At independence, the majority of immigrants to the United States were from Northern and Western Europe.

But in the late 1800s, immigrants with markedly different languages, customs, and traditions began to arrive. Many of these "new immigrants" were from Southern or Central Europe. They were Roman Catholics.

Many from Eastern Europe were Orthodox Christians or Jews.

But the nation was experiencing an Industrial Revolution and there was a demand for factory workers.
Yet the cultures that were most foreign to Americans were the cultures of Asia. At this time, most Americans were ethnocentric. They believed American culture was superior to other cultures and American culture was influenced by Western Europe.

I may not like immigrants from Southern, Central, or Eastern Europe but at least, they are from Europe!

Chinese and Japanese cultures were the most foreign to the American descendants of the "old immigrants."

Now, this is too much. This must stop. What will happen to America?

Like other immigrants, the Chinese came to the United States to escape famine and economic hardships. They came to work and provide a better life for their families. The Chinese helped build the railroads and work in the mines. Because owners knew that immigrants would work for less, they sometimes fired existing employees and hired the Chinese to work in their places.

Bob, you're fired. This here fellow will work for less.
In the late 1860s, Dennis Kearney organized the Workingmen's party in California to ban the immigration of Chinese people. Anti-Chinese agitation led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The ban on Chinese immigration was made permanent in 1902.

Whereas, in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory; Therefore,

Be it enacted, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be ... suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after expiration of said ninety days, to remain within the United States.

Prejudice is NEVER Right!
1. How did the "new immigrants" differ from the "old immigrant"

2. How had immigration changed by the 1880s?

3. Why did many "new immigrants" come to the U.S.?

4. How did Chinese immigrants help the United States?

5. Why did some immigrants face discrimination?

6. Why did some Californians support the Chinese Exclusion Act?

7. How did the Chinese Exclusion Act affect Chinese immigration?

8. To what extent are American attitudes towards immigrants today similar to or different from the attitudes in the United States of the 1870s and 1880s?