

Document Analysis: “Japanese Cheap Labor”

The SF Chronicle article, "[Japanese Cheap Labor](#)," appeared in the newspaper on March 2, 1905. The longer title, which includes, “it is not needed here and should not be admitted” clearly signals the author’s point of view. The article is a stark example of the economic competition and racial hostility that some native born whites felt toward Japanese immigrants.

Lesson Steps:

1. Have students read the article the first time, employing the “talk to the text” strategies introduced earlier in the course.
2. Help students with difficult vocabulary such as: inevitable, exclusion, sentimentalists, servile, patriarchal, vagabond.
3. Have students read the article a second time, filling out the [Student Handout Analyzing Point of View](#).
4. Then have the students take the details they gathered from the SOAPSTONE questions to write an analysis paragraph of the article.
5. After students have completed this task, conduct a class discussion about the article.

Extension Activity Ideas:

There are many primary sources that can be found in a similar vein. The [Densho](#) website includes numerous examples, including another 1905 SF Chronicle article entitled, [The Japanese Exclusion Organization Finishes Meeting To-Day](#). In addition, a second powerful primary source document is a short [court transcript related to Takao Ozawa](#), a Japanese American, who applied for naturalization on October 16, 1914, in the United States District Court for the Territory of Hawaii after living in the United States for 20 years. The Court ruled that persons of Japanese ancestry were members of the “yellow race” and therefore not eligible for naturalization. These documents may help students understand why the Issei, the first generation of Japanese Americans, were denied citizenship. You may also want to tie the Japanese immigrant experiences, to broader anti-Asian forces, such as those who lobbied for the Chinese Exclusion Act in the second half of the 19th century.