Taking a Deeper Look

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
Chinese immigrants helped build the West Coast tracks, bridges, and infrastructure for the railroads. In 1882, the government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first U.S. law that barred immigration on the basis of race and nationality. This law passed because of racial prejudice against the Chinese and resentment that they worked for very low wages, which took jobs away from Americans. The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943.

Questions:
1. Look carefully—what’s going on in this picture?
2. Why did the artist draw Chinese people in the clothing of other immigrant groups?
   What was the artist’s point of view?
3. What’s the purpose of this cartoon?
4. Do you think some people agreed with the point of this cartoon? Who? Why? If not, why not?

Argue the pros and cons of this legislation from the following points of view. Learn more by using the Clues sheet from Activity One and conducting your own research. Make a list of the key points for your point of view.

Japanese farm worker
Chinese railroad worker
European-born immigrant
Orchard owner
Small family farmers