

Teacher Key: Immigration & Exclusion

What each labeled part shows. These describe the image only. Each cartoon was made by someone with a point of view, noted under "Viewpoint." Let students build and defend their own readings.

Station 1: The Chinese Question (1871)

Context: The wall behind them is covered with posted insults and arguments made against Chinese immigrants at the time. The caption has Columbia saying "Hands off, gentlemen! America means fair play for all men." The orphan asylum was burned in the 1863 New York draft riots.

A: A woman (Columbia) standing protectively over a Chinese man seated by a wall.

B: An angry crowd carrying clubs, approaching from the right.

C: A burned building in the background labeled "Colored Orphan Asylum."

Viewpoint: Nast opposed anti-Chinese laws; supporters of restriction argued Chinese labor lowered wages.

Source: Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, 1871. Harper's Weekly (via Wikimedia Commons): [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Chinese_Question_\(February_1871\),_by_Thomas_Nast.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Chinese_Question_(February_1871),_by_Thomas_Nast.png). Public domain.

Station 2: Welcome to All! (1880)

Context: Drawn as immigration from Europe was rising quickly. Storm clouds over Europe appear at the upper right.

A: A building (an ark) labeled "U.S. Ark of Refuge," with Uncle Sam at the door.

B: A sign: "No oppressive taxes, no expensive kings, no compulsory military service, no knout or dungeons."

C: A line of people in clothing from many countries coming aboard.

Viewpoint: Keppler, himself an immigrant from Austria, generally favored open immigration.

Source: Joseph Keppler, Puck, 1880. Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/2002719044/. Public domain.

Station 3: The Anti-Chinese Wall (1882)

Context: Published as Congress debated the Chinese Exclusion Act, which passed in 1882. The builders are drawn as members of other immigrant groups.

A: Blocks in a wall labeled with words such as "Jealousy," "Competition," "Low Wages," and "Non-Reciprocity."

B: A worker carrying a block labeled "Law Against Race."

C: In the background, people taking apart a wall in China while ships arrive for trade.

Viewpoint: Puck opposed Chinese exclusion; supporters of the law argued it protected American workers.

Source: Friedrich Graetz, Puck, 1882. Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/96500349/. Public domain.

Station 4: The Only One Barred Out (1882)

Context: Published in 1882 as the Chinese Exclusion Act became law. The caption has an "Enlightened American Statesman" saying "We must draw the line somewhere, you know."

A: A notice: "Communist, Nihilist, Socialist, Fenian & Hoodlum welcome, but no admittance to Chinamen." (The word reflects the language of the time.)

B: A gate labeled "Golden Gate of Liberty."

C: A bag labeled "Industry" and a box labeled "Order" next to the seated man.

Viewpoint: Critical of the exclusion law.

Source: Unidentified artist, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 1882. Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/2001696530/. Public domain.

Station 5: Looking Backward (1893)

Context: The caption reads "They would close to the new-comer the bridge that carried them and their fathers over." Debates over limiting immigration were growing in the 1890s.

A: A shadow on the wall behind one of the men, showing a poorer, working man.

B: A well-dressed man holding up his hand to stop someone.

C: A newcomer carrying his belongings in a bundle.

Viewpoint: Critical of immigration restriction; supporters of limits argued new arrivals strained cities and wages.

Source: Joseph Keppler, Puck, 1893. Billy Ireland Cartoon Library (via Wikimedia Commons): commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Looking_Backward.png. Public domain.

Station 6: In the Art Pen at Ellis Island (1908)

Context: Drawn during debates over the U.S. tariff on imported artworks, which was removed for older art in 1909.

A: A sign reading "Prohibitive Tariff on Art."

B: Figures in clothing from earlier centuries, resembling famous European painters and their subjects.

C: A wire-mesh cage enclosing the room.

Viewpoint: Critical of the art tariff.

Source: Unidentified artist, Puck, 1908. Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/2011647275/. Public domain.