



Ian Simpson is a learning designer in DoE Learning Systems, Public Schools NSW. His article showcases two rich and engaging resources about the experiences of Chinese settlers to Australia in the nineteenth century, recently produced by the NSW Department of Education.

Engaging with Asia through History

Supporting the curriculum

Mystery at Rookwood and *The Chinese question* are the products of a partnership between DoE Learning Systems and Sydney Living Museums (the public-facing identity of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW) to create resources that complemented the Sydney Living Museum's 2014 exhibition, *Celestial city: Sydney's Chinese 1850-1900*.

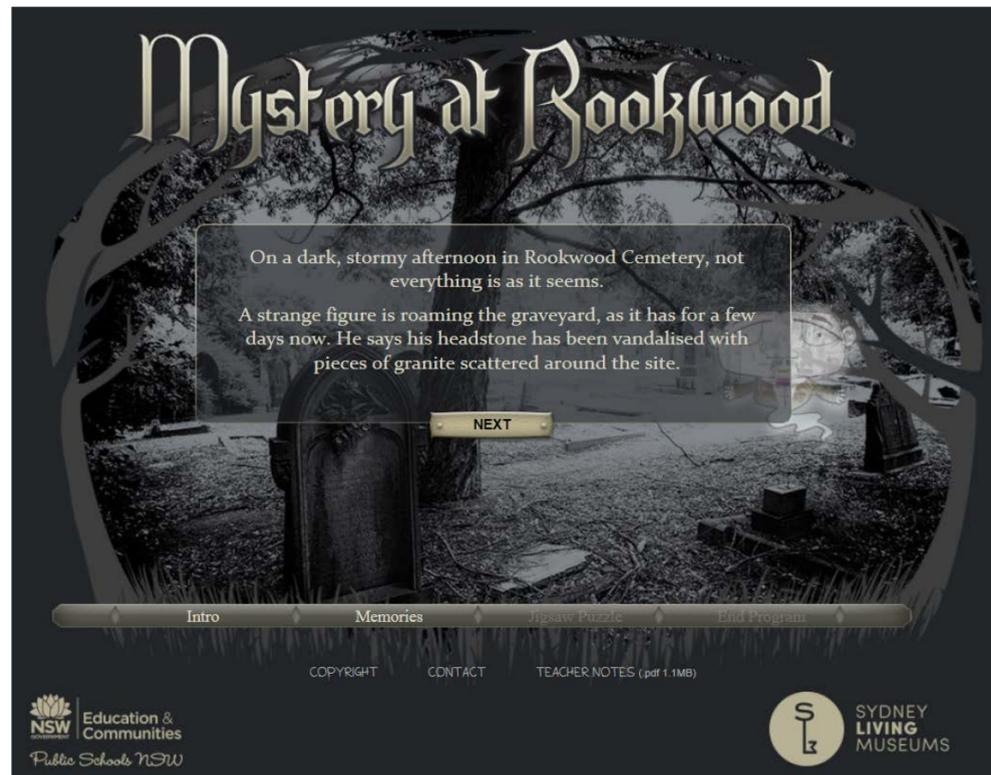
Chinese friendship garden in Sydney



These interactive and user friendly resources support outcomes in the [NSW History K-10](#) and the Australian Curriculum [History F-10](#).

syllabuses and address the cross-curriculum priority [Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia](#).

Mystery at Rookwood



Mystery at Rookwood resource homepage

Setting the scene

The Stage 3 resource *Mystery at Rookwood*, a multimedia unit of work designed for Year 5 students, examines the [experiences of Chinese migrants to Australia](#) in the nineteenth century. In a game based approach, the students play the role of investigators trying to help a mysterious figure, whose ghost has

been haunting the Rookwood Cemetery, to discover his identity. In doing so, they will compare and contrast the life of entrepreneur [Quong Tart](#) with the experiences of the Chinese population in general. This learning experience will enable students to explore several aspects of content for the Stage 3 topic, [The Australian Colonies](#), which asks students to *identify the experiences of a particular migrant group and the contributions they made to society and to use a range of sources to... investigate the role of a significant individual... in the shaping of the colony*. To complete this task, the students must:

- read a series of memories that the *unidentified figure* has of the past (these memories look at different stages and aspects of Quong Tart's evolution from newly arrived gold miner to respected member of society)
- examine primary and secondary sources relevant to the memories
- attempt quizzes (tasks).

The students receive a piece of a jigsaw at the end of each of the *memories*, or sections, when they successfully complete a quiz. By assembling these jigsaw pieces at the conclusion of the unit, i.e. rebuilding the headstone, they will reveal the identity of the mystery figure.

The memories

Mystery at Rookwood acknowledges that this might be the first time that students have examined and analysed primary historical sources. To this end, the teacher notes provide advice on introducing students to the nature of historical sources, what they can tell us and how they can be analysed as well as a series of



Mystery at Rookwood: The memories homepage

worksheets designed to develop their skills in [Analysis and use of sources](#).

Mystery at Rookwood also includes a dashboard that can be activated from the home page. The dashboard allows teachers to monitor student progress.

Manage students activities Print

Student details

Show 10 entries Search:

Student user ID	Activities status	Jigsaw puzzle status	Time taken	Time remaining	Reset tasks	Activities report
joe.schmo	In progress	Not started	2:00	22:00	Reset activity	Show activities

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries First Previous 1 Next Last

[Back to Home](#)

Mystery at Rookwood teacher dashboard

The Chinese question

The Chinese question is a Year 9 [project-based learning](#) resource that also examines Chinese migration to the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century.



Five keys to rigorous project based learning

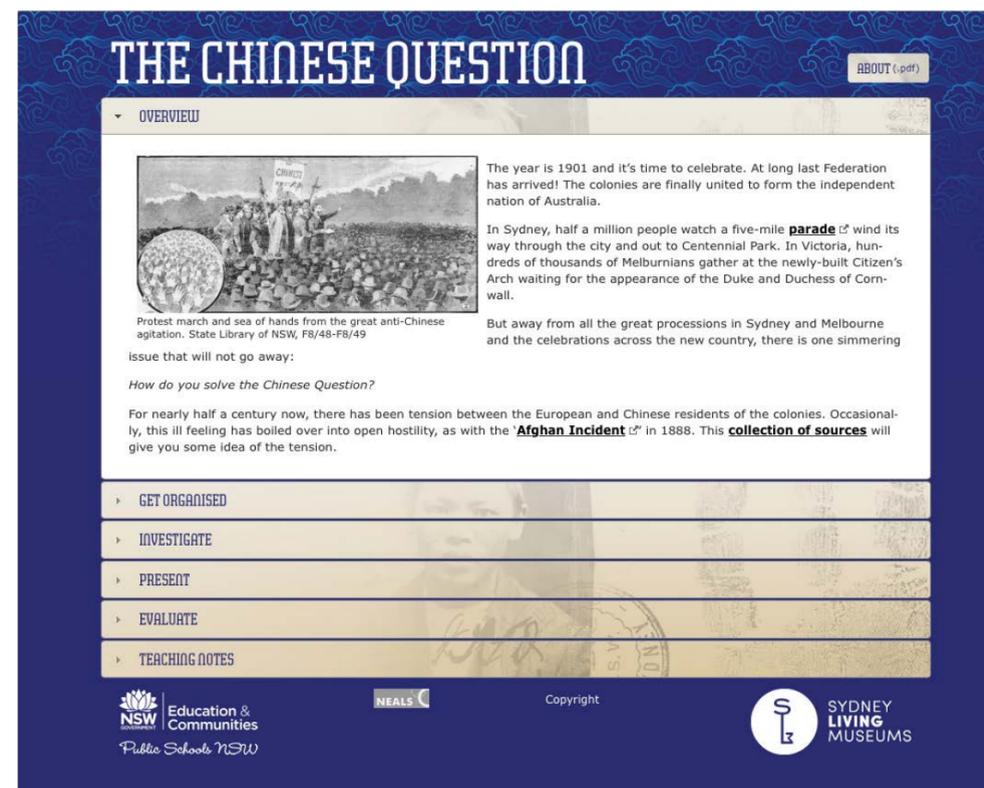
The resource could be used in [Depth Study 2: Australia and Asia](#) to help students to learn about the *experiences of non-Europeans in Australia prior to 1900*. The resource addresses the [big question](#):

How do you solve *The Chinese Question*?

This terminology relates to the pamphlet called [The Chinese question in Australia](#), published in 1879, which is one of the featured primary sources students are able to view. The resource features a large range of primary sources that are arranged into six themes relating to the roles played by Chinese migrants to Australia:

- Goldminers
- Gardeners
- Cabinetmakers
- Neighbours
- Merchants
- Families.

Students role-play members of a 1901 committee that has been established to study these sources, investigate the contribution of Chinese migrants and make recommendations for the future. To do this, they must apply the methodology of an historian and not be swayed by the often racist and hysterical thinking of the time.



The Chinese question website homepage

The Chinese question follows a series of inter-related stages and culminates in small groups of students working interdependently to produce a website.

- In the *Get organised* section, students are divided into small groups and given specific tasks and instructions.
- At the *Investigate* stage they examine the primary sources and make notes in a shared Google document.
- Students next present their research findings on a website of their own making which is based on a Google Sites template. Teachers must make copies of [this template](#) for their student groups.
- The *Evaluate* stage allows students to compare and contrast their findings with those of other groups in the class. An extra set of primary sources are provided so the class can examine disparities between their findings and the reality of Chinese treatment in the early 1900s.

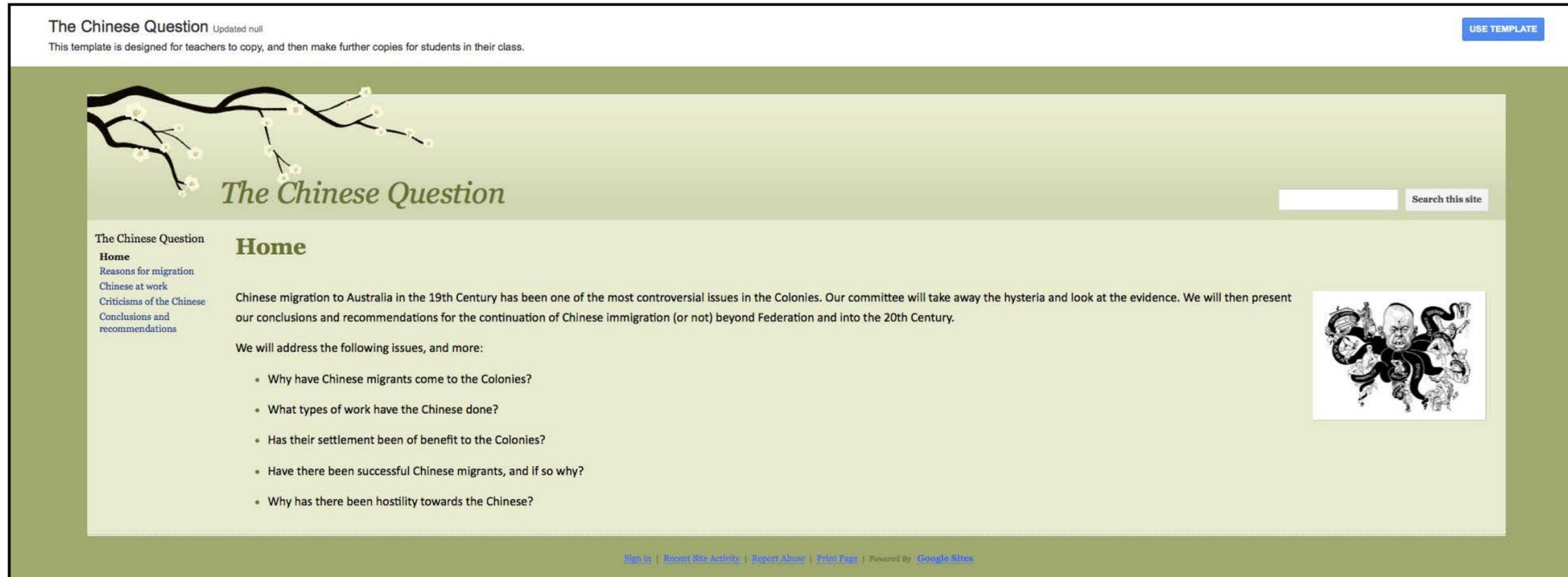
As a follow up exercise, teachers might like to compare the treatment of Chinese migrants in the nineteenth century with past and present real-world situations:

- the experiences of Greeks and Italians in the 1950s
- Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s
- Australians with a Middle Eastern background in the twenty-first century.

The Chinese question integrates, and provides students with the opportunity to develop [21st century learning skills](#) including:

- collaboration

The Chinese Question Updated null
 This template is designed for teachers to copy, and then make further copies for students in their class. [USE TEMPLATE](#)



The Chinese Question

Home

Reasons for migration
 Chinese at work
 Criticisms of the Chinese
 Conclusions and recommendations

Chinese migration to Australia in the 19th Century has been one of the most controversial issues in the Colonies. Our committee will take away the hysteria and look at the evidence. We will then present our conclusions and recommendations for the continuation of Chinese immigration (or not) beyond Federation and into the 20th Century.

We will address the following issues, and more:

- Why have Chinese migrants come to the Colonies?
- What types of work have the Chinese done?
- Has their settlement been of benefit to the Colonies?
- Have there been successful Chinese migrants, and if so why?
- Why has there been hostility towards the Chinese?

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The Chinese question student response template

- knowledge construction
- problem-solving
- use of ICT for learning.

If teachers are not familiar with using Google Apps for Education in the classroom, this resource provides a useful framework for experimenting with these learning tools in the classroom.

Both these resources are available to all students in Australian schools through [Scootle](#). *The Chinese question* is available to all students in the [Learning resources](#) area of the Sydney Living Museum website.

References and further reading

Board of Teaching & Educational Standards NSW 2015, [NSW syllabus for the Australian curriculum: History K-10](#), accessed 7 July 2015.

Edutopia 2014, '[Five keys to rigorous project based learning](#)', *YouTube*, accessed 7 July 2015.

Intel (nd), [Curriculum-framing questions](#), accessed 7 July 2015.

Microsoft Partners in Learning 2012, '[21CLD learning activity rubrics](#)', *itlresearch.com*, accessed 7 July 2015.

Simpson, I 2013, '[Learning resources: engaging with Asia](#)', *Scan* 32(4), pp. 17-20.