

The History of Asian Americans in the U.S. and Combating Stereotypes in Education



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Remembering and Honoring

Essential Questions

- **Part 1:**
 - What does it mean to be “Asian American”?
 - What are some dominant stereotypes about Asians and Asian Americans, and why are they harmful?
- **Part 2:**
 - How do stereotypes and tropes about Asians and Asian Americans show up in education?
 - What can I do to increase representation and inclusion?

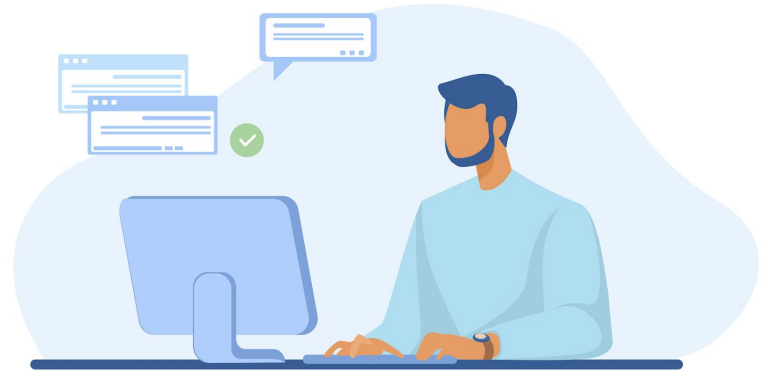
- Opportunities for Q&A will be included at the end of each part.
- Please chat in any questions as we go!



Practicing Care

Chatbox Question

What does the term “Asian American” mean to you?



A note on context and language

“Asian American” is a political identity, strongly inspired by the Black liberation and anti-war movements and aimed at harnessing collective power.



“This new identity arose out of our common experiences in America, the experience of being treated as if we were all the same and of an inferior race. As a result, the differences in our home countries became less important and we were able to find a common interest and identity with each other.”

- Gordon Lee, 2003

A note on context and language

“AAPI” “APA” “APIA” or “APIDA” are more contemporary terms and include people of Pacific Islander heritage and/or specifically name Desi (or South Asian) Americans. You will sometimes see “AANHPI” or “AA/PI/NH” used to more specifically include Native Hawaiians.

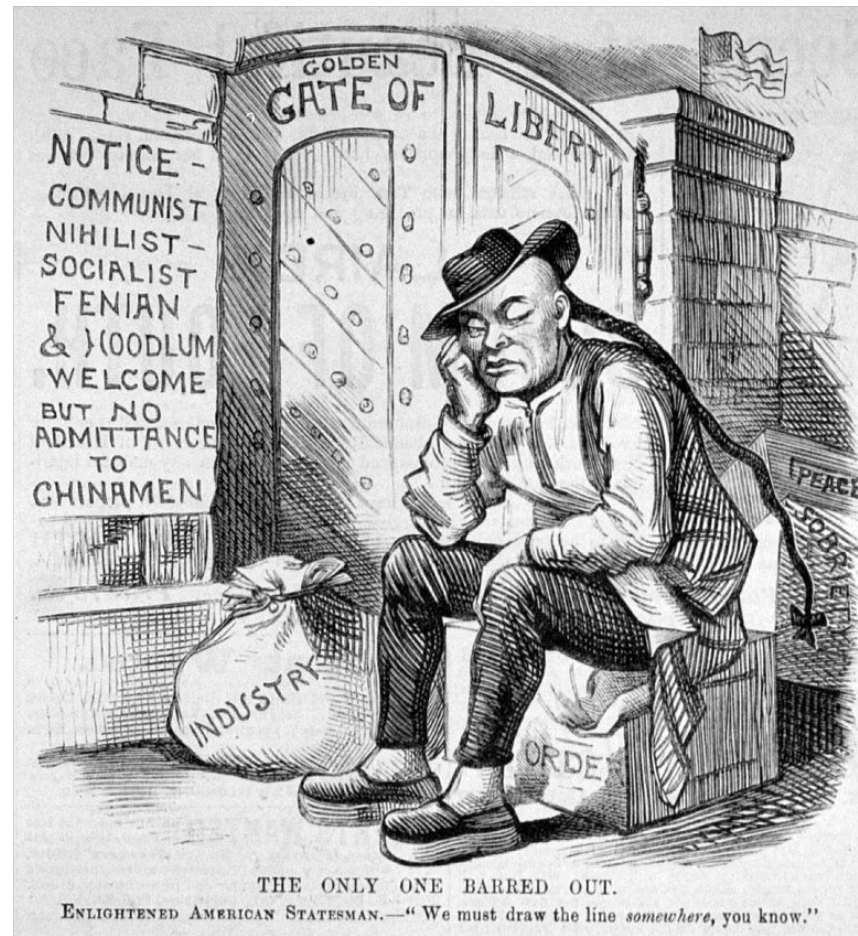


A Brief History

Early Years



Chinese, Gold Mining in California [illustration]: From Roy D. Graves pictorial collection: Chinese and Chinatown CREATOR
Photographer: Graves, Roy D. (Roy Daniel), 1889-1971 This image is in the public domain.



From Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper, vol. 54 (1882 April 1), p. 96. This image is in the public domain.

Justification for the Page Act

Characteristics of the
“Yellow Peril” Stereotype

“...End the danger of
cheap Chinese labor
and immoral Chinese
women”

- Horace Page



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Common Beliefs

Ask yourself...

- Have you heard these sentiments before?
- Where and from whom have you heard them?
- Based on your identity, how do you feel when you hear these things?
- Asians are hardworking.
- Asians are polite and respectful.
- Asians are really good at math, science and technology.
- Asians don't cause trouble.
- Asian parents value education more than other groups.
- Asians are competent, loyal employees.

Major components of the Model Minority Myth

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What is a “model minority”?

- A model minority is a non-dominant group deemed to have had greater economic, educational and other success than other minoritized groups.
- The model minority group is perceived as having better assimilated to dominant cultural norms and standards, or at least to exhibit more “acceptable” behaviors, than other minoritized groups.
- As such, the model minority group is defined by its continued status as an “other,” its relation to other minoritized groups and as a standard by which all other groups are judged.



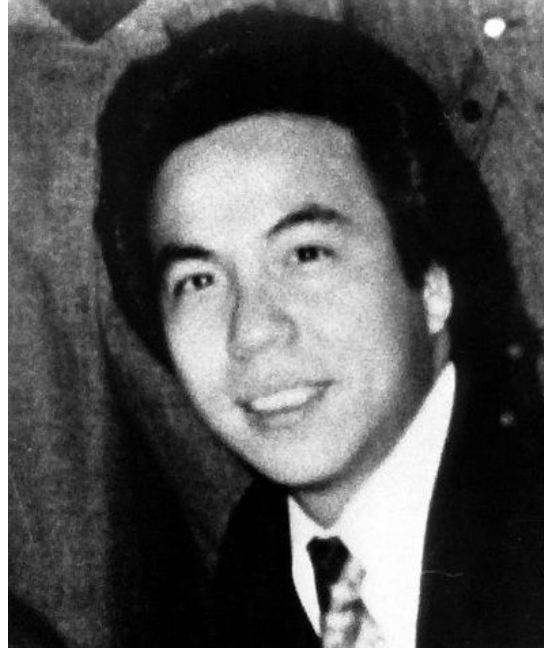
American Mother for 1952

Mrs. Toy Len Goon of Portland, Maine, was named the "American Mother for 1952" by the American Mothers Committee of the Golden Rule Foundation. The 57-year old China-born mother of eight children came to the United States from Canton 30 years ago. All of her children were born in this country. Operating a laundry, Mrs. Goon educated all of her children, despite the fact that her husband, a veteran of World War I, died 12 years ago as a result of his war injuries. In the above photo, Mrs. Goon is shown busy at work in her laundry with daughters Doris (left) and Janet (center) helping her.

Repercussions of Stereotypes about Asian Americans

Erases racism against and struggles of AAPI peoples

- The murder of Vincent Chin
- Undocumented people and immigrants who do not fit the perceived “norm”
- Perpetual foreigner stereotypes
- **Current anti-Asian racism**



Vincent Chin. This image is in the public domain.

Erases activism and civil rights struggles

- Larry Itliong
- Yuri Kochiyama
- Grace Lee Boggs
- Fred Korematsu
- ...and so many more



"Gonna produce prints of Yuri Kochiyama and Larry Itliong at TANA. These have been stuck in my head as ideas for years! #tana #radicalleaders #servethepeople" by dignidadrebelde is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Erases successes that do not fit the myth

- Film and television roles
- Expectations of students
- School data collection

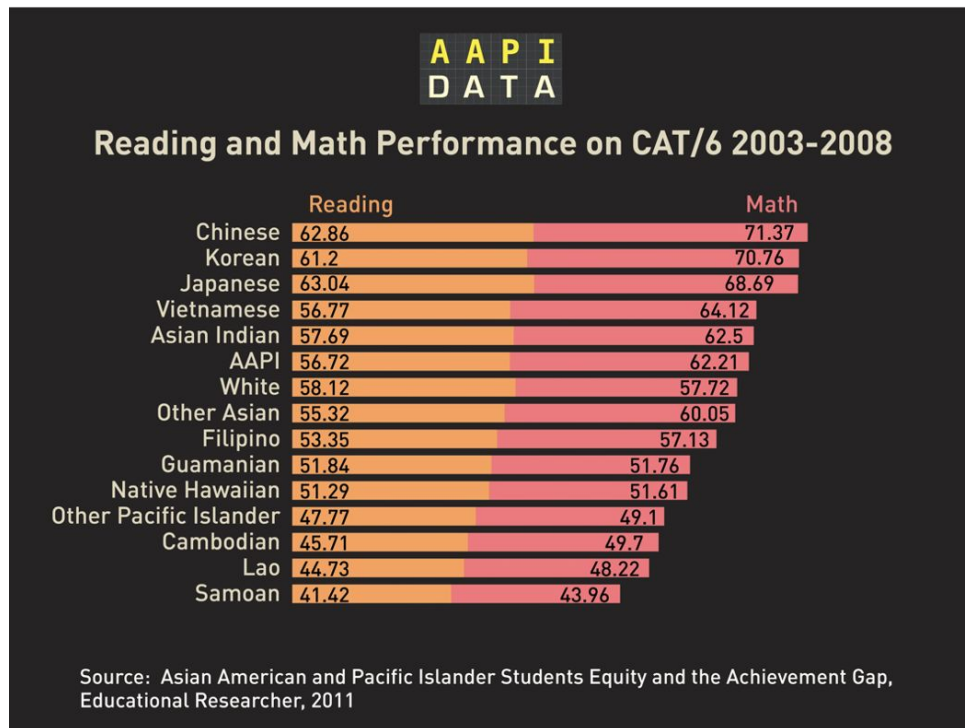


"John Cho, 2008.jpg" by Charlie Nguyen, CC BY 2.0

Erases differences and disparities among ethnic groups



Disaggregating Data



Disaggregating Data

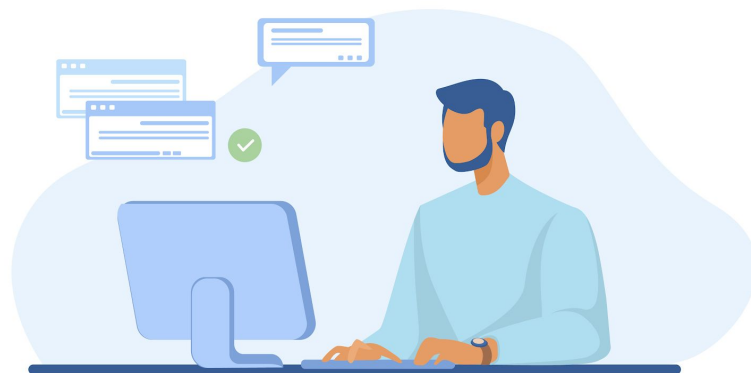


The Model Minority Myth Perpetuates Anti-Black Racism

Q&A Time: Part 1

Recap:

- The term “Asian American” represents a richly diverse group of peoples with often vastly different histories, experiences, and realities in the U.S.
- The “yellow peril” and “model minority myth” stereotypes coexist and contradict each other, yet both cause harm for individuals, AAPI people, other minoritized groups, and our nation as a whole.

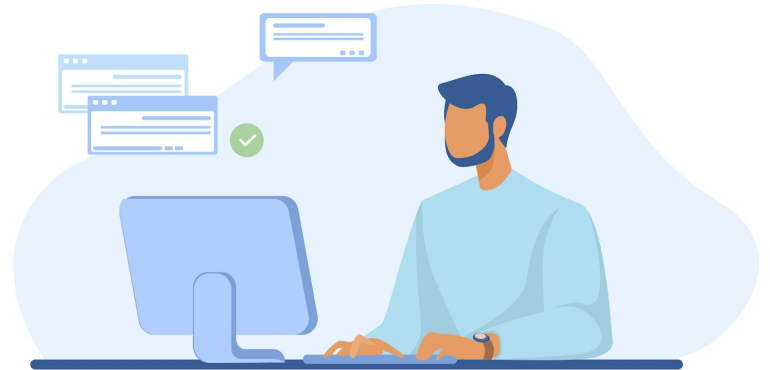


Applications for Education

Chatbox Question

Yes or No

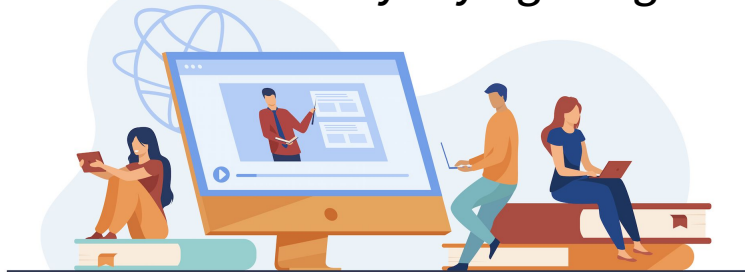
Have you ever heard of the Supreme Court Case “Lum v. Rice”?



How do stereotypes and tropes about Asians and Asian Americans show up in education?

Where do you see any of the following in your context?:

- Erasure of experiences, identities, histories, brilliance, struggles, activism, etc.
- Bias or racism against AAPI students because of the pandemic (ie. “I can’t play with you because the virus is from your country”)
- Characterizations of all Asian Americans or AAPI people as a monolithic group
- Biases that affect AAPI students and teachers through either the stereotype of “yellow peril” or the “model minority myth”
- Justification of other forms of racism or bias by saying things like “Asians are doing well, so why can’t...”



Increasing Representation and Inclusion

- Continue to raise your own awareness
- Feature resources and texts representing a diverse range of AAPI voices
- Use AAPI voices and stories throughout the year
- Whenever possible, disaggregate AAPI data
- Be specific with the language you use to describe people of Asian descent
- Have conversations



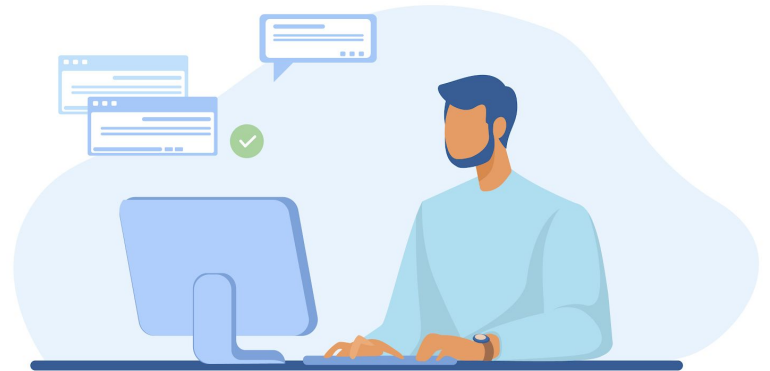
Have Conversations

- Have shared language
- Normalize the conversation
- Discuss discomfort
- Continuously learn and seek out new perspectives
- Practice listening in new ways
- Push back against harmful language, even those “good” stereotypes



Chatbox Question

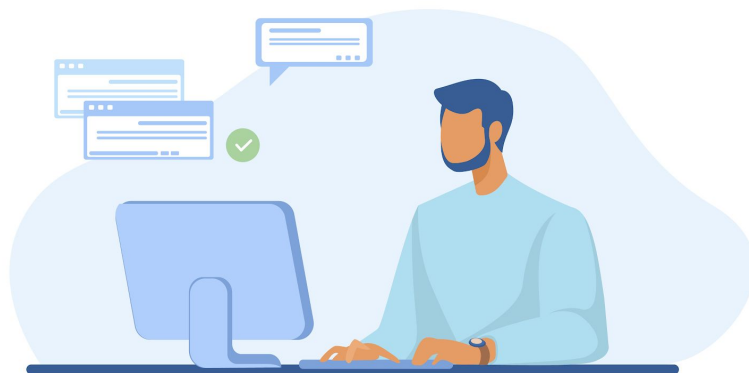
What is one action step you plan to take to resist stereotypes and increase representation and inclusion of AAPI peoples and experiences?



Q&A Time: Part 2

Recap:

- Just like all other biases, anti-Asian stereotypes affect schooling and the experiences of students. Unchecked, these biases maintain the foundations of systemic forms of discrimination and oppression.
- We each have a role to play, in large and small ways, to counteract stereotypes, racism and hatred in our schools and classrooms.



Thank you!



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