

# Chinatown's History and Impact

Explore the History of Chinatown and Beyond

## GOAL

Students will trace the history, significance, and evolution of a chosen Chinatown anywhere in the world.

## OVERVIEW

The oral histories and thoughtful profiles of the world's Chinatowns provide students and teachers with a colorful journey through the history of a unique neighborhood. Classes will find stimulating ways to study how immigrants contributed to the building of various cities and how the local and federal government responded to immigration during the last 150 years. Educators can use this lesson to integrate historical, geographic and economic topics into the curriculum.

## METHODOLOGY

- First ask students to define the following vocabulary words to initiate a discussion of what they really mean and represent:

**immigrant** - a person who comes to a country for the purpose of establishing permanent residence.

**citizenship** - entitlement to the rights and privileges as a member of a community.

**segregation** - the separation or isolation of a race, sex, class, or ethnic group.

- Introduce the class to the following quote:

"Heard one by one, their voices may seem small, quiet. But multiplied many times over, generation after generation, you start to hear an insistent chorus. It says 'We want to be here...we want to improve the lives of our children...we want to dream American dreams.'"

Have the class discuss the meaning of this quote. What examples can they find from their daily lives among their friends, family and community that might represent a collective strength? Write a brief paragraph about these examples.

- Additional questions for students to think and write about:

- What types of occupations did Chinese people have in America?
- How did other people feel about the Chinese in America?
- What are some of the obstacles that Chinese people had to overcome?



## OPTIONS

- Take the class on a field trip to a Chinese restaurant to bring the food from the movie to life.
- Create a cross-cultural food festival and explore the origins of ethnic cuisines in your community.

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- Choose a critical time in your neighborhood's history and produce a newspaper, including relevant news articles, editorial columns and cartoons of the day.
- How many ethnic groups can you identify in your community? What is their history and their present-day role within your community and what brought about any changes?

