

MADE IN ASIAN AMERICA

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE





ABOUT THE BOOK ★ ★ ★

Asian American history is not made up of one single story. It's many. And it's a story that too often goes untold.

It begins centuries before America even exists as a nation. It is connected to the histories of Western conquest and colonialism. It's a story of migration; of people and families crossing the Pacific Ocean in search of escape, opportunity, and new beginnings.

It is also the story of race and racism. Of being labeled an immigrant invasion, unfit to become citizens, and being banned, deported, and incarcerated. Of being blamed for bringing diseases into the country.

It is also a story of bravery and hope. It is the story of heroes who fought for equality in the courts, on the streets, and in the schools, and who continue to fight in solidarity with others doing the same.

This book is a stirring account of the ordinary people and extraordinary acts that made Asian America and the young people who are remaking America today.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS ★ ★ ★



Photo by Lisa Miller

ERIKA LEE

is an award-winning historian, author, and advocate. The Bae Family Professor of History and Radcliffe Alumnae Professor at Harvard University and past president of the Organization of American Historians, she is the author of several prize-winning books including *The Making of Asian America*, winner of the Asian/Pacific American Award

for Literature in Adult Non-Fiction, and *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States*, winner of the American Book Award. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Erika and her family now live in Massachusetts.



Photo by Sam Bond

CHRISTINA SOONTORNVAT

is the award-winning and bestselling author of over twenty books for young readers. She is a three-time Newbery Honor recipient, whose works include *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*, which

was also awarded the Sibert Honor and the Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature. Born and raised in Texas, Christina currently resides in Austin with her family.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY ★ ★ ★

Knowledge Excavation: Gaps in History

Start by reading the section "Who Are Asian Americans?" (pages xv and xvi). Create a baseline of knowledge before reading with a timed game and discussion. Write down on the board the names of as many famous Americans in history as the class can come up with in two - five minutes. Together, reflect on who the class named as historical figures. Ask questions including, How many names on your list were BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) Americans? How many were women? How many were Asian Americans?

For round two, ask your students to name famous Asian Americans in history. Review this list and discuss who was included. Where did they learn about these people? How challenging was this task? Together, consider how much—or how little—students have been taught about Asian Americans in history.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ★ ★ ★

- The authors describe a concept that has shaped much of the world today: *Takers Keepers*. How has the idea of “taking and keeping” been applied in U.S. history? What are some examples of the consequences of taking and keeping?
- The history of Asian America is impossible to tell without talking about racism and oppression. What are examples of resistance from Asian Americans against racist behavior and unjust laws? Think about how Asian Americans in history have actively worked to survive, maintain their dignity, and challenge others, including the government, to uphold freedom and justice.
- How did the Philippines’ status as an American colony impact Filipino American history and experiences? How did Filipino Americans speak out and take action against unfair labor practices?
- Chapter 10 describes how Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Historically, these have been called *internment* camps, but today they are more accurately known as *incarceration* camps. What is the difference between the terms?
- Over and over in history, from Mamie Tape to Fred Korematsu to Balbir Singh Sodhi, the refrains from Asian Americans declaring, “I am American!” “I am loyal to America!” and “I am a patriot!” can be heard. What does being “American” mean? How have different people expanded and rewritten what it means to be American?
- How has the term *model minority* been developed and used to racialize Asian Americans? What is the harm of the model minority label? How do “positive” stereotypes also produce and sustain harm?
- The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s had a big impact on the lives of Asian Americans. How did different racial or cultural groups work together to resist oppression and injustice?
- How do the stories of Southeast Asian Americans help us think about the difference between being a refugee vs. an immigrant? How do they shed light on some of the consequences of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War? Reflect on the many stories of resistance and freedom fighting that you read in this book, from both ordinary people and famous Americans. What can you do in the face of racism? What can you say in response to hate? What actions can we take to provide and preserve freedom and justice for ourselves and others?
- Consider some of the key events, figures, and ideas learned in this book, how has reading *Made in Asian America* changed your understanding about Asian Americans and U.S. history?

Courtesy of Simran Jeet Singh. Photo by Don Bartletti/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images. Lorie Shaul Rhododendrites.



Demonstrators outside JFK International Airport in New York City in 2017 protest President Donald Trump’s ban on Muslim travelers.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES ★ ★ ★

Amazing Americans: An Anthology of Asian America

Throughout this book, we are introduced to many courageous and resilient Asian Americans in history. Select an Asian American who was not featured and research them. You can choose an ordinary or famous American. Create a written or illustrated entry describing their significance in U.S. history and some of their lived experiences. Share your finished work with your class.

Patsy T. Mink Papers at the Library of Congress.



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Imagine an Immigration Interview," Smithsonian National Museum of American History.



Immigrant inspection on board a ship docked at Angel Island in 1931.

Courtesy of Wendy Chou Le



Wendy Chou (Le) and her mother (both wearing flower garlands) with friends who came to say goodbye at the airport on the day they immigrated to the US from Taiwan.

Asian Americans vs. the Courts

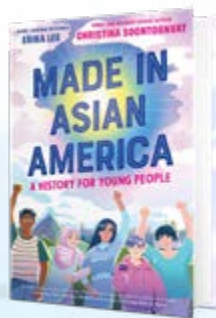
The authors tell us, "Here is a beautiful thing, a truly great thing about this nation: any person, no matter where they stand on society's ladder, can take their case to the highest court in the land" (p. 47). Create a timeline that tracks Asian American civic participation by identifying court cases noted in the book. Write down the year, the name of the case, and a brief description of how these ordinary Americans challenged discriminatory practices and unfair laws.

Voices of the Unheard

Immigrants who were detained at Angel Island etched their pain, fear, and anger into the wood walls of their detention barracks. Research this National Historic Landmark further and look at the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation website (<http://aiisf.org>) to see some of this poetry. Select a poem and analyze it further by creating a word cloud that expresses the mood and tone of the poem and drawing a picture to symbolize a central idea.

Interviewing History

The authors dive into the personal stories of multiple "ordinary people" to illustrate the history of Asian America. Choose one person profiled in the book who was particularly interesting to you. Imagine that you could sit down with this person and interview them for one hour. Create a list of interview questions you would ask them.



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