



FOUNDATIONS
and FUTURES

Asian American and Pacific Islander Multimedia Textbook

Lesson Plan



Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II

Module 1: Overview & Introduction



Chapter Compelling Question

How can an entire racial group be unjustly incarcerated in a democracy?



Module Supporting Questions

- Why and how did the United States government decide to mass incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II?
- How did the movement for Japanese American reparations develop and why was it successful?
- What did Japanese Americans experience when they were removed from their homes and imprisoned?



Lesson Plan Description

In this set of learning experiences, students will get a basic overview of constitutional violations incurred by Japanese Americans during World War II. They will gain an understanding of the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans by reading Module 1 and using strategies of skimming, posing questions, summarizing, and making connections with the text. Then they will map the “Road to Mass Incarceration” together on a handout.



Learning Goals/Objectives

- **Learn** the constitutional rights violated by the US government during World War II.
- **Understand** the process of dispossession enacted by the US government upon Japanese Americans during World War II.
- **Explore** literacy strategies, like question-generating techniques and summation, to comprehend an academic text.



Skills Focus

- ☒ Written Communication
- ☒ Oral Communication
- ☒ Primary Source Analysis & Research
- ☐ Community Engagement
- ☐ Creative Arts
- ☒ Critical Thinking
- ☐ Additional Skills: Literacy; Academic Reading

Ethnic Studies Framing & Pedagogy

- ☒ **Build a foundational understanding about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders**, including the histories, perspectives, and contemporary experiences spanning the precolonial to the present day.
- ☒ **Develop literacy and the skills to communicate, understand, engage, and articulate different perspectives** through understanding multiple ways of knowing, including indigenous, ancestral, familial, and diasporic knowledge.
- ☐ **Nurture critical thinking and inquiry on fundamental assumptions** related to empire, capitalism, race and racism, gender and patriarchy, and other structures of power and inequality and how they shape society and the environment.
- ☐ **Cultivate holistic well-being amongst all and connections across difference** by strengthening historical empathy, self-worth and mutual respect, cultural expression, and cross-cultural understanding.
- ☐ **Grow wisdom and agency** to imagine and create new possibilities and solidarities for a more just, equitable, democratic, non-racist, compassionate, and sustainable society and world.



 Suggested Grade Level(s)

- ☒ 9
- ☒ 10
- ☒ 11
- ☒ 12
- ☐ 13-14

 Suggested Discipline(s)

- ☐ Arts
- ☒ English Language Arts
- ☒ Ethnic Studies
- ☒ History/Social Studies
- ☐ Other:

 Note About Content Standards

The following standards are based on the Common Core established by the California State Board of Education, as well as standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. Please check your own state's English Language Arts and History/Social Studies Standards for specific curriculum alignment.

 ELA Standards Alignment

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.



History/Social Studies Standards Alignment

- Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Other Standards Alignment

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework¹

- D2.Civ.3.9-12. Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.
- D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

Materials

- [Cards for Critical Concepts Handout](#)
- [SQ3R Handout](#)
- [Road to Mass Incarceration Handout](#)

Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students, SPED, & Newcomers

- Chunk text into smaller parts using the SQ3R strategy and handout.
- Provide text digitally so that larger print text, audio-versions, and translations can be created.
- Arrange for peer support (such as pairs or small groups) for note-taking and discussion.
- Review glossary terms or any unknown words when reading.
- Give key indicators so that students know they have engaged in tasks effectively.
- Announce optional extension activities for students who finish the tasks before others.

¹ National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (NCSS, 2013).



CRITICAL CONCEPTS/KEY TERMS:



Fourteenth Amendment

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept

Those born in the US are naturalized US citizens and have the right to life, liberty, and property with equal protection of the laws. This amendment is especially significant in showing how Japanese Americans' constitutional rights were violated.



Alien Land Law of 1913

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept

California passed the first law that prohibited “aliens ineligible to citizenship” from owning or leasing land, a law that targeted Americans of Japanese descent. From this point on until 1923, many states (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) across the US passed similar laws and restrictions.



democracy

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept

A way of governing by all people of a nation or state. The people have a voice in deciding laws or electing officials to create laws for them. Democracy is a fundamental principle of the US government, influenced by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, made up of Indigenous nations that gathered in what is now known as New York, and European philosophers.



Executive Order 9066

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept



On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the US military the power to exclude anyone they saw as a military threat into special military areas. Although Americans of Japanese descent were not specifically mentioned, this led to them to be mass incarcerated.



Immigration Act of 1924

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept

A federal law that denied immigration to the US from Japan and other Asian countries (except the Philippines, which was then a US colony).



Ozawa v. United States (1922)

DEFINITION & RATIONALE for choosing this word, phrase, or concept

A Supreme Court decision that determined Japanese people and other Asians were not allowed to become US citizens.

LESSON PLAN

C1: CULTURAL RITUAL/ENERGIZER [5-7 min]

Title of Cultural Ritual/Energizer: What are our rights?

DESCRIPTION:

Instruct students to write a response to the following prompt:

- *What rights do you think all people should have? Explain why.*

Pair up students and have them share their responses with a partner. Then facilitate a discussion with the whole class on students' opinions about what universal rights all people should have and why it is important for these rights to be upheld.



C2: CRITICAL CONCEPTS [15 min]

Title of Activity: The Road That Led to Mass Incarceration

DESCRIPTION:



STEP 1: Review Critical Concepts/Key Terms

Review the definition of **democracy** from the **Critical Concepts/Key Terms** section above. Inform students that they will examine how the rights of an entire group of people can be violated in a democracy by learning about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.



STEP 2: Set Students Up

Inform students that they will learn about democratic rights in the US by reviewing parts of the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the US Constitution.



STEP 3: Review the Fifth Amendment

Present Card 1 to students (via slides or poster) from the **Cards for Critical Concepts Handout**. Card 1 shows the following quotes from and about the Fifth Amendment:

Fifth Amendment - Excerpt

“...nor [shall any person] be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law...”

Analysis

“...the Supreme Court has interpreted the Fifth Amendment’s Due Process Clause to...protect certain fundamental constitutional rights from federal government



interference, regardless of the procedures that the government follows when enforcing the law.”²

Read this card with students and explain that a constitutional right all Americans have is the right to life, liberty, and property. Explain the meaning of due process, so students can learn why these rights cannot be taken away without due process. Highlight that, according to this amendment, not even the federal government can interfere with depriving these rights without following the due process of law. Discuss how **democracy** relates to this amendment.

STEP 4: Review the Fourteenth Amendment

Go over the Fourteenth Amendment from the **Critical Concepts/Key Terms** section. Then present Card 2, which shows the following quote from the Fourteenth Amendment:

Fourteenth Amendment - Excerpt

“All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”³

Read this card with students and tell them that this is similar to the Fifth Amendment, emphasizing that those born in the United States are naturalized US citizens and have the right to life, liberty, and property with equal protection of the laws. Discuss how **democracy** relates to this amendment.

² “Amdt5.4.1 Overview of Due Process,” *Constitution Annotated: Analysis and Interpretation of the U.S. Constitution*, https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/amdt5-4-1/ALDE_00013721/

³ “Fourteenth Amendment Citizenship, Equal Protection, and Other Rights of Citizens,” *Constitution Annotated: Analysis and Interpretation of the U.S. Constitution*, <https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/amendment-14/>



 STEP 5: Set Up the Textbook

Inform students that they will learn what led to the violation of Japanese Americans' constitutional rights during World War II. They will gain an understanding of how this happened by reading Module 1 of the Japanese American Incarceration chapter.

C3: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION/CRITICAL CULTURAL PRODUCTION [50–60 min]

Titles of Main Activities:

1. SQ3R Strategy: Reading Textbooks
2. The Road to Mass Incarceration

ACTIVITY 1: SQ3R STRATEGY: READING TEXTBOOKS [30-40 min]

DESCRIPTION:

In the previous part of this lesson, students studied two constitutional rights violated by the US government during the World War II-era incarceration of Japanese Americans. During this activity, students will practice a key literacy strategy: re-reading, note-taking, and generating questions with academic texts like Module 1. Called the “SQ3R,” the strategy involves the following steps:

1. **Survey**
2. **Question**
3. **Read**
4. **Recite**
5. **Reflect**

Pass out printed copies of the **SQ3R handout** so that students have the protocol and also a space to jot down their responses.



Step 1: Survey

Have students skim over the entire module to get a sense of the text's purpose and main ideas. Instead of reading the full text, students should skim by looking for the:

- **Title:** The title of the chapter indicates the driving idea of the text.
- **Headings and Subheadings:** These break up the chapter into the main sections, usually exploring one concept.
- **Images or Boxed Text:** These usually help support or illustrate the text.
- **Introduction and Conclusion:** These summarize and review the big ideas in the text. Pay attention to the first and final sentences of these paragraphs.

After identifying these elements, direct students to jot down the title, headings or subheadings, and an image or text box in section 1 of their SQ3R handouts.

Step 2: Question

Next, students should formulate questions about the text by turning all chapter headings and subheadings into questions. Start questions with “What...?,” “Who...?,” “Why...?,” and/or “How...?” Students should record their questions in section 2 of the SQ3R handout.

For example, the subheading “Closing the Camps: Where’s Home Now?” from Module 1 can be turned into questions like:

- *Why did the government decide to close the camps?*
- *What happened to the people once the camps closed?*

Step 3: Read

Next, students will read the entirety of Module 1 of the Japanese American Incarceration chapter. While they read, students should identify answers to the questions they developed. If a printed version of Module 1 is available, students can make notes in the margins and directly highlight main ideas in the text. Chunk the reading into manageable parts; read one section and ensure comprehension before moving on.



 Step 4: Recite

As soon as they have finished reading Module 1, students should put away the text. Now they will reiterate the reading in their own words. Pair students up and have them take turns reciting the main ideas of the text out loud. In section 4 of their SQ3R handouts, they should write a summary of the module, or create a “mind map” diagram of the ideas and how they relate.

 Step 5: Reflect

Finally, students should reflect on what they read and learned. Share the following reflection prompts with students:

- *What does this material mean to you?*
- *How can you apply it to your life?*
- *Does the text connect to other things you know about? Think of living examples, historical or current events, a book, or film.*

Direct students to jot down responses to these prompts in section 5 of their SQ3R handouts. If students can affiliate the material with something they already know well, they will enhance their understanding and remembrance of it.

ACTIVITY 2: THE ROAD TO MASS INCARCERATION [20 min]

 Step 1: Set up the Activity

Tell students that they will demonstrate their understanding of how Japanese Americans’ democratic rights were violated by creating a timeline together.

 Step 2: Review Key Anti-Asian Laws in the US

Distribute copies of the blank **Road to Mass Incarceration handout** and review with students the first three subsections of Module 1, from “Introduction” through “Communities Thrive Despite Discrimination.” Then watch the video [“A Community Grows, Despite Racism”](#) from the



organization Densho. Encourage students to pay attention to examples of how people and the government racially discriminated against Japanese Americans.

After students watch the video, use the following laws and historical events to talk through examples of legalized racial discrimination (these can also be presented on a slide for students to refer to):

- Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 - Most Chinese people were prohibited from immigrating to the US.
- Alien Land Law of 1913 - “Aliens ineligible to citizenship,” including Japanese immigrants, were denied the right to own or lease land.
- *Ozawa v. United States*, 1922 - The Supreme Court ruled that Japanese people and other Asians were not allowed to become US citizens.
- Immigration Act of 1924 - Japanese and other Asians were barred from immigrating to the US.

Direct students to write down these points on their blank **Road to Mass Incarceration** handouts, in the boxes with the corresponding titles. In addition to these examples of legalized discrimination, review how Japanese Americans were socially discriminated against in the video, such as being excluded from the community pool and employment discrimination. Highlight that all these examples of racial discrimination happened long before World War II.

Step 3: Mapping the Steps to Incarceration

Instruct students to review Module 1’s next four subsections, from “The Road to Mass Incarceration” through “Moved Once Again.” Then share the following dates and events with students (these can also be presented on a slide):

- December 7, 1941 - Japan attacked a US naval base at Pearl Harbor, located in Hawai‘i
- December 1941–February 1942 - Almost right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Issei community leaders were arrested by the FBI and indefinitely imprisoned. The arrests continued for months.



- February 19, 1942 - Executive Order 9066: President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the US military the power to exclude anyone they saw as a threat from special “military areas”
- Spring, 1942 - Starting in March, Americans of Japanese descent were forcibly removed to temporary detention centers or camps, also known as “assembly centers”
- Mass Incarceration (1942-1946) - From the summer of 1942 until 1946, 120,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned in War Relocation Authority incarceration camps

Students should complete the rest of the handout by writing this information in the boxes with the corresponding titles. Review and highlight from the Module 1 text that the government used the excuse of “military necessity” to imprison more than 120,000 Japanese Americans, even though they knew that there was no evidence for this.

C4: CLOSING DIALOGUE [5–7 min]

DESCRIPTION:

Have students circle one question, mind map, or reflection they wrote on their **SQ3R handout** that they would like to share. In pairs or small groups, students can take turns explaining the questions they developed or the ideas they reflected on. Have 2–3 students share their reflections aloud with the whole class.

End class with a discussion that builds on the compelling question: *How can an entire racial group be unjustly incarcerated in a democracy?* Ask students to consider what they would feel if this happened to them, their family, and their community?

Lesson Extension: As an extension to their reading of Module 1, ask students to choose one of the Explore More sections featuring a text source, such as the excerpt from *American Yellow*, the “Government Deception” documents, or the “Solidarity with Japanese Americans” description. Using



a fresh copy of the SQ3R handout, they can repeat the SQ3R reading strategy for an Explore More of their choosing.

Links to Resources and Notes:

- For more information on the SQ3R comprehension strategy, you can visit adlit.org.

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