

Sample Context Questions

Project: What businesses did Chinese immigrants establish in Harlem in the 1920s & 1930s, and why?

Note: Your list of questions does not need to be this long!

Local:

- Who established the businesses operated by Chinese immigrants in Harlem?
- When were they established? Where were they established?
- What other businesses existed in Harlem?
- Who else established businesses in Harlem?
- When and where did other groups establish businesses in Harlem?
- Did other groups establish the same businesses as Chinese immigrants?
- Who worked in Harlem businesses?
- Who lived in Harlem? Who patronized Harlem businesses?
- What institutions and organizations existed in Harlem?
- What were the legal restrictions on business in Harlem, for Chinese immigrants and for other groups?
- How did local unions and community groups respond to Chinese businesses?

Regional / State

- What businesses did Chinese immigrants establish elsewhere in NYC, and in other places in the US?
- When were they established? Where were they established?
- Were there legal restrictions on Chinese businesses in other places?
- How did Harlem compare to other black neighborhoods in the northern United States?
- How did the prosperity of the 1920s and the Depression of the 1930s impact Chinese businesses?
- How did restrictions on immigration in the 1920s affect Chinese businesses?

Subject/Thematic

-Immigration

- How does Chinese immigration and American attitudes toward Chinese immigrants help explain the businesses they established?

- Were the businesses established by Chinese immigrants different before or after the 1920s and 1930s?
- How was the experience of Chinese immigrants different to that of other immigrant groups?

-Labor history

- Did the work involved in the businesses Chinese immigrants operated and who did that work change in the twentieth century?

-Asian Americans

- How did Chinese businesses contribute to the development of an Asian American identity?