



**TITLE**

# THE BROWN ASIAN AMERICAN POWER MOVEMENT

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

**DISCIPLINE:** English, History

**TOPIC:** South Asian and Brown Asian American activism, and tensions within the AANHPI community.

**STANDARDS:** Integration of Knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. 9-10.9), Key Ideas and Details (CCSS.ELA LITERACY.RH.11-12.3), and Craft and Structure CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

**OBJECTIVES:**

- At the end of this lesson, students should be familiar with all of the countries included under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and with general details surrounding the Brown Asian American Power Movement.
- Students should also be able to identify the reasons for its initial failure through the complex racial factors concerning East Asian and Western peoples.
- Students should be able to analyze secondary and primary source documents to understand historical implications.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

- At the end of this lesson, students should be familiar with all of the countries included under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and with general details surrounding the Brown Asian American Power Movement.
- Students should also be able to identify the reasons for its initial failure through the complex racial factors concerning East Asian and Western peoples.
- Students should be able to analyze secondary and primary source documents to understand historical implications.

**KIT INCLUDES:**

[Background Reading For Educator](#)

[Slideshow](#)

[Background Reading for students, "Asian Americans then and Now"](#)

[NPR, "In An Era of Colorlines, Can East Asians Call themselves Brown?"](#)

[Asian American Policy Review, "The Brown Asian American Movement: Advocating for South Asian, South East Asian, and Filipino American Communities"](#)

[PBS video, "Are you AAPI or Asian American? It's complicated."](#)

[Glossary](#)

**CLASSROOM HOURS NEEDED:**

Projector for video

**FINAL ASSESSMENT TYPE:**

Essay

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Projector for video

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## PRE-WORK

Before presenting the lesson, have students read and annotate, "Asian Americans then and Now," linked above for homework.

## INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

Ask students the following discussion Question: Have students define the words/phrases, Brown Asian American, or South Asian.

Have students discuss their answers in a socratic seminar format. The educator should note similarities and differences in their responses.

Follow-Up Question: Ask students what they know about the Brown Asian American Power Movement.

Have students discuss their answers once more.

## LECTURE (15 MINUTES)

Present the following slideshow linked above to students, or allow students to read through the slideshow in their own time.

## ACTIVITY (90 MINUTES)

Have students read the essay, "The Brown Asian American Movement: Advocating for South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Filipino American Communities." (15 minutes)

Show the class the Youtube video: Are You "AAPI" or "Asian American"? It's Complicated" (11 minutes)

Based on the class size, divide students into several groups. Half should examine the cross-cultural relationship between East Asians and South Asians, and the other half will focus on non-South Asian American perceptions of South Asian identity. (30 minutes)

You can ask them to consider the following guiding questions:

For the cross-cultural relationship between East Asians and South Asians:

- What are some examples of solidarity between these two groups?
- What are some examples of tension that exists between these groups?

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**ACTIVITY**  
(90 MINUTES)

- What are some political, social, economic, or historical reasons for this?
- What cultural similarities are there between these two groups?
- Differences?

Perceptions of South Asian identity:

- How have non-South Asian, American perceptions of South Asians change over time?
- What historical events have impacted these perceptions?
- How are South Asians depicted in media historically and today?
- What are the impacts of these perceptions on the South Asian community?

Have students prepare a slideshow or poster of their research. At the end of class, or the next day if running short on time, ask students to present. Each presentation should be five minutes long. (for a class of 30 in groups of 5, 30 minutes)

**TAKE HOME  
ASSIGNMENT:**

Have students read the NPR article: [\*"In An Era of Colorlines, Can East Asians Call Themselves Brown?"\*](#)

- Ask them to write another journal discussing the topic of this article, and addressing the question:
  - How would separating South Asian identity from the "Asian" umbrella affect the Brown Asian American Power Movement? How would uniting the two identities affect the Movement?