

# Chapter 9

## **What Does a U.S. Citizen “Look” Like? What Does It Mean to Be Loyal to Your Country?**

### **Civics Inquiries About Japanese American Incarceration**

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Figure 1. *442nd Combat Team, Japanese-American Fighting Unit at Camp Shelby*



**Note.** *It's "Present arms!" for members of the 442nd Combat Team, Japanese-American fighting unit, as they salute their country's flag in a brief review held the day of their arrival at Camp Shelby, Miss. (1943). [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/00652071/>*

## What Does a U.S. Citizen “Look” Like?

<b>C3 Disciplinary Focus</b> Civics	<b>C3 Inquiry Focus</b> Evaluating Sources & Taking Informed Action	<b>Content Topic</b> Japanese American incarceration during World War II
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### C3 Focus Indicators

**D1:** Identify facts and concepts associated with a supporting question. (D1.3.K-2)  
 Make connections between supporting questions and compelling questions. (D1.4.K-2)  
 Explain how supporting questions help answer compelling questions in an inquiry. (D1.4.3-5)

Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration the different opinions people have about how to answer the questions. (D1.5.3-5)

**D2:** Describe democratic principles such as equality, fairness, and respect for legitimate authority and rules. (D2.Civ.8.K-2)

Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities. (D2.Civ.8.3-5)

Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others’ points of view about civic issues. (D2.Civ.10.3-5)

**D3:** Gather relevant information from one or two sources while using the origin and structure to guide the selection. (D3.1.K-2)

Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, structure, and context to guide the selection. (D3.1.3-5)

Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions. (D3.4.3-5)

**D4:** Identify and explain a range of local, regional, and global problems, and some ways in which people are trying to address these problems. (D4.6.K-2)

Explain different strategies and approaches students and others could take in working alone and together to address local, regional, and global problems, and predict possible results of their actions. (D4.7.3-5)

Use a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions about and act on civic problems in their classrooms and schools. (D4.8.3-5)

<b>Suggested Grade Levels</b> 2-6	<b>Resources</b> See end of chapter for list of primary sources, recommended children’s literature, and media links.	<b>Time Required</b> 1-4 weeks
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Elementary school narratives about World War II generally focus on the events in the European theater, sometimes introducing intermediate students to the Holocaust with minimal attention to domestic events in the United States. Only as students progress through their secondary education are they likely to learn about the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Yet a wealth of primary sources and children’s literature about Japanese American incarceration is available for elementary educators to teach this often overlooked history.

## Rationale for Classroom Practice

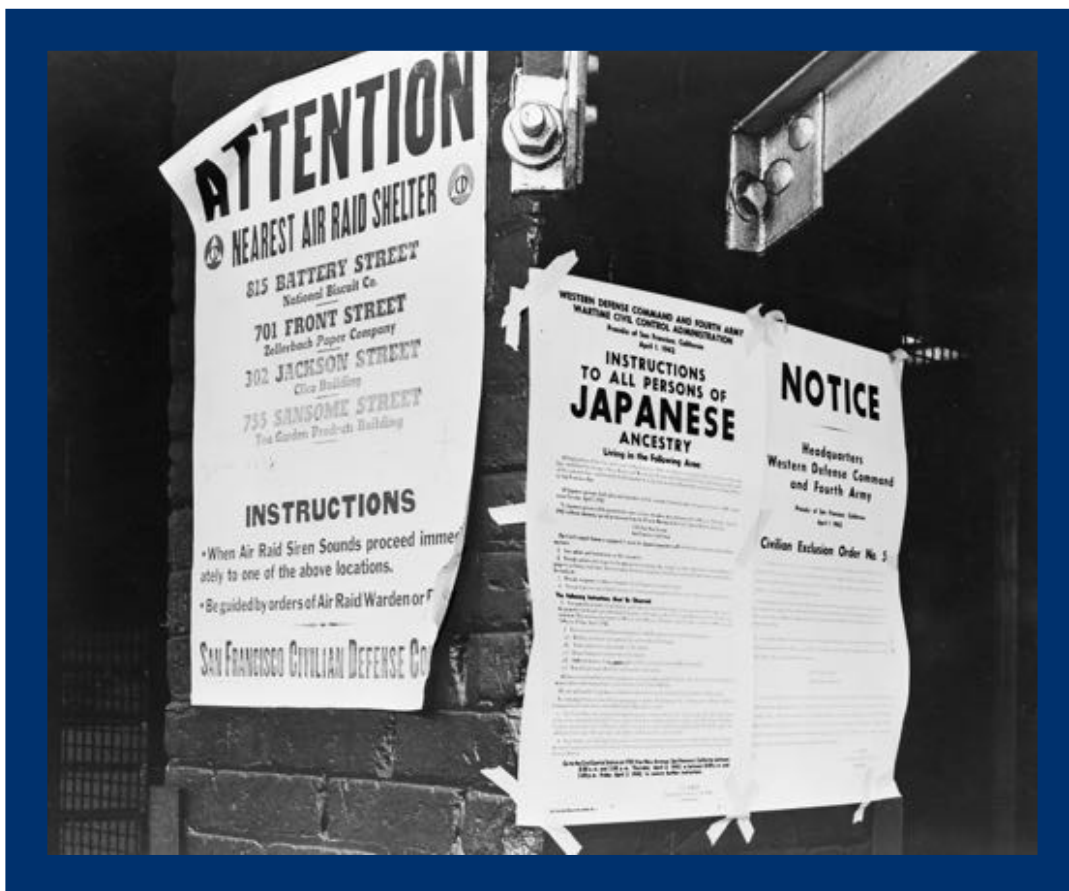
In this chapter, I guide the reader through Japanese American incarceration, with an emphasis on accurate terminology and primary sources to illustrate how this history can help students understand issues of (in)justice, civics, and racism during wartime that connect to contemporary issues of citizenship, xenophobia, racism, and racial profiling. In particular, educators of second through sixth-grade students can use this topic as an opportunity to engage young learners in conversations about race and racism beyond the Black/white binary while also considering the complexities of what it means to belong somewhere.

## A Note on Terminology

The forced removal of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States and their subsequent incarceration in isolated camps in the desert and mountains between 1942 and 1946 (Lee, 2015) is often referred to as “internment.” This term has long been used in American and international law, and the first internment conducted by the American government took place during the War of 1812 when residents from Britain were forcibly moved inland. During World War I, over 2,000 resident aliens of German birth were interned in the United States. By definition, internment was designed to deal with the treatment of prisoners of war, and sometimes civilian enemy nationals, who are from a country against which the country of their residence is at war or conflict (Daniels, 2005; Lee, 2015).

On December 8, 1941, the day after Japan bombed the military base at Pearl Harbor, [the United States declared war on Japan](#). Within days of this declaration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested over two thousand people of Japanese ancestry throughout the U.S. and in the territories of Hawaii and Alaska. Although the FBI determined that these individuals were suspicious, no charges of espionage, sabotage, or any other crimes were filed. Regardless, most of those arrested were men who were secretly transported to one of 26 Department of Justice camps located in 16 states, in addition to Hawaii and Alaska, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards (Lee, 2015; Murray, 2000).

Figure 2. *Civilian Exclusion Order #5*



**Note.** *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 (1942). [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705937/>*

In the months that followed, a series of executive orders and public laws called for the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from California and parts of Arizona, Oregon, and Washington. By 1946, 77,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry and 43,000 Japanese nationals, most of whom were permanent U.S. residents, had been imprisoned by the U.S. government (Japanese American Citizens League, 2011). As two-thirds of these individuals were U.S. citizens, the term “internment” cannot legally be applied to them as they were not enemy nationals nor prisoners of war, but rather citizens who were imprisoned without due process or cause. In fact, their imprisonment violated numerous constitutional rights they were titled to as citizens (Daniels, 2005).

So why are these events referred to as “internment” if that term is inaccurate? President Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to these places as “concentration camps” on multiple occasions. However, after the liberation of the Nazi death camps in Europe, the phrase took on a much more extreme meaning and has been avoided in reference to anything other than the horrific camps created by the Nazis. In addition to “internment camps,” other widely

used terms are “relocation” and “evacuation” camp (Daniels, 2005). All three terms avoid the unconstitutional nature of the camps and the fact that, like prisons, those who lived there were unable to leave of their own free will. Moreover, the camps were in extremely inhospitable conditions, surrounded by barbed wire and **armed guards**, and those imprisoned did not know when they might be released. As Daniels (2005) argues, “internment,” “relocation,” and “evacuation” are euphemisms that downplay the painful, traumatic, and dehumanizing conditions under which Japanese and Japanese Americans were deliberately placed by the U.S. government.

**Figure 3.** *Guard Tower at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming*



**Note.** Highsmith, C. M. (2015). *Guard tower at the onetime Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Park County, Wyoming* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017884777/>

In fact, decades aftward, the U.S. government determined that Japanese American incarceration was a result of “**wartime hysteria, race prejudice, and a failure of political leadership**” (Commision on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians [CWRIC], 1983). In an effort to recognize this shameful history, historians and scholars increasingly use the term “incarceration” for its accuracy, and educators should, too. Page 9 of [this curriculum resource guide by the Japanese American Citizens League](#) is titled “The Power of Words,” and clearly summarizes the need to avoid euphemisms regarding Japanese American incarceration. In this chapter, I exclusively use the term “incarceration” instead of “internment” and will refer to the camps that held Japanese Americans as prison camps or camps.

# Japanese American Incarceration in the Classroom: “But They Didn’t Do Nothing Wrong!”

Some educators argue that topics like Japanese American incarceration are too complex or “difficult” to teach to young children. To illustrate how elementary social studies educators can take up this work in caring, thoughtful ways, I offer the example of Ms. Ye, a second-grade teacher at a large urban public school in Texas. Her students spent several weeks learning about what Hall (2005) refers to as the Long Civil Rights Movement, reading biographies about Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ruby Bridges, among others. Ms. Ye also wanted her students to know that fights for civil rights were not solely based on a Black/white binary, so she introduced her students to the history of Japanese American incarceration.

Ms. Ye began with a picture flood of primary sources ([LOC Primary Source set](#)) to activate their prior knowledge and generate questions before reading *The Bracelet* (Uchida, 1993), a picturebook about Japanese American incarceration. As Ms. Ye read the book aloud, the events of the text evoked strong emotions among her students. During a scene where Emi, a young Japanese American girl, and her family are forced to leave their home and move into temporary housing in a horse stall, the author explains, “The government was sending them to a prison camp because they were Japanese Americans and America was at war with Japan” (Uchida, 1993, n.p.). Ms. Ye’s students were startled by the idea that a child their age would be forced to live in a prison camp. “But they didn’t do nothing wrong!” one student protested. Another student added, “They’re just taking them ‘cause of the way they look!” Although this lesson was one of the first times Ms. Ye’s second graders had received formal instruction about World War II, they quickly recognized how illogical and unfair it was for the government to [imprison innocent citizens](#).

For the next few weeks, Ms. Ye heavily integrated social studies and language arts as her students read multiple texts (see “Recommended Children’s Literature”), watched videos, engaged with primary sources, and wrote about the injustice of Japanese American incarceration (see [Rodríguez, 2017](#) and [2020](#) for a detailed account of Ms. Ye’s pedagogy and how students responded). While *The Bracelet* is a widely popular book about Japanese American incarceration, it is often read as a story of friendship (Rodríguez, 2020) in ways that avoid dealing with the complexities and contradictions of that historical moment. Educators can and should make efforts to more deeply contextualize this history for young learners; as Ms. Ye illustrated, it is possible for students to engage in deep, meaningful discussions about this topic. However, elementary educators often avoid this and other historical events that may constitute what scholars refer to as “difficult histories.”

# Teaching Difficult Histories to Young Learners

Gross and Terra (2018, p. 54) identify five criteria that make “difficult history” difficult for educators and learners:

1. **Difficult histories are central to a nation’s history (whether or not they are so recognized by political elites).** Periods or events that are parochial or only loosely connected to the national past may also be important, but they do not need to be integrated into the national storyline.
2. **Difficult histories tend to refute broadly accepted versions of the past or stated national values.** They are often dissonant with the narrative template that characterizes the overall memory of a national past (Wertsch, 2002), or they contradict such national values as tolerance or equality.
3. **Difficult histories may connect with questions or problems facing us in the present.** That is, they are relevant to the world around us.
4. **Difficult histories often involve violence, usually collective or state sanctioned.** Even when it is not state sanctioned, this type of violence may be committed by citizens of good social standing. Violence approved by the state or enacted by groups of supposedly upstanding citizens cannot be easily dismissed as aberrations or exceptions.
5. **Partly as a result of the other four conditions, difficult histories create disequilibria that challenge existing historical understandings.** To integrate these periods or events into an existing historical understanding may require people to change their assumptions or beliefs. Such a process comes at a cost, either individually, in adjusting our relationship to the nation and state, or collectively, in the national story we tell.

Japanese American incarceration neatly meets each of these criteria: (1) it is an essential part of the United States’ World War II history; (2) the imprisonment of babies, disabled, and elderly Americans, many of whom were U.S. citizens deprived of their constitutional rights, belies the popular belief that incarceration was an act of national security; (3) this history of some ethnoracial and other minoritized groups being viewed as disposable Others, regardless of their citizenship or relationship to the United States, continues to challenge the nation today; (4) the imprisonment of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was the result of an executive order by the President and enacted by the U.S. military and state and local law enforcement; and (5) the notion that the United States would imprison its own citizens, without evidence of guilt or due process, defies the depiction of the United States as a progressive modern democracy and world leader. To paraphrase a fifth grader (Rodríguez, 2017), Japanese American incarceration makes the United States look bad.

The history of Japanese American incarceration itself is not difficult to teach; what can be difficult is recognizing the deep injustice of this event, explaining it in terms that young learners can understand without becoming afraid, and recognizing that similar events could



happen again should we choose not to learn from the mistakes of the past. This chapter outlines two civics inquiries about Japanese American incarceration. The first inquiry is designed for second through fourth graders who are new to the topic of Japanese American incarceration and perhaps World War II in general. The second inquiry is designed to follow the first and could also be used on its own with fourth through sixth graders who already have a foundational understanding of the events of World War II. Both of these inquiry lessons were inspired by the instruction undertaken by Ms. Ye and her second-grade students in the opening classroom example, who demonstrated how powerful such learning can be for young children as well as how students can take informed action about issues that they find compelling and important.

**Table 1. Overview of Civics Inquiry 1**

<b>What Does a U.S. Citizen “Look” Like?</b> <b>Inquiry with Library of Congress and Other Primary Sources</b>			
<b>C3 Framework Indicator</b>	D2.Civ.8.K-2. Describe democratic principles such as equality, fairness, and respect for legitimate authority and rules.		
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Ask students to draw a picture of a U.S. citizen/American. Then ask them to draw a picture of themselves. Do the images look similar or different? Share the images in a group, then ask students if they can think of examples of U.S. citizens/Americans who do not look like the images shown. Next, print the images from the <a href="#">Library of Congress’ primary source set about Japanese American incarceration</a> and spread them around the room. Ask students to record the questions they have about each image; afterwards, compile the questions and refer to them later in the inquiry.		
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>	<b>Supporting Question 4</b>
Why were Japanese Americans imprisoned during World War II?	What was life like in Japanese American prison camps during World War II?	How did baseball become a popular sport in Japanese American prison camps?	Did serving in the military change perceptions of Japanese Americans?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Provide a five-fact overview that explains <b>WHO</b> was affected by Japanese American incarceration, <b>WHY</b> , <b>WHEN</b> , <b>WHERE</b> , and <b>HOW</b> .	Describe life at the Manzanar camp. How did life at the camp compare to life outside the camp?	Explain how baseball became popular in the camps and how it (and other sports) brought communities together during a difficult time.	Summarize the story of one Japanese American veteran, explaining how their experience during WWII impacted their life after the war.

*(continued on the next page)*

Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santa Anita reception center</li> <li>• Japanese American child being evacuated in LA</li> <li>• Evacuation of Japanese Americans in LA</li> <li>• <i>San Francisco Examiner</i> front page</li> <li>• Executive Order 9066</li> <li>• Civilian exclusion order #5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barracks at Manzanar camp</li> <li>• Miyatake family at Manzanar (image 1)</li> <li>• Miyatake family at Manzanar (image 2)</li> <li>• Farmworkers at Manzanar</li> <li>• Science lecture at Manzanar</li> <li>• Roy Takeno at Manzanar Free Press</li> <li>• Baseball game at Manzanar</li> <li>• Prison camp newspapers, 1942–1946</li> <li>• Ansel Adams’ photographs of Manzanar</li> <li>• Dorothea Lange’s photographs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball game at Manzanar</li> <li>• Baseball huddle at Manzanar</li> <li>• Japanese American boy waiting to play</li> <li>• Chick-a-dee softball team at Manzanar</li> <li>• Gila baseball team in Heart Mountain Sentinel</li> <li>• Youth baseball at Manzanar</li> <li>• Baseball team at Tule Lake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Go for Broke” 442nd Combat Team song</li> <li>• Sen. Daniel Inouye’s oral history about the formation of the 442nd Combat Team</li> <li>• 442nd Combat Team training at Camp Shelby</li> <li>• 442nd salute the flag at Camp Shelby</li> <li>• 442nd around anti-tank gun</li> <li>• 442nd relax and play ukelele</li> <li>• Japanese American servicewomen</li> <li>• Private Shinagawa of the Women’s Army Corps</li> <li>• Sen. Daniel Inouye</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p>Using the structure of a physical or digital scrapbook, students will use words/audio and primary sources to explain why Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II, the ways they were denied their rights as citizens, and the ways they modeled citizenship in the camps in the midst of adversity. The scrapbook should include a timeline with major events, two pages/slides for each event that feature primary sources with captions and short descriptions (written or recorded audio), and a final summary (written or audio) about why this history is important and should be taught to everyone.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Research aspects of camp not included in this lesson, such as detailed accounts from <a href="#">children of the camps</a>, farming, religious practices, schooling, etc.</p>		

**Taking Informed  
Action**

**Understand**

**Option 1:** Several Japanese Americans went to court in response to EO 9066, arguing that incarceration violated their constitutional rights. Learn about their stories and how they took civic action.

**Option 2:** The story of Bainbridge Island is one of community solidarity in the face of the injustice of EO 9066. Research this story.

**Option 3:** It took several decades for the U.S. government to admit that Japanese American incarceration was unjustified. In small groups, learn about the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which produced the report *Personal Justice Denied*. Ultimately, this commission and several political leaders (including individuals who had grown up in camps themselves) pushed for the passage of [the Civil Liberties Act of 1988](#), which resulted in a formal presidential apology and redress to camp survivors, and provided them with financial compensation for their personal and economic losses.

**Assess**

**Option 1:** Are there injustices that students can identify in their own communities? How can they take similar action against them?

**Option 2:** Ask students to consider who in their own community may need solidarity or support due to an injustice or need and how students can get involved (e.g., food pantry, mutual aid, mentoring).

**Act**

Why is it important to admit and apologize when a wrong has been committed? How can members of the classroom and school community work together to right wrongs when they occur? Students can determine specific issues they want to address and collaboratively decide on ways to apologize or spread awareness.

# Civics Inquiry 1: Japanese American Incarceration

While most elementary-level social studies textbooks and curricula fail to include Japanese American incarceration in their coverage of World War II, a wealth of primary sources can be found through the Library of Congress (LOC) as well as organizations like the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Japanese American National Museum, and the Densho Project. Although many educators cite World War II, and the Pearl Harbor attack in particular, as the starting point for this content, the Japanese American Citizens League (2011) urges educators to consider the seeds of prejudice sown a century earlier when the first major group of immigrants from Asia, the Chinese, arrived in the United States (see the chapter [“For Whom Should America’s Gates be Open? Inquiry about Chinese Immigration in the 1800s and Angel Island”](#) by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez). In the context of already

existing anti-Asian sentiment and economic interests, it becomes clear why West Coast Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes when they only comprised less than 4% of the 1,100,000 enemy nationals living in the United States in 1942 (JACL, 2011), while only 1% of Japanese Americans on the island of Hawai'i, the site of Pearl Harbor, were incarcerated. In short, the incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans was an opportunity for white Americans to financially benefit from Japanese American losses under the guise of national security (for more about this history, see [the Munson Report](#); Lee, 2015).

## Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Historical narratives of life in the United States during World War II often center on women working in factories and examples of military bravery. While horrors occurred outside of the country, domestically, Americans worked hard, made sacrifices, and came together against a common enemy. But the real story is not so simple. Individuals with ancestral ties to Axis nations often felt compelled to demonstrate their patriotism. While textbooks often describe how German sauerkraut was rebranded as “liberty cabbage” during World War I, they rarely attend to the hostility faced by young Italian, German, and Japanese Americans during World War II. This first civics inquiry presents Japanese American incarceration predominantly from the first-hand perspectives of Japanese American youth.

Begin the unit by asking students to draw a picture of a U.S. citizen/American.<sup>1</sup> If students have questions, ask them to draw the first thing that comes to their mind. After their drawings are complete, ask students to draw themselves. Are the two images similar or different? Then share the images as a group. Are the images of Americans that students have drawn similar to each other? How so? Do these images look different from their self-portraits? After discussing students' drawings, suggest some famous Americans whose images were not represented (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chávez, Harriet Tubman, Yuri Kochiyama). It is possible that students will not draw young people or People of Color in their images; if you observe this, ask students why they think this happened, particularly if they consider themselves to be Americans. Lastly, ask students what they would draw now if they were asked to do the same task again. Ideally, they will realize that there is no single representation of a U.S. citizen, as they are incredibly diverse in many different ways.

With these ideas about citizens and representation in mind, conduct a *picture flood* of images from [the Library of Congress Japanese American incarceration primary source set](#), as Ms. Ye did at the beginning of her unit on Japanese American incarceration. She spread printed copies of the eighteen photos in the set across the desks in her classroom and asked students to wonder aloud as they observed the photos. As her students were emergent

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<sup>1</sup> Both of these terms can be problematic; “citizen” is often defined in ways that privilege individuals with legal status and “American” can describe any person in the Americas and is not unique to the U.S. I urge educators to discuss the complexities of these terms and to ask students to consider which term makes the most sense to them.

writers, she and her student teacher moved around the room to record students' questions on paper. With confident writers, educators can provide sticky notes or chart paper for students to write down their questions themselves. In smaller spaces that do not permit all students to move around freely, primary sources may be passed around in rotation. After students have generated questions about the primary sources, educators should compile the questions to avoid repetition. Students will likely want to know who they are looking at, where they are, and why they are where they are. It is important to refer to students' self-generated questions throughout this inquiry to ensure that they are genuinely interested in finding the answers to their questions.

The first inquiry modeled in this chapter centers on the compelling question, "What does an U.S. citizen 'look' like?" This particular question alludes to the ways whiteness is often equated with notions of citizen, and how immigrants and People of Color are often assumed to *not* be American/citizens (Rodríguez, 2018, 2019; Vickery, 2017). The questions generated by students during the picture flood will likely fall under some of the supporting questions included in this inquiry, and several of the primary sources found in the LOC set will be revisited in response to the supporting questions. Depending on the instructional time and children's literature available to the teacher, this unit could dedicate a single day to each supporting question or an entire week to each. With younger learners, it is recommended that picturebooks be covered in two days rather than in a single read aloud to ensure ample time to develop comprehension and critical thinking.

**Figure 4.** *Japanese American Child Preparing to Leave for Manzanar*



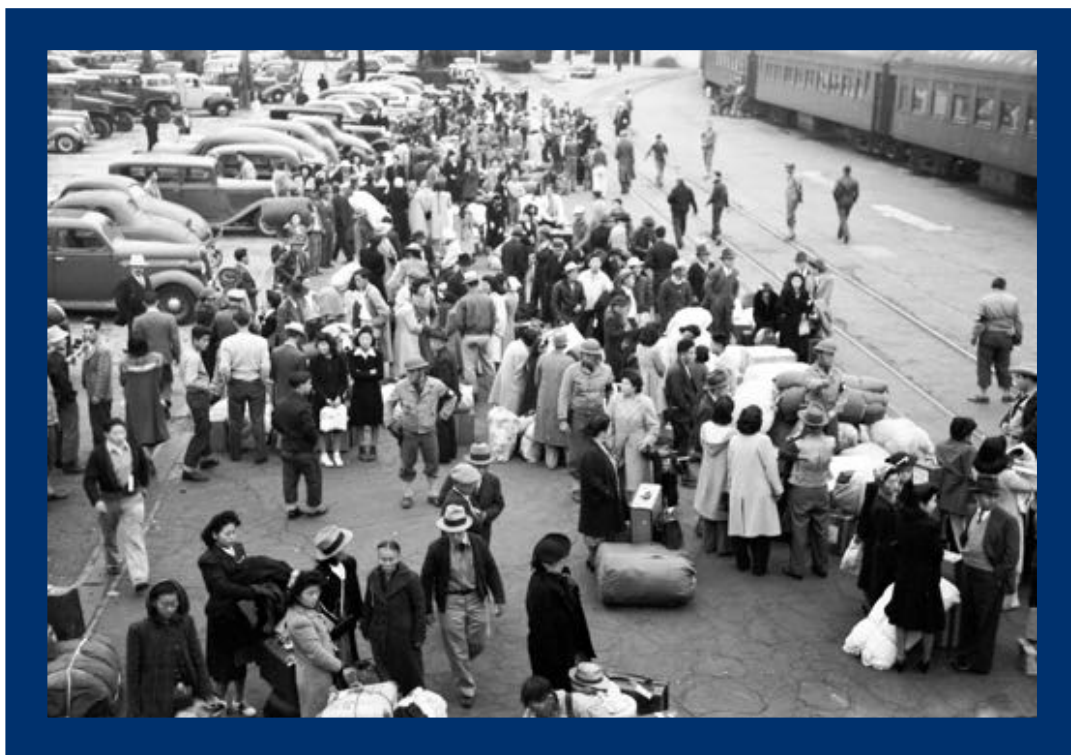
**Note.** Lee, R. (1942). *Los Angeles, California. The evacuation of Japanese-Americans from West Coast areas under U.S. Army war emergency order. Japanese-American child who is being evacuated with his parents to Owens Valley* [Photograph]. The Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017744913/>

## Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence

### Supporting Question 1: “Why Were Japanese Americans Imprisoned During World War II?”

As modeled by Ms. Ye, a read-aloud of *The Bracelet* can introduce learners to the history of Japanese American incarceration, and should be supplemented with primary sources that trace West Coast Japanese American families’ journeys from their urban homes to hastily constructed relocation centers (typically **abandoned racetracks** and fairgrounds) and then to desolate prison camps. Several illustrations from the book are very similar to images from the LOC primary source set and will likely result in rich conversation. For example, **Figure 4** shows a Japanese American child preparing to leave for Manzanar, a prison camp in Owens Valley, California, part of **a large group of Japanese Americans** who were forcibly removed and were only allowed to take what they could carry with them. The child’s white identification tag stands in stark contrast to their dark coat, and their small stature is juxtaposed with the nearby soldier towering over them. Observing this primary source with children can lead to powerful conversations about power and intimidation.

**Figure 5. Japanese Americans Preparing to Leave for Manzanar**



**Note.** Lee, R. (1942). Los Angeles, California. *The evacuation of the Japanese-Americans from West Coast areas under U.S. Army war emergency order. Japanese-Americans and a few alien Japanese waiting for a train which will take them to Owens Valley* [Photograph] The Library of Congress.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017744872/>

Much like the characters depicted in *The Bracelet*, the individuals in the photograph in Figure 5 did not know where they were going or how long they were going to be gone. The illustration that parallels the primary source of a large group of Japanese Americans waiting to load buses is accompanied by the text, “When they got to the center, Emi saw hundreds of Japanese-Americans everywhere. Grandmas and grandpas and mothers and fathers and children and babies” (Uchida, 1993, n.p.). Draw students’ attention to this statement. Do they think “grandmas and grandpas” and “children and babies” could be threats to a country’s national security?

About halfway through *The Bracelet*, the main character and her family are on a bus heading to Tanforan assembly center when they pass by a storefront sign that says, “We are LOYAL AMERICANS.” This illustration also mirrors a primary source in the LOC set. The main character, a young girl, thinks to herself, “I am, too. We all are” (Uchida, 1993, n.p.). At this point in the text, pause and return to the compelling question: What does an American “look” like? If the main character is a U.S. citizen, why is she being treated differently than her white friend?

Figure 6. *San Francisco Examiner*



Note. Oakland, Calif., Feb. 1942 (1942). [Photograph] Library of Congress  
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705924/>

At this point in the text, it is important to ensure student understanding of how and why the U.S. government has compelled Japanese Americans to leave their home. Share [this headline from the \*San Francisco Examiner\*](#) (Figure 6) that describes the imminent implementation of Executive Order 9066. Educators should be careful to note that “Japs” is a derogatory term and should not be used to refer to Japanese Americans. Next, review [Executive Order \(EO\) 9066](#), which was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. This order authorized the forced removal of all persons deemed a threat to national security to designated military areas; however, it was only enforced on a large scale with Japanese Americans who lived along the West Coast. After EO 9066 was issued, a series of civilian exclusion orders were publicly posted to notify Japanese and Japanese Americans of their impending removal; as seen in [Civilian Exclusion Order #5](#), the orders stated instructions to all persons of Japanese ancestry. [Page 7 of this lesson plan by the Japanese American National Museum](#) provides a worksheet version of Civil Exclusion Order #29 along with several prompts for students to analyze and consider. Educators can guide students through this worksheet so they better understand how forced removal was structured through EO 9066.

*The Bracelet* ends when the family arrives at Tanforan racetracks and discovers their new home is a former horse stable. Tanforan was one of sixteen assembly centers that Japanese Americans first lived in while the permanent camps were still under construction. Between May and October 1942, Japanese Americans were transferred from the assembly centers to ten camps (Densho, 2020). Most children’s literature does not distinguish between the assembly centers, which were temporary and often quickly built on fairgrounds and racetracks, and the prison camps, where families lived for several years until EO 9066 ended. After reading *The Bracelet* and supplementing with the primary sources referenced above, students should be able to complete a formative performance task in which they communicate *who* was affected by Japanese American incarceration, *why*, *when*, *where* and *how*. Additional discussion questions and book activities related to *The Bracelet* can be found on page 73 of the Japanese American Citizens League [curriculum and resource guide](#) (2011).



Figure 7. *Manzanar Relocation Center, California*



**Note.** Adams, A. (1943). *Manzanar street scene, clouds, Manzanar Relocation Center, California* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695966/>

## ***Supporting Question 2: “What Was Life Like in Japanese American Prison Camps During World War II?”***

Upon their arrival in the camps, Japanese Americans were often stunned by the poor housing conditions and inhospitable environments. The War Relocation Authority built ten mass permanent camps in isolated areas of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming, each holding between 7,000–18,000 Japanese Americans (Japanese American Citizens League, 2011; Murray, 2000). The Japanese American National Museum has [an interactive map of the camps](#) that provides visitors with detailed information about each camp along with artifacts from those who were imprisoned there; [the Bancroft Library at Berkeley also has a wealth of primary sources organized by camp](#). Students can work in small groups to complete [Table 2](#) below with facts about each camp, then come back together in the whole group to map out their camps and share what they learned. They will discover that the camps were located in deserts and mountains and that residents had very little privacy or access to everyday conveniences. As students read books and narratives about Japanese American incarceration, they should note on the map which books describe particular camps.

Figure 8. *Tojo Miatake Family, Manzanar Relocation Center*

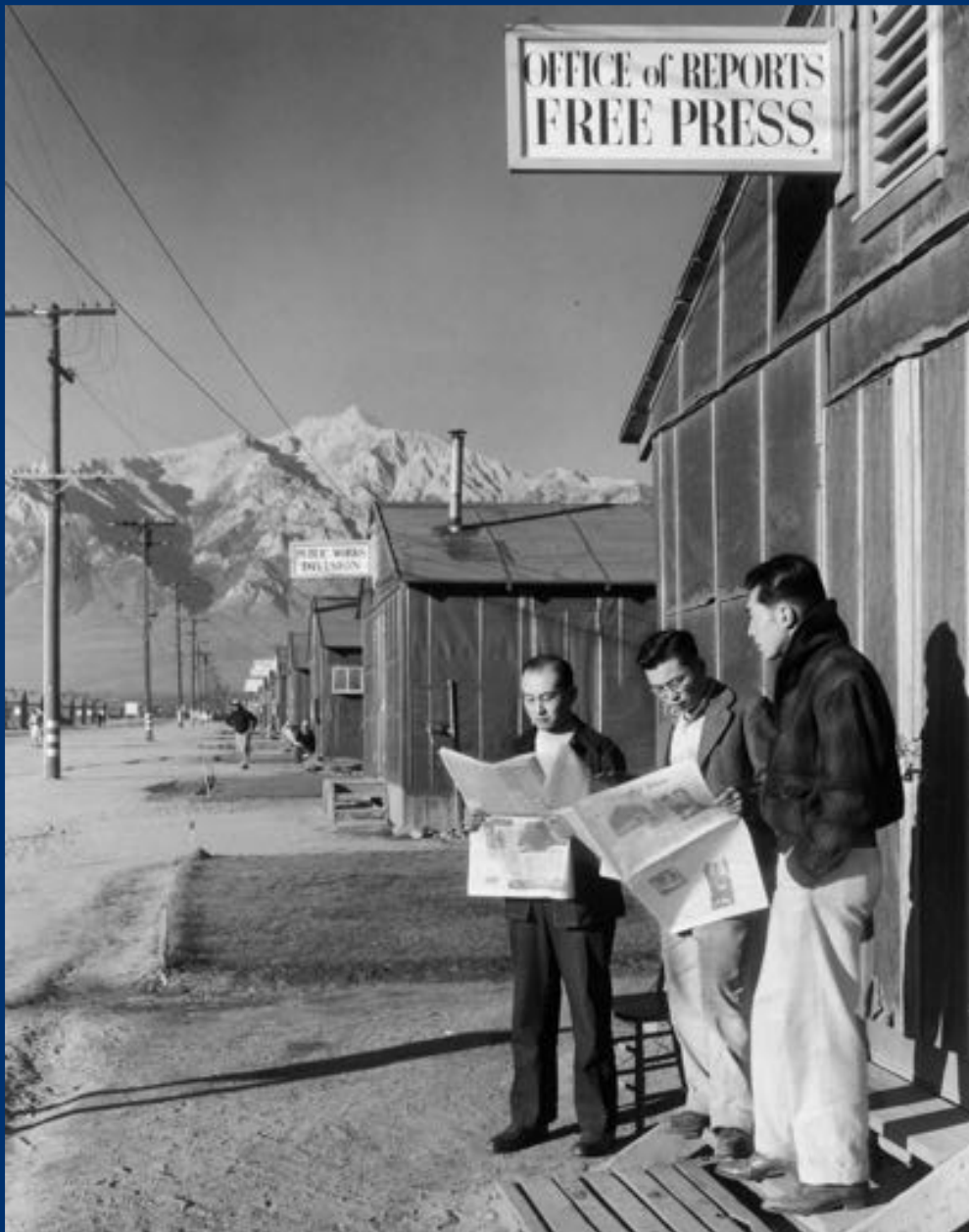


**Note.** Adams, A. (1943). *Tojo Miatake [i.e. Tōyō Miyatake] Family, Manzanar Relocation Center* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695956/>

**Images of camp barracks** demonstrate the crowding and lack of privacy experienced by their inhabitants. **Families were innovative** and used whatever materials they could salvage **to make their dreary conditions feel like home**. Many built gardens, constructing irrigation systems that **allowed their plants to thrive despite desert conditions**. Given the size of the camps and the lack of structured work and activities available, Japanese Americans worked together to ensure that **schools were formed, newspapers were created, and sports were organized** to create some semblance of a normal life for young and old. **Newspapers for each prison camp have been archived and digitized at the Library of Congress**, and students can return to their small groups to analyze newspapers and can continue to make comparisons and contrasts across the camps.

Famed photographers Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange were allowed unprecedented access to the camps; Adams's collection of photographs at the camp in Manzanar can be found [here](#) and presents a wide array of **formal portraits, candid shots, and camp landscapes**. Lange's photographs before and during incarceration can be found [here](#); [this video](#) describes her work related to Japanese Americans. Notably, both photographers were given strict instructions to capture neither the barbed wire nor the watchtowers with armed guards that surrounded the camps, and their photographs were not made public until after World War II.

Students should be mindful of these absences in the photographs they observe and should be encouraged to share any images they find that *do* include guard towers or barbed wire. Ask students to consider why these particular aspects of the camps were deliberately excluded and who was protected by their absence. Be sure to question whether those who lived in the camps could ignore these aspects in the same way.



**Note.** Adams, A. (1943). *Roy Takeno, editor, and group reading paper in front of office, Manzanar Relocation Center, California* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002696016/>

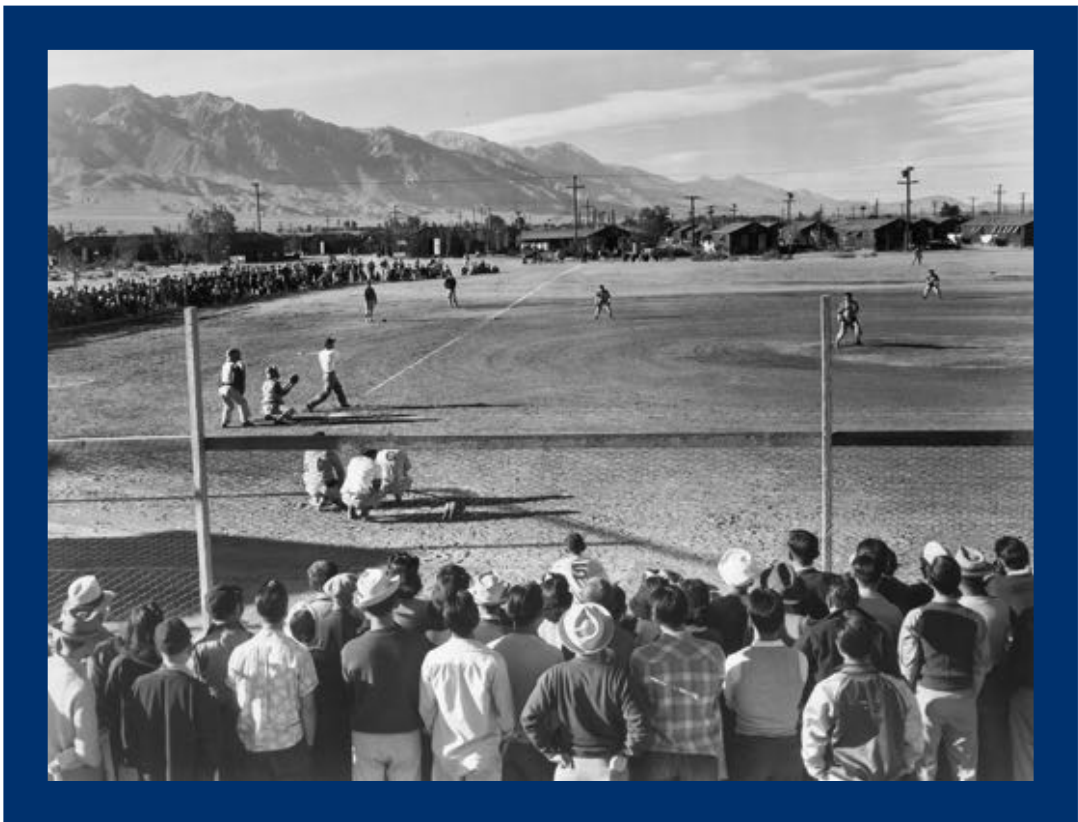
A significant body of children's historical fiction and nonfiction about Japanese American incarceration exists across a range of reading levels. Students may enjoy learning about the correspondence that took place between librarian Clara Breed and the young Japanese American children who frequented her library before EO 9066. *Dear Miss Breed* (Oppenheim, 2006) and *Write to Me* (Grady, 2017) describe the letters and postcards that Japanese American children exchanged with Miss Breed, who saved all the mail she received from imprisoned youth; excerpts from these letters can also be found at [the Smithsonian](#). There are also several middle grade and young adult novels that provide an in-depth glimpse of camp life, including *The Moon Bridge* (Slavin, 1992), *Paper Wishes* (Sepahban, 2016), *Sylvia and Aki* (Conkling, 2011), and *Weedflower* (Kadohata, 2006). Japanese American author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston wrote the autobiographical novel *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973) about her childhood experience in Manzanar, and Yoshiko Uchida, author of *The Bracelet*, has written many memoirs for young adults.

In recent years, several graphic novels for adolescent readers have been released about Japanese American incarceration, including *Fred Korematsu Speaks Up* (Atkins & Yogi, 2017) and *They Called Us Enemy* (Takei, Eisinger & Scott, 2019). Educators should determine the best way to engage their students with a combination of primary sources and children's literature; for younger learners, picturebooks like *Write to Me* or a short chapter book like *Sylvia and Aki* may be ideal. Older learners may benefit from structured book clubs deeply integrated with language arts skills in which they create detailed summaries and timelines for the books they read about Japanese American incarceration. Still others might prefer to select books by genre, reading level, or independently; for these learners, educators may rely on their preferred graphic organizers and book projects for students' individual accountability while bringing classes together to review timelines and primary sources. The formative performance task for this supporting question is composing a paragraph describing life at the Manzanar camp (or, if conducting group research on all camps, the camp assigned to individual students). How did life inside the camp compare to life outside the camp? Rather than encouraging students to make direct comparisons to their own lives, which can disregard the wartime context and time period, ask students to draw on perspective-taking and historical empathy to consider how they might feel if they were a young person in camp, using evidence from primary sources and tradebooks.

**Table 2. World War II Prison Camp Study**

<b>Name of Camp</b>	
<b>Camp Location</b>	
<b>Peak Population</b>	
<b>Date Camp Opened</b>	
<b>Date Camp Closed</b>	
<b>What was life like in this camp?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>
<b>What resources did you use to learn about this camp?</b>	Websites: Books: Other:

**Figure 10. Baseball Game, Manzanar Relocation Center**



**Note.** Adams, A. (1943). *Baseball game, Manzanar Relocation Center, Calif.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002695992/>

### **Supporting Question 3: “How Did Baseball Become a Popular Sport in Japanese Americans Prison Camps?”**

Baseball has long been referred to as America’s pastime. During World War II, it was beloved by [many of the Japanese Americans imprisoned in camps by the U.S. government](#). This supporting question explores the role of sports, and baseball specifically, as a source of recreation and community engagement at the camps; while the camps were desolate prisons, the Japanese Americans within them found many ways to foster joy and community, especially among youth. Share the primary sources related to sports at the camps in this section through a picture flood or gallery walk, then ask students [why people play and enjoy sports](#). Why might they miss these pastimes in camp, especially when there is no access to television (and the internet had yet to be invented)?

Then, depending on age group, read the following two books aloud or have students read them independently in small groups: *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki (1993), whose parents were imprisoned at the Minidoka camp in Idaho, and *Barbed Wire Baseball* (Moss, 2013), the story of Kenichi “Zeni” Zenimura, who played baseball in and outside of the camps. [Zenimura and his Gila baseball teammates are featured in this issue of the Heart Mountain Sentinel](#), which also illustrates the importance of camp baseball leagues in the news stories that surround the image of Zenimura and his team. Ask students why camp sports were important to those who participated in and enjoyed them, [especially for young people](#).

While the example of [camp baseball](#) is important for students to understand the importance of finding joy in dark times, it is also important for students to critically analyze the stories about these events. Both *Baseball Saved Us* and *Barbed Wire Baseball* have happy endings; at the end of [camp baseball games](#), however, children and adults were still imprisoned against their will. In *Baseball Saved Us*, did playing baseball actually save Japanese Americans imprisoned in the camps? And in *Barbed Wire Baseball*, in which images of armed guard towers and barbed wire fences abound, did playing baseball actually give Zenimura freedom from his imprisonment? These stories provide opportunities to consider the role of metaphors and figurative language against the backdrop of the terrible history of Japanese American incarceration.

Figure 11. *Chick-a-dee Softball Team*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1942) *Japanese relocation, California. Maye Noma, behind the plate, and Tomi Nagao, at bat, in a practice game between members of the Chick-a-dee softball team, which was kept intact when the players were evacuated from Los Angeles to Manzanar, California, a War Relocation Authority Center for evacuees of Japanese ancestry* [Photograph] Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017699970/>

Although the limited children’s literature about camp sports focuses only on men, women also formed sports teams. Dorothea Lange took [this photo of the Chick-a-dee softball team at Manzanar](#) (Figure 11). Additional background on the baseball phenomenon at the camps can be found at [this LOC blog](#), [the Densoh blog](#), [the National Museum of American History](#), and at the [Nisei Baseball website](#). The formative performance task for this supporting question is describing (orally, in writing, or through creative expression) baseball in the camps and how it (and other sports) brought communities together during a difficult time.

### ***Supporting Question 4: “Did Serving in the Military Change Perceptions of Japanese Americans?”***

A common theme of World War II learning is national service. At a time when Japanese Americans were questioned for their loyalty to the United States on the basis of their ancestry, some decided to demonstrate their commitment to their country by enlisting in the

military. The [Go for Broke National Education Center](#) educates the public about Japanese American veterans of World War II through an interactive exhibition, oral histories, and educational resources. A portion of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's ["A More Perfect Union" website](#) is dedicated to [Japanese American service during World War II](#). The story of the Japanese American men from Hawai'i who volunteered to create the 100th Infantry Battalion and a second segregated Nisei unit, the 442nd Combat Team, can be introduced to young learners through the short video ["Sacrifice: An American Story."](#) Some Japanese Americans also joined the Military Intelligence Service, where they served as translators. For older learners who can conduct research independently, these websites are rich sources of information.

**Figure 12.** *Soldiers Enjoying Ukulele While Awaiting Orders*



**Note.** *Awaiting orders to detain at Camp Shelby, a quartet of Japanese-Americans swing out to the accompaniment of a Hawaiian ukulele (1943).* [Photograph] Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/00652093/>

The famed [442nd Regimental Combat Team](#) of [Japanese American soldiers](#) can be taught through a combination of Library of Congress primary sources and children's literature. Several primary sources are available of [the 442nd at Camp Shelby](#), where they [trained](#), [prepared for war](#), and [found small moments of joy](#); these primary sources



are important supplements for children’s literature. *Heroes* by Mochizuki (1995) is a picturebook that describes a boy who learns about his Japanese American family’s military service. This fictional story can be paired with oral [histories from the Veterans History Project](#) about 442nd Sergeant [Norman Ikari](#), First Lieutenant [Kenneth Takihara](#), and Army medics [Yeichi Kuwayama](#) and [Jimmy Kanaya](#). [The Japanese American National Museum also has primary sources about the Saito family](#), which had three brothers who served during World War II. While the majority of Japanese American veterans during World War II were men, [500 Japanese American women enlisted](#) in the Women’s Army Corps, Army Nurse Corps, and Cadet Nurse Corps. For more information about these women veterans, visit the [Go for Broke website](#). After reading aloud *Heroes*, educators can model summarizing the life of a Japanese American veteran based on one of these links, making explicit connections between their experiences at the camps and the impact of those experiences later in life.

On December 17th, 1944, the Western Defense Command, led by General Henry C. Pratt, rescinded exclusion and detention orders. Japanese Americans were free to return to their homes on the West Coast in January 1945, and were given a bus or train ticket and \$25. Screen the video [“Righting a Wrong” by Densho](#), which summarizes Japanese American life after the camps closed. Despite the valiant displays of heroism by Japanese American soldiers, their names were removed from community honor rolls and some local cemeteries refused to bury the remains of soldiers killed in action overseas. [U.S. Army Captain Daniel K. Inouye, who was later elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962](#), walked into a San Francisco barbershop in full uniform, with all his medals, and was told, “We don’t serve Japs here” (JACL, 2011, p. 16). Even though the camps had closed, Japanese Americans were never proven to have been spies, and Japanese Americans had served in the military in defense of the United States, they continued to face discrimination at home. The formative task for this supporting question is for students to listen to/read the oral history of one Japanese American veteran and to summarize their story, explaining how their experience during World War II impacted their life after the war.

## Summative Performance Task

Either physically or digitally, in small groups or in pairs, have students create scrapbooks that explain why Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II, the ways they were denied their rights as citizens, and the ways they modeled citizenship in the camps in the midst of adversity. The scrapbook should include a timeline with major events, two pages/slides for each event that feature primary sources with captions and short descriptions (written or recorded audio), and a summary (written or audio) about why this history is important and should be taught to everyone.

## Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

This inquiry lesson offers a starting point for further learning about Japanese American incarceration, and is by no means comprehensive. Students can conduct further research about examples of civic agency and action taken by Japanese Americans during World War II to come to their own conclusions about what it means to be an American and uphold American values of freedom and justice. For example, [several Japanese Americans went to court in response to EO 9066, arguing that incarceration violated their constitutional rights](#). The most famous individuals are Fred Korematsu (featured in Civics Inquiry 2), Mitsuye Endo, Minoru Yasui, and Gordon Hirabayashi, whose cases went to the U.S. Supreme Court. Learn about their stories and how they took civic action. How can their fights inspire students to fight for what is right when they see injustice in their own communities? In contrast to these tales of individual resistance, the story of [Bainbridge Island](#) is one of [community solidarity](#) in the face of the injustice of EO 9066. Research this history ([the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community website](#) and [Kitsap regional library](#) have many primary sources) and consider how community members can band together in defense of justice. Students can consider issues of injustice that have occurred in their own communities, determine what they want to address, and collaboratively decide on ways to apologize or spread awareness.

### Conclusion of Civics Inquiry 1

It took several decades for the U.S. government to publicly admit that Japanese American incarceration was unjustified. In small groups, learn about the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (introduced in the [“Righting a Wrong” video](#)), which produced the report *Personal Justice Denied*. Ultimately, this commission and several political leaders (including individuals who had grown up in camps themselves) pushed for the passage of [the Civil Liberties Act of 1988](#), which resulted in a formal presidential apology and redress to camp survivors (financial compensation for their personal and economic losses). Why is it important to admit and apologize when a wrong has been committed? This question, as well the account of Japanese American Tom Kometani, who describes his family’s struggles after the camps close, is discussed in [this 1983 episode of the MacNeil/Lehrer Report \(begin playing at 9:10\)](#). A full timeline for the campaign for redress can be found in the [JACL curriculum and resource guide](#), on pages 30–33.

By the end of this inquiry, students should have an emerging understanding of how whiteness has often been linked to ideas of who is considered a U.S. citizen through the case of Japanese Americans in World War II. Students will hopefully be able to apply their analysis of primary sources and critical approaches to children’s literature to other groups in the past and present. If students are deeply engaged in the Japanese American incarceration inquiry,

they may want to continue their learning through the inquiry that follows. While Civics Inquiry 2 is designed for an upper elementary audience, Ms. Ye did an adapted version of this unit with her second graders that featured whole-class discussions and activities.

## **Civics Inquiry 2: Loyalty & Patriotism During Japanese American Incarceration & Today**

**Table 3. Overview of Civics Inquiry 2: What Does It Mean to Be Loyal to Your Country?**

<b>What Does It Mean to Be Loyal to Your Country?</b> Inquiry With Primary Sources From the Library of Congress			
<b>C3 Framework Indicators</b>	D2.Civ.9.3-5. Use deliberative processes when making decisions or reaching judgments as a group. D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.		
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Every day at school, students across the United States take part in the Pledge of Allegiance. But what does it mean to pledge allegiance? Ask students to define the word "loyal." What does it mean to be loyal to someone or to a community? What does it mean to be loyal to your country? Then ask students to define "patriot." Are there ways in which these definitions overlap? Are there ways in which defining these terms becomes difficult? What would students do if they were asked to sacrifice some of their rights for the good of the country?		
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
Who was Fred Korematsu and would he be considered a loyal American?	Why was the Loyalty Questionnaire difficult for Japanese and Japanese Americans to respond to?	Was Japanese American incarceration constitutional?	What are contemporary examples in which U.S. citizens have had their loyalty questioned?

Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Provide a five-fact overview that explains <i>who</i> Fred Korematsu was, <i>why</i> his story is important, <i>when</i> he lived and took action against the government, <i>where</i> he lived and was imprisoned, and <i>how</i> he showed that he was loyal to the United States. If reading <i>Fred Korematsu Stands Up</i> , for each chapter, illustrate and summarize in one sentence to create a short biography.	Use a graphic organizer ( <a href="#">Table 5</a> ) to illustrate the motivations and consequences behind the different responses to Questions 27 and 28 of the loyalty questionnaire	Complete Rights Violated/Rights Upheld table with a partner.  For older students: Complete <a href="#">chart</a> comparing Endo, Yasui, Hirabayashi, and Korematsu court cases.	Drawing from individual or small group research, how was the person selected fighting for the rights of a specific community and why did others think they were not being loyal because of these actions? Describe your response and whether or not you think this person is loyal and explain why.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Korematsu v. United States</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Motion to vacate Korematsu conviction</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Questions 27 and 28 from loyalty questionnaire*</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Yuri Kochiyama interview about loyalty questionnaire*</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ex parte Endo</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hirabayashi v. United States</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<p>Make a trifold brochure about loyalty or patriotism. On the cover, begin with traditional imagery about what the chosen word means. On the inside, describe an example of loyalty or patriotism related to Japanese American incarceration and another example from the present. On the back, explain your response to the <a href="#">James Baldwin quotation in this inquiry</a>.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Research other Japanese American activists who were mentioned briefly in this inquiry, such as <a href="#">Yuri Kochiyama</a>, <a href="#">Mitsuye Endo</a>, <a href="#">Minoru Yasui</a>, and <a href="#">Gordon Hirabayashi</a>.</p>		
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>Understand</b> Learn about the stories of Japanese Americans who were children imprisoned in the camps and later became state and national leaders.</p> <p><b>Assess</b> Identify problems in your own community and the leaders who might be able to help solve them.</p> <p><b>Act</b> Brainstorm a list of potential stakeholders and create an action plan to solve the problem in collaboration with others.</p>		

## Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

To set the stage for this inquiry, educators should begin with a conversation about loyalty and patriotism. As most public schools across the United States begin their day with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, this is an easy and familiar starting point. What does it mean to pledge allegiance to a country? What is it that students are committing to as they recite these words? Similarly, what does it mean to be loyal to a country? What if the country does something you think is unfair? Does loyalty mean obedience? The Civil Rights Movement was founded in civil disobedience, but that disobedience was conducted in order to attain equal rights that had been promised but not given. Relatedly, what does it mean to be a patriot? For example, federal flag code states that the American flag “should never be used as wearing apparel” (4 U.S. Code, Section 8), yet many people wear American flag t-shirts, shorts, hats, even bathing suits. Can you be patriotic when you are breaking a federal code?

## Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts

Students should be familiar with Japanese American incarceration during World War II before beginning this lesson. Refer to [this timeline by the Library of Congress](#) to review major events from this history. This inquiry focuses on civic action and agency through the compelling question, “What does it mean to be loyal to your country?” The first three supporting questions of the inquiry focus on loyalty in the context of Japanese American incarceration, while the fourth and final supporting question considers contemporary examples of contested loyalty. Before beginning this inquiry, review Table 4 below for terminology about the different generations of Japanese immigrants as these terms will be referenced later in the inquiry.

**Table 4. Terms for Generations of Japanese/Japanese Americans (Densho, 2020)**

Japanese Name	Generation Description
<i>Nikkei</i>	Japanese immigrants <i>and</i> their descendants; sometimes used instead of Japanese American
<i>Issei</i>	The first generation of immigrants from Japan; these were typically the adults who were imprisoned
<i>Nisei</i>	The second generation; these children of immigrants were typically U.S.-born and were often very young during World War II.
<i>Kibei</i>	The second generation; American-born Japanese who were predominantly educated in Japan ( <i>considered to be the most “dangerous”</i> )
<i>Sansei</i>	The third generation, or the children of the Nisei
<i>Yonsei</i>	The fourth generation, the grandchildren of the Nisei

## Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence

### ***Supporting Question 1: “Who Was Fred Korematsu and Would He Be Considered a Loyal American?”***

The compelling story of Fred Korematsu offers students an example of individual resistance against the injustice of EO 9066. Korematsu refused to voluntarily turn himself into local authorities and was soon arrested. Shortly afterwards, he was imprisoned in a camp in Topaz, Utah. With the support of the American Civil Liberties Union, [Korematsu took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court](#) on the grounds that forced removal was unconstitutional, but he lost. Decades later, in 1983, [Korematsu’s conviction was finally vacated](#). Later in life, Korematsu became a civil rights activist and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

After his death in 2005, Korematsu’s daughter Karen founded the Korematsu Institute to support the teaching of her father’s legacy; the free curriculum toolkit available from [the Korematsu Institute](#) is highly recommended for use with this inquiry. This toolkit includes two graphic novels and an educational DVD, *Of Civil Wrongs and Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story*. Show the elementary-edited version of the video to open the lesson and ask students what surprises them. When Ms. Ye shared this video in her class, her second graders were most stunned by Korematsu’s statement that jail was better than the camps.

After introducing Korematsu’s story through the video, read aloud *Fred Korematsu: All American Hero* (Chander & Sunder, 2011) or *Fred Korematsu Stands Up* (Atkins & Yogi, 2017). Create a timeline of Korematsu’s life as a class; if reading *Fred Korematsu Stands Up* aloud or individually, the formative task for individual students is to summarize each chapter with an illustration and description, orally or in writing. With twelve chapters in all, students’ illustrations and summaries will create a short biography. For younger students, the formative task can be a simple five-fact overview that explains *who* Korematsu was, *why* his story is important, *when* he lived and took action against the government, *where* he lived and was imprisoned, and *how* he showed that he was loyal to the United States. The [JAACL curriculum and resource guide](#) has a lesson plan about the *Korematsu v. United States* case and a summary of the constitutional rights that were violated.

### ***Supporting Question 2: “Why Was the Loyalty Questionnaire Difficult for Japanese and Japanese Americans to Respond to?”***

In 1943, the War Relocation Authority and the War Department came together in search of loyal Japanese Americans who might enlist in the military. They distributed [a questionnaire](#) to all adult men camp prisoners that was four pages long; the form was also given to Nisei already serving in the military and *Nisei* outside of the exclusion zone who were being processed for enlistment. Most of the information the questionnaire requested

was relatively simple. However, the final two questions made this questionnaire notorious across the camps.

Questions 27 and 28 were the final questions on the document. Question 27 asked, “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?” Some young Japanese American men feared that by answering “yes,” they would be volunteering for service. Question 28 asked, “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?”

A printable version of the questionnaire is available in the [JACL curriculum & resource guide](#) and should be shared with students in small groups. Ask students to examine these two questions closely and to discuss what specific words or ideas in the questions might make them tricky to respond to. Students should compile their comments and share with the whole group; educators can note or chart these responses before summarizing the explanation that follows.

Question 28 asked the signer to swear allegiance to the United States and renounce loyalty to the emperor of Japan. Japanese Americans resented the suggestion that they had ever been loyal to the Emperor; moreover, those who had not been born in the United States were not legally able to become citizens as they were barred access to that privilege on the basis of race. (Asians who were not born in the United States were unable to become U.S. citizens through naturalization until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.) Although *Issei* may have held allegiance to the United States, because they were not allowed to become U.S. citizens, to renounce their Japanese citizenship would make them stateless.

*Issei* organized and successfully convinced the War Relocation Authority to change the language in the form before they were required to respond. In particular, they revised Question 28 so that *Issei* would not risk the possibility of losing all citizenship if they renounced their allegiance to Japan. However, for *Nisei*, the form was part of the selective service process (commonly known as the draft); although their very imprisonment violated their rights as citizens, to refuse to comply with the selective service process could result in prosecution through the Espionage Act. [On the Densho Encyclopedia, activist Yuri Kochiyama explains the confusion around answering the last two questions on the questionnaire](#); play this video clip for students and discuss. Despite the complexity of the details surrounding the answers chosen for these final questions, responses seemed to divide Japanese into two categories: loyal and disloyal (Densho, 2020).

Approximately 20% of all *Nisei* answered “no” to questions 27 and 28. Those who responded “No” to both questions, or refused to answer them, were considered disloyal and were known as “No-No” boys. In 1943, all “No-Nos” from the ten camps (12,000 in all) were sent to the Tule Lake camp, which was rebranded as a segregation center. Tule Lake became increasingly inhospitable as more barbed wire, guard towers, and fencing were added and 1,000 military police arrived in armored tanks and cars. Although a third of the Tule Lake

population were “loyals” who had answered “yes” to both questions, Tule Lake gained a reputation for being a facility filled with disloyal Japanese Americans (Varner, 2019). After explaining these consequences to students, educators should create a map or flow chart that demonstrates the cause/effect relationship between the different responses to these two controversial parts of the questionnaire. Relevant primary sources can be incorporated into this visual aid if space permits, or maps/charts can be made digitally for a multimedia experience and to support a range of different learners.

[Densho](#) and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History’s [“A More Perfect Union” website](#) offer educators additional background, primary sources, and oral histories about the loyalty questionnaire. If you already have some knowledge of the loyalty questionnaire, [Densho’s “10 Things You Probably Didn’t Know about the Loyalty Questionnaire”](#) may be of interest. The formative performance task for this supporting question is for students to work in small groups to complete a graphic organizer that illustrates the motivations behind the different answers to questions 27 and 28, as well as the consequence for each response.

**Table 5. Responding to the Loyalty Questionnaire**

	Question 27: “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?” Some young Japanese American men feared that by answering “yes,” they would be volunteering for service.	Question 28: “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?”
Summarize in your own words		
If you answered “Yes,” what might happen?		
If you answered “No,” what might happen?		
What made answering this question tricky?		
How could you rephrase the question?		



## **Supporting Question 3: “Was Japanese American Incarceration Constitutional?”**

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching Japanese American incarceration is the fact that it violated the Constitutional rights of U.S. citizens; this is one of the key reasons it is considered a “difficult history.” Now that students have learned about this history, they can reflect on the events they have learned in regard to constitutional rights. The Japanese American National Museum lesson plan guide, “[Instructions for All Persons: Reflections on Executive Order 9066](#),” contains a Bill of Rights worksheet. Make double-sided copies of this worksheet for each student and return to the instructional materials and performance tasks from the previous two supporting questions. Students should work in pairs to determine what can go into the table on page 12 of the worksheet under the “Rights Violated” and “Rights Upheld” columns. Once students have worked together to list a few ideas, come together as a class to discuss their responses. Then, refer to the JAACL summary of constitutional rights violated (listed in their [curriculum and resource guide](#) on p. 99) to verify what students got correct and what they did not include.

Interested students may conduct additional research on three other Japanese Americans who brought court cases against the United States government: [Mitsuye Endo](#), [Minoru Yasui](#) ([additional resources here](#)), and [Gordon Hirabayashi](#). Resources for their stories were referenced in the first civics inquiry and information gathered by students can be organized into a table or foldable as modeled below. These four individuals are considered the most important civil rights activists of the incarceration era.

**Table 6. Supreme Court Cases related to Japanese American Incarceration**

<i>Name of Defendant</i>	<i>Mitsuye Endo</i>	<i>Minoru Yasui</i>	<i>Gordon Hirabayashi</i>	<i>Fred Korematsu</i>
<b>Name and Date of Court Case</b>				
<b>What law was the defendant accused of violating?</b>				
<b>Which of the defendant’s Constitutional rights were violated?</b>				
<b>What was the court’s decision?</b>				

## ***Supporting Question 4: “What are Contemporary Examples in Which U.S. Citizens Have Had Their Loyalty Questioned?”***

For older students, there are many examples of Americans living today whose loyalty to the United States has been questioned. From the highly publicized protests of athletes Colin Kaepernick and Megan Rapinoe (see the lessons about patriotism and sports by Hawkman & Van Horn, 2019) to individuals like Edward Snowden who have released classified government information, arguments over what it means to be a loyal American and/or patriot continue. Can one be a loyal citizen or patriot if they defy laws or traditions for the betterment of society? Students can engage in this topic through any number of specific examples, and educators should be careful to engage them in critical media literacy (see Weber & Hagan, 2020) to ensure that students are finding resources that are accurate and represent multiple perspectives.

Before students begin this work in small groups or independently, they should consider the following James Baldwin (1984) quotation: “I love America more than any other country in this world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.” Does critiquing the United States for failing to live up to its ideals mean that one is not a patriot, or is it the very definition of patriotism? Baldwin’s quotation and the question that follows should guide students’ individual inquiries into contemporary examples. The formative performance task for this supporting question is a description of how the person selected fought for the rights of a specific community and why others thought they were not being loyal or patriotic because of those actions. This oral, written, or creative description should use evidence to explain students’ opinions about whether or not they think the selected person is loyal and why.

### **Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**

Returning to the history spotlighted in this inquiry, Japanese Americans have launched numerous campaigns in response to the so-called Muslim Ban implemented by the Trump administration. Reflecting on their own experiences with incarceration, many Japanese Americans have been vocal in their opposition and have launched multiple actions across the United States in protest. Sponsored by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, filmmaker Frank Chi [filmed Muslim youth reading letters sent to Clara Breed by Japanese American youth alongside camp survivors](#) (Kohli, 2016). These efforts to avoid the racist mistakes made in the past illustrate the importance of interracial solidarity, and the article and video [What does it mean to be an American Muslim?](#) from the Smithsonian blog considers how ignorance and intolerance continue to impact Americans with marginalized identities today. Share these resources with students to illustrate how the difficult history of Japanese American incarceration is connected to ongoing struggles today.

## Summative Performance Task

The summative performance task for this inquiry is for students to make a trifold brochure about loyalty or patriotism. On the cover, begin with traditional imagery about what the chosen word means. On the inside, describe an example of loyalty or patriotism related to Japanese American incarceration and another example from the present. On the back, they will explain their response to the James Baldwin quote from the beginning of the inquiry.

In terms of taking informed action after engaging in the lessons about the supporting questions for the unit, students will use what they have learned about Japanese American incarceration and apply it to the present day. Numerous incarcerated eventually became leaders at the local, state, and national level. [Norman Mineta](#), whose [family](#) was imprisoned in the camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming, became a Congressman and Presidential cabinet member. *Enemy Child* (Warren, 2019) is a detailed account of Congressman Mineta's life in the camp, and ends with Mineta's alliance with childhood friend and fellow Congressman Alan Simpson to seek justice for incarcerated Japanese Americans through the development of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) and the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Congressman [Mike Honda](#) was imprisoned as an infant and Congresswoman [Doris Matsui](#) was born in a camp. These and other Japanese American members of Congress are examples of how witnessing incomprehensible injustice can lead people to fight against injustice for the rest of their lives.

Students should identify a problem in their community and the leaders in their community who might be able to help address the problem. Mineta's story can inspire students to collaborate with others in order to effect change; who else in the community might be able to support students in improving their conditions? Students can brainstorm a list of potential stakeholders and create an action plan to solve their problem in collaboration with others.

## Conclusion

In sum, while Japanese American incarceration during World War II is often taught in superficial ways to elementary learners, this event and the stories of those who experienced it teach students valuable lessons about civics and patriotism. Japanese American incarceration is central to U.S. history, both in terms of World War II and regarding the complicated civic relationship Asians and Asian Americans have had in the United States. The difficult truths of Japanese American incarceration refute notions that the United States has always ensured the Constitutional rights of its citizens in this purported land of the free and home of the brave, even when those citizens have committed no crime and even serve in the military, and has clear connections to the present and ongoing injustices in our country. Violence and trauma enacted by the government still resonate today, as evidenced by the activism of Japanese Americans against the Muslim ban and immigrant detention camps on

the border. Wrestling with the struggles and contradictions of citizen, loyalty, and patriotism is a part of America's complicated history that demands greater attention, starting in elementary schools.

# Recommended Children's Literature

- Atkins, L., & Yogi, S. (2017). *Fred Korematsu speaks up*. Heyday.
- Chander, A. & Sunder, M. (2011). *Fred Korematsu: All American Hero*. Carolina Academic Press.
- Chilcoat, G. W., & Tunnell, M. O. (1996). *The children of Topaz: The story of a Japanese-American internment camp based on a classroom diary*. Holiday House.
- Conkling, W. (2011). *Sylvia and Aki*. Tricycle Press.
- Grady, C. (2017). *Write to me: Letters from Japanese American children to the librarian they left behind*. Charlesbridge.
- Houston, J. W. (1973). *Farewell to Manzanar*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Kadohata, C. (2006). *Weedflower*. Scholastic.
- Mochizuki, K. (1995). *Heroes*. Lee & Low Books.
- Mochizuki, K., Lee, D., & González, R. (1993). *Baseball saved us*. Lee & Low.
- Moss, M. (2013). *Barbed wire baseball*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.
- Oppenheim, J. (2006). *Dear Miss Breed: True stories of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and a librarian who made a difference*. Scholastic.
- Savin, M. (1992). *The moon bridge*. Scholastic.
- Sepahban, L. (2016). *Paper wishes*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Stanley, J. (1994). *I am an American: A true story of Japanese internment*. Knopf Books for Young Readers.
- Takei, G., Eisinger, J., & Scott, S. (2019). *They called us enemy*. Top Shelf Productions.
- Uchida, Y. (1993). *The bracelet*. Philomel Books.
- Warren, A. (2019). *Enemy child*. Margaret Ferguson Books.

# Educational Resources

[Bainbridge Island Historical Society](#)

[Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community](#)

[Densho](#)

[The Empty Chair Project](#)

[Japanese American Citizens League. \(2011\). A Lesson in American History: The Japanese American Experience.](#)

[Japanese American National Museum](#)

[Korematsu Institute Curriculum Toolkit](#)

[Manzanar National Historic Site](#) by National Parks Service

[Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center](#)

[Wing Luke Asian Museum](#)

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- Hall, J. (2005). The long civil rights movement and the political uses of the past. *The Journal of American History*, 91(4), 1233–1263.
- Hawkman, A. M., & Van Horn, S. E. (2019). What does it mean to be patriotic? Policing patriotism in sports and social studies education. *The Social Studies*, 110(3), 105–121.
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- Rodríguez, N. N. (2018). From margins to center: Developing cultural citizenship education through the teaching of Asian American history. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 46(4), 528–573.
- Rodríguez, N. N. (2019). Caught between two worlds: Asian American elementary teachers’ enactment of Asian American history. *Educational Studies*, 55(2), 214–240.
- Rodríguez, N. N. (2020). Focus on friendship or fights for civil rights? The challenges of teaching Japanese American incarceration with *The Bracelet*. *Bank Street Occasional Papers #44* (Article 6), 48–59
- Varner, N. (2019, July 19). The “loyalty questionnaire” of 1943 opened a wound that has yet to heal. *Densho Blog*. <https://densho.org/the-loyalty-questionnaire-of-1943-opened-a-wound-that-has-yet-to-heal/>

Vickery, A. E. (2017). "You excluded us for so long and now you want us to be patriotic?": African American women teachers navigating the quandary of citizenship. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 45(3), 318–348.

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