



# LEAVING HOME:

## Chinese Migrations in the Mid-Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Assessment and Activity Options

## ABOUT THESE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

The activities provided in the following pages are intended for use with the **Leaving Home: Chinese Migrations in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century** background reading, available on the Asia Pacific Curriculum website (<http://www.asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/Chinese-migrations>). They can be used to build and assess the curricular competencies outlined in the re-designed social studies curriculum for British Columbia (B.C.) high schools, with particular focus on competency 4 (**continuity and change**) and competency 6 (**perspective**).

These competencies are (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/10-12#ss>):

1. Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
2. Assess the significance of people, locations, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance).
3. Assess the credibility of and justification for evidence after investigating the reliability of sources and data, the adequacy of evidence, and the bias of accounts and claims (evidence).
4. **Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups, at different times and places (continuity and change).**
5. Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, places, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence).
6. **Explain and infer different perspectives on past and present people, places, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspective).**
7. Recognize implicit and explicit ethical judgments in a variety of sources (ethical judgment).
8. Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions and assess varying responses to events in the past or present (ethical judgment).

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Questions and feedback may be directed to the Asia Pacific Curriculum project, an initiative of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Education, at [curriculum@asiapacific.ca](mailto:curriculum@asiapacific.ca).



## ACTIVITY 1: INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF MIGRATION

Migration within and out of China in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century had many types of causes. In this four-step activity, you will investigate the factors that caused migration in one of the three case studies provided:

1. Flight migration during the Taiping Rebellion
2. Internal economic migration to Manchuria
3. International economic migration

Then, you will decide which factors mattered, and whether they played a direct or indirect role.

### STEP 1: REVIEW THE CONTEXT

Review the description of China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the factors that shaped the context for migration. Briefly describe each factor in the right-hand column of the “What Caused Migration?” worksheet. If there are factors you think are important but were not mentioned, describe them in the box that says “Other.”

### STEP 2: IDENTIFY FACTORS THAT MATTER FOR YOUR CASE STUDY

Select one of the three case studies. As you read through, look back at your list from Step 1. In column 2, answer the following question: Did this factor cause migration in your case study?

### STEP 3: DETERMINE THE ROLE

Decide whether the factors played a direct role or indirect role in causing migration. Another way to think about it is whether the factors were an immediate cause or underlying cause. Immediate causes are generally those that are visible and close to the event, whereas underlying causes may be ‘in the background’ or happening at an earlier time in history.

For all factors you selected as important, answer whether you think they played a direct or indirect role in column 2.

### STEP 4: DETERMINE THE IMPORTANCE

In the last step, decide what you think are the *most* important factors (either direct/immediate or indirect/underlying) that caused your case of migration. For the factor you think was most important, put a #1 in the right-hand column of the worksheet, a #2 for the second-most important, and so on.

## WORKSHEET: WHAT CAUSED MIGRATION IN CHINA?

Step 1	Steps 2 and 3	Step 4
Expanding empire	<p><b>Step 2: Did this factor cause the migration in your case study?</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Step 3: If you answered 'yes' in Step 2, was the cause direct or indirect?</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Direct    <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect</p>	Order of importance in causing migration (e.g., #1, #2).
Population growth	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes:  <input type="checkbox"/> Direct    <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect</p>	
Declining governance	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes:  <input type="checkbox"/> Direct    <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect</p>	
Lack of employment opportunities	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes:  <input type="checkbox"/> Direct    <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect</p>	

Step 1	Steps 2 and 3	Step 4
Internal upheaval	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect	
Foreign intrusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect	
New transportation technologies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect	
Growing demand for labour	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect	
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect	

## **ACTIVITY 2: PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION THEN AND NOW**

Each type of migration presented in the three case studies from mid-19th-century China (flight migration, internal economic migration, and international economic migration) exists in the present day. Unfortunately, we do not have much direct evidence or documentation of the experience of migrants from China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, we do have more evidence and documentation of people who experience these migrations today.

Select one of the case studies and examine what that type of migration looks like today. There are some suggested resources on the following pages to help you get started.

After you have finished your research, be prepared to answer the following questions:

1. What is similar about the type of migration in your case study then and now? Are the causes of that type of migration the same? Are there some differences?
  
2. Thinking about present-day examples of migration, what are the consequences of migration—for the migrants, the places they left behind, and the places that become their new homes?
  
3. Finally, thinking about the articles you read or videos you watched, what do you think the authors and narrators are trying to communicate about migration?

## CASE STUDY #1: FLIGHT MIGRATION

Compare people fleeing the violence and destruction of the Taiping Rebellion with people fleeing conflict (and other circumstances) today.

### Key terms:

- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
- Refugees

### TO GET YOU STARTED

#### General

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Who Is an IDP (Internally Displaced Person)?" (video: 1:12), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfZ9RIDfgxs>

John Campbell, "Internally Displaced Continue to Grow in 2016," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/internally-displaced-continue-grow-2016>

#### Examples from the Present Day

Zachary Laub, "No Refuge," Interactive Backgrounder by the Council on Foreign Relations (see section "Enhance International Support for IDPs" in the "System under Strain" section, as well as the "Causes of Displacement" section)  
<https://www.cfr.org/interactive/refugee-crisis/index.html#!/a-system-under-strain>

Radio Free Europe, "In Kabul, IDPs Find Security, Little Help" (video: 2:48),  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfIKiIA3SA>

Al Jazeera, "Afghanistan's Internally Displaced" (video: 2:52),  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_wlp1nWxFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_wlp1nWxFU)

New York Times VR, "The Displaced" (story of three children currently displaced by conflict) (video: 11:08), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecavbpCuvkl>. (Note: This is a virtual reality video. It can be watched as a regular video, and the viewer can manipulate the screen to get a more panoramic view, but may have to re-adjust the screen to see the subtitles.)

## CASE STUDY #2: INTERNAL ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Compare economic migrants to Manchuria to internal economic migrants in China today.

### Key ideas and terms:

- Hukou (Household Registration System)
- Economic reforms of the late 1970s/1980s

### TO GET YOU STARTED

#### General

The Economist, "China: The Largest Migration in History" (video: 2:43),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNXg-kYk-LU>

Andrew Scheineson, "China's Internal Migrants," Council on Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-internal-migrants>

#### Videos about Young Adult Migrants

FT World, "Meet the Fragile Middle: China's Youth Migrant Workers" (video: 2:26)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTZd9gt-b04>

China Icons, "Happy Factory: The Hopes and Dreams of Chinese Factory Workers"

(video: 14:20), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wpX5jLJLnl>

PBS NewsHour, "Urban Migration for Young Chinese on the Rise" (video: 4:54),

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/urban-migration-for-young-chinese-on-the-rise>

#### Videos about the Impact of Economic Migration on Chinese Families

VICE News, "Year of the Dog: Inside the World's Largest Human Migration"

(video: 26:35), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPNkJgrSaGM>

Matthew Carney, "China's Left-Behind Generation" (video: 25:00),

Al Jazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2016/11/china-left-generation-161130065311382.html> (also available on YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MM7BS271jUg>)



## CASE STUDY #3: INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Compare Chinese economic migrants to Latin America in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with international economic migrants today who face similar conditions.

### Key terms:

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour

### TO GET YOU STARTED

Briefing Sheet, "The Chinese Coolies in Latin America," next page.

### General

International Labour Organisation, "Lured by a Job, Trapped in Forced Labour" (video: 1:17), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOHq0MIN3PY>

International Labour Organisation, "Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking," <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

### Forced Labour Featuring Men

Environmental Justice Foundation, "Thailand's Seafood Slaves" (video: 13:38), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo35uvxPXPw>

Al Jazeera, Fault Lines, "Seafood Slaves" (similar case as the Environmental Justice Foundation video above) (video: 24:19) <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/faultlines/2016/03/seafood-slaves-160308070134432.html> (Also available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRXNYJXE03I>)

BBC News, "My Life as a Slave" (video: 2:48), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59KGc6UyjAw>

Al Jazeera, 101 East, "Myanmar's Youngest Maids" (video: 25:55), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnU7nO563Bc>

## BRIEFING SHEET: THE CHINESE 'COOLIES' IN LATIN AMERICA

From 1847 to 1874, about 125,000 Chinese men migrated to Cuba, mostly to work on sugar plantations. Another 100,000 went to Peru to work in guano mines. These migrants were referred to as "coolies." Some of them were abducted and forced onto ships headed for Latin America. Others signed contracts, believing they would receive wages, housing, food, and access to a doctor. They were also told they could pay off the cost of their sea travel after about 5–8 years of work. They had no way of knowing that their new employers had no intention of providing what they were promised.

In the 1860s and 1870s, the international media began reporting on the miserable living and working conditions of these Chinese workers. Finally, the Qing government sent fact-finding missions to both countries to learn more. They were assisted by several foreign governments: England, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States. The delegation to Cuba recorded statements from more than 1,000 Chinese workers, describing their 'recruitment,' the conditions aboard the ship that took them to Cuba or Peru, and the circumstances of their work and lives. The observations from the fact-finding mission included the following:

- Many migrants "declared that they had been kidnapped or decoyed."
- "...the mortality during the voyage from wounds caused by blows, suicide and sickness proves to have exceeded 10 per cent."
- "...on arrival at Havana [capital of Cuba] they were sold into slavery, a small proportion being disposed of to families and shops, whilst the large majority became the property of sugar planters."
- "...the cruelty displayed...is great... and unendurable. The labour, too, on the plantations is...excessively severe, and the food to be insufficient; the hours of labour are too long, and the chastisements [punishment] by rods, whips, chains, stocks [cause] suffering and injury. During the past years a large number have been killed by blows, have died from the effects of wounds and have hanged themselves, cut their throats, poisoned themselves with opium, and thrown themselves into wells and sugar caldrons."
- "On the termination of the contract, the employers, in most cases withhold the certificate of completion, and insist on renewal of engagements, which may extend to even more than 10 years, and during which the same system of cruelty is adhered to; whilst if the Chinese refuse to assent, they are taken to the depots, whence in chains, and watched by guards, they are forced to repair roads, receiving no compensation for their labour, undergoing a treatment exactly similar to that of criminals in jail. Afterwards they are compelled to again enter the service of an employer, and sign a contract, on the completion of which they are once more taken to the depots; and as this process is constantly repeated, a return home, and an attempt to gain a livelihood independently, become impossible."

After the Commission's report, the Spanish recruiters were forced to change their practices. They still recruited Chinese to work in Latin America, but under better terms than before. The Spanish were forced to pay for the remaining Chinese workers to return to China, but only a small percentage of the Chinese migrants returned to their hometowns.

Quotes are from *The Cuba Commission Report: A Hidden History of the Chinese in Cuba, the Original English-Language Text of 1876*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp. 33-34.



**CHINESE IN CUBA**

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