

**LESSON 5:
FILM SCREENING: CARVED IN SILENCE****Focus Questions**

How does the film *Carved in Silence* illustrate how the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 affected Chinese immigration to the United States? What was it like for Chinese immigrants who passed through the Angel Island Immigration Station?

Objectives

Students will use the film *Carved in Silence* to gain insight into the experience for the immigrants who were held at Angel Island Immigration Station. Students will gather information from the film using a note taking matrix.

Key Themes

The perseverance of Chinese immigrants in the face of discrimination and detention. Self-reliance and unity of immigrant communities. Artistic expression as manifestation of suffering.

Grades

6 - 12

Time Period

One fifty-minute class period

Materials

Copy of the video *Carved in Silence*, VCR, T.V., handout *Carved in Silence* Matrix.

Standards

California History Social Science Content Standards, National History Standards

Film Synopsis

Carved in Silence tells of the stories and experiences of immigrants detained at Angel Island Immigration Station. The director uses dramatic recreations filmed in the historic building and includes interviews with former detainees and immigration officers that were stationed on the island. There is a twenty minute and forty minute version available for classroom use. Copies can be ordered for \$20 each (plus California sales tax and shipping and handling) by calling AIISF at (415) 561-2160.

This video can be used as an introduction to the Angel Island Unit. It covers several of the unit vocabulary words and can be used as a vehicle for discussion on Angel Island immigrants.

Note: The first chapter in Lawrence Yep's novel Dragonwings is an excellent introduction to the video subject matter. It can be used to prepare students for the video. However, it is not a necessary component for this exercise.

Procedure

1. Anticipatory Set/Hook: Pass out copies of the film matrix to students. Have students write on the back of their paper and/or discuss out loud with the class, an answer to the following question, “What does the title of the film, *Carved in Silence*, make you think the film is going to be about?” Have students share their responses with the class.
2. Introduction: Tell students that they are going to watch the film *Carved in Silence* by filmmaker Felicia Lowe. This video brings to life the experiences of Chinese immigrants who passed through the Angel Island Immigration Station as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Review with students as needed the content of the Exclusion Act, and what it meant for Chinese immigrants to the United States.
3. Guided Practice: Explain to students how to use the Film Notes Matrix—that they will take at least five notes on any information they hear or see in the film. Teachers may want to model note taking by giving an example of one note from the film to the class. Tell students that they will reserve room on their matrix for notes numbered six through ten to write down notes or information from their classmate’s papers, once the film is over.
4. Independent Practice: After the film is over, the teacher asks for student volunteers to share one of their notes from the film. Instruct students that when they hear a note or piece of information from one of their classmates that they did not write down themselves during the film, they should copy it on to their matrices on matrix notes numbers six through ten.
5. Next have students complete the two boxes on the right side of the matrix. Depending on the grade or skill level of students, teachers may require a certain number of sentences for the “how the film makes you feel” box.

Assessment

Each student’s matrix should be complete with ten notes, a response to the film and a sketch of an image or picture from the film.

Adaptations

For younger students, an alternate procedure is to ask them the following questions as they watch the film instead of filling out the matrix:

1. Why did people come to California?
2. Who was detained on the Island and why were they detained there?
3. How was Angel Island like a prison? Give some specific examples.
4. What was the Chinese Exclusion Act?
5. Do you think the interview questions were fair? Why or why not?
6. What did citizenship mean to the Chinese people?

As written above, this lesson is designed for the twenty-minute version of the film *Carved in Silence*. Teachers may also use the forty-minute version of the film. If using the forty minute

version of the film, teachers may want to break the viewing into two separate days and increase the number of film notes required.

Teachers are encouraged not to limit student notes, responses, or sketches, by the size of the matrix provided. Teachers should use any format for the information as needed by the students.

If the film is unavailable, teachers can replace it with a piece of literature such as the book *Dragonwings* by Lawrence Yep, that includes an account of the Angel Island Immigration Station experience.

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Name _____ Date _____

Carved in Silence Matrix

<p>Take notes in this box on any new information you have learned from the film.</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>	<p>In this box write about what this film makes you think about or how it makes you feel.</p>
<p>Write more new notes in this box that your classmates share with the class.</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p>	<p>In this box draw a picture of an image that you remember from the film.</p>