

Innocence in an age of Infamy

Lesson 2: Who’s an American? Security or Justice For All?

Grades 7-12

Objectives:

- Students will explore the rights, responsibilities, and limitations of citizenship as guaranteed in the U.S. Bill of Rights.
- Students will examine the conflict between security and justice that occurred in the treatment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Materials:

- Map is available at <http://www.opb.org/lmd/infamy>
- **“Innocence in an Age of Infamy”** video: “Kennie Namba” excerpt

Procedure for Classroom Activity:

1. Begin this activity by asking students to raise their hands if they are United States citizens. Ask if there are students in the class who are citizens of any other countries. Write the word “citizen” on the chalkboard — and ask students to tell you what the word means. Write their ideas on the board in a web pattern.
2. Probe their ideas by asking questions about what rights citizenship gives them, what responsibilities, and what limitations (for example, what about babies — are they citizens? What about old people? Handicapped people? Convicted criminals? Prisoners? People who were born in the U.S. but live in foreign countries? People who were born in the U.S. but whose parents were not? Immigrants? etc.)
3. Tell students that in all the above examples, all were citizens, except for immigrants who have yet to go through the naturalization process. All are entitled to the very same rights and responsibilities of citizenship as guaranteed by the U.S.

Constitution. But, it hasn't always been as easy as this to define citizenship in practice! Even as recently as 60 years ago, the U.S. government had some problems with how it defined (and treated) all of its citizens.

4. Preview the following vocabulary words:

- a. Pearl Harbor
- b. President Franklin D. Roosevelt
- c. Aliens, Japanese Issei (born in Japan, but living in the U.S.), Japanese-Americans Nissei (born in the U.S. of Japanese descent, but American citizens)
- d. Exclusion Order
- e. Internment
- f. 442nd Regimental Combat Unit

5. Review with students the history of the Japanese military before Pearl Harbor. Using the map, show the following progression of Japanese military aggression. If you wish, ask students to shade in these events on individual maps:

- 1931 Japan invades Manchuria
- 1932 Japan attacks Shanghai
- July 1937 Japan starts full-scale war on China
- Dec. 1937 Japan sinks U.S. gunboat "Panay" on Yangtze River
- Dec. 7, 1941 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor
- 1942 Japan controls Dutch East Indies, Burma, Singapore, North Guinea, Solomon Islands, Wake Island, Western Aleutians, Guam, Malaya, Philippines

6. Drawing on their prior knowledge about U.S. history and World War II, ask students to develop generalizations about what might have concerned the U.S. government as it observed the actions of the Japanese government from 1931 to 1942. Focus on the U.S. government's requirement to ensure security for its citizens.

7. Prepare students for watching Kenzie Namba's story. On the chalkboard, label two columns: 1) Security and 2) Justice. As they watch, ask the students to write down examples that they observe in the video of the U.S. need for security and the Japanese-Americans' need for justice.

8. After the video, discuss the following questions:
- For what reasons did the U.S. government decide to intern Kennie and other Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor? Do you think the U.S. government was justified in this action? Why or why not?
 - Why do you think that Japanese-Americans were interned, but not Italian-Americans or German-Americans?
 - How were Kennie's and other Japanese-Americans' citizenship rights violated by the internment?
 - How did Kennie and his family cope with internment?
 - If you had been Kennie, how do you think you might have felt about and reacted to Executive Order 9066?

Assessment Suggestions:

- Organize a radio debate about the legality of Executive Order 9066. Ask students to weigh the costs and benefits of this order and write a paragraph explaining whether they think it was justified or not. Ask the students to explain the lessons from the internment experience that they think the U.S. government and we as citizens should be sure we never forget in the future.

Extension Ideas:

- Invite Japanese-Americans living in your community to visit your classroom to talk with students about their families' experiences before, during, and after World War II. How do they interpret the meaning of the word "citizen"? Have they been involved in any of the settlement claims against the U.S. government as a result of the Japanese-American Internment?
- Ask students to read Farewell to Manzanar and So Far From the Sea for excellent accounts of the internment experience.
- Research the cases of Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Min Yasui, Japanese-Americans who chose to use the court system to correct the wrongs caused by their internments.

Discuss the following questions for each case:

- Who was this person? What was his situation on Dec. 7, 1941?
- What effect did the Exclusion Order have on him?
- What did he choose to do? Why?
- What did the U.S. government do? Why?

e. What was the outcome of his case? What reasoning did the Supreme Court use in its decision? Do you agree with this decision? Why or why not? See <http://www.trinity.edu/departments/history/faculty/Miller/Hirabayashi.htm>

4. Invite a lawyer or judge to visit the classroom to further discuss the landmark civil rights cases of Korematsu, Hirabayashi, and Min Yasui. Compare these cases with other cases that have occurred in history that deal with remedying wrongs, for example, the cases against the U.S. government for slavery, termination of American Indian rights, etc. Nearly fifty years after World War II, the U.S. apologized for the Japanese-American internment. The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed into law, authorizing payments of \$20,000 to each person who suffered as a result. Out of 120,000 Japanese-Americans who had been interned, 82,219 cases were paid under this law.
5. Ask students to visit the Japanese American National Museum Web site <http://www.janm.org/breed/title.htm> to read the postcards sent from Japanese-American students to Miss Breed, a librarian. Ask your students to write their own imaginary postcards about the internment experience.
6. Review the reasons Kennie gave for choosing to help his country as a soldier. Write a letter as if you were Kennie or another Japanese-American citizen during World War II, explaining:
 - Your reaction to the internment and what remedy, if any, you believe the U.S. government owes you as a result. Why?
 - Your reasons why you would or would not join the U.S. military. What are your best hopes and worst fears about enlisting in the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit while your family is in an internment camp? Explain how your internment and its effect on your civil rights relate to your decision.Ask students to read these letters aloud in class and compare them. Discuss the short- and long-term effects of these decisions.
7. On Sept. 9, 1942, a Japanese pilot named Nobuo Fujita dropped the first aerial bomb on the continental United States, near Brookings, Oregon, in a futile attempt to start a forest fire. No one was hurt, and years passed. In 1962, in an effort to promote international friendship, the City of Brookings invited Mr. Fujita to its Azalea Festival, and Mr. Fujita presented the town with his family's

400-year-old Samurai sword that he had worn during World War II. In 1992, Mr. Fujita again returned to Oregon to plant a sequoia tree as a symbol of peace. Ask students to develop a play about the meaning of these events in promoting understanding and peace in the world.

8. Examine the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was written after World War II. Discuss the rights that were violated during the Japanese-American Internment. Do you feel that all the UDHR rights are protected in your community today? Columbine High School? On what basis was this decided?