Borders and Birthright

How immigration limits and citizenship rules changed

USH.C.1.4.E "Explain changes in federal immigration policy including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Gentlemen's Agreement, and the Supreme Court's application of the 14th Amendment."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each named law, agreement, or court ruling, and underline what it changed. Write A beside a change to admission and C beside a change to citizenship.

Who Could Enter? Who Was a Citizen?

1 In 1882, a Chinese laborer hoping to enter the United States faced a new federal barrier. The Chinese Exclusion Act stopped most Chinese laborers from immigrating for ten years. It still allowed some people, such as merchants and students, to enter. The act also barred Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens. Congress renewed the restrictions in 1892 and made the laborer ban permanent in 1902. Earlier federal immigration laws had not singled out a nationality for a broad laborer ban. The act marked a shift toward restricting entry by national origin and occupation, with families separated by the rules.

2 A different question reached the Supreme Court in 1898: Could the government deny citizenship to a person born in the United States because his parents were Chinese immigrants? In United States v. Wong Kim Ark, the Court ruled that Wong, born in San Francisco to Chinese parents who lived there, was a citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment. The amendment grants citizenship to people born in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction. This ruling protected birthright citizenship even while Congress restricted Chinese immigration. It did not remove the entry ban or give people born abroad a right to immigrate.

3 In 1907 and 1908, immigration rules shifted again through the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan. Rather than pass a law excluding all Japanese immigrants, Japan agreed to limit passports for laborers going to the United States. The agreement still permitted passports for certain relatives, including wives and children, to join Japanese residents already there. In return, San Francisco ended a policy that separated Japanese children into a different public school. Like the Chinese Exclusion Act, this arrangement limited labor migration, but it used diplomacy instead of a federal exclusion law. Neither rule overturned the Court's decision about U.S.-born citizens.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Chinese Exclusion Act change federal immigration policy, and who could still enter?

2. How did the Court's ruling in United States v. Wong Kim Ark affect citizenship without ending the Chinese Exclusion Act?

3. How did the Gentlemen's Agreement limit immigration differently from the Chinese Exclusion Act?

4. Why would the Court's ruling protect a child born in the United States to Chinese immigrant parents but not guarantee entry to a child born abroad?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A 1908 newspaper prints this headline: "Supreme Court Opens U.S. Borders to Everyone." Write a four- or five-sentence correction that explains how each of the three actions in the passage affected a different group. Make clear the difference between entering the country and being a citizen.

ANSWER KEY

Borders and Birthright

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.1.4.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each named law, agreement, or court ruling, and underline what it changed. Write A beside a change to admission and C beside a change to citizenship. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Chinese Exclusion Act change federal immigration policy, and who could still enter?	**It barred most Chinese laborers, a broad entry restriction based on nationality and occupation. Some people, including merchants and students, could still enter.**
2	How did the Court's ruling in United States v. Wong Kim Ark affect citizenship without ending the Chinese Exclusion Act?	**The Court held that Wong was a citizen because he was born in the United States. Its ruling protected birthright citizenship but did not end the ban on Chinese laborers entering.**
3	How did the Gentlemen's Agreement limit immigration differently from the Chinese Exclusion Act?	**Japan agreed to limit passports for laborers through an agreement with the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a federal law barring most Chinese laborers.**
4	Why would the Court's ruling protect a child born in the United States to Chinese immigrant parents but not guarantee entry to a child born abroad?	**The ruling applied the Fourteenth Amendment's citizenship protection to Wong because he was born in the United States. It did not give people born abroad a right to immigrate.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Supreme Court did not open the border to everyone. The Chinese Exclusion Act barred most Chinese laborers from entering and prevented Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens. Under the Gentlemen's Agreement, Japan limited passports for laborers, but certain family members could still join Japanese residents. The Court ruled that Wong Kim Ark was a citizen because he was born in the United States, a protection that did not erase entry limits.

Accept answers that distinguish limits on entry from citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment. Students should identify the Gentlemen's Agreement as a diplomatic arrangement, not a federal exclusion law.