Fear and Freedom
Japanese-American Internment During World War II

Overview: This lesson uses a variety of photographs from the Library of Congress to examine the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Goal: Students will use primary sources to explore the reasoning behind the internment order, the reality of life in internment camps, and connections between Japanese-American internment and broader issues of freedom, prejudice, and patriotism.

Objectives: Students will be able to:
- Use context clues embedded within primary sources to identify broader historical phenomena
- Develop skills in analyzing primary sources, particularly photographs
- Gain understanding of the historical forces that led to Japanese-American internment
- Gain understanding of the effects of internment on Japanese-Americans

Investigative Question: Why did the American government imprison more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans, and what were the effects of that imprisonment on Japanese-Americans themselves?

Time Required: Two one-hour class periods

Recommended grade range: Grades 6-12

Subject: History

Topic: World War II

Standards:

Illinois Learning Standards
16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.
16.D.3 (W) Identify the origins and analyze consequences of events that have shaped world social history including famines, migrations, plagues, slave trading.

Common Core State Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH 6-8.2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH 6-8.6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH 6-8.7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Credits: David Bates

Preparation

Resources:

- Computer lab or laptop cart

Materials:

- Selection from Adams book (see below)
  - Title: *Born Free and Equal*
  - Author: Ansel Adams
  - Date: 1944
  - URL: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=gdc3&fileName=scd0001_20020123001bfpage.db](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=gdc3&fileName=scd0001_20020123001bfpage.db)

- Selection from *After the Day of Infamy: “Man-on-the-Street” Interviews Following the Attack on Pearl Harbor*
  - Title: “Man-on-the-Street,’ Madison, Wisconsin, December 9, 1941”
  - Author: Leland A. Coon (collector)
  - Date: 12/9/1941
  - URL: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcpearltext:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28afcpearlsr116367a%29%29](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcpearltext:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28afcpearlsr116367a%29%29)

- Propaganda poster:
  - Title: *Salvage scrap to blast the jap / PvP.*
  - Artist: Phil von Phul
  - Date: c. 1940-1941
  - URL: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/wpapos:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28cph+3b49009%29%29:displaTypet=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3b49009](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/wpapos:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28cph+3b49009%29%29:displaTypet=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3b49009)

- Photographs from “Japanese-American Internment” (Primary Source Set)
  - Title: Oakland, Calif., Feb. 1942
  - Creator: Dorothea Lange
  - Date: 1942
  - URL: [http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705924/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705924/)

  - Title: Civilian exclusion order #5, posted at First and Front streets, directing removal by April 7 of persons of Japanese ancestry, from the first San Francisco section to be affected by evacuation
  - Creator: Dorothea Lange
  - Date: 1942
  - URL: [http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705937/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705937/)
Title: Oakland, Calif., Mar. 1942. A large sign reading "I am an American" placed in the window of a store, at 13th and Franklin streets, on December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor. The store was closed following orders to persons of Japanese descent to evacuate from certain West Coast areas. The owner, a University of California graduate, will be housed with hundreds of evacuees in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration of the war.

Creator: Dorothea Lange
Date: 1942
URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004665381/

Title: Los Angeles, California. A store in Little Tokyo
Creator: Russell Lee
Date: 1942
URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000049194/PP/

Title: Japanese residents at Civil Control station for registration, San Francisco
Creator: Dorothea Lange
Date: 1942
URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705934/

Title: Santa Anita reception center, Los Angeles, California. The evacuation of Japanese and Japanese-Americans from West Coast areas under U.S. Army war emergency order. Registering Japanese-Americans as they arrive
Creator: Russell Lee
Date: 1942
URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998003578/PP/

-Ansel Adams’s Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar

-Title: [various]
-Photographer: Ansel Adams
-Date: 1943
-URL: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams/index.html

-Copies of:
-Primary Source Analysis Tool: http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf

Optional/extension resources:

-Title: Immigration...Japanese
-Author: Leni Dolan (producer), Frank Diller, Elizabeth Paul, Marin Hagen, Stephen Wesson (researchers/writers)
Procedure

1. Distribute paper copies of selections from Ansel Adams’ *Born Free and Equal* (see materials below), explaining Executive Order 9066 and the process of evacuation. Have students read the selections silently. Ask: how could the United States have imprisoned hundreds of thousands of its own citizens based on their race?

2. Remind students of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Ask them to consider the fear and anger that Americans felt.

Activity 1

1. Break students into groups and instruct each group to view a primary source at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov). Group should receive a copy of the Teacher’s Guide to Analyzing Oral Histories; all other groups receive a copy of the Teacher’s Guide to Analyzing Photographs and Prints. All groups also receive a blank Primary Source Analysis Tool.

   - Group 1: “‘Man-on-the-Street,’ Madison, Wisconsin, December 9, 1941.”
   - Group 2: *Salvage scrap to blast the jap / PvP.*
   - Group 4: “Civilian exclusion order #5...”
   - Group 6: “Los Angeles, California. A store in Little Tokyo”
   - Group 7: “Japanese residents at Civil Control station for registration, San Francisco”
   - Group 8: “Santa Anita reception center...”

2. Instruct students to use the Teacher’s Guide and Analysis Tool to analyze their source.

3. Have students their findings with the larger group. Hold a class discussion about the ways in which Americans’ anger and fear at Pearl Harbor attack could lead to prejudice against Japanese-Americans.
4. **Extension:** If time permits, use the resources contained in the *Immigration...Japanese* classroom presentation to connect prejudice against Japanese-Americans during World War II to prejudice against Japanese immigrants during the 19th century.
   a. Ask students to compare and contrast 19th century stereotypes and depictions of Japanese and Japanese-Americans with those from World War II.
   b. Discuss 19th-century efforts to bar Japanese immigration. Why were Americans distrustful of Japanese and Japanese-Americans? How were those fears similar to those held by Americans immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack? How were they different?

**Activity 2**

1. If you are breaking this lesson up over multiple days, review your previous discussion about reactions to Pearl Harbor. Encourage students to recall the negative reactions of “men-on-the-street,” as well as depictions of Japan and Japanese people in WPA posters.

2. Ask each student to write down a question they have about the internment on an index card. Collect the questions and read out five or six to stimulate discussion.

3. Ask students: how do you think the evacuation order affected Japanese-Americans?

4. **Extension:** if time permits, show students the 5-minute excerpt from the *Experiencing War* interview with Norman Saburo Ikari. Ask students to reflect on the video.
   a. How did internment affect all Japanese-Americans, including those not forced into camps?
   b. What broader attitudes toward Japanese-Americans did internment reflect?
   c. What do Ikari’s experiences as a soldier reveal about what it meant to be an American citizen during World War II?

**Activity 3**

1. Take students to the computer lab and instruct them in the use of the Library of Congress’s American Memory collection “Ansel Adams’s Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar.”

2. Break students into groups of 3-4. Each group should find at least three photographs from the collection (centered on a theme) and use them to create a one-paragraph narrative of a day in the life of an internment-camp prisoner. Narratives must make specific references to each photograph selected by the group. Some potential themes include:
   - Arrival: What were prisoners’ initial reactions to their new home?
   - Work: What kind of work did prisoners do? How did this work compare to their prior work outside the camps?
   - Leisure: How did prisoners relax? How did these activities compare to their leisure activities outside the camps?
   - Family life: Did families stay together in the camps? How did familial structures or relations change?
   - Education: What education did children receive? How did this compare to their prior education outside the camps?
• Patriotism: How did the prisoners feel about the United States government? How did they express those feelings?

3. Have the groups present their photographs and narratives to the class. Encourage students to discuss connections between their various findings.
   a. Combined, what do these themes tell us about the hardships of life in the camps? How did the prisoners respond to those hardships?
   b. What aspects of their prior lives did the prisoners keep? Which did they lose?
   c. What were the attitudes of prisoners toward their new lives? Toward one another? Toward the U.S. government?

4. Ask the students to use what they have learned to think critically about the implications of Japanese-American internment.
   a. How does the experience of war change a nation’s perception of “citizenship”?
   b. How do we as a nation define “patriotism?” How does that definition change?
   c. How do prejudices change over time? How do they remain the same?
   d. Modern issues: In 1988, the federal government issued and official apology for internment and awarded $20,000 to each surviving internee. Was this justified?

5. **Extension [differentiation/assessment]:** return students’ index cards from Day 2. Ask students to write an answer to their question based on what they have learned throughout the lesson. If they feel they cannot answer their question, direct them to Library of Congress resources such as:
   a. “Suffering Under a Great Injustice” Collection Connection
   b. American Memory Gallery of Japanese Internment
   c. Japanese American Internment Primary Source Set
   d. Born Free and Equal

**Evaluation**
Students can be evaluated based on their analysis of the primary source in Activity 1, their questions and class participation in Activity 2, and their presentations in Activity 3.
THE HISTORY

Certain facts and events preceding Pearl Harbor should be reviewed in order to clarify the meaning and relationships of the events following that momentous day.

In the excellent pamphlet, “What About Our Japanese-Americans?”, Carey McWilliams presents a concise outline of the problem and includes the important factors leading up to war-time tensions and decisions:

1. “The Japanese were a late immigrant group . . . arrived for the most part . . . between 1900 and 1910.”
2. “Most . . . were single men who married late in life . . . the second generation group did not appear in large numbers until after 1920.”
3. “In 1940 the average age of the Issei, or alien group was around fifty years of age; that of the Nisei, or citizen group, around 19 or 20 years of age.”
4. “Of 126,947 Japanese in this country in 1940, 122,353 lived in the three west coast states. Nearly 80% were in California.”
5. About 45% were concentrated in agricultural pursuits; other elements of the population were engaged in fishing and in mercantile, professional, and home services in metropolitan areas.

*Public Affairs Committee, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York
“Both internal and external pressures had intended to set the Little Tokyo settlements apart from the larger communities of which they were a part.”

6. In regard to the slow rate of assimilation, “it must be remembered . . . the American-born or Nisei generation had not, by December 7th, 1941, assumed the leadership of the Japanese Communities, although they clearly would have done so in another decade.”

“In the spring of 1942, we in the United States placed some 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in protective custody. Two out of every three were American Citizens by birth; one-third were aliens forbidden by law to become citizens. Included were three generations:

1. Issei, or first-generation immigrants (aliens)
2. Nisei, or second-generation (American born citizens)

“No charges had been filed against these people nor had any hearing been held. Evacuation was on Racial, or, perhaps more accurately, on ancestral grounds. It was the ‘largest single forced migration in American History.’”

Without doubt there were dangerous individuals, groups and nationalistic organizations among the Japanese prior to Pearl Harbor. Many of these were known to the authorities and were arrested and properly interned, both in the coastal regions and Hawaii. Espionage there was without doubt prior to Pearl Harbor, but not one conviction of sabotage or espionage by Japanese-American citizens has been obtained. On June 14, 1943, the Office of War Information revealed that Japan relied upon Nazi agents for certain signaling aid at Pearl Harbor! But this was too late, for wild stories were already broadcast; the public tension rose alarmingly, and the Military proceeded to recommend and enforce a series of evacuation orders, all based on Executive Order 9066, and on the establishment of Military Zones 1 and 2. By June 5th, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry had been removed from Zone 1, the coastal areas, and by August 7th from Zone 2, the eastern sections of the Pacific coast states.