

May 2026



Ethnic Studies Educator Support



JOIN OUR
EDUCATOR
BULLETIN

Heritage carries multiple dimensions.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW
WHERE YOU ARE FROM?
WHAT HAS BEEN LOST?
WHAT HAS BEEN FOUND?

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR IN CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Jewish American Heritage Months.

This issue spotlights instructional materials that **bear witness** to the multiplicity of heritage by telling stories across generations. Through **intergenerational memory projects**, students can see creative models for one of the most foundational dimensions of heritage itself: *being curious about where one comes from*. The materials in this bulletin explore family history, testimony, ancestry, culture, movement, inheritance, resilience, and lived experience.

ESResources.org cultivates an evergreen instructional database for Ethnic Studies educators that offers hundreds of materials: easy access to interdisciplinary readings, classroom-ready lesson plans, experiential learning opportunities, and robust book collections for lifelong learning.

Through collaboration with trusted community partners and educators across California, our site continues to expand. Together, we work to strengthen the broader ecosystem that supports a *humanistic Ethnic Studies education*: historically rooted, culturally literate, interdisciplinary, emotionally accessible, intellectually serious, and attentive to inheritance, memory, and student belonging.

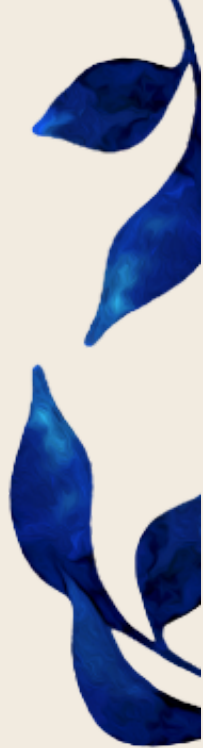


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Intangible Heritage

"... seeks to sustain a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction ... like tangible heritage, intangible heritage is culture, like natural heritage, it is alive." It includes **"collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition ... transmitted orally or by gesture, and ... modified over a period of time through a process of collective recreation."**

-Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a world-renowned anthropologist, is Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at Tisch School of the Arts, NY. This quote is from her essay, "Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production."

Iranian Jewish American Heritage



IN CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

THE NIGHTINGALE OF IRAN

This Documentary Podcast Travels: Across Space, Time, and Sounds



“

It has always been a mystery to the Dardashti sisters – Why did their family leave Iran? Now, in a documentary podcast series, the sisters reveal painful secrets unspoken for generations. The Nightingale of Iran is a story that will resonate with outsiders everywhere.

- JTA x PRX

THE PERSIAN MUSIC I NEVER INHERITED

By Galeet Dardashti

I grew up in the US singing in my family band with my parents and two sisters. We sang in twelve languages including Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew, Greek, and Spanish, among others. ***But we never sang in Persian.*** This is surprising since my grandfather, Younes Dardashti, was one of the most beloved singers of Persian classical music in mid-twentieth-century Iran, a religious Jew who became a national radio star known as "The Nightingale of Iran." My father, Farid, grew up in that world and was himself a teen pop idol on Tehran television before leaving for the United States in 1962. In America he eventually trained as a cantor, the professional singer who leads prayer in a synagogue. But the Persian music he and his father had grown up with wasn't part of my childhood. **That gap between what a family carries on and what it sets aside on the way to becoming American is one of the questions that has shaped my work as a musician and as an anthropologist.**

The American Jewish story is often told as a single arc, and the version that has come to stand in for the whole — Ashkenazi, with roots in Eastern Europe — represents only about two-thirds of American Jews. The other third includes Sephardi/Mizrahi Jews with roots in Spain, the Middle East and North Africa, Persian Jews like my father's family, and many others.

When my father auditioned for cantorial school in 1965, he discovered that becoming an American Jewish professional cantor essentially meant becoming an Eastern

European one. The Persian melodies he had grown up with weren't legible as "Jewish music" in that American context, so he let them go. *This is a pattern your students will recognize across many American ethnic experiences: the particular textures of a heritage — a language, a liturgical style, a way of cooking, a way of grieving — often get narrowed under the pressure to become recognizable as American, or as a recognizable kind of American minority.* What's striking is that no one forbade my father from singing Persian Jewish music. ***He simply understood that it wasn't what Jewish music was supposed to sound like in America.***

I've learned both from my family and from my academic work that heritage isn't a static object passed intact from one generation to the next. **It's a living practice that gets remade at every point of transmission — sometimes consciously, often not.** I've spent significant time as an adult learning the Persian Jewish music my father set aside — studying with teachers, working on a vocal style I hadn't grown up with, building a connection from fragments rather than inheriting it whole.

My sister Danielle and I created *The Nightingale of Iran*, a six-episode documentary podcast about our family's journey from Iran to America, and we're now developing curricula around it for classrooms because the questions **the podcast raises aren't only Jewish ones.** They are questions **about diaspora, assimilation, what survives and what gets lost, and how later generations go looking for what was left behind.**

mmmbbb

THE PERSIAN MUSIC I NEVER INHERITED

“ *My hope for Jewish American Heritage Month is that it becomes an occasion to ask those questions honestly — to **honor heritage as something worth carrying forward**, and to recognize that the **carrying is itself creative work**, that every generation, in taking up a tradition, remakes it.* Dr. Galeet Dardashti

Discover

LISTEN to the Podcast
A Six-Episode Series

Dive Deeper

To explore a large tapestry of Jewish immigrant stories from the Middle East and North Africa, consider using the “[Sephardi and Mizrahi Education Toolkit](#).” You can also learn and teach about [Libyan Jews](#) using personal stories, history, and cultural artifacts.

Enjoy Monajat



Galeet Dardashti sings with remixed samples of her grandfather’s legacy recordings. This “multi-sensory” project is a revival of inheritance — a reimagination of continuity and a cross-generational conversation through music integrating genres from jazz to Middle Eastern to ancient.

TESTIMONIALS

Teaching *The Nightingale of Iran*

"I spend a lot of time thinking about the humans my students will become after they leave my classroom for the last time ... If I teach my students anything, I hope that I teach them to be compassionate young people who can think critically about all of the content they consume ... The opportunity to teach *The Nightingale of Iran* has been a gift ... the podcast invites listeners to question and reflect upon (sometimes harmful) preconceptions they may have had ... Perhaps more than ever before, we need to be helping and preparing students to think about and discuss difficult topics, including Middle Eastern geopolitics. ***The Nightingale of Iran* is an excellent entry point for educators hoping to have these challenging, if difficult, conversations with their students.**"

- Public High School Teacher, Kentucky

"This podcast **really helped me to understand** the struggles middle eastern Jews faced before and after the Holocaust. Although we've studied the Holocaust and its impact on Jewish people previously, learning about the Dardashti family through the *The Nightingale of Iran* opened my eyes to new struggles I didn't previously know about, such as housing struggles Jewish refugees in Israel faced after 1948 and the challenges Jewish Iranians faced as they attempted to adjust to new communities in Israel or the United States."

- 11th-grade student

Vietnamese American Heritage



IN CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

THE BEST WE COULD DO

This illustrated memoir explores intergenerational Vietnamese testimony, finding meaning through the act of parent-child transmission.



The Best We Could Do by Thi Bui © Thi Bui. Published by Abrams ComicArts.

“

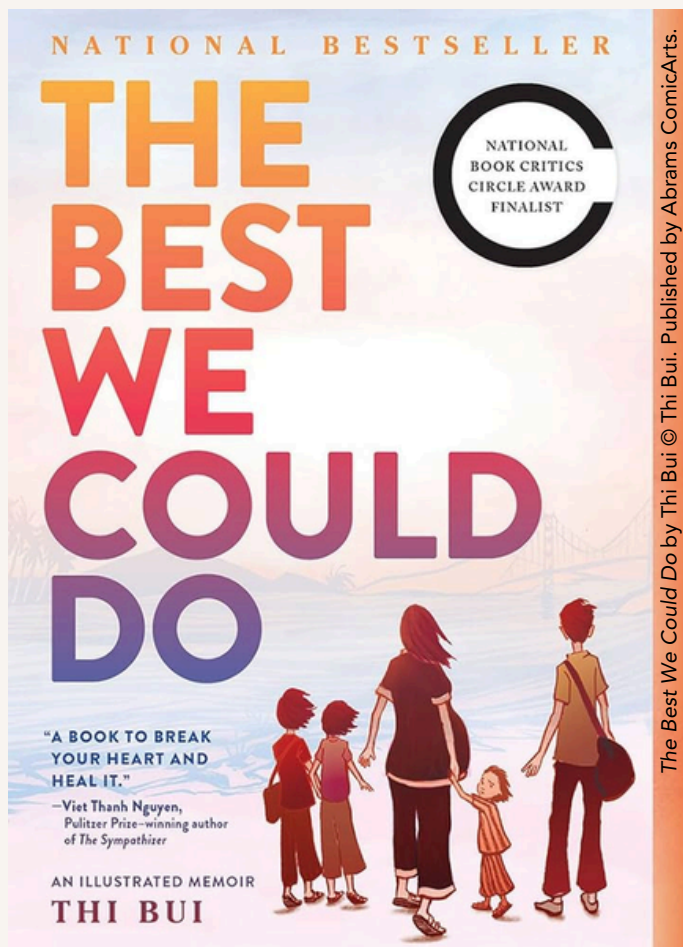
"I began to record our family history ... thinking that if I bridged the gap between the past and the present, I could fill the void between my parents and me."

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

THE BEST WE COULD DO

“A book to break your heart and heal it.”

Viet Thanh Nguyen, Pulitzer-prize winning novelist



This illustrated memoir is a deeply personal journey between audience and author, and between the author and her parents, Má and Bố. It is the testimony of a family — their daring **escape after the fall of South Vietnam**, the life that continues afterward, and the memories of what came before.

Teaching Guide

Pronunciation Guide

Korean American Heritage



IN CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

KOREAN AMERICAN STORY

“The Legacy Project” is an initiative to “capture, share, and archive the vibrancy of Korean American experience through authentic, personal storytelling”



Korean American Story invites opportunity to “foster dialogue, build community, and promote healing. By archiving these stories, we affirm our experiences as Korean Americans and preserve our history for future generations.”

*Letters to My
Hometown*

Legacy Project Archives

Queer Joy Series

WHAT DOES AAPI MEAN?



Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

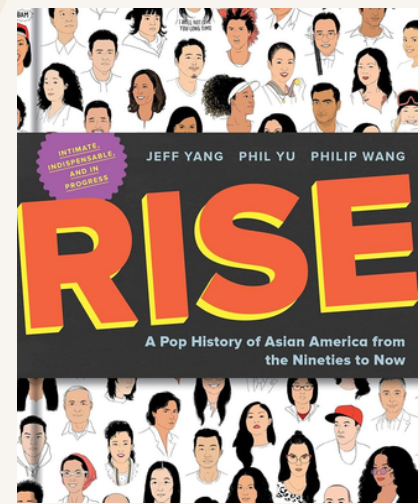
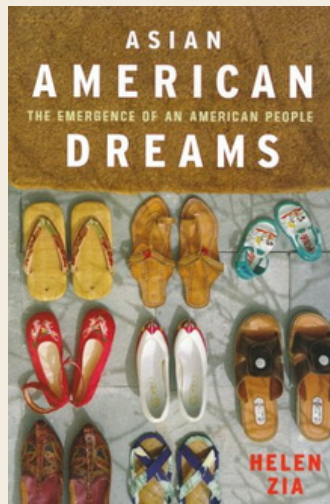
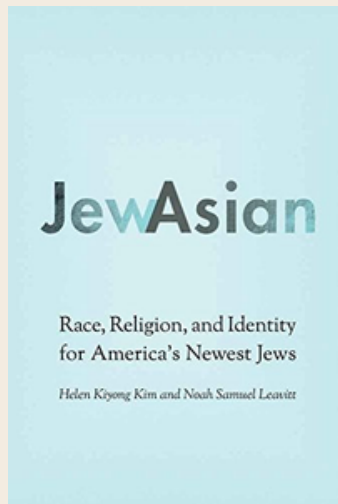
The study of people of Asian descent in the United States has taken on various academic field names, including Asian American Studies and Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies. Additionally, various subfields have emerged out of Asian American Studies as a means of including groups that have been historically marginalized and understudied within the field. Arab American Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, Filipina/o/x Studies, and Pacific Islander Studies are just a few. Ethnic studies educators and administrators are encouraged to consider student demographics, needs, interests, and current events when crafting a course or lesson, as this may help determine what framework will be most useful for the class.

An Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies course can be designed to be an introduction to the sociopolitical construction of Asian American and Pacific Islander identity in the United States. Students can explore the diverse history, cultures, struggles, and politics of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as part of the larger Asian diasporas. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders come from many different countries with varying languages, dialects, customs, and cultural practices. This field of study contends with how the history and experiences of migration, resettlement, and exclusion have intersected with race, gender, and class to shape life in the United States for people of Asian descent. Teachers may want to consider beginning with a lesson plan that addresses Asian Americans and the model minority myth in a foundational course to introduce Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies. This approach can help students understand the racial formation and racialization of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and can guide teachers on how to build inclusive courses on a panethnic identity. Ultimately, this course considers how different Asian and Pacific Islander heritages are reflected in collective and distinctive identities, cultures, and politics.

Text retrieved from Chapter 3. California State-Approved Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC): “Instructional Guidance for K-12 Education.” Access the full text of the ESMC and PDFs for individual lesson plans at [ESResources.org](https://www.esresources.org).

Discover READ

Books



Articles



Discover

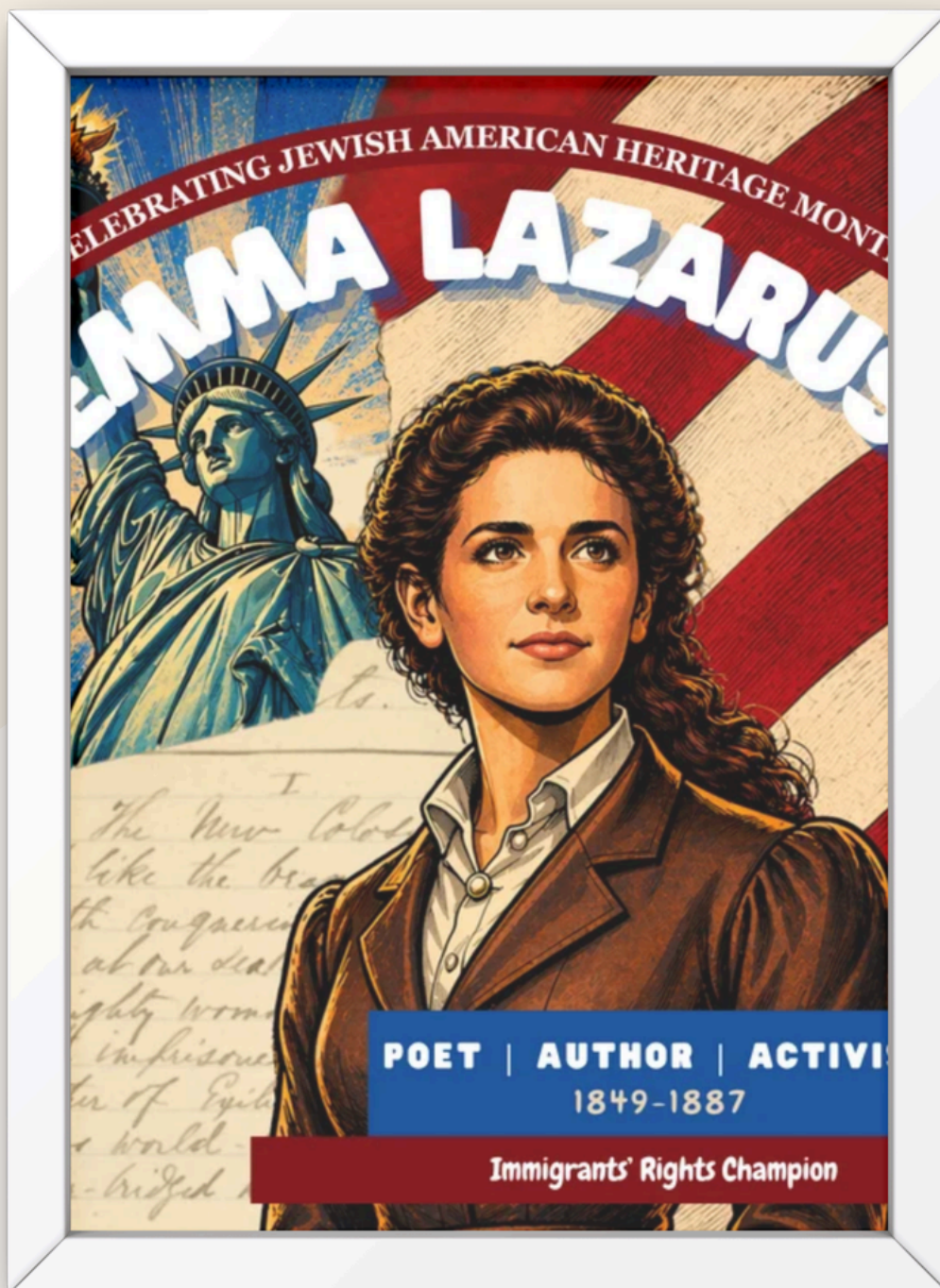
WATCH AND LISTEN

This Filipino American Life Podcast – Exploring the nuanced experiences of Filipinos in the United States

Little Manila: Filipinos in California's Heartland



Multicultural Bridge



[DOWNLOAD](#)

THE EMMA LAZARUS PROJECT

Migration, Memory, and Reimagining What It Means to “Breathe Free”...

If You Could Write a Poem For The Statue of Liberty Today, What Would You Say?

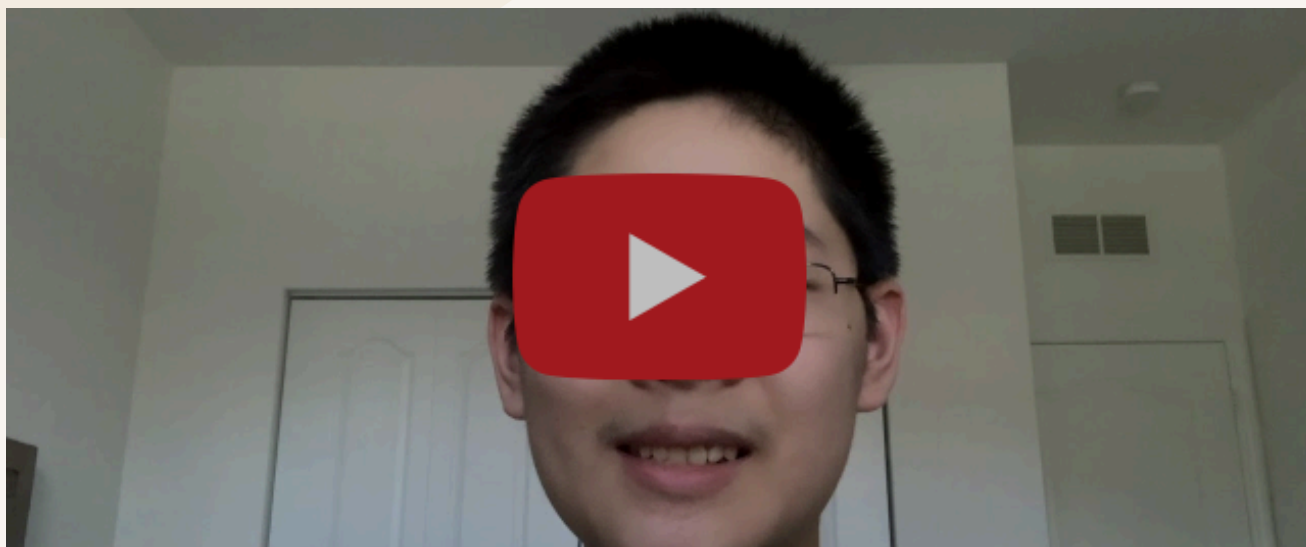


Interactive “Storybook”
Lesson Plans & Curriculum

EMMA LAZARUS PROJECT

**What does it mean to “breathe free”?
You know her poem—but do you know her story?**

The “Emma Lazarus Project” Poetry Contest invited students to reimagine the meaning of the Statue of Liberty using their own ideas - because historical texts continue to acquire new meanings across time, historical inquiry connects to present, and personal inheritance can inform civic reflection. Educators are celebrating the multiple dimensions of heritage when they model that creative interpretation is a form of student agency. When they engage curiosity, diversity, and lived experiences through cultural memory. And when they situate intergenerational storytelling as a connecting fabric for students.



High School | 2020 | Winner
Lady Liberty: Reimagined
by Kevin Kong

*25 poems from
winners and finalists*

EMMA LAZARUS'

"GOLDEN DOOR!"

Emma Lazarus' "**The New Colossus**," mounted on the Statue of Liberty, travels far beyond the monument—a dream inherited by generations of refugees arriving at “sea-washed, sunset gates,” searching for refuge at “the golden door.” This is an American story—and a Jewish one. Lazarus, a Jewish American writer and refugee advocate, came from a long history of exile. **Her Sephardic ancestors were among the first Jews to establish a permanent community in what would become the United States: 23 refugees, one ship, an enduring beginning.** Jews in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) had faced **forced conversion and Inquisition-era persecution.** Some lived as “*Conversos*,” practicing Judaism in secret, some fled. **Those who found refuge in Dutch-controlled Brazil faced uncertainty when, in 1654, the Portuguese regained control. That small ship carrying 23 Jewish refugees from Recife (Brazil) arrived in New Amsterdam—present-day NYC—carrying some of Emma Lazarus’ own ancestors.** Director-General Peter Stuyvesant tried to bar them from staying, but after fierce debate and support from Jewish communal leaders in Amsterdam, the refugees were ultimately permitted to remain.

Centuries later, born in New York City, Emma Lazarus (1849–1887) gave us language that embodies not just her own Jewish family history, but a broader one. With the words, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” she tied the Statue of Liberty to an ongoing, unfinished conversation about immigration, belonging, and who gets to call a place home. Her legacy reminds us how personal history and public voice shape the stories we tell, inviting exploration into the tangled histories of exile, diaspora, and migration as they intersect across religious, linguistic, geographic, national, and family origins.

Extended Enrichment





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Jewish American experiences have been shaped by and in relation to interethnic **bridge building** themes at the core of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. Performance is one way that artists have participated in “**intangible heritage**” – the transmission of cultural knowledge through embodied practice. Intangible heritage includes “*oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivities, traditional medicine ... the culinary arts and all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspects of culture.*”

Your students know about feminism...

BUT DO THEY KNOW THIS PART OF THE STORY?

“*As I travel around the world...I am always meeting women who introduce themselves by saying, ‘I’m the Bella Abzug of Russia, or ‘I’m the Bella Abzug of Kazakhstan,’ or ‘I’m the Bella Abzug of Uganda.’”*

Hillary Clinton, 1998

Through activism, writing, protest, and public leadership, **three Jewish American women helped transform society**. **Betty Friedan**’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) became one of the most influential texts of its time, sparking a national conversation about gender roles. **Gloria Steinem** helped pioneer feminist ideas in mainstream culture and co-founded *Ms. Magazine*, a landmark publication of the era. **Bella Abzug**, known as “Battling Bella,” brought a bold and outspoken voice to Congress—with the 1970 campaign slogan, “This woman’s place IS in the House—the House of Representatives.” Together, they broke barriers—challenging patriarchy, misogyny, and sexism—and expanded access to education, career options, civic leadership, and political life. Their legacies teach that well-placed chutzpah can push society to open doors for the generations to come.

Discover

BELLA ABZUG

Appropriately born in 1920, the year American women won the right to vote, "Battling Bella" was a life-long rebel; a lawyer, mother, civil rights activist, passionate pacifist, author, disruptor, fierce feminist, and social justice warrior ... Bella was elected to Congress in 1971. Her campaign slogan? **"This Woman's Place IS In The House - The House of Representatives!"** As a Congresswoman, Bella sponsored 306 bills and co-sponsored 1,132. She was the first member of Congress to embrace, engage, support and defend the gay and lesbian community, introducing the [Equality Act in 1974](#). Her first House vote was for the [Equal Rights Amendment](#). She introduced the [Equal Credit Opportunity Act \(1974\)](#). In partnership with **Congresswomen Patsy Mink and Shirley Chisholm**, Bella pushed for the groundbreaking [Title IX/Opportunity in Education Act \(1972\)](#), prohibiting gender discrimination in schools. Determined to make government proceedings more transparent, she was a key figure in the passage of the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#). An early and lifelong environmentalist, Bella fought for clean water and clean energy. During her three terms in Congress, Bella brought close to six billion dollars into New York, distributing funds into the community, including by creating ramps to improve accessibility. Bella's legacy endures—globally.

DOWNLOAD *the classroom reading assignment.*

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PRIMARY SOURCES

*Compliment your
teaching*

Disclaimer: The materials below are intended as starting points for teacher exploration and potential primary source integration; they *have not* been comprehensively reviewed page-by-page for classroom use. Educators should **preview** and **select excerpts** appropriate for their students and instructional context and plan to excerpt, contextualize, or adapt for student use.

- [Bella Abzug: How One Tough Broad from the Bronx Fought Jim Crow and Joe McCarthy, Battled for the Rights of Women and Workers, Rallied Against War and for the Planet, and Shook Up Politics Along the Way \(2007\) – oral history by Suzanne Braun & Mary Thom. Includes personal interactions and stories from Bella Abzug’s family, friends, and colleagues.](#)
- [Bella Abzug’s mock American Express ad created at a 1983 Center for American Women and Politics conference | Congresswoman Bella Abzug tells how she helped secure equal credit for women.](#)
- [Ms. Magazine digital archives](#)
- [Plenary Speech at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women - Sept. 12, 1995 - Archives of Women's Political Communication](#)
- [Gender Gap: Bella Abzug’s Guide to Political Power for American Women \(1984\) by Bella Abzug & Mim Kelber](#)
- [Bella! Ms. Abzug Goes to Washington \(a diary of her first year in Congress\)](#)

Lesson Plans & Toolkits



Discover INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

ESResources.org

- A collection of over one hundred AAPI educational materials at [ESResources.org](https://www.esresources.org). You can recommend new materials for the site [here](#).

Korean American Studied Education Foundation 8-Part Curriculum

- Lesson 1: The Korean Diaspora and Korean Americans
- Lesson 2: The First Koreatown and the Legacy of Dosan Ahn Chang Ho
- Lesson 3: Immigrant Experiences of Korean Americans: The Sammy Lee Story
- Lesson 4: The Korean Independence Movement
- Lesson 5: Young Oak Kim: Hero and Humanitarian
- Lesson 6: Aftermath of the Korean War and Korean Transnational Adoptions
- Lesson 7: Saigu: The 1992 LA Civil Unrest
- Lesson 8: Korean Popular Culture in the United States

Discovery Education Testimony & Artistic Expression

- Lesson Plan, 2 class periods (60-90 min) + Activity
- Stories That Shaped a Nation - Having the Right to Not Agree: Honoring Civil Discourse & Dissent 60-90 minutes



LESSON PLANS

**California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum
(ESMC)**

- Lesson 14: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the Model Minority Myth
- Lesson 15: Cambodian Americans/Deportation Breaking Families apart
- Lesson 16: Chinese Railroad Workers
- Lesson 17: Little Manila, Filipino Laborers, and the United Farm Workers (UFW)
- Lesson 18: Hmong Americans— Community, Struggle, Voice
- Lesson 19: Indian Americans: Creating Community and Establishing an Identity in California
- Lesson 20: The Japanese American Incarceration Experience Through Poetry and Spoken Word—A Focus on Literary Analysis and Historical Significance
- Lesson 21: Korean American Experiences and Interethnic Relations
- Lesson 22: The Immigrant Experience of Lao Americans
- Lesson 23: Historical and Contemporary Experiences of Pacific Islanders in the United States
- Lesson 24: South Asian Americans in the United States
- Lesson 25: Vietnamese American Experiences— The Journey of Refugees
- Lesson 25.1: Additional Topics in Asian American Pacific Islander Studies

Discover

TOOLKITS & COLLECTIONS

- [Filipino American History Month: Fiction & Literature](#) (Los Angeles Public Library)
- [Saigu: An archive of writings and images on the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest](#)
- [Contemporary Jewish Museum](#) | [The CJM](#) Educator Resources
- [Unpacked for Educators](#)
- [Jewish American Heritage Month \(JAHM\)](#)
- [Toolkit & Resources - Jewish American Heritage Month](#)
- [Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley](#)
- [American Jewish Historical Society – Emma Lazarus Project](#)
- [CSU Dominguez Hills Digital Collections](#)
- [Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[Teaching with Primary Sources for Middle School](#)
[Educator Resources for Teaching Testimony](#)



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