

RUBRIC

RACISM

Text	Illustrations
Consider the way in which the creators address racist events or incidents.	
Racism is acknowledged in a meaningful way, with perpetrators of specific racist behaviors identified (such as using an active voice, rather than a passive voice; avoid “X experienced racism.”).	
Characters of different races work thoughtfully toward cultural understanding; APIA characters do not exist only to ameliorate white characters’ racial anxiety.	
Consider whether historical events or figures are interpreted with a present-day lens. Historical figures and events are presented in context.	

STEREOTYPES

Text	Illustrations
Books should avoid stereotypes, as described below.	
APIA stereotypes include exaggerated, othering, and/or dehumanizing depictions of model minority , shuffling feet, quiet, nerdy/studious/smart, submissive, accented or broken English, martial arts, inedible/smelly food, misogynistic, irrationally angry, essentialized religious faith and practices.	APIA stereotypes include exaggerated depictions of slant-eyes , rice bowl haircuts, long braids, Fu Manchu mustache, barefoot, yellow skin, short stature, large front teeth, or bowing.
Loaded words include conniving, superstitious, treacherous, terrorist, wily, crafty, inscrutable, docile, backward, exotic , boat people, fresh off the boat.	Outdated or traditional clothing not appropriate to the occasion, or ornamentation being the only identity marker for a character such as a head scarf or hijab.
	Decor not relevant to the occasion or narrative include luaus, hula dancing, grass skirts, Tiki novelties, leis, martial arts, paper lanterns,

	chopsticks, or Shamshir swords.
	Token symbolism including orientalist font, fake “Asian” lettering, inclusion of animals (pandas, elephants, snakes, dragons, etc.) not relevant to the story.

TOKENISM

Text	Illustrations
Books should avoid tokenism, as described below.	
APIA characters’ inclusion is not rendered in any meaningful way	
A character’s name or surname, the use of stereotypical broken English and exaggerated accents, or any of the above stereotypes should not be the only indicators of Asianness.	APIA characters look like white characters, but colored in differently or depicted as Asian only through Asian-appearing clothing and headscarves. Or, slanted eyes are the only characteristic that distinguishes Asian characters from other characters.

HUMANITY

Text	Illustrations
The text acknowledges the character’s humanity and race through authentic dialogue.	The illustrations acknowledge the character’s humanity and race with authentically rendered images.
Each APIA character/culture is depicted as distinct from one another and not lumped together as one monolithic Asian culture. For example, Japanese and Chinese cultures are shown as distinct and not lumped together as one monolithic East Asian culture. Arab and South Asian cultures and Islam and Hinduism are shown as distinct and not lumped together as one monolithic Muslim culture. Where applicable, stories depict a variety of skin tones and body shapes and attend to issues of colorism , fatphobia, etc.	

POWER, AGENCY, AND HEROES

Text	Illustrations
APIA characters are centered and depicted as heroes and leaders and as having agency, power, and the ability to solve problems. APIA characters are not depicted in subservient and passive roles or primarily as villains or stock characters (Dragon Lady , Fu Manchu , Madam Butterfly , Aladdin, etc.).	

<p>APIA characters' occupations are displayed with nuance, especially if they are commonly held jobs such as cab drivers, motel owners, grocery store owners, dry cleaners, technology professionals, doctors, and nurses (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).</p>	
<p>Female characters are not inactive observers; males are not always the active "doers."</p>	<p>Different genders are shown in a variety of roles.</p>
<p>APIA characters have as much dialogue (or meaningful dialogue) as non-APIA characters, or APIA characters speak English as appropriate, or do not communicate primarily through grunts and hand motions.</p>	<p>APIA people are not depicted on the margins.</p>

SETTING

Text	Illustrations
<p>Asian/Asian American and Pacific Island settings (Korea, Iran, Thailand, Chinatown, Filipinotown, Little Tokyo, Little India, Hawaiian Islands, Samoa, etc.) are authentically described and positively support the narrative.</p>	<p>Asian/Asian American and Pacific Island settings (Korea, Iran, Thailand, Chinatown, Filipinotown, Little Tokyo, Little India, Hawaiian Islands, Samoa, etc.) are authentically depicted and positively support the narrative.</p>
<p>APIA communities are depicted as vibrant and modern; stories that take place in the present do not depict Asian countries as inferior, backwards, or underdeveloped in relation to the west.</p>	

STORYLINE

Text	Illustrations
<p>APIA characters do not assimilate to whiteness (e.g., pressure to speak "perfect" English).</p>	
<p>Where applicable, the storyline addresses the impact of colonialism on the setting, characters, and other relevant aspects of the story.</p>	
<p>APIA characters can be who they are; they do not have to be extraordinarily kind, smart, hardworking, etc., to succeed. On the other</p>	

<p>hand, the storyline acknowledges that APIAs <i>have</i> to work harder to survive in the United States. Working and/or studying hard should be rendered in a way that dignifies the whole person within the context of their reality and avoids meritocracy.</p>	
<p>The character's Asianness is normalized and is not posed as a problem. For example, the storylines shouldn't only center pain, bullying, war, and rejection (especially for Southeast Asians and Muslims).</p>	
<p>Storylines should be evaluated for Othering characteristics, such as an overemphasis on the 5 Fs - food, festivals, folklore, famous people, fashion - or an overemphasis on immigration, looking different, etc.</p>	

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUNDS

<p>The book indicates the author's and/or illustrator's lived experiences, expertise, and/or research that recommend them as the creators of this book, with preferences for insider-created books.</p>
<p>The author's and/or illustrator's perspective is not primarily patriarchal, Americentric, or Eurocentric.</p>

COPYRIGHT DATES

<p>Consider that "colorblind" ideology became popularized in the late 1970s and can be reflected in children's literature. Furthermore, a publication date before 1990 may indicate that a book was created at a time when few APIA were involved in book publishing as either writer, illustrator, editor, reviewer, critic, etc., and should be evaluated with that in mind. Children's literature also follows sociopolitical trends; for example, with the rise of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 environment, South Asian and Muslim characters were often conflated with security threats or violence. In recent years, there's been an uptick of books with what KT Horning calls "ambiguous ethnicities, eg. brown-skinned" characters with no other identifying characteristics (2017).</p>
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Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework

Identity

Exploration of Self

- What identities do you hold? (Think about race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, immigration status, etc.)
- What does learning about our identities teach me about others? Myself?
- What identities are viewed as part of the dominant group (what is considered the norm or “normal”) in the society you live in?
- Which of your overlapping identities may be marginalized in the society you live in?
- How are some identities expressed more in certain spaces than other identities?
- How do the social spaces in which you participate impact how you view your own identity and the identities of others?

Stereotypes & Discrimination

- When you imagine “Asian American”, who do you imagine (which groups/communities) and who is left out of your imagination?
- How are certain identities stereotyped and represented/misrepresented?
- How could such stereotypes become reinforced in various aspects of society (law, education, media, health care, prison system, sports, entertainment)?
- How have stereotypes impacted the ways Asian Americans have been discriminated against in U.S. society?

Power & Oppression

Imperialism, War & Migration

- What is imperialism and how did it impact Asian migration to the United States?

- How have U.S. imperialism, wars, and military interventions in Asia induced Asian migration to the United States?
- When and from where have different groups of Asians migrated to the United States?
- What factors impacted how the U.S. designed its immigration and exclusion policies?
- How do current economic initiatives continue Asian migration for specific labor?

Citizenship & Racialization

- What are dominant perceptions of what it means to be “American” and what has shaped these ideas?
- How have Asian Americans fit into (or not) these perceptions and how have they been excluded or included from “American” citizenship?
- How does this inform Asian Americans’ relationships to other racialized groups?

Community & Solidarity

Resistance & Solidarity

- How have various groups of Asian Americans resisted against discriminatory laws, policies, and practices?
- How have Asian Americans built cross-ethnic and cross-racial solidarity to fight against racism and discrimination?
- What are examples of everyday resistances and acts of solidarity that individuals and families engage in to maintain linguistic, religious, ethnic practices in spite of the dominant cultures’ oppressive structures?
- What can these acts of resistance and alliances indicate to us about pathways forward?

Contention & Complexity

- In what ways have Asian Americans been complicit in anti-Black racism and settler colonialism?

- In what ways have Asian Americans sought to dismantle oppression?
- What contentions and divisions are there within and across various groups of Asian Americans and why? How have they affected various communities?

Reclamation & Joy

Reclaiming Histories

- How have Asian Americans reclaimed their histories and spaces of belonging that are largely forgotten, misrepresented, or left absent in the dominant society?
- How does reclaiming Asian American histories and stories allow Asian Americans to think about identity and power?
- How does Asian American reclamation of histories and spaces contribute to collective struggles against settler colonialism? How can we reconcile this?

Creative Expression

- How is representation impacted by both the producer and the audience?
- Who are some Asian American artists that have challenged systems and brought attention to Asian American stories?
- How have Asian Americans shown ingenuity and creativity beyond what is traditionally known as the arts?
- How have Asian Americans expressed their struggles, resilience, and hopes through arts and other creative expressions?