

POPULATION OF CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES 1860-1940

(48 Contiguous States Only)

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE IN U.S.	Resident Aliens	Citizens*	TOTAL U.S. POPULATION
1860	34,933	34,933	—	31,443,321
1870	63,199	55,396	7,803	38,558,371
1880	105,465	89,023	16,442	50,155,783
1890	107,488	94,987	12,501	62,947,714
1900	89,863	80,853	9,010	76,212,168
1910	71,531	56,596	14,935	92,228,531
1920	61,639	43,107	18,532	106,021,568
1930	74,954	44,086	30,868	123,202,660
1940	77,504	37,242	40,262	151,325,798

*Denied the opportunity to become U.S. citizens through naturalization, Chinese were citizens of the United States through birth on U.S. soil or to U.S. citizens no matter where the birth occurred.

● QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What percentage of the United States population was Chinese in 1880, two years before the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed? (Use formula 1A)
 - Calculate the percentage of Chinese in the U.S. population in 1990. The total U.S. population was 248,709,873 and the number of Chinese was 1,645,472.
 - Using the number of students in your classroom, calculate how many of them would represent the Chinese population in the United States (1) in 1880 and (2) in 1990. (Use formula 1B)

I The Chinese Experience in 19th Century America

Would you say the Chinese population in the United States has increased a great deal? Moderately? Not much?

2. The thing that alarmed Americans in western states was not just the number of Chinese but the rate at which the number of Chinese seemed to be increasing.

Calculate the percent growth of the Chinese population between 1860 and 1870. (Use formula 2)

Between 1870 and 1880.

Between 1880 and 1890.

What happened between 1880 and 1890 to slow the growth?

3. Although Chinese immigrants made up only a very small part of the whole United States population, the Chinese were concentrated in certain areas. Californians, for example, saw many more Chinese immigrants than Americans living in states where few Chinese had settled. The following table shows the growth of the Chinese population in California over the three decades before the Exclusion Act.

Year	Chinese in California	Total population of California
1860	34,933	379,994
1870	49,277	560,247
1880	75,132	864,894

What percentage of the total California population was Chinese

In 1860?

In 1870?

In 1880?

Was there significant growth of the Chinese population in California compared to the growth of the whole population in California?

4. Compare the percentage of Chinese in the general population (#1) in 1880 with the percentage of Chinese in California (#3). Do either of these figures support the arguments made for exclusion in the readings?

FORMULAS

1A. The formula for calculating percentage of the Chinese in the U.S, population is

$$\text{number of Chinese} \div \text{total U.S. population} = \% \text{ of Chinese in general population}$$

Example: $105,465 \div 50,155,783 = \% \text{ of Chinese in U.S. population in 1880}$

1B. To figure what number of people in your class represents the percent of Chinese in the total population of 1880 or 1990, multiply the total number of students by the percent of Chinese in the population and then divide by 100.

Example: If your class has 25 students and you want to find out how many students make up 10%, you would do this calculation:

$$\frac{25 \times 10}{100} = 2.5 \text{ students}$$

2. To find the percent growth of the Chinese population, you use this formula

$$\begin{aligned} &(\text{population of later year} - \text{population of early year}) \div \text{population of early year} \\ &= \% \text{ growth} \end{aligned}$$

Example: To calculate the percentage growth of the Chinese population in the United States between 1860 and 1870, you would do the following calculation

$(63,199 - 34,933) \div 34,933 = \text{the percent that the Chinese population grew}$

Answer Key:

1. .2%, .6%
2. 1860 to 1870 80% increase
 1870 to 1880 67% increase
 1880 to 1890 1% increase

3. 1860 - 9%
 1870 - 8.8%
 1880 - 8.7%

The percent of Chinese in the population of California declined slightly.

4. Less than 1% in the total U.S. population and not more than 9% in the population of California.