



Ethnic Studies Lesson 5D: Asian American Experience During World War II

TOPIC:

ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

2. History and Movement
3. Systems of Power

Values and Principles:

2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
5. Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonial beliefs and practices on multiple levels.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. (RI.11-12.2)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)**

Evaluate the consequences of wartime policies, such as Executive Order 9066 and the internment of Japanese Americans, on civil liberties and democratic principles in the United States. (11.7)

Lesson Purpose

Students will research the differences between how Japanese and Chinese Americans were treated during World War II and the legacies this treatment had for Asian Americans.

Essential Questions

What legacies are there from the treatment of Japanese and Chinese Americans during World War II?

How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?

Materials

[Retro Report: How a 1944 Supreme Court Ruling on Internment Camps Led to a Reckoning](#)

[National Archives: Executive Order 9066](#)

[Oyez: Korematsu v. United States](#)

[Densho Encyclopedia: Civil Liberties Act of 1988](#)

[Los Angeles Times: Madame Chiang's Influence on America](#)

[Immigration History: Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act](#)

[The U.S. Army: "Go For Broke"](#)

[Unit 5 KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

Executive Order 9066

Korematsu v. United States

Magnuson Act

Civil Liberties Act of 1988

442nd Infantry

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they already know about how Asian Americans were treated during World War II. As a class, ask students to watch [Retro Report: How a 1944 Supreme Court Ruling on Internment Camps Led to a Reckoning](#) (video 10 minutes, 15 seconds). As students watch, ask them to take notes on the who, what, where, when, and why of the 1942 Executive Order 9066, the 1944 *Korematsu v. United States*, and the 1988 Civil Liberties Act. Stop the video frequently for students to take notes. When the video is complete, pair the students to compare notes, and give the groups the following websites to continue their research:
 - [National Archives: Executive Order 9066](#)
 - [Oyez: Korematsu v. United States](#)
 - [Densho Encyclopedia: Civil Liberties Act of 1988](#)
- When students have completed their research, have pairs meet with another pair to check their notes. As a class, have students share information on these events in order to create event cards. Add the three event cards to the class timeline.

Step 2:

- Ask students what they know about the differences in how Chinese Americans were treated compared with Japanese Americans during World War II. Have students continue in pairs to research the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act with the Magnuson Act. As students research, have them look for the who, what, when, where, and why of the Magnuson Act.

- [Los Angeles Times: Madame Chiang's Influence on America](#)
- [Immigration History: Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act](#)
- When students have finished researching, have pairs meet with one other pair to check their notes. As a class, have students complete an event card for the Magnuson Act and place it on the class timeline.

Step 3:

- Let students know that despite Japanese internment in the US, there were many Japanese Americans from Hawaii that served in the Army. Have students watch [The U.S. Army: "Go For Broke"](#) (video 4 minutes, 15 seconds). As students watch, ask students to take notes on how Japanese Americans added to the war effort. When the video is over, as a class, have students share.

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this lesson's questions, "What legacies are there from the treatment of Japanese and Chinese Americans during World War II?" Also ask this unit's question, "How has life changed for Asian Americans over the last 150 years?" Make note of what was learned on this unit's KWL chart—along with additional questions.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time permits, ask students to watch [Hawaii News Now: New Documentary tells little-known story of Hawaii's Japanese-Americans during WWII](#) (video 3 minutes, 21 seconds) and look at [Japanese American National Museum, Map of Japanese American Internment Sites](#). As students view these resources, ask students to take notes on how the response of Japanese Americans after the war shows the character trait of resilience. Students should write their response in a short paragraph.

Additional Readings and Resources

- Bean, Jonathan J. "R.C. Hoiles, Civil Rights Pioneer," *Orange County Register*, November 25, 2007. <https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=2086>
- Beito, David T. *The New Deal's War on the Bill of Rights: The Untold Story of FDR's Concentration Camps, Censorship, and Mass Surveillance*. Independent Institute, 2023.
- Beito, David T. "No More Excuses for FDR's Concentration Camps for Japanese Americans." *Orange County Register*, August 30, 2023.
- [Center for Arkansas History and Culture, Interview with Roger Daniels, historian on Japanese American internment](#)
- Irons, Peter H. *Justice at War*. Oxford University Press, 1983.
- [The Orange County Register, In his own words: R.C. Hoiles on the WWII Japanese internment Reason, How FDR Emasculated the Black Press in World War II](#)
- Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 133-179.
- [University of California Television, Japanese American Incarceration Reconsidered: 1941-2010 with Roger Daniels](#)

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 5A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

<p><i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i></p>	<p><i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i></p>	<p><i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i></p>