.</li></ul>
Sequence of Key Learning Activities	<p>Prior Knowledge: Students should be familiar with major waves of immigration, push and pull factor theory vs. Critical Transnational Perspective, Chinese Exclusion Act, ongoing Transnational Railroad Construction and disputes between Chinese and white Workers.</p> <p><b><u>Lesson Procedure:</u></b></p> <p><i>*HW from previous class: Students were assigned a reading of one of the following oral histories from Island:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Lai Bing: Paper Son of a Merchang- Pg 213</i></li><li>- <i>Law Shee Low: “That’s How it Was” - Pg 230</i></li><li>- <i>Ja Kew Yuen: “Treated as Second Class Citizens,”- Pg 325</i></li><li>- <i>Koon T. Lau: “Why?” - Pg 292</i></li><li>- <i>Wong Gue Jue: A True Chinese Character- Pg 254</i></li><li>- <i>Helen Hong Wong: “No Gold to be Picked Up” - Pg 267</i></li></ul> <p><i>They will have 3 quotes they have chosen from the reading that they believe were the most important, interesting, shocking, or surprising in the reading.</i></p>

1. **(5 min) Do Now-** Write one word describing how you felt after reading the oral history you were assigned for homework. Also, using one of the quotes you chose for homework, explain why you chose this quote.
2. **(10 min) Partner Groups-** Students will work with a second student to answer the questions on the first page about both of their assigned readings. They should answer the questions about both of their Oral histories, with the goal of highlighting commonalities and differences between the experiences.
3. **(10 min) Teaching Groups-**  
Students will be divided into groups where they will have 1 person who has read each of the assigned readings for homework. If two students have the same reading in the same group they can share to the group together. Students will fill out the handout with their groups based on their readings
4. **(5 min) Brief overview of Angel Island-**
  - Ask students what they know about Angel Island, compare ideas with Ellis Island knowledge (students are expected to have some background knowledge of Ellis Island since it is relatively nearby), have students consider why there is a difference in knowledge.
  - Go over basic logistics of operations at Angel Island, including its purpose, misconceptions about its purpose, and its years in usage
  - Explain that it is currently a California state park, and is in the process of being restored, introduce the poems inscribed into the walls by detainees held at Angel Island
5. **(15-20 min) Graffiti Boards-** There will be 8 short poems excerpted from *Island* displayed around the room including:
  - a. Poem 7                      - Pg 50
  - b. Poems 8, 9                - Pg 52
  - c. Poems 15, 29             - Pgs 58, 70
  - d. Poems 33, 34             - Pgs 72, 74
  - e. Poems 42, 45             - Pgs 80, 84
  - f. Poems 60, 68             - Pg 94, 102, 104
  - g. Poems 71, 74             - Pgs 104, 106
  - h. Poem “Remembering Grandma’s Farewell in Hong Kong”  
     - “Fig. 3.41” Pg 300. (Not inscribed but from later life  
     - The Students will have space around the poem and in between the poems lines on several large posters around the room. They will then be assigned a group color by which to go around the room with and write their thoughts in that marker color. Students will have about 10-15 minutes to go around and read through the different poems and annotate them with their thoughts, connections, questions, or reactions to the

	<p>poems themselves.</p> <p>6. <b>(10-15 min) Shareout and Discussion-</b> Each group will share some of the responses and ideas that they want to share and discuss with the class. Some possible discussion questions can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What did you think of these poems? What is the significance of these being found in the walls?</li> <li>- How do these poems further illustrate what we have learned from the oral histories we read prior?</li> </ul> <p>7. <b>(5 min) Exit Ticket:</b> (Can be an Extension or Final Discussion Question) How do the inscriptions on Angel Island’s walls help us to better understand the experiences of the people detained there?</p>
<p>Texts and Materials Used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Island</i> Edited by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, Judy Yung</li> <li>- (My own adaptation) Facing History and Ourselves: <a href="https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/graffiti-boards">https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/graffiti-boards</a></li> </ul>
<p>Assessments</p>	<p>Discussion, Exit Ticket</p>

## Angel Island Oral Histories Activity

### Discussion Questions:

What aspect of Immigration history do these sources illuminate?	
According to these sources, what motivated this person to immigrate to the United States? What were their goals?	

### Oral History Discussion Questions:

What were significant events in this person's life and how did they shape them? What choices did they make?	
How was their experience shaped by being a Chinese immigrant during this time period?	

### Connecting Oral Histories:

Were these people relatable to you? Why or why not?	
How did they demonstrate agency* according to their oral history? (Before coming to the	

US and after their arrival)	
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*\*agency-a person's individual ability to act autonomously/independently*

**Other Oral Histories:**

Discuss with people from other groups and summarize your key takeaways from the other Oral Histories.

<b>Lai Bing</b>	
<b>Law Shee Low</b>	
<b>Ja Kew Yuen</b>	
<b>Koon T. Lau</b>	
<b>Wong Gue Jue</b>	
<b>Helen Hong Wong</b>	

**Corroborating Oral Histories**

*How do the oral histories of the people who were detained on Angel Island help us to better understand the experiences of the people detained there?*

*Explain your response with specific evidence about 2 of the people you have learned about.  
(Historical Paragraph)*