**Subject area/course**: History/U.S. History

**Grade level/band**: 11-12

**Task source**: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); author: Daisy Martin

**Chinese Exclusion Act Document-Based Question**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

During the late 19th century, the United States began to industrialize rapidly. As factories and cities grew, a strong demand for workers encouraged millions of immigrants to uproot themselves and make their way to America seeking jobs and a better life. On the East Coast, immigrants were mainly from various parts of Europe. On the West Coast, Chinese immigrants flooded in by the thousands. Some people welcomed these immigrants, but increasingly others regarded them as a threat. Economic troubles in the 1870s provoked conflicts between workers and business owners, and these troubles also affected attitudes toward Chinese immigrants. It was in this context that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1872 was passed. In this task, you will analyze several sources about the Chinese Exclusion Act and use evidence from those sources to defend your own thesis about that act.

1. **Final product**:

Historians have explained the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in varied ways. Using the documents provided and your knowledge of the late 19th century, write an argumentative essay in which you answer the following prompt:

*Why was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 passed? Use and cite evidence from the documents to support your argument. Use your background knowledge of the era as appropriate. Write a clearly organized essay that includes an introduction and conclusion.*

For your essay to be Proficient, it must meet the following descriptions.

*Argument*

* A central thesis clearly answers the prompt.
* Essay clearly presents related claims, counterclaim(s), reasons, and evidence.
* A counterclaim, distinct from the thesis, is challenged.

*Using Evidence*

* Multiple sources are accurately used in major parts of the argument.
* Explains evidence, including information and quotations, to support thesis.
* Sources are evaluated for perspective, believability, and accuracy.
* Connections between sources are made by grouping similar positions or identifying differences between sources.
* The dates and origins of sources help student make accurate claims.

*Historical Content*

* Core content relevant to the topic and necessary for understanding the argument is accurate, and *supports* the argument.
* Argument explains multiple reasons the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed or thoroughly explains a primary reason.
* Explains connections to relevant social, political, or economic conditions of late19th century America.

*Writing Organization and Clarity*

* Essay’s organization clearly guides reader through parts of the argument.
* Transitional words or phrases connect parts of the argument.
* Introduction goes beyond restating the prompt/thesis and conclusion follows from or supports the argument.

*Conventions*

* Sources are cited consistently using a standard format with only occasional minor errors.

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* Use information about the origins of a source to accurately understand it and use it as evidence in an argument;
* Use and explain evidence to support a claim;
* Understand that historical events have multiple causes;
* Write a thesis that clearly answers a prompt and clearly present related subclaims.

1. **Materials needed:**

* Chinese Immigration and Exclusion Chronology
* Documents A-G
* Tools A & B

1. **Time requirements:**

This task will take approximately 4-5 days in-class to complete.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the Chinese Exclusion Act Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.