Document Based Introduction to Model Minority Stereotype

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NEH Landmarks Wing Luke 21-22

Course: Asian American Literature (11th - 12th grade English seminar)

Goal: Introduce the model minority stereotype during the course’s introductory unit. Enable students can see how authors address and contest the stereotype in Asian American literature throughout the course.

Skills: Critical thinking and reading, textual analysis, thesis construction, application of historical concepts to literary analysis

Content: Definition of “model minority” stereotype, history of “model minority” stereotype and its uses, fallacies behind “model minority” stereotype, understanding of why even a “positive” stereotype can be negative

Springboard Text: Don Lee’s story “Yellow” particularly the scene at a party where Danny, the protagonist, reacts negatively to a wealthy patron who compliments him by saying, “You Koreans are the hardest working people I know” (Lee 248).

Document Based Question Texts (will select excerpts for class:

1. *Time* “Whiz Kids” [cover image](http://content.time.com/time/covers/0%2C16641%2C19870831%2C00.html) (and perhaps [article](http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0%2C33009%2C965326%2C00.html))
2. [US News and World Report article on model minority](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~hist32/Hist33/US%20News%20%26%20World%20Report.pdf)
3. Excerpts from the [original article](http://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/US_History_reader/Chapter14/modelminority.pdf) by William Petersen
4. Pew data from [here](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-origin-groups-in-the-u-s/) looking at wealth and education distribution across different Asian American groups

Class Plan (roughly an 80 minute class)

1. Moment for engagement: post on Jamboard one line from the reading (second half of “Yellow”) that you found notable with a short reason why
2. Introduce concept “model minority” and activate prior knowledge: next page on Jamboard, post words, ideas that come to mind when you see the phrase “model minority”
3. As a class observe key themes from the Jamboard: on right side of Jamboard post common themes
4. Introduce Document Based Question (DBQ)
	1. Solicit from class tips for reading primary source historical documents from prior Humanities and History classes
	2. Students read and annotate primary source documents in the DBQ keeping in mind the prompt (see below).
	3. Students divide into groups to synthesize information from the documents and craft theses and outlines in response to the prompt: What is the model minority myth and why is it problematic?
		1. Answers include a thesis, and an outline showing how one would structure a multiple paragraph essay answering the question including the quotations and statistics that would be included to support claims (provide format sheet and guide)
		2. Answers submitted by groups in Canvas
		3. Definitions posted on next page in Jamboard
5. Fishbowl style discussion of the question: why is the model minority myth problematic considering its history, what we see in “Yellow, and what we see in America today.
6. Last takeaway, submit on Canvas personal reflection--your reflection on the model minority myth and its origins.