



TITLE

THE JOURNEY OF LOLA GONG: AN ANGEL ISLAND STORY

GRADE LEVEL: ELEMENTARY TO HIGH SCHOOL

SUBJECT: Social Studies

THEME: Bias and Stereotype, Civil Rights, Identity and Culture, Immigration, International Affairs, and World War II

STANDARDS: UCLA Public History Initiative: Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900); Standard 2: Massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity. Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s); Standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Explain details about the consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, i.e., what it said about citizenship and about leaving the U.S. and returning.
- Describe the processes at Angel Island to determine if someone was eligible for entry into the U.S.
- Explain how and why the exclusion laws ended during World War II and what possibilities that meant for future immigrants from Asia.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What were some of the consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882?
- What was the immigrant experience like for those arriving on Angel Island?

CLASSROOM TIME:

1 to 2 Periods



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INTRODUCTION:

The story of “Lola Gong” is shown here as a photo essay where students will be engaging with a series of photos chronicling Lola’s path to American citizenship with twists and surprises along the way. As students follow her journey, they will learn what the Chinese Exclusion Act meant in real terms: how Chinese and other Asians entered the U.S. through Angel Island, some as “Paper Daughters” or “Paper Sons”; why they were required to carry certificates of residence; and what consequences immigrants faced during the exclusion era. The photos are to be used as a slideshow where the presentation will be paused at each slide for analysis and reflection. As the slideshow progresses, students will create a narrative using prompts to tell Lola’s story.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain to students that they are about to hear the story of Lola Gong and how she came to be an American. But the story they will hear is complicated and that they will be learning about Lola through studying some documents about her life.
2. Divide the class into groups of 4. Hand out the “Notes Sheet” that includes prompts for students to record what they learn as they work through the slideshow. Link to slideshow: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-9UvsUy9t8agBOXYGE2T-e92CVwShXnWOnOyqvqAROU/edit>
3. Begin the slideshow pausing to do a photo analysis of each slide. Encourage the groups to figure out as much of the story as they can. Do not worry about “right” or “wrong” suppositions - just tell them to base their ideas on information taken from the documents. Use the process in DocsTeach or a similar resource (<https://www.docsteach.org/tools/analyzing-documents>)
Depending on the age and grade level of the class, the time spent for this activity will vary.
4. **Assessment:** Once the slideshow has been completed and the notes filled in by the students, have them turn their notes into a story about Lola. Give students flexibility to use 1st or 3rd person voice and to choose a format such as poetry to tell the story. **Note to Teachers:** In this plan, there is a student version and teacher’s version of the worksheet. Possible answers and notes are provided to assist the teacher with the context of the slides.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPRECIATION:

This lesson would not be possible without the story and documents provided by Ted Gong, the Executive Director of the 1882 Foundation. Through the personal experience of his family, we are able to enter into a bigger picture of the immigrant experience for the many who came through Angel Island. It is another insight into the complexity and the beauty of the American story.



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RESOURCES:

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation; 2nd link is to a Curriculum Guide for lessons

<https://www.aiisf.org/history>

<https://www.aiisf.org/curriculum>

Film- Carved in Silence by Felicia Lowe. Available through the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (a 22 min. cut of Carved in Silence is available online)

<https://vimeo.com/294645783>

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

<https://www.aiisf.org/poems-and-inscriptions>

History.com: Angel Island Immigration Station. Provides a short history and contextual background, including information about the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), with links to other resources.

<https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/angel-island-immigration-station>

Comparison of Ellis Island and Angel Island Immigration Lesson Plan

<https://immigrationhistory.org/lesson-plan/immigration-stations/>

Immigration History: A Project of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society. It is also the site for more information on the War Brides Act, 1945-46.

<https://immigrationhistory.org/lesson-plan/asian-migration/>



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