
Sample Lesson 24: South Asian Americans in the United States

Theme: History and Movement

Disciplinary Area: Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

Day 1: South Asian Americans in the United States

Time: 45 minutes

Essential Questions:

1. How does history shape present-day attitudes toward South Asian Americans?
2. What are the challenges faced by immigrants (and their children and grandchildren)?
3. How do we make our society more inclusive?

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to ...):

- Define key terms related to bullying and xenophobia
- Understand the historical migration of South Asians to the United States
- Explore instances of discrimination and xenophobia at the individual, community, and policy level

Materials and Resources:

- Handout: Who Are South Asian Americans? (one page, one copy per student)
- Handout: Glossary (one page, one copy per student)
- Printouts of images (11 pages, one image per group)
- Handout: Short Time Line of South Asian Americans in the US (two pages, one copy for each student)
- Chart paper with a time line from the 1870s to the present (This can also be written on a blackboard or whiteboard as long as it's large enough for the images to be posted.)
- Sticky notes and pens or markers

Main Activity (30 minutes)

1. Make sure that a time line from the 1850s to the present is drawn (or a clothesline can be hung with dates dangling and clothespins for students to attach their images) somewhere in the classroom with room for students to affix their images.
2. Divide students into 11 groups (ideally of no more than 2–3 students per group).
3. Distribute the Short Time Line of South Asian Americans in the US handout (one per student) and the images (one per group).
4. Ask students to discuss their image and utilize any terms from the glossary that apply to the example and situation given. Students can apply sticky notes with keywords that apply to their historical image on the bottom of the page or, if using a clothesline, on the back of the printed image.
5. After students have discussed their image, have them look at the Short Time Line of South Asian Americans in the US handout and decide where on the time line their image goes.
6. Once all images are lined up, have students read out chronologically the historical time line of events and examine the images. (Variations: Students can line up with their images and read out chronologically. Students can do a silent gallery walk to read about the images and look at the historical time line.)

Discussion/Closing (15 minutes)

Pose the questions:

1. What did you learn in today's lesson that you didn't know before?
2. What things can lead to a rise in xenophobia (historically or in the present)?
3. How can tolerance be promoted?

Homework:

Ask students to investigate their migration stories using the Migration Worksheet at the end of the day 1 section.

Images

1885



A memento of the Dean's reception, held October 10, 1885; Photograph of Anandabai Joshee, Kei Okami, and Tabat M. Islambooly, students from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania (left); Gurubai Karmarker (from India) graduated from Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1892 (right)

With international ships and missionary societies, people from India began visiting the United States as early as the late 1700s. In the late 1800s, international students from India attended the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, such as the women pictured above.

Image 1 "Students posing for photo" Source: Legacy Center Archives, Drexel University College of Medicine, Philadelphia

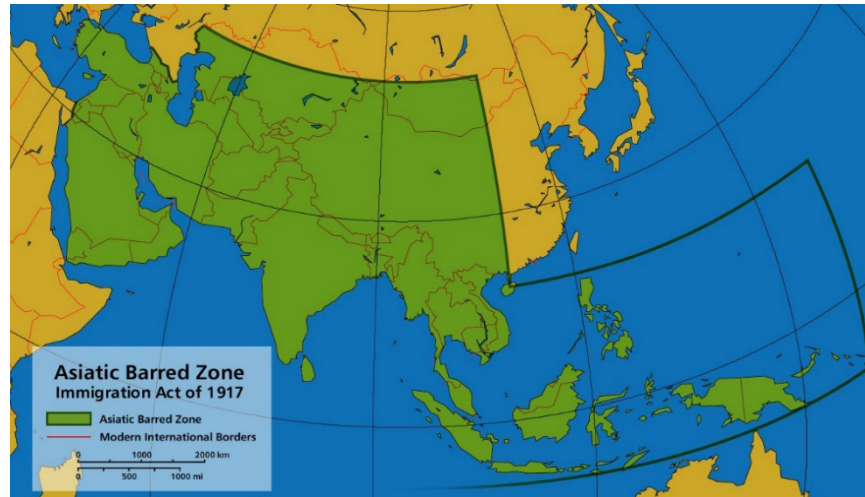
Image 2 "Gurubai Karmarker" Source: Legacy Center Archives, Drexel University College of Medicine, Philadelphia



The first gurdwara (Sikh temple) in the United States was established in 1912 in Stockton, California. Immigrants from India, usually men and generally from the region of Punjab, came to the United States to study or work on the Pacific and Eastern Railroad as construction workers, in lumberyards, or in agriculture. By 1910, 5,000 people had migrated to the West Coast of the United States from colonial India.

Many early immigrants were not able to bring family members with them to the United States, and few women were allowed to migrate, so many migrants intermarried with other groups, such as European Americans, Mexican Americans, or other Asian Americans. The PBS film *Roots in the Sand* documents the history of this community.

“Exterior photograph of the Stockton Gurdwara,” January 1916, *The Hindusthanee Student*;
Source: South Asian American Digital Archive
(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link244>)



In February 1917, during World War I, the US Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1917 (also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act). Although President Woodrow Wilson previously vetoed it in 1916, the congressional majority overrode the president's veto. The act added people originating from the Asiatic Barred Zone (see above) to the list of people who were considered “undesirable” for immigration to the US; the list also included: “homosexuals,” “idiots,” “feeble-minded persons,” “criminals,” “epileptics,” “insane persons,” “alcoholics,” “professional beggars,” all persons “mentally or physically defective,” “polygamists,” and “anarchists.”

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had barred Chinese from entering the US, and the 1917 legislation expanded the categories to the entire Asian region. The rising nativism and xenophobia in the US led to the passage of the act to prohibit immigration of certain groups. Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, and the Luce–Celler Act of 1946 ended immigration policy discrimination against Asian Indians and Filipinos, who were accorded the right to naturalization and allowed a quota of 100 immigrants from each group per year. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, known as the McCarran–Walter Act, allowed other Asian groups (Japanese, Koreans, and others) to become naturalized US citizens.

Accessed from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link245>



“Bhagat Singh Thind at Camp Lewis.” Photograph dated November 18, 1918, of Bhagat Singh Thind with his battalion at Camp Lewis, Washington. His unit was called Washington Company No. 2, Development Battalion No. 1, 166th Depot Brigade.

Bhagat Singh Thind (who lived from 1892 to 1967) was born in Punjab, India, and came to the US to study in 1913. In 1918, he was enlisted in the US military during World War I. He was first granted US citizenship because of his military service in 1918, but it was revoked four days later because citizenship was only available at the time for “free white men.” In 1923, Thind brought a case to the Supreme Court arguing that immigrants to the US from India should be allowed to be naturalized citizens. The Supreme Court disagreed, since only commonly understood “Caucasian” immigrants were eligible to become citizens. Thind finally became a citizen in 1936. He went on to study spirituality and lecture extensively in the US.

Source: South Asian American Digital Archive
(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link246>)

1937



“East India Store Section,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, Hawaii (1937)

Description: This four-page advertisement insert from the June 3, 1937, edition of the *Honolulu Advertiser*, marked the opening of the Watumull Building on 1162 Fort Street. It includes several short articles about G. J. Watumull and J. Watumull and advertisements for the stores, products, and boutiques housed in the building, as well as photographs of the East India Store interior and its employees.

Source: South Asian American Digital Archive
(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link247>)

1961



Congressional Coffee Hour (House of Representatives) at the White House with President John F. Kennedy, May 18, 1961.

From left to right: Congress Member **Dalip Singh Saund** (California), Congress Member Harold C. Ostertag (New York); Congress Member James A. Haley (Florida); President John F. Kennedy; Congress Member Frank W. Boykin (Alabama); Congress Member Harold T. Johnson (California); Congress Member John W. Byrnes (Wisconsin). Photographer Robert Knudsen.

Dalip Singh Saund (who lived from 1899 to 1973) was the first Asian American member of the US House of Representatives (Congress). He served as the Congress Member from the 29th District of California from 1957 to 1963. He was born in Punjab, India, while it was under British rule. He migrated to the United States (via Ellis Island) in 1920, and pursued masters and doctoral degrees at the University of California, Berkeley. He campaigned for the rights of South Asian immigrants in the United States. After the Luce–Celler Act was signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1946 (allowing for people from India and the Philippines to become naturalized US citizens), Saund could become a US citizen, and later he successfully ran for national office.

“President John F. Kennedy at Congressional Coffee Hour,” May 18, 1961, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

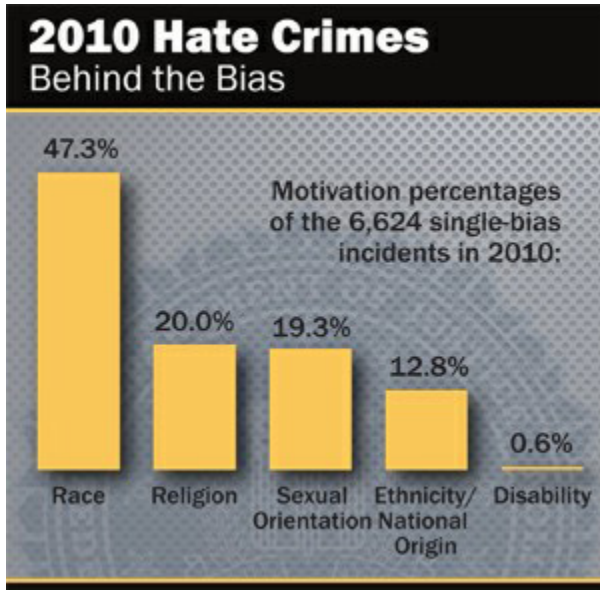


President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the 1965 Immigration Act, with Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy greeting the president. Source: LBJ Library and Museum, Photo credit: Yoichi Okamoto.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration Act of 1965, which changed US immigration policy. Previously, immigrants from Asia and Africa were allowed into the United States in very small numbers (even if they were highly educated or had family living in the US). The Act of 1965 was signed in front of the Statue of Liberty, on Liberty Island, and reflected the Civil Rights Movement's gains for racial equality. US immigration policies had been severely discriminatory, given decades of exclusion of non-European immigrants.

Departing from the previous system of country-based quotas, US immigration after 1965 has focused on the skills that immigrants bring and reunification of families (immigrants sponsoring their families to join them in the United States).

Image from the LBJ Library Archive



[Long Description Text for Bar Graph Graphic](#)

In 1987, a 30-year-old immigrant from India who worked in a bank, Navroze Mody, was brutally beaten to death by a group of teenagers who called themselves “Dotbusters.” This group was active in New Jersey, where a large South Asian immigrant community is concentrated, and they had been harassing immigrants from South Asia for months. A month before Mody’s killing, Dotbusters (referring to the bindi that many Hindu women and others wear on their foreheads), sent a letter to a local newspaper. Part of their letter read:

I’m writing about your article during July about the abuse of Indian People. Well I’m here to state the other side. I hate them, if you had to live near them you would also. We are an organization called dot busters. We have been around for 2 years. We will go to any extreme to get Indians to move out of Jersey City. If I’m walking down the street and I see a Hindu and the setting is right, I will hit him or her. We plan some of our most extreme attacks such as breaking windows, breaking car windows, and crashing family parties ... They are a week [sic] race physically and mentally. We are going to continue our way. We will never be stopped.

In Jersey City, after Mody’s death, another person of South Asian descent was assaulted by three men with baseball bats. Laws against hate crimes are in existence in New Jersey though incidents still continue.

Source: Pluralism.org and the FBI hate crimes statistics



Photo caption: The federal government has ordered Hamtramck to print election ballots and other materials in the Bangla language.

“Feds order city to print Bengali ballots”

by Charles Sercombe

Here’s more proof that Hamtramck’s Bengali community is a major voting bloc.

The federal government is now requiring the city to print all election material, including ballots and candidate nominating petitions, in the Bangladeshi language as well as in English.

That’s because, according to the US Census, the Bangladeshi community is sizeable enough to warrant separate ballots. The agency said it used a variety of data to determine this mandate, but just what exactly the decision was based on was not immediately known.

Hamtramck is not alone in being ordered to print separate ballots. Some 248 voting districts across the country have been told to print up separate ballots for their dominant ethnic group.

City Clerk Ed Norris said the mandate will mean an additional cost to the city, but he did not know how much more elections will now run.

He said there is not enough time to ready ballots for the Bengali community for the Nov. 8 General Election. The next election after the November election is the Republican Primary on Feb. 28.

Norris said he's not sure if the additional ballots will be ready by then, either.

"We're going to try to comply the best we can, as soon as we can," he said.

Part of the problem in getting ballots ready is finding both a reliable translation service and a printer that has the proper font for the Bangla language. Another issue to figure out is who is responsible for preparing and paying for the separate ballots when elections are under the jurisdiction of the county or state.

Not all elections are solely city elections. Norris said trying to coordinate this mandate with county and state officials is another hurdle to jump.

In the online social network site Facebook, there has been criticism of this mandate. There are some who believe that if you are a citizen and are eligible to vote, you should be able to understand the English language.

But the Voting Rights Act of 2006 mandates special language ballots for [when] there is a significant ethnic presence in a community.

Norris said that there is no appeal option to challenge the mandate. Norris added that the city has already provided some election material in Polish, Arabic, and Bangla.

Source: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link248>



New York Neighbors is an interfaith organization that uses the symbols of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to symbolize how people of different backgrounds can get along.

In the weeks following the attacks on 9/11/2001, there were significant increases to bias incidents aimed at persons believed to be of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent. Many groups came together to unite against extremism and to understand individuals from different backgrounds in order to make sure that unfair laws and practices don't result in discriminatory treatment. One organization included the New York Neighbors, an interfaith coalition of over 130 groups in New York City that strive to "defend the constitutional and American values of religious freedom, diversity, and equality, while fighting against anti-Muslim bigotry and discrimination against our neighbors no matter what their national origin or religion."



On Sunday August 5, 2012, an armed gunman entered a gurdwara (Sikh house of worship) in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and opened fire on people praying in their house of worship. Six people were killed (Sita Singh and Prakash Singh, who were responsible for official duties and leading services at the gurdwara; Ranjit Singh; Satwant Singh Kaleka, president of the gurdwara committee; and Suveg Singh and Paramjit Kaur, members of the gurdwara community). Two other worshippers were injured. The gunman, Wade Michael Page, aged 40, committed suicide after being shot by a police officer. Wade Michael Page is reported to have been affiliated with white supremacist and hate groups and was on the watchlist of organizations that track hate crimes, such as the Southern Poverty Law Center.

After the shooting, President Obama released a statement: “At this difficult time, the people of Oak Creek must know that the American people have them in our thoughts and prayers, and our hearts go out to the families and friends of those who were killed and wounded. My Administration will provide whatever support is necessary to the officials who are responding to this tragic shooting and moving forward with an investigation. As we mourn this loss which took place at a house of worship, we are reminded how much our country has been enriched by Sikhs, who are a part of our broader American family.”

The White House statement is from the White House blog, August 8, 2012.

The map is adapted from Wikipedia: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link249>

Glossary

Ally: Someone who acts to help an individual of a group targeted by bullying or discrimination. Allies can help by standing up on behalf of (and together with) the victim or advocating for changes in attitudes or policies.

Bigotry: Intolerance or inability to stand people who have different opinions or backgrounds.

Empathy: The ability to understand someone else's feelings, challenges, or problems. Empathy for another's difficult situation should ideally lead to some action to help address that situation or its causes.

Harassment: Any type of repeated or persistent behavior that is unwanted, unwelcome, and causes emotional distress in the person it is directed at. It is typically motivated by gender, race, religion, national origin, etc.

Institutionalized Racism: A system, policy, or agency that discriminates based on race or ethnic origin through its policies or practices.

Islamophobia: Irrational fear and strong dislike of anyone who is, or appears to be, Muslim.

Microaggressions: Interactions between people of different races, genders, cultures, or sexual orientations where one person exhibits nonphysical aggression. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional, but they convey hostility, discrimination, and attitudes of superiority.

Nativism: Literally refers to the practice of favoring the interests of those of a particular place over immigrants. In the 1900s, nativist policies in the United States made immigration policies restrictive to non-European countries.

Naturalized Citizen: Someone born in one country who becomes a citizen of another country. In the US, there are three ways people become citizens: (1) *jus sanguinis* (right of blood) in which case if one parent is a US citizen, then the child is also entitled to US citizenship, even if the child is born outside the US; (2) *jus soli* (right of birthplace) in which case if a person is born in the US, they are granted citizenship; or (3) through naturalization in which case, after living in the US for multiple years, a person must apply for citizenship and complete a citizenship test.

Prejudice: Negative feelings and stereotyped attitudes toward members of a different group. Prejudice or negative prejudgments can be based on race, religion, nationality, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, age, or other factors.

Refugee: Someone who is outside of the country where they are from or have lived because they have been targeted, harassed, or persecuted because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, etc. Refugees often seek asylum in other countries.

Second Generation: This term refers to the US-born children of immigrant parents. Second-generation children and youth sometimes face discrimination because of their appearances or religion even though they are Americans.

Solidarity: Demonstrating unity or cooperation to work with others who may or may not share the same interests or challenges. Being an ally and working in solidarity go hand in hand.

Tolerance: The ability to be fair and open to people who are different than oneself and beliefs that are different than one's own. Being tolerant means being free from prejudice and bigotry.

Xenophobia: A strong and unreasonable hatred of people who are from other countries or other ideas and things that are foreign.

Who Are South Asian Americans?

Population of South Asians in the US (density)

According to the 2010 Census, approximately 4.3 million South Asians live in the US. South Asian Americans trace their origins to **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka**, and the **Maldives**. Some were born outside of the US, while others are descended from immigrants from these nations.

The community also includes double migrants—members of diasporic communities in the Caribbean (Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago), Africa (Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zanzibar), Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific Rim (Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) who have subsequently migrated to the US.

The South Asian American community is diverse not just in terms of national origin, but also in terms of ethnicity, religion, and language. South Asian Americans practice Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism, and some are not religious. The most common languages spoken by South Asians in the United States, other than English, include Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu, and Urdu.

South Asians are diverse also in terms of immigration and socioeconomic status. While many are citizens or permanent residents, thousands live in the US on short-term work visas or are undocumented. With respect to employment, there are notable concentrations of South Asians in tech and health professions, education, and service work, taxi work, domestic work, and the hotel and restaurant industry.

Adapted from the South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) factsheets and from the curriculum “In the Face of Xenophobia: Lessons to Address the Bullying of South Asian American Youth” (2013) available online at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link250>.

Short Time Line of South Asian Americans in the US

[Key moments in US and world history are presented in brackets.]

1838

By 1838, approximately 25,000 Indian laborers have been transported as indentured workers to the British sugar colony of Mauritius. By 1917, more than 3.5 million South Asians will have been transported to European colonies in Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific as indentured “coolies,” often undertaking harsh work once performed by slaves for a “penny a day,” as historians have noted. [Slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1834 and in the US in 1865.]

1880s and 1890s

Approximately 2,000 South Asians are residing in the US on the West Coast. Many are farmworkers from the Punjab region who are members of the Sikh faith. Others are students. [The modern nations of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Burma were all part of the British Empire from the mid-nineteenth century to the late 1940s.]

1907–1908

The Asian Exclusion League, an anti-immigrant nativist group, opposes immigration from Asia and sparks violent race riots against South Asians in Washington, California, and Oregon in order to drive out “cheap labor.” The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization issues directives to dissuade citizenship applications from “Hindoos” (a derogatory term inaccurately applied to all South Asians; of the early migrants, 85% were Sikh, about 13% Muslim, and only 2% Hindus).

1912–1913

In 1912, Sikh migrants build the first gurdwara (Sikh house of worship) in the US, in Stockton, California. Founders of the gurdwara were also founders of the Ghadar Party in 1913. Ghadar leaders galvanized a cross-class community of laborers and students to fight the British by connecting colonialism to the racist conditions of labor and life they experienced in the US. As the Ghadar Party expanded, it established official headquarters in San Francisco. Its leaders attracted the attention of the British government, who recruited US immigration officials to keep tabs on Indian nationalists in America to limit the growing strength of the Ghadar Party’s revolutionary aims.

1917

Immigration Act of 1917 defines a geographic “barred zone” in the Asia-Pacific (including South Asia) from which no immigrants can come to the US. [World War I lasts from 1914 to 1918.]

1920

State alien land laws prohibit transfer and ownership of land to noncitizens; as a consequence Indian farmers lose over 120,000 acres in California. In the following years, over 3,000 Indians return to their homeland due to xenophobic pressures. Migrants still come to the US as traders or merchants through port cities such as New Orleans or New York, and some settle in African American or Puerto Rican communities. [Women in the US are granted the right to vote in 1920.]

1923

In the *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* decision, the US Supreme Court found that Asian Indians are ineligible for US citizenship because they are not white. [In 1924, US President Calvin Coolidge signs the Snyder Act giving Native Americans US citizenship, but many states still denied them the right to vote until 1948.]

1946

The Luce–Celler Act grants right of naturalization and small immigration quotas to Asian Indians and Filipinos, including a national quota of 100 per year for immigrants from India. [World War II lasts from 1939 to 1945.]

1957

Dalip Singh Saund, an Indian American from Imperial Valley, California, is elected to the US House of Representatives and serves from 1957 to 1963. South Asian Americans number more than 12,000. [In 1955, the Montgomery Bus Boycott starts in Alabama. In 1956, the Supreme Court declares segregation on buses to be illegal.]

1965

The Immigration and Nationality Act, which removes quotas for Asian immigrants, triggers the second wave of South Asian immigration. [In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act.]

1966–1977

Eighty-three percent of South Asians enter the United States under employment visas, including 20,000 scientists, 40,000 engineers, and 25,000 medical doctors. Most have been educated at great public expense in their nations of origin.

1987

In Hoboken, New Jersey, Navroze Mody is beaten to death by “Dotbusters”—a violent hate group active in the state. South Asian Americans number more than 200,000 in the United States. [1989 marks the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the end of the Cold War.]

1990

The third wave of South Asian immigrants begins, including H-1B visa holders (many working in high tech), students, and working class families.

2000

Hamtramck, Michigan, is the first jurisdiction to provide language assistance in a South Asian language—Bengali—to voters following a lawsuit by the Department of Justice.

September 11–17, 2001

Attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon take place on September 11, 2001. In the week following 9/11, there are 645 reports of bias incidents aimed at persons perceived to be of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent. South Asians Balbir Singh Sodhi of Arizona, Waqar Hasan of Texas, and Vasudev Patel of Texas are all killed in post-9/11 hate crimes. Harassment and threats make up more than two-thirds of all reported bias incidents.

September 2001–February 2002

The US government detains without charge about 1,100 individuals (many from India and Pakistan). Many are denied access to counsel and undergo secret hearings. Many are detained for months on end; others are deported with no evidence ever presented of terrorist activity.

2002

The FBI reports that after 9/11, reports of violence against Muslims rose by 1600%. Nineteen people are murdered in hate crimes prompted by the events of 9/11.

2002

The Special Registration program (NSEERS) requires men and boys—ages 16 and older—from 25 Asian and African countries (24 of them predominantly Muslim, including Pakistan and Bangladesh) to report to their local immigration office for fingerprinting and interrogation. Over 93,000 people register throughout the country. None are ever charged with any terrorist-related activity. More than 13,000 people were placed in deportation proceedings, while thousands more voluntarily leave the country.

2005

Piyush Bobby Jindal becomes the second South Asian American member of Congress. Many South Asians are elected to state office. [In 2007, Jindal is elected the first ever South Asian American state governor (Louisiana). Nikki Haley becomes the second in 2011 (South Carolina). In 2016, Haley becomes the US ambassador to the United Nations under Donald Trump.]

2012

Wade Michael Page, a white supremacist, walks in and opens fire during services at a Sikh gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, killing six and wounding four. Page subsequently commits suicide after police arrived on the scene. The shooting is labeled an act of “domestic terrorism.”

2012/2013

According to the 2010 US Census, there are 4.3 million people of South Asian descent in the United States. In 2012, Ami Bera from California becomes the third Indian American to be elected to the US House of Representatives.

2015

The assault of Sureshbhai Patel occurred on February 6, 2015. Patel, a 57-year-old Indian national who was visiting his son in Madison, Alabama, was seriously injured after being detained by three police officers in a residential neighborhood responding to a call from a neighbor that there was a “skinny Black man” walking around the predominately white neighborhood. There is video footage of the officer slamming Patel to the ground. He had to be hospitalized and is partially paralyzed as a result of the injuries. The police officer (Eric Parker) was at first fired due to international uproar, but then reinstated in 2016, and was later acquitted of all charges.

2016–2019

After the November 2016 election of Donald Trump, hate crimes have skyrocketed across the US. Islamophobia and xenophobia targeting anyone with brown skin have resulted in many deaths and injuries. In February 2017, two men originally from India chatted after work at a bar in Kansas. Asking them about their legal status and yelling at them to “get out of my country,” Adam Purinton opened fire, killing Srinivas Kuchibhotla and wounding his friend Alok Madasani as well as Ian Grillot who was at the bar and tried to help the men who were being attacked.

2020/2021

Kamala Devi Harris, a Black and South Asian Senator, becomes the first woman of color nominated to a major party’s ticket as Vice President. She is sworn in as Vice President in January 2021.

Adapted from “South Asians in the US: A Social Justice Timeline,” developed by SAALT

Migration Worksheet

Use this worksheet to find out as much information as possible about how your family came to the United States. If your ancestors are Native American, find out any stories of migration within the US over the past few centuries. It is hard to pinpoint many historical dates, but just get as much information as you can to share with classmates.

What can you find out about the first person in your family (on either or both sides) who migrated to the US? Around what year did that migration take place?

Any additional details?

Feel free to affix copies of any photos or documents you can find to the back of this sheet.

Day 2: South Asians and Xenophobic Violence

Time: 60 minutes

Essential Questions:

- What turns xenophobia into violence?

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to ...):

- Understand the Oak Creek tragedy in historical context
- Build empathy

Materials Needed:

1. Handout 1: BBC News Article
2. Handout 2: Graphic Organizer (optional)
3. Handout 3: Oak Creek Testimony
4. Projector or smart board for YouTube viewing

Performance tasks

Understanding and Situating the Oak Creek Tragedy

Activity (3 minutes)

Connect students to the activity from the previous lesson where they represented their own migration story and the xenophobia their families may have faced and to the South Asians in America time line that they walked through for the previous lesson.

Part I: Opening Activity (15 minutes)

Before beginning the lesson, the teacher should warn students that this lesson contains details and stories from a recent mass shooting.

Direction for Students:

1. Today, we will examine the treatment of South Asians and Muslims in the US. We will begin class by reading and reacting to a current event. In the fall of 2012, a white supremacist opened fire in a gurdwara (Sikh house of worship), and killed seven innocent people. As you read this article, pay attention to what happened and why it happened. Use the headings to take note of the key ideas the author wants to illustrate and pay attention to how you are feeling. Annotate the article

as you read for key ideas and your reactions. Draw on information you learned in the previous two lessons as you respond to the text.

Instructions for the Facilitator/Teacher:

When implementing this lesson, teachers should take care to ensure that students do not conflate Islam with terrorism. Questions 3–4 in this section have been added to address this point.

1. Give students 7–10 minutes to read and react to the article and follow with a facilitated discussion. After reading the article, the teacher should provide time for comment and reflection to help the student process the traumatic events.
 - Handout 1: BBC News Article
 - Handout 2: Graphic Organizer (optional)
2. Guiding Questions for Discussion: What are your reactions to this article? What do you see happening here? Why do you think this happened? How do you see xenophobia and racism at play?
3. What is problematic about the following statement in the article which makes reference to mistaken identity and negative stereotypes? “Members of the community have been attacked in the past by assailants mistaking them for Muslims.” Why should Islam not be conflated with terrorism? What challenges occur when people who are Muslim, or are perceived to be Muslim, are targeted with Islamophobic sentiment?
4. Compare the above statement from the article with the following one from Harpreet Singh Saini’s testimony. “So many have asked Sikhs to simply blame Muslims for attacks against our community or just say ‘We are not Muslim.’ But we won’t blame anyone else. An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us.” Why do you think many Sikhs refrain from using the phrase “we are not Muslim”?

Part II: Historicize Oak Creek – 9/11 Connections (15 minutes)

1. If a student doesn’t mention this, highlight that a key idea the article mentions is that this is not the first of these kinds of incidents. Twenty years ago, after the World Trade Center attack on 9/11, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans became targets of xenophobic harassment and attack.
2. Guiding Questions:
 - What do you know about 9/11?
 - What knowledge do you have of what happened to members of the Muslim, Sikh, South Asian, and Arab American communities after 9/11?

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- Why do you think this happened?
3. Use a T-chart/graphic organizer to capture student responses.
 - Key Understanding:
 - After 9/11, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans have experienced increased incidents of racial profiling, harassment, discrimination, bullying, and hate crimes.
 4. Have students watch the opening sequence of the documentary *Divided We Fall* (0–4:30) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link251>. Frame the viewing by telling students that you will now watch a segment of a film that captures the aftermath of 9/11 faced by Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans. Tell students to record their reactions.
 5. Discussion: What are your thoughts regarding the connections between the Oak Creek tragedy and post-9/11 aftermath?

Part III. Building Empathy: Oak Creek Testimony and Response Letter (25 minutes)

1. Bring students back to the Oak Creek tragedy by suggesting that hearing people's testimonies and narratives deepens our understandings. Tell students that you will now read a testimony from the Oak Creek tragedy.
2. Engage in a shared reading of the Oak Creek testimony (the teacher reads aloud, students follow along).
 - Handout 3: Oak Creek Testimony
3. Ask students to reread the Oak Creek testimony independently and respond by writing a letter to Harpreet. As they read the Oak Creek testimony again, guide them to capture their emotional reactions and think about what they would like to share with teenagers who share Harpreet's religious background.
4. Before the end of the class period, ask whether any students would like to share an excerpt from their letter. Ask students: How did it feel to write the letter?

If useful, share with the students this infographic prepared by the Sikh Coalition (based in New York): Who Are the Sikhs? <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link252>



August 6, 2012

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link253>

“Sikhs express shock after shootings at Wisconsin temple”

Sikhs living in the United States have expressed their shock and fear after a shooting at a temple in Wisconsin on Sunday which left seven people dead.

Some community members could not believe what happened. Others said they had feared such attacks since 9/11.

A gunman entered the Sikh temple on Sunday morning and opened fire, killing six people and injuring a policeman.

The suspect has been named as Wade Michael Page, a 40-year-old army veteran, in US media reports.

But his identity has not been independently confirmed to the BBC.

A vigil for the victims was held in nearby Milwaukee as police searched the suspect's home.

FBI and bomb squad officers have surrounded the property of the alleged gunman in Cudahy, about 2.5 miles (4km) north of the Wisconsin Sikh Temple, and evacuated local residents.

In total, seven people died in the attack in Oak Creek, a suburb of Milwaukee, including the gunman. A police officer and two other men were critically injured.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is himself a Sikh, said he was “deeply shocked and saddened” by the attack.

“That this senseless act of violence should be targeted at a place of religious worship is particularly painful,” Mr. Singh said in a statement.

Muslim confusion

Officials have not yet identified the gunman or a possible motive, but Sikh organisations in the US say the community has been vulnerable since the 9/11 attacks.

“This is something we have been fearing since 9/11, that this kind of incident will take place,” said Rajwant Singh, chairman of the Washington-based Sikh Council on Religion and Education.

“It was a matter of time because there’s so much ignorance and people confuse us [as] being members of Taliban or belonging to [Osama] bin Laden,” he told Associated Press.

“We never thought this could happen to our community,” Devendar Nagra, 48, told Associated Press. “We never did anything wrong to anyone.”

Sikhism hails from the Indian subcontinent, and observant Sikhs wear turbans. Members of the community have been attacked in the past by assailants mistaking them for Muslims.

“That turban has tragically marked us as automatically suspect, perpetually foreign and potentially terrorists,” Valarie Kaur, a filmmaker based in the US who has chronicled attacks on Sikhs, told AP.

Several hundred people turned up to an impromptu candlelit vigil in Milwaukee on Sunday evening for the victims. Cab driver and Oak Creek resident Kashif Afridi went to the temple after he heard about the attack.

“When the shooting happened, I was at home watching the news. I went straight out and drove to the temple. There were lots of police and the area was closed off.

“The press was already there and there were lots of people from the Sikh community. I spoke to one girl who was in the temple when the shooting happened.

“She said when the shooting started, everyone panicked. People were running around trying to hide. She said she lost her uncle.

“People here are in a state of a shock. This is a very small and peaceful place, you would never imagine this kind of attack could happen here. Nobody can believe it.

“Lots of people have gathered in the area. People just stop by to express their sympathies.”

“Terrorist-type incident”

There are an estimated 2,500–3,000 Sikh families in and around the city worshipping at two gurdwaras, or temples, including the Wisconsin Sikh Temple.

Lakhwinder Singh, a member of the congregation there, told Reuters that two of the victims were believed to be the president of the temple and a priest.

“It will take a long time to heal. We’re hurt very badly,” he said.

President Barack Obama expressed his condolences with victims of the attack, which comes just over two weeks after a gun massacre left 12 people dead at a Colorado cinema.

“As we mourn this loss which took place at a house of worship, we are reminded how much our country has been enriched by Sikhs, who are a part of our broader American family.”

The US embassy in India said it was “deeply saddened by the senseless loss of lives and injuries” caused by the shooting.

“Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers go out to the victims and their families,” a statement said.

“The United States takes very seriously the responsibility to respect and protect people of all faiths. Religious freedom and religious tolerance are fundamental pillars of US society.”

Local politician Mark Honadel called the attack “craziness.”

The state representative told CNN: “Unfortunately, when this type of stuff hits your area, you say to yourself, ‘why?’ But in today’s society, I don’t think there’s any place that’s free from idiots.”

Police have described it as a “domestic terrorist-type incident.” The FBI are taking over the criminal investigation.

There was believed to be only one attacker, with eyewitness reports suggesting it was a white male.

Information from the Article

My Reactions

Handout 3: Oak Creek Testimony

Testimony before the US Senate of Harpreet Singh Saini (age 18) (Survivor of the Oak Creek Shooting)

Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights Committee on the Judiciary on “Hate Crimes and the Threat of Domestic Extremism”

September 19, 2012 (excerpts)

My name is Harpreet Singh Saini. I am here because my mother was murdered in an act of hate 45 days ago. I am here on behalf of all the children who lost parents or grandparents during the massacre in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. A little over a month ago, I never imagined I'd be here. I never imagined that anyone outside of Oak Creek would know my name. Or my mother's name: Paramjit Kaur Saini.

As we all know, on Sunday, August 5, 2012, a white supremacist fueled by hatred walked into our local gurdwara with a loaded gun. He killed my mother, Paramjit Kaur, while she was sitting for morning prayers. He shot and killed five more men—all of them were fathers, all had turbans like me. And now people know all our names: Sita Singh, Ranjit Singh, Prakash Singh, Suveg Singh, Satwant Singh Kaleka.

This was not supposed to be our American story. This was not my mother's dream. My mother and father brought Kamal and me to America in 2004. I was only 10 years old. Like many other immigrants, they wanted us to have a better life, a better education. More options. In the land of the free. In the land of diversity.

It was a Tuesday, two days after our mother was killed, that my brother Kamal and I ate the leftovers of the last meal she had made for us. We ate her last rotis—which are a type of South Asian flatbread. She had made the rotis from scratch the night before she died. Along with the last bite of our food that Tuesday ... came the realization that this was the last meal, made by the hands of our mother, that we will ever eat in our lifetime. My mother was a brilliant woman, a reasonable woman. Everyone knew she was smart, but she never had the chance to get a formal education.

She couldn't. As a hard-working immigrant, she had to work long hours to feed her family, to get her sons educated, and help us achieve our American dreams. This was more important to her than anything else.

Senators, my mother was our biggest fan, our biggest supporter. She was always there for us, she always had a smile on her face. But now she's gone. Because of a man who hated her because she wasn't his color? His religion? I just had my first day of college. And my mother wasn't there to send me off. She won't be there for my graduation. She won't be there on my wedding day. She won't be there to meet her grandchildren. I want to tell the

gunman who took her from me: You may have been full of hate, but my mother was full of love. She was an American. And this was not our American dream.

We ache for our loved ones. We have lost so much. But I want people to know that our heads are held high. We also know that we are not alone. Tens of thousands of people sent us letters, attended vigils, and gave us their support—Oak Creek’s mayor and police chief, Wisconsin’s governor, the President and the First Lady. All their support also gave me the strength to come here today.

Senators, I came here today to ask the government to give my mother the dignity of being a statistic. The FBI does not track hate crimes against Sikhs. My mother and those shot that day will not even count on a federal form. We cannot solve a problem we refuse to recognize.

Senators, I also ask that the government pursue domestic terrorists with the same vigor as attackers from abroad. The man who killed my mother was on the watch lists of public interest groups. I believe the government could have tracked him long before he went on a shooting spree.

Finally, Senators, I ask that you stand up for us. As lawmakers and leaders, you have the power to shape public opinion. Your words carry weight. When others scapegoat or demean people because of who they are, use your power to say that is wrong.

So many have asked Sikhs to simply blame Muslims for attacks against our community or just say “We are not Muslim.” But we won’t blame anyone else. An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us.

I also want to be a part of the solution. That’s why I want to be a law enforcement officer like Lt. Brian Murphy, who saved so many lives on August 5, 2012. I want to protect other people from what happened to my mother. I want to combat hate—not just against Sikhs but against all people.

Senators, I know what happened at Oak Creek was not an isolated incident. I fear it may happen again if we don’t stand up and do something.

I don’t want anyone to suffer what we have suffered. I want to build a world where all people can live, work, and worship in America in peace.

Because, you see, despite everything, I still believe in the American dream. In my mother’s memory, I ask that you stand up for it with me. Today. And in the days to come.

Accessed and excerpted from full testimony available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link254>

Day 3: South Asian Americans: Past and Present

Time: 60 minutes

Essential Question:

How can examining historical manifestations of xenophobia and racism help us understand present forms of bias-based bullying?

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to ...):

- Examine historical roots of xenophobia against Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans in America
- Compare past occurrences with modern day forms of bias-based bullying

Materials Needed:

1. Background Information handout
2. Past and Present sets
3. Graphic Organizer

Performance Tasks: Connecting the past to the present

Before beginning the lesson, the teacher should warn students that this lesson describes acts of violence that led to death. Time for process and reflection should be given to students because each of the sets can be traumatic for some students.

Activity: (5 minutes)

Connect students to the previous lesson in which they developed an understanding that the Oak Creek tragedy was not a new phenomenon. Rather, hate crimes against Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans have significantly increased after the attacks on the World Trade Center. Tell students that today they will further historicize this and understand how xenophobia is most often linked to what is happening in the political landscape.

Quick Write (5 minutes)

- Ask students to recall when the earliest South Asians came to the United States. Draw upon the time line.
- Prompts: What do you think early arrivers might have experienced? What leads you to make these inferences?

Part I: Background Information (10 minutes)

Instructions for the Facilitator/Teacher:

For the main activity for this lesson, students will be working in groups in order to compare the harassment of South Asians and Muslims in the past and present. In the next 10 minutes, you will provide students with background knowledge to set them up effectively for their independent work. As a class you can read through Handout 1, which provides a brief synopsis of each historical occurrence that students will examine. You may want to include the following visual media:

1907 Bellingham Riots:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link255>

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link256>

The Persian Gulf War: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link257>

Dotbusters: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link258> (begin at 0:42)

Part II: Small Group Work (25 minutes)

Break students into three larger groups and then create subgroups of 3–4 students. Before you break students into groups, discuss terms:

Microaggressions: contemporary form of racism—invisible, intentional or unintentional, and subtle in nature; usually outside the level of conscious awareness, but which cumulatively and over time create an uncomfortable or hostile environment for the victim

Bullying: verbal, physical, or psychological acts of intimidation where there is an imbalance of power

Harassment: systemic and/or continued unwanted actions, including threats and demands, often based upon race, sex, religion, gender, etc.

Hate crimes: acts of violence against individuals, groups, places of worship, and others, typically motivated by some form of prejudice

Ask students to independently read their set of events (Handout 2). Thereafter, they should work together to complete the graphic organizer (Handout 3). (This could be completed using chart paper as well.) Students will summarize each event and identify whether the occurrence is an example of microaggression, bullying, or hate crime. Next, they will analyze the language used to describe Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arab Americans in each excerpt either by perpetrators or by media sources. Finally, they will use guiding questions to synthesize the exercise and compare and contrast the xenophobic and racist treatment of the past and present. Students should prepare a quick (three-minute) presentation for the class on their event set.

Note: You may want to model or use guided practice for the first set to give students an example of the type of thinking they will need to do.

Part III: Whole Class Share (15 minutes)

After each group shares, debrief the comparison of the past and present and discuss why the analysis of historical forms of xenophobic and racist phenomena is significant.

- Guiding Questions:
 - What did you realize as you read about the Bellingham Riots, the hate crimes that occurred during the Persian Gulf War, and the Dotbusters?
 - Why do you think the events of the past occurred? What was happening between the United States and other countries during this time that influenced those events?
 - What about present-day occurrences?
 - What was similar to the present-day forms of harassment? What was different?
 - What can be done?

South Asians Past and Present—Background Information 1907

Bellingham Riots

“Located in the northwest corner of Washington State, just shy of the Canadian border, Bellingham boomed in the early twentieth century as a center of extractive industries like mining, fishing, and timber. Workers from all over the world arrived in Bellingham looking for jobs, including a sizable number from Asia.

In the early 1900s, Asian immigrants numbered in the hundreds and were a substantial presence in Bellingham, sustaining small communities with their own restaurants, pool halls, and barbershops. Yet, due to sustained campaigns of racism and exclusion, little to nothing of these communities remains in the city today. By 1950, city census numbers reported a mere eight individuals of Asian ancestry.

The most visible manifestation of these campaigns was the riot of 1907. A group of South Asian migrant workers arrived in Bellingham in 1906, employed mostly in the city’s lumber mills.

Immediately, white labor leaders demanded the South Asian workers be expelled from the city, claiming the newcomers took jobs away from white workers and drove down wages.”

Information excerpted from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link259>

Dotbusters: Anti-Indian Hate Group in New Jersey

In the fall of 1987, an anti-Indian hate group formed in New York and New Jersey that committed their crimes in Jersey City. Their hate crimes include burglary, vandalism, assault, and murder. While the violence seemed to be aimed at the Hindu community, where the wearing of the bindi is most common, it is believed that the Dotbusters actions were based on racial grounds, aimed at South Asian immigrants.

See <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link260>

Hate Crimes During the Persian Gulf War

The Persian Gulf War against Iraq was led by the United States, backed by a UN coalition of 34 nations, and followed Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. This conflict led to an eruption of hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims and other ethnic communities perceived to be Middle Eastern in the United States.

Information excerpted from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link261> and <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link262>

Xenophobic Racism Against South Asians and Muslims in the United States: Past and Present

Set 1

Event 1: 1907



Description:

On September 4, 1907, 500 white working class men in Bellingham, Washington, attacked South Asian millworkers and their families. Within 10 days, the entire South Asian population departed town.

It should be noted that the use of the term “Hindu” in this article is inaccurate and actually refers to Sikhs. “Hindu” or “Hindoo” was a common label in Canada and the US for all South Asians, though most early twentieth century immigrants from India were Sikhs from the Punjab region. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link263>)

The Sikh Coalition’s teacher resources about the Bellingham Riots provide greater detail about the Sikh community specifically being targeted and can supplement this source. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link264>).

Morning Reveille September 6, 1907, p. 4 (Editorial)

“The Hindus Have Left Us”

While any good citizen must be unalterably opposed to the means employed, the result of the crusade against the Hindus cannot but cause a general and intense satisfaction. The school kids, who made up the greater portion of the mob that put the heathen out of business, should, of course, be spanked and sent to bed and the hoodlums should go to jail, but the fact that the fear instilled into the hearts of the Hindus induced them to return to the land which owes them protection [note: reference here is to Canada] is a cause for rejoicing. Two wrongs never make a right, it is true, and such riotous demonstrations are to be discouraged and prevented, but the departure of the Hindus will leave no regret.

From every standpoint it is most undesirable that these Asians should be permitted to remain in the United States. They are repulsive in appearance and disgusting in their manners. They are said to be without shame and, while no charges of immorality are brought against them, their actions and customs are so different from ours that there can never be tolerance of them. They contribute nothing to the growth and up-building of the city as the result of their labors. They work for small wages and do not put their money into circulation. They build no homes and while they numerically swell the population, it is of a class that we may well spare. ... They have been working here because of the labor shortage, but now that they have decamped their places will be filled by white men. ... There can be no two sides to such a question. The Hindu is a detriment to the town, while the white man is a distinct advantage.

Information sourced from:
Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link265>

Event 2: 2005

“In the fall of 2005, seventh-grader Mandeep Singh’s daily routine included fighting off classmates who pulled and yanked at his *jurdha* (the topknot worn by Sikh men) while calling him “Bin Laden” and “meatball head.” Though Mandeep and the Sikh Coalition repeatedly complained to his school’s administration, nothing was done to stem the harassment for almost two years. In February 2005 students hit the seventh-grader twice on his head, leading to contusions and a severe injury that left Mandeep confined to bed rest for weeks. Unconvinced that the school could do anything to ensure their son’s safety, Mandeep’s parents sent him back to his native England to finish his schooling.”

Information sourced from the Sikh Coalition
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link266>

Set 2

Scenario 1: 1987

In 1987, a 30-year-old immigrant from India who worked in a bank, Navroze Mody, was brutally beaten to death by a group of teenagers who called themselves “Dotbusters.” This group was active in New Jersey, where a large South Asian immigrant community is concentrated, and they had been harassing immigrants from South Asia for months. A month before Mody’s killing, Dotbusters (referring to the bindi that many Hindu women and others wear on their foreheads), sent a letter to a local newspaper.

Part of their letter read:

“I’m writing about your article during July about the abuse of Indian People. Well I’m here to state the other side. I hate them; if you had to live near them you would also. We are an organization called dot busters. We have been around for 2 years. We will go to any extreme to get Indians to move out of Jersey City. If I’m walking down the street and I see a Hindu and the setting is right, I will hit him or her. We plan some of our most extreme attacks such as breaking windows, breaking car windows, and crashing family parties. ... They are a week [sic] race physically and mentally. We are going to continue our way. We will never be stopped.”

In Jersey City, not long after Mody’s death, another person of South Asian origin was assaulted by three men with baseball bats. Incidents still continue even though laws against hate crimes have been instituted in New Jersey.

Scenario 2: 2003

“On November 27, 2003, *Metro West* reported that an Ashland, Massachusetts, teenager defaced a Hindu temple in Ashland on Halloween. Anthony Picciolo, 17, was convicted of spray-painting hate messages. Police said Piccioli spray-painted ‘Sand NRRRRRRR beware,’ and ‘head,’ on a rock near the Hindu temple. Police said ‘head’ was short for ‘towel head.’ On June 25, 2003, in Boston, an Indian graduate student named Saurabh Bhalerao, who was working part time as a pizza deliveryman, was the target of deplorable abuse. He was robbed, beaten, burned with cigarettes, stuffed in a trunk, and stabbed twice before finally being dumped along a road. Police suspect that the attackers mistook the Hindu man for a Muslim. As they were beating him, the attackers supposedly taunted, ‘go back to Iraq.’”

Information sourced from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link267>

Set 3

Event 1: 1991

“Suspicious Fires Probed for Ties to Gulf Tension: Crime: An arson unit studies a West Los Angeles market blaze and police label the torching of a Sherman Oaks store a likely hate crime. Owners of both businesses are of Mideast descent.”

... The Los Angeles Fire Department, meanwhile, opened an arson investigation into the other blaze that seriously damaged the Elat Market on West Pico Boulevard and destroyed an adjoining stationery store and storage area. The fire, which occurred about 11 p.m. Tuesday, caused an estimated \$325,000 damage.

“Because of the situation in the Middle East, we called for an arson unit right away,” said Assistant Fire Chief Ed Allen. “The market is owned by a gentleman from Iran.”

“The fire had a very good start,” Allen added. “There was a lot of heavy smoke when the first companies arrived. It very quickly broke through the roof. When that happens, you take a hard look at it.”

Although the owner, Ray Golbari, said repeatedly he thought the fire was “just an accident,” some neighbors said it was possible someone had started the fire in the mistaken belief that Golbari is of Arab, rather than Jewish, descent.

The Elat Market has signs in both Hebrew and Persian script on the front, but Golbari said the Persian script is sometimes misread as Arabic.

There have been two other suspicious fires in the Pico-Robertson district in recent weeks. One occurred Dec. 27 at an insurance agency, and another on the night of Jan. 17 at a hot dog stand.

“This is the kind of violence that we have been warning the authorities that the Arab-American community would be subjected to,” said Nazih Bayda, regional director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Information sourced from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link268>

Event 2: February 2009

As an eighth-grade student at Beckendorf Junior High School in Katy, Texas—the same town where residents infamously held pig races to protest a proposed mosque in 2006—Abdul Hamed initially accepted a classmate’s explanation that jibes like “terrorist” and “your family blows things up,” were just jokes.

But the teasing continued almost daily, and soon escalated into shoving.

Abdul alerted his teachers, who separated the boys in class, but the bullying would continue in the hallways. In early February 2009, on the school’s track field, Abdul shoved back.

According to Abdul, the boy left but returned several minutes later and sucker punched him, knocking him out and breaking his jaw. That was how Abdul’s Palestinian parents first learned about the bullying.

Abdul said school officials made the boy go to anger management counseling. “For what I went through, that punishment wasn’t even close,” said Abdul, whose jaw was wired shut and missed several weeks of school.

Abdul, now a 15-year-old sophomore at Seven Lakes High School where his attacker also goes, said he’s “moved on.”

Information sourced from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ch4.asp#link269>

SUMMARIZE!

What's happening in each event? Which acts are microaggressions, which might be called bullying, and which are hate crimes?

Event 1

Event 2

ANALYZE!

What terms are used to describe Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and/or Arab Americans in each event?

Event 1

Event 2

SYNTHESIZE!

Why does this matter? What does this show us? How?

Event 1

Event 2

Long Description Text for Bar Graph Graphic:

2010 Hate Crimes: Behind the Bias

Motivation percentages of the 6,624 single bias incidents in 2010:

Race: 47.3 percent

Religion: 20.0 percent

Sexual Orientation: 19.3 percent

Ethnicity/National Origin: 12.8 percent

Disability: 0.6 percent

[Return to Bar Graph Graphic.](#)