

Know History, Know Yourself

Family Tree

INTRODUCTION

“If you know history, you know yourself” is the motto of the ROOTS (Restoring Our Original True Selves) program at San Quentin Prison. Their quote represents an example of how Asian American and ethnic studies in the classroom educates and empowers vulnerable communities of color, such as those in the criminal prison system. Students of the ROOTS program learn about the context of mass incarceration and race, along with Asian American history, to promote self-healing and self-knowledge.

DIRECTION

Fill in the Family Tree focusing on the experiences of your family rather than an individual family member (as is the focus of traditional family trees).

Roots: Make a list of events and situations that have affected your family, either your immediate family or your family over many generations.

Trunk: Jot down the impact of those events or situations on your family and their response to what they faced.

Leaves and Fruit: Write the future you imagine for your family and/or community that addresses the past issues you all have faced.



Graphic by Eunice Ho