

***Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion* Post-Visit or Wrap-Up Activity**

Immigration Today: Children at the Border

The goal of this activity is to look at unauthorized immigration today and find connections to the Chinese American story. The focus is one issue that became particularly pressing during the summer of 2014: the arrival of unprecedented numbers of unaccompanied Central American children at the South Texas border.

This suggested wrap-up activity can be done after visiting *Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion* at the New-York Historical Society (September 26, 2014 through April 19, 2015), or after exploring the Classroom Materials for the Exhibition, available on DVD through the New-York Historical Society Education Department, or online at www.nyhistory.org/curriculum-library.

Resources:

The following six articles from newspapers and websites can be printed and distributed to small groups. They are arranged here chronologically and cover the period from May to October 2014, when the South Texas border saw an enormous increase in the arrival of unaccompanied children.

Resource E: "U.S. Setting Up Emergency Shelter in Texas as Youths Cross Border Alone." May 16, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/us/us-sets-up-crisis-shelter-as-children-flow-across-border-alone.html>. (The Department of Homeland Security declares a crisis.)

Resource F: "New U.S. Effort to Aid Unaccompanied Child Migrants," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/us/politics/new-us-effort-to-aid-unaccompanied-child-migrants.html>. (FEMA steps in; deportation proceedings.)

Resource G: "Overcrowded, Unsanitary Conditions Seen at Immigrant Detention Centers," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 2014. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-texas-immigrant-children-20140618-story.html#page=1>. (Conditions faced by children in U.S. detention centers.)

Resource H: "Unaccompanied Child Migrants: Q&A with UNICEF Honduras." July 31, 2014. <http://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unaccompanied-child-migrants-qu-unicef-honduras/18167>. (Conditions in Honduras that prompt child immigration.)

Resource I: “Influx of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Slowed Again in September.” October 9, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2014/10/09/influx-of-unaccompanied-immigrant-children-slowed-again-in-september/>. (Secretary of Homeland Security credits drop in numbers of unaccompanied children to more detention centers, stricter border security, and Central American leaders discouraging the journey.)

Resource J: “Children at the Border,” October 21, 2014 (original date July 15, 2015). <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/15/us/questions-about-the-border-kids.html? r=0>. (Maps and charts supporting a Q&A about unaccompanied minors.)

The Activity

Break the class into six small groups and distribute one resource to each group. Ask each group to summarize the article on chart paper, including: title, date, source, and 3-5 key points. Bring the groups together and ask each one to share out as classmates take notes.

Discussion Questions:

Based on these resources, why do many Central American children leave their home country? Why do they go to the United States?

How does the story of unaccompanied minors in 2014 compare to the experiences of individual Chinese Americans during the exclusion period—for example, Soto Shee, Henry Cheu, or Bok Ying Chin?

What similarities and differences do you see in U.S. government policies during the Chinese exclusion period and its policies today? What similarities and differences do you see in American attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants today and attitudes toward Chinese immigrants before and during Exclusion?

NOTE to teachers: If you would like to do a shorter version of this activity, concentrate on Resource G and the 9-minute video “Why So Many Migrant Kids Are Coming to the U.S. Alone,” <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/country-lost-kids/>. In addition, the Pew Research Center document (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/22/children-12-and-under-are-fastest-growing-group-of-unaccompanied-minors-at-u-s-border/>) offers statistics that provide a broader portrait of the issue. Both of these resources are further described below. Together, these three materials will focus attention on children entering the U.S. and the conditions they face.

Other Useful Resources

“No Country for Lost Kids.” Public Broadcasting System, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/country-lost-kids/>. (A good overview, including photographs, stories, and videos focused on individual children who have made the journey. The 9-minute video, “Why So Many Migrant Kids Are Coming to the U.S. Alone,” includes the story of an 11-year-old Honduran boy who successfully made the journey on his own.)

“How the United States Immigration System Works: A Fact Sheet.” Immigration Policy Center, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/how-united-states-immigration-system-works-fact-sheet>. (Includes statistics about the numbers of immigrants allowed in various visa categories, including family connections and employable skills.)

“SCOTUS Decides Immigrants Can ‘Age-Out’ of Visa Petitions.” American Immigration Council, <http://immigrationimpact.com/2014/06/09/scotus-decides-immigrants-can-age-out-of-visa-petitions/>. (A Supreme Court ruling that affects children waiting for a visa.)

“Why Don’t They Just Get In Line?” Immigration Policy Center, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/why-don%E2%80%99t-they-just-get-line>. (Details the difficulties of immigrating legally.)

“Children 12 and Under Are Fastest Growing Group of Unaccompanied Minors at U.S. Border.” Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends Project, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/22/children-12-and-under-are-fastest-growing-group-of-unaccompanied-minors-at-u-s-border/>. (Includes a number of useful charts and statistics.)