

On Racial Profiling and Civic Action

Objective: SWBAT explain racial profiling and how action can be taken against it.

Warm Up: 10 minutes

Directions: Read the provided quote below to answer the following:

1. Why did Asians and Asian Americans experience prejudice/discrimination during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What do you think the author means by “it is important to identify **blind spots** and realize how we treat others during global crises?”
3. When a person’s race is used to assume something about them, this is termed “racial profiling.” Have you ever experienced, seen or heard of racial profiling occurring? If so, when and how? Explain.
4. Why do you think racial profiling occurs?
5. What do you think can be done to combat racial profiling?

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, Asians and Asian Americans have become the victims of physical and verbal attacks, even from United States government officials, because of their ethnicity and the virus’ origins. Indeed, the humanity of Asians and Asian Americans is being violated, denied, or questioned during this pandemic, not unlike other periods of history when hated outgroups were perceived as “less than human.” To **mitigate** hatred and cruelty around the world, it is important to identify blind spots and realize how we treat others during global crises.”

Part I: 1941: Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor

Directions: Read the Historical Background and Roosevelt’s Address to the Congress to respond to the following:

1. According to Roosevelt, why is Japan a threat?

Historical Background: America’s isolation from war ended on December 7, 1941, when Japan staged a surprise attack on American military installations in the Pacific. The most devastating strike came at Pearl Harbor, the Hawaiian naval base where much of the US Pacific Fleet was moored. In a two-hour attack, Japanese warplanes sank or damaged 18 warships and destroyed 164 aircraft. Over 2,400 servicemen and civilians lost their lives.

The President Requests War Declaration 125 ("December 7, 1941 A Date Which Will Live in Infamy" Address to the Congress Asking That a State of War Be Declared Between the United States and Japan. December 8, 1941

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

YESTERDAY, December 7, 1941 a date which will live in infamy the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. **During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.**

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

...Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong: Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

But always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces with the unbounding determination of our people we will gain the inevitable triumph so help us God.”

Part II: Japanese Internment:

Directions: Open the following link to access the transcript to today’s radio show:

<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/radiolab-presents-more-perfect-american-pendulum-i>

Use the radio show and the transcript to respond to the following:

1. What did Roosevelt order after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor? Why did he order this?
2. How did racial profiling impact Fred Korematsu? Did he “fit” the “profile” or Japanese-Americans at the time?
3. How did Ernest Besig combat racial profiling? What did he do? What arguments did he make?
4. What do Ernest Besig and Fred Korematsu show us about how to combat injustice when it is happening?

Exit Ticket:

Directions: Discuss the following in small groups:

1. What injustice was Fred Korematsu facing? Why was this injustice happening?
2. What does Fred’s story tell us about how to combat injustice? What actions can we as citizens take in the face of injustice?