

Handout

Event Cards | Asian Discrimination in the United States Timeline

Teacher Instructions: The following pages include descriptions of individual events for students to analyze as part of the activities for Supporting Question 1. Print and cut them apart before class.¹



March 26, 1790

The US Congress, in The Naturalization Act of March 26, 1790, states that "any alien, being a free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for a term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof."

May 6, 1882

Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, ending Chinese immigration for the next 60 years.



¹ This timeline is adapted from Densho Encyclopedia, <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/timeline/>.



January 1, 1885

Japanese laborers begin arriving in Hawaii, recruited by plantation owners to work the sugarcane fields.

September 2, 1885

Anti-Chinese rioters set fire to Chinatown in Rock Springs, Wyoming, killing 28 Chinese miners and wounding 15, as a result of a swelling anti-Chinese reaction over cheap labor and strikebreakers. All 16 white suspects were acquitted.

January 1, 1891

Japanese immigrants arrive on the mainland US for work, primarily as agricultural laborers.





June 27, 1894

A US district court rules that Japanese immigrants cannot become citizens because they are not “a free white person” as the Naturalization Act of 1790 requires.

May 7, 1900

The first large-scale anti-Japanese protest in California is held, organized by various labor groups.

February 23, 1905

“The Japanese Invasion: The Problem of the Hour,” reads the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, helping to escalate racism towards the Japanese in the Bay Area.

May 14, 1905

The Asiatic Exclusion League is formed in San Francisco. In attendance are labor leaders and European immigrants, marking the first organized effort of the anti-Japanese movement.



October 11, 1906

The San Francisco Board of Education passes a resolution to segregate children of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ancestry from the majority population.

January 1, 1908

Through what is known as the “Gentlemen’s Agreement,” Japan and the US agree to halt the migration of Japanese laborers in the United States. Japanese women are allowed to immigrate if they are wives of US residents.





January 1, 1913

California passes the Alien Land Law, forbidding “all aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning land. This later grew to include prohibition on leasing land as well, and 12 other states adopted similar laws.

November 1, 1920

A new, more stringent 1920 Alien Land Law passes in California, intending to close loopholes found in the 1913 Alien Land Law.

January 1, 1920

Japanese American farmers produce \$67 million dollars worth of crops, more than ten percent of California’s total crop value. There are 111,000 Japanese Americans in the United States, 82,000 are immigrants and 29,000 were born in the US.



July 19, 1921

White vigilantes deport 58 Japanese laborers from Turlock, California, driving them out by truck at gunpoint. Other incidents occur across California and in Oregon and Arizona.

November 13, 1922

The US Supreme Court rules on the Ozawa case, reaffirming the ban on Japanese immigrants becoming naturalized US citizens. This ban lasted until 1952.

January 1, 1924

Congress passes the Immigration Act of 1924, effectively ending all Japanese immigration to the US.





November 1, 1941

A US Intelligence report, known as the “Munson Report” commissioned by President Roosevelt, concludes that the great majority of Japanese Americans are loyal to the US and do not pose a threat to national security in the event of war with Japan.

December 7, 1941

Japan bombs US ships and planes at the Pearl Harbor military base in Hawaii. Over 3,500 servicemen are wounded or killed. Martial law is declared in Hawaii.

December 7, 1941

The FBI begins arresting Japanese immigrants identified as community leaders: priests, Japanese language teachers, newspaper publishers, and heads of organizations. Within 48 hours, 1,291 Japanese immigrants are arrested. Most of these men would be incarcerated for the duration of the war, separated from their families.



December 8, 1941

A declaration of war against Japan is brought by the President and passed by Congress.

December 1, 1941 –January 1, 1942

Attorney General Francis Biddle authorizes search warrants for contraband materials in any home in which an “enemy alien” resides. Over the next few months, thousands of Japanese American households are randomly searched for such things as shortwave radios, cameras, and anything that might be considered a weapon, ranging from heirloom Japanese swords to dynamite that farmers use to clear stumps.





February 19, 1942

President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, authorizing military authorities to exclude civilians from any area without trial or hearing. The order does not specify Japanese Americans—but they are the only group to be imprisoned as a result of the Executive Order.

February 25, 1942

The US Navy orders all Japanese Americans living on Terminal Island in the Port of Los Angeles—some 500 families—to leave within 48 hours. As the first group to be removed en masse, they incur especially heavy economic losses.



March 1, 1942

General DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command, issues Public Proclamation No. 1 and begins the process of removing all persons of Japanese ancestry—US citizens and aliens alike—living in the western halves of Washington State, California, Oregon, and parts of Arizona. A curfew goes into effect in these areas—all those of Japanese ancestry must remain at home from 8 pm to 6 am.

March 1, 1942

The Wartime Civil Control Administration opens 16 “Assembly Centers” to detain approximately 92,000 men, women, and children until the permanent incarceration camps are completed. The “Assembly Centers” are located at fairgrounds, racetracks, or former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps, with terrible living conditions. Entire families are housed in places like horse stalls with dirt floors.





March 5, 1942

California fires 34 Japanese American civil servants from their jobs.

March 18, 1942

The President signs Executive Order 9102, establishing the War Relocation Authority with Milton Eisenhower as director.

March 24, 1942

The first Civilian Exclusion Order is issued by the Army for Bainbridge Island near Seattle, Washington. Forty-five families are given one week to prepare. By the end of October 1942, 108 exclusion orders have been issued.



March 27, 1942

"Voluntary evacuation" ends as the Army prohibits the changing of residence for all Japanese Americans in the western halves of Washington State, California, and Oregon.

May 1, 1942

The Japanese American incarcerated begin transferring to permanent War Relocation Authority incarceration facilities or "camps." There are a total of ten camps: Manzanar, Poston, Gila River, Topaz, Granada, Heart Mountain, Minidoka, Tule Lake, Jerome, and Rohwer.

