Lesson Plan: The Oklahoma Chinatown

Grades: 9-12

Standards: SS.9-12.7, SS.9-12.3, SS.9-12.8. SS.9-12.5.

In this lesson, students will explore the obscure mystery of Oklahoma Chinatown and how it is allegedly underground. They will learn and review the historical context behind the existence of Oklahoma's Chinatown and the impact of falsified history and misinformation on future generations. In addition, they will learn about the history of the migrations of Chinese immigrants into Oklahoma City. This will be accomplished by studying various news articles as well as engaging in group discussions.

Lesson Summary:

Students will read about Oklahoma's Chinatown and migrant history through various news sources. Based on their knowledge from the lesson, they will answer discussion questions and fill out activity worksheets in groups.

Time allotment

This is a lesson that should be done in 2 class periods, with each period being around 90-120 minutes. The first class period should be delegated to learning the alleged history of the underground Chinatown. The second class period will learn about the migration and settlement of Chinese people in Oklahoma.

Learning Object

- Compare and contrast various news reports that claim the existence of an underground Chinatown, and identify the inconsistency of the sources and their validity.
- Examine how racism influences the narrative of the historical context of Oklahoma's Chinatown.
- Understand the time of important events relating to the migration of Chinese immigrants to Oklahoma and Chinatown.

Supplies/Materials Needed:

- Pen or Pencil
- Computer or Tablet with internet
- Printed Oklahoma City map post-WWII
- Printed Handout of Packet 1:
    - *International Chinese Business Directory of the World. 1913*
    - *The Daily Oklahoman, 1969 Apr 11th*
    - *Fusion cuisine traced back to assimilating immigrants in 2019*
    - *The Underground World of Willie Hong 2019*
    - Discussion questions #1
- Printed handout packet 2
    - *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*
    - *1907 Oklahoma Census Records, pg. 11*
    - Empty timeline worksheet
    - Discussion Questions #2
- Timeline key for instructor

Procedure

Introductory activity (approximately 10-15 minutes)

- Ease the class into the topic by the students if they know what Chinatown is and if they know any Chinatown. After some answers, introduce the Oklahoma Chinatown. For example "All your answers are amazing! However, have you heard of the Oklahoma Chinatown? It has an interesting history regarding the narrative of it being underground in the 1940s. You'll be reading a lot of articles today about it to see if you agree with that statement."

Learning Activities:

Class Period 1:

1. Split the students into groups of 4-5
2. Give each group a copy of each printed article and discussion questions.
3. Have the groups read and answer questions for 30–40 minutes and then gather back as a class to brief the discussion questions for another 30 minutes (or more if needed)
4. After the class discussion, give each group a copy of *International Chinese Business Directory of the World* as well as the Oklahoma City Map after WW2
5. In this activity, have the students try to pinpoint where these Chinese businesses would have been.

Class Period 2:

1. Spit the students up in a new group of 4-5
2. Repeat steps 2 and 3 from period one
3. After discussion, hand out the empty timeline worksheet and spend the rest of the class period filling it out.

Extension Activity

Students have the option to read *"4 Exposing Negative Chinese Terminology and Stereotypes"* if they wish to study more about other false claims using their laptops.

Acknowledgement:

This lesson plan is inspired by the format of Professor Laura Ng's Tutorial Class and PBS "The Niagara Movement: The Early Battle for Civil Rights"