



Integrating Philosophy into Literacy: Discussing Japanese American Incarceration

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
5th Grade ELA

Keywords: Philosophy, Japanese-American Incarceration, Ethics, Morality, Xenophobia, Racism, Literacy

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis:

In this unit, students will learn about Japanese-American incarceration through a series of lessons that incorporate both philosophy and literacy in order to answer the questions: *“Do you feel responsible to act in situations of injustice? Why or why not? What actions can you take to change discrimination towards others in situations of injustice?”*.

The texts incorporated throughout these lessons allow students to engage with 5th grade literacy standards, but also lend themselves to philosophical questions and discussions about ethics. Students learn about Japanese-American Incarceration from both nonfiction and historical fiction texts, giving students both historical knowledge about Japanese-American incarceration as well as a more personal account. Philosophical questions are embedded throughout the unit in order to spark interest, engagement, and reflection on the part of students. Philosophical conversations drive most lessons forward, and encourage students to question their beliefs, actions taken throughout history, and events taking place in the world today. These content areas are intertwined throughout the unit with one overarching goal - to encourage students to critically examine history and its context so that we can identify and avoid similar events in the future.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 25 students in 5th grade ELA.

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Introduction

Rationale

From “Teaching Japanese American Incarceration”

Karen L. Miksch and David Gher

“Most treatments of [Japanese American Incarceration] have focused upon the racial aspects and the inherent unfairness of the policy, or on the illegal seizure of property and the treatment of citizens. Lessons designed in this manner typically generate various levels of sympathy for the victims, outrage against government officials, and collective national guilt. While this ethical and moral approach is commendable and the resulting emotional reactions are understandable, one goal of studying history is to be able to recognize and avoid similar deplorable events in the future. This goal requires an examination of the historical context and justification, logical and legal, that enabled such an oppressive policy to be implemented with popular support.” (Miksch and Ghere 2004)

My students and I often have conversations about the intention behind the work we do in class. “Why does this matter?” is a question that arises often, not because students don’t want to do the work, but because they want to know the real-life implications of the effort they put forth in the classroom. The answer to this question changes based on the subject matter and assignment, of course. Often, though, the answer is the same. I remind my students of the importance of being conscientious and informed citizens. I encourage them to keep asking questions and to keep learning so that they are able to contribute to society in positive ways. This is a broad statement, I know. What is considered positive? How do we measure our contributions to society? These are inherently philosophical questions of which I do not and can not have a final answer. What I can do, though, is push my students to think about these concepts and consider the people they want to be.

For me, the idea of being conscientious and informed citizens requires critical analysis of society at present and in the past, asking questions, forming opinions, and allowing those analyses to shape our actions. I think often about my opportunities (and lack thereof) to do this throughout my schooling experience. Many of my teachers taught me to pass tests well, but they didn’t teach me thoroughly. I could pass tests and recite facts but I didn’t learn much about the “hard” parts of U.S. history. I didn’t learn to analyze historical contexts surrounding events in order to better understand why those events occurred. We didn’t spend time studying trends throughout history in order to shape the way we act in the future.

The unit on Japanese American Incarceration in my A.P. United States history class was brief. Maybe it was my teacher’s lack of knowledge on the subject, or the discomfort of grappling with the past of the U.S., or even that it wasn’t a tested standard and therefore wasn’t deemed deserving of the time. Regardless, most people I speak to about the subject have had a similar experience. My goal with this unit is to teach students about Japanese American Incarceration both so they learn about this piece of often forgotten history, which in itself is important and worthy of studying, but also so that they can make larger connections to other historical and

current events, focusing on the idea that “one goal of studying history is to be able to recognize and avoid similar deplorable events in the future” (Miksch and Ghere 2004)

Demographics

Devonshire Elementary School is a Title 1 School located in the Central 1 Learning Community in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. Devonshire is a Title 1 school consisting of grades K-5. Of the 612 students currently enrolled at Devonshire Elementary, 59% of students are Hispanic, 33% of students are Black, and 8% of students are White or identified as “Other”. English Language Learners make up 46% of our student population, 9% qualify for EC services, and 100% of students receive free lunch.

This academic year, Devonshire has one principal, one assistant principal, two deans, a K-2 literacy and math facilitator, and a 3-5 math facilitator. We do not have a 3-5 literacy facilitator this year as of now. I am teaching 5th grade ELA (English Language Arts) and math for a (mostly) self-contained class. My class receives science instruction from the 5th grade science teacher. My class is comprised of 24 students. I have 2 students with IEPs, 1 student with a 504 plan, and 7 of my students are considered English Language Learners. I also have 1 student in the Talent Development (TD) program for gifted students. He is the only student who is TD certified in the fifth grade at Devonshire this year.

Unit Goals

This unit is intended to be taught as one continuous unit throughout small groups during ELA time (the structure of my small groups will be expounded upon in the “Teaching Strategies” section below). This unit can easily be taught in isolation, but I will be teaching it after a unit on the Holocaust and before a unit on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This will serve to give my students an overall understanding of WWII and allow us to make deeper connections between historical events.

Throughout the unit, philosophical questions will be embedded along with opportunities for students to develop and discuss their own philosophical questions about the unit. Because these lessons will be taught in small groups, each lesson is written to take about 20 minutes. It is important to me that students have the opportunity and time to explore their philosophical thinking. Keeping this in mind, I will prioritize encouraging philosophical discussions over staying on track with pacing. I plan on teaching each part of each lesson, but will allow space for student conversation and questioning throughout the unit. This may lead lessons or lesson parts to be pushed back, affecting the pacing laid out for the lesson.

Students will be able to:

- Form and support their own opinions when presented with philosophical ideas or questions.
- Contribute to discussions surrounding a philosophical question, asking questions and providing their own insight.

- Develop philosophical questions when presented with a prompt.
- Gain an understanding of Japanese American Incarceration and of the events leading up to the incarceration of Japanese Americans.
- Make connections between Japanese American Incarceration and other events rooted in xenophobia and/or racism.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how events in history impact each other.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how current events are shaped by historical events.
- Analyze how their understanding of history and current events can shape the way they interact with the world around them.

Below is my vision for this unit:

Teach students about Japanese American Incarceration	→ Through	5th grade ELA standards	→ Embedded with	Philosophical thought centered around ethics	→ In order to	Critically examine history and it's context so that we can identify and avoid similar events in the future
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Content Research

Japanese American Incarceration

Below is a short explanation of Japanese Incarceration and the events leading up to it. I have outlined the major points and events surrounding Japanese American Incarceration, but this is by no means a complete history. I encourage any teacher who is wanting to teach this unit to conduct additional research on this event before teaching it. This will allow more comfort with student questions and allow a stronger basis for developing philosophical questions.

The United States of America joined World War II on December 7, 1941 after Japan launched an attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet located in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The aftermath of this event directly led to the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans. Of those incarcerated, the majority were U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry (Marshall 2018).

Americans were fearful of another act of violence from Japan, and were suspicious of Japanese Americans, regardless of citizen status. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which created “military areas”, located predominantly in the Western United States, to which Japanese Americans were transported and incarcerated (Marshall 2018). This was done despite the fact that there was no evidence to suggest that any person of Japanese descent in the United States was working in collusion with the Japanese government as a spy or otherwise. Japanese Americans were given minimal time to close their

businesses, sell their belongings, and relocate to incarceration camps. Once there, Japanese Americans were faced with dehumanizing conditions - dirt floors, uncomfortable and unsanitary living conditions, and little privacy.

Incarceration camps remained open until 1946, when Japanese Americans were released without any support, financial or otherwise. Many people who had been incarcerated for years went home to find their homes, businesses, and other belongings taken from them. It wasn't until 1988 that President Ronald Reagan issued a formal apology to Japanese Americans along with \$20,000 in reparations, the equivalent of \$40,000.

When teaching this unit, I believe it is critically important to go deeper than surface level facts. Outlined below are additional points that I will capitalize on in discussion with students. I am listing these separately as they are often the parts of Japanese American Incarceration that go untaught and undiscussed, but will likely yield the best philosophical discussion due to questions that can stem from conversations about these events (“To what extent is the average person responsible for having an understanding of how others around them are affected by the law?” “Was it fair that Japanese Americans on the mainland of the United States were removed from their homes but Japanese Americans in Hawaii were not?”, and more broadly “What does it mean to be fair?”).

- Japanese American Incarceration was undoubtedly race-based. But what is often not mentioned is that there was discrimination against Japanese Americans (and Asian Americans at large) in the United States far before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. According to (Miksch and Ghere 2004) in “Teaching Japanese American Incarceration”, “The incarceration policy did not occur in a vacuum, rather, it was the consequence of decades of vehement anti-Asian racism on an individual and institutional level” (Miksch and Ghere 2004).
 - Japanese immigration in the United States had been limited in 1907 and then completely eliminated in the 1920's (Miksch and Ghere 2004).
 - At the time of World War II, Japanese immigrants weren't able to legally purchase land in Washington, Oregon, or California due to Alien Land Laws (Miksch and Ghere 2004).
 - Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans were taught in segregated schools (Miksch and Ghere 2004).
- These events compounded after the bombing of Pearl Harbor as the average American grew weary that their Japanese neighbors didn't own land and stayed to themselves. This was used to point the finger at Japanese Americans as not being “loyal” to the United States, and paranoia plagued white Americans.
- In the western states, including Oregon, Washington, and California, white business owners benefited greatly economically from the removal of Japanese Americans (Rodríguez 2020). In Hawaii though, where Pearl Harbor took place, Japanese Americans were not removed from their homes and forced to enter incarceration camps. Less than 2% of those on the Islands lost their liberty because of the effect that it would have on the economy of Hawaii (Preston and Daniels 1972).

Historical & Modern Implications of Xenophobia

In her book *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States*, Erica Lee defines xenophobia as the “fear or hatred of foreigners.”(Lee 2021). Japanese American incarceration is part of a long list of major events in U.S. history and world history alike that are rooted in racism and xenophobia. With the intention of this unit to be for students to critically examine history and its context through a philosophical lens in order to “recognize and avoid similar deplorable events in the future” (Miksch and Ghery 2004), I believe it is critical that educators teaching this unit have an understanding of xenophobia, but also of events rooted in xenophobia and racism.

The contexts of the events listed below are very different and all at once very similar. The through line is this: fear or hate based on identity has led to groups of people being discriminated against. In order to teach this unit to the means identified above, connections to other historical events is necessary. I will not go into the history of each of these events in this Curriculum Unit, but found it important to outline historical events that teachers could reference throughout this unit.

- Anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States post-9/11
- Concentration camps for Jewish people during WWII
- Anti-Asian hate crimes surrounding COVID-19
- Trail of tears & the removal of Indigenous People
- Slavery
- Jim Crow & Segregation
- Treatment of immigrants at the U.S. border

For reference, I could connect the events of Japanese American incarceration and suspicion of Muslims after 9/11. After both Pearl Harbor and 9/11, Americans grew suspicious of other American citizens or immigrants based on their identity. This suspicion was not rooted in knowledge of a threat, but fear based on the identities of people who looked like attackers. Here it is important to note that assumptions and generalizations are often made about people’s identities. After Pearl Harbor, many Americans feared people of Japanese ancestry, but could not identify the differences between Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans. Similarly, after 9/11 anyone who was assumed to be Muslim based on skintone, clothing, etc. was subject to second glances or threats to their safety.

Teaching Philosophy

Teaching this unit is dependent on the ability to engage students in meaningful philosophical thought and discussions. I think an important distinction to make is that the embedding of philosophical thought comes from discussions with students that are centered around philosophical questions - not teaching them explicitly about theory or philosophers. For example, we can discuss morality and what we consider to be “right” or “wrong” without ever using the words “utilitarianism” or “deontology”. The ideas and theories behind utilitarianism, deontology, and other systems of ethics will most likely emerge, but I believe that explicitly teaching ethical

theory would detract from the organic thoughts and questions that can and will arise from within this unit. I do think though that if a student were forming an argument that fell into a specific theory, it would be worth naming that theory for students. This would allow students to understand both that they may ascribe to a certain way of thinking and give students the opportunity to continue research on their own if ethical theory piques their interest.

According to Lone and Burroughs in “Philosophy in Education”, to make discussions philosophical, they must contain the following 3 elements:

1. They must explore ideas that are abstract and unsettled
2. Arguments (and counterarguments) must be formed in order to help us support what we understand or to resolve questions.
3. The goal is to move forward in developing shared meaning of ideas or furthering understanding of the subject matter.

My intention in this unit is to create among students Communities of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI), which are defined as “a classroom structure that supports collaborative discussion and exploration” (Lone and Burroughs 2016). The implementation of CPI in this unit will be critical to engaging students in philosophical discussion. For this reason, I have outlined the 4 central features and 5 main parts of CPT below:

Central Features

1. “The members of a CPI are engaged in a structured, collaborative inquiry aimed at building meaning and acquiring understanding through the examination of philosophical questions or concepts of interest to the participants” (Lone and Burroughs 2016).
 - Again, this unit focuses on encouraging philosophical discussion or students “doing” philosophy, rather than learning about philosophy.
2. Each CPI requires “epistemological modesty”. This acknowledges that each member of the group is fallible, and that all participants, including the facilitator of the conversation, can make mistakes (Lone and Burroughs 2016).
 - Teachers, serving as facilitators, can share their ideas and thoughts. The idea here, though, is that it is clear that our ideas are not fact. With new information or insight, we too can change our stances or understandings. I personally want my students to question my thinking and push me to think differently as well.
3. “Refrain from using much technical philosophical language or direct references to the work of professional philosophers” (Lone and Burroughs 2016).
 - Part of “doing philosophy” is focusing on the questions posed, not just discussing what others have already thought about the questions.
4. Each CPI also requires an “environment of intellectual safety” in which all questions and comments are welcome and encouraged, as long as they don’t degrade or diminish the contributions of other members of the group. (Lone and Burroughs 2016).

- An important point to keep in mind when considering the idea of creating an intellectually safe environment is that “While an intellectually safe learning community involves trust, respect, and an atmosphere conducive to taking intellectual risks, it does not promise comfort.” (Lone and Burroughs 2016).
- These environments can bring discomfort and paradigms begin to shift, but that rethinking and change should be welcomed and encouraged.

Main Parts (Lone and Burroughs 2016).

1. A prompt
 - This could be a text, video, music, etc. to “inspire philosophical wondering”
2. Time for reflection
 - Students can draw or write their reflections
3. Emergence of questions the prompt has raised for students
 - Facilitator can ask “What questions did this [prompt] make you wonder about?”
 - Student developing questions is integral to the process, even if it takes time. Teachers may choose to model thinking philosophically or provide a student-friendly document outlining what makes questions philosophical. Eventually, though, the goal is for students to come up with their own questions.
 - Questions chosen for discussion should be chosen by the students and not the teacher. If student questions tend to not be philosophical in nature, the teacher may guide the discussion.
4. Discussion
 - The teacher guides the structure of conversation, but not the content.
 - There is no clear plan or guide here. The teacher should let conversation flow, as long as the center of the discussion is philosophical in nature.
5. Some form of closure
 - This consists of recapping the discussion, recounting questions and responses.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching in Small Groups

Due to the implementation of the EL curriculum, this curriculum will be taught in small groups during ELA time. These small groups will consist of about 6-7 students each. Content knowledge about Japanese American incarceration and philosophical discussion are central to this unit, but ultimately these will be taught through activities that are based on fifth grade ELA standards. In order to provide each student with the level of scaffolding needed to best support their learning, these groups will be differentiated based on literacy data acquired throughout the year. Please note that it is not my assumption that literacy proficiency is correlated with my student’s ability

to think philosophically. In fact, I think that homogenous grouping based on literacy data can and will still lead to a heterogeneous grouping of philosophical thinkers.

Teaching in small groups will also allow students to have more intimate philosophical conversations with their CPI, wherein each student has the opportunity to share their ideas and ask questions during discussions. My hope is that this will also allow students to feel comfortable sharing with others.

Analyzing Primary Sources

The purpose of these activities is to show students articles (Executive Order 9066) and videos (FDR declaring war on Japan and Reagan's formal apology) about Japanese American Incarceration so that they 1. Have a deeper understanding of what we're studying and 2. The reality of this event sits with students. I've found that oftentimes, students have a hard time understanding that events in history affected real people.

Community of Philosophical Inquiry Sessions

After learning about the aforementioned primary sources, students will engage in two CPI sessions surrounding different prompts. Students will have time to reflect on the Executive Order or videos, then develop their own philosophical questioning about the prompt. Their philosophical questions will guide the discussion, until it is time for closure. These discussions will be facilitated by the teacher, but should be student-centered. Ideally, students would develop and ask their own questions and respond to the questions of others with little teacher input. Teachers can refer back to the *Teaching Philosophy* section of this CU for a more detailed outline of what this CPI session should look like.

Making Historical Connections

With the goal of this unit being to critically examine history and its context so that we can identify and avoid similar events in the future, it is important that we continuously make connections about repetitive themes in history. The lens that this unit takes on is the idea of fear or hatred based on identity and the ways in which fear/hatred that affects marginalized groups. Within the unit, students will have the opportunity to brainstorm other historical events rooted in Xenophobia and Racism, as well as current events. This can also be embedded throughout the unit through teacher questioning: "Can we think of another time in history when something similar happened to a group of people?" or "Is there anything happening in today's world that seems similar to this?"

Instructional Implementation

- Explicitly philosophical questions are highlighted in blue (though it is important to recognize that many more of these questions could be considered philosophical as well). Not all philosophical questions need to be addressed or fully answered. They are simply suggestions that can spark philosophical dialogue.

Lesson #1	Standards Addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1
<p><i>Writing Prompt</i></p> <p>Students answer the prompt:</p> <p>“Do you feel responsible to act in situations of injustice? Why or why not? What actions can you take to change discrimination towards others in situations of injustice?”</p> <p>Respond in the form of a paragraph, providing clear reasons and explanations for your response.</p> <p>Complete opinion writing rubric (<i>Appendix 2</i>) for each student’s writing.</p> <p>*Encourage students to write what they really feel, and elaborate as much as they can. At the end of this unit, students will be asked to respond to the same prompt. This will allow the teacher to measure student growth over the span of the unit, and will allow students to see their own growth as a result of their learning.</p>	
Lesson #2	Standards Addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1
<p><i>The intention of this second lesson is to introduce Japanese-American Incarceration to students. This will be the first time most students have heard about this event.</i></p> <p><i>Before teaching this lesson, pass out the Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log (see List of Materials for Classroom). This will be completed by referring to the glossary as students read, with the intention that they refer back to these words in their discussions (philosophical and otherwise) and classwork.</i></p> <p>Read pages 4-7 in "Japanese American Incarceration During World War II"</p> <p>Stop at page 4: "My world had just come to an end".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ask “Why do you think Daniel thought this?” & allow students to answer.● Ask “Did his world literally come to an end?” & allow students to answer. Emphasize that no,	

his world did not *literally* end. That is figurative language.

Stop at page 5: "Despite his loyalty, to the United States, however, he was now under suspicion - along with all ethnic Japanese living on U.S. soil"

- Ask "Why is Daniel under suspicion" & allow students to answer.
- Ask "Do you think that it is fair that Daniel and other Japanese Americans are under suspicion for something they have nothing to do with?" & allow students to answer. Encourage them to explain why or why not & encourage students to respond to each other.

Stop at page 6: "even before Pearl Harbor... Roosevelt ordered an investigation of Japanese" Americans and Japanese immigrants.

- Think aloud "So even before Pearl Harbor, the President thought it was important to investigate Japanese Americans. It seems to be that there was already a distrust of Japanese Americans."

Page 6 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Ancestral**.

Stop at page 6: "However, many Americans had a long history of anti-Asian bias..."

- "I see the book says there were deep feelings of prejudice and hostility against Japanese Americans. Part of this was because they would work for lower wages. Can we make a connection to other events in history or current where people have been discriminated against in relation to working conditions?"
 - If the EL curriculum is being taught, 5th graders should be able to make the connection between events in *Esperanza Rising* (the 5th grade Module 1 text)
 - Other events that could be connected include (but are not limited to) Chinese Railroad laborers, current sentiments about immigrants "taking jobs".

Page 6 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Prejudice**.

Page 7 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Hysteria, Exclusion, & Incarceration Camps**.

Lesson #3

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Tell students that yesterday we learned about what led to Japanese American Incarceration. Allow students to share what factors led to Japanese American Incarceration, making sure that both Pearl Harbor and previous anti-Asian sentiment are discussed.

Let students know that today we will be having a conversation focused on anti-Japanese sentiment.

Share with students the three facts below:

- Japanese immigration in the United States had been limited in 1907 and then completely eliminated in the 1920's.
- At the time of World War II, Japanese immigrants weren't able to legally purchase land in Washington, Oregon, or California due to Alien Land Laws.
- Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans were taught in segregated schools leading up to World War II.

Ask students what their initial reactions are to these facts. Then, tell students that when Pearl Harbor happened, Americans were suspicious of Japanese Americans partly because they didn't own land and didn't go to school with other students (even though that wasn't the choice of Japanese Americans - it was the law).

Ask: **“To what extent is the average person responsible for having an understanding of how others around them are affected by the law? Why”**

- Encourage students to respond to each other's thoughts. As time goes on, the goal is for conversations to be student centered and less guided by teacher questions

At this point, I will have a conversation with my students about the importance of being conscientious and informed citizens. I will emphasize that the more we know about the world around us, even the things we think don't affect us, the more we will understand the events happening.

Lesson #4

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Today students will participate in their first Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) Discussion (CPI feature and main parts are outlined in the “Content Research” section of this CU). This one will be mostly teacher-guided, though students should be encouraged to ask each other questions or expand on each other's ideas.

Complete CPI rubric (*Appendix 3*) for each student's participation. This will allow the teacher to measure student growth over the span of the unit, and will allow students to see their own growth as a result of their learning.

Tell students that today we'll be watching President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech declaring war against Japan (*See Resources for Teachers*), and participating in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) discussion about it.

Let students know that they will:

1. For the prompt, students will watch President Roosevelt's speech (0:30-4:00 min) (4 min)
2. Have some time to reflect on what they read. (3 min) Students can draw or write their reflections before sharing.
3. Share questions that emerged for them (2 min)
4. Participate in a discussion about their questions (10 min)

5. Teacher will recap the discussion(1 min)

Sample question/topics for discussion (if needed):

- Roosevelt says “This form of treachery will never again endanger us” - discuss how fearful/desperate Americans felt. **Can fear justify actions that harm innocent people?**
- Video at 3:38 - Roosevelt says “our people, our territory... are in grave danger”. **Who is included when he says “our”? Who is not included?**

Lesson #5

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Read pages 8-14 in "Japanese American Incarceration During World War II"

Page 8 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **First-Generation & Evacuation**.

Page 9 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Detained & Opportunists**.

Stop on page 10: “Few Americans protested the government’s actions”

- Ask “Why do you think few Americans protested the government’s actions?” (They benefited from the removal of Japanese Americans, they were fearful of Japanese Americans)
- Engage students in a conversation: “Many Americans benefited from the incarceration of Japanese Americans. They could buy houses at cheaper prices, there was less competition with their businesses, and people could get jobs that were previously held by Japanese Americans. If you were alive during this time, do you think you would’ve spoken up about Japanese American Incarceration - even if it benefitted you and your family?”

Stop on page 11: “In the end, fewer than 1,800 Hawaiian Japanese people were incarcerated”

- Say: “Even though Pearl Harbor happened in Hawaii, much fewer Japanese Americans were incarcerated because of the impact it would have on the workforce.”
- Ask **“Is this different treatment of Japanese Americans based on where they live fair? Why or why not?”**
- **Can you think about situations from your own life that you thought were fair or unfair?**
- Ask **“What does it mean to be fair? Should everything be fair?”**
- What does this say about what America’s values were at the time?

Page 11 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Marshall Law**.

Page 12 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Barracks**.

Stop on page 13: Reference the living, education, and healthcare conditions.

- If students have participated in the EL curriculum for 5th grade, they will have learned about Human Rights in Module 1.
- Ask: **“Do you think Human Rights were violated during Japanese American Incarceration? Why or why not?”**
- Ask: **“Should people who are incarcerated still have their human rights respected? Does the answer to that question change if they have actually committed a crime or done harm?”**

Lesson #6

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

Have students respond to the following writing prompt in a paragraph:

“It’s 1942, in the midst of World War II, and your government questions your loyalty. You are ordered to report to the local train station for transportation to a relocation camp. Would you follow the orders and show up at the train station? Why or why not?”

Respond in the form of a paragraph, providing clear reasons and explanations for your response.

Complete opinion writing rubric (*Appendix 2*) for each student’s writing.

Students should have & use their Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log

Lesson #7

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Read pages 15-19 in "Japanese American Incarceration During World War II"

Stop on page 15: **“They saw military service as a means to change public opinion by proving their loyalty as Americans”**

- Ask: **“What do you think about the fact that the U.S. didn’t trust Japanese Americans to the point where they incarcerated them, but then trusted them enough to fight in the war? Does that seem right to you?”**

Stop on page 18: Reference that Japanese Americans held deep emotional psychological scars, and also that no evidence of Japanese-American sabotage.

- Ask: **“Japanese Americans were removed from their homes and incarcerated in conditions that we find unacceptable, then no evidence was found against a single Japanese American. Should something be done to reconcile this situation? Why or Why not?”**

- Follow up questions:
 - **“What can be done after to reconcile this situation? Can anything be done?”**
 - **If a conversation about monetary reparations arises: “How can we determine the proper compensation? How much is freedom worth?”**

Page 18 - Have students fill out Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log for the word **Injustice**

Lesson #8	Standards Addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3
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Timeline Sort (See List of Materials for Classroom)

Divide the small group into pairs and provide them with the Japanese American Timeline Sort, already cut apart. Have students work with their partner to place the events in order. Then students will paste the events, in order, on a larger piece of construction paper, creating a timeline.

Lesson #9	Standards Addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1 ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3
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Timeline Activity

Discuss with students the idea that events impact each other. Today we will explore the cause and effect relationship between events.

Students will write on their timelines from yesterday, connecting each event.

- Examples:
 - Japan’s involvement in WWII led to deep distrust of Japanese Americans
 - Distrust of Japanese Americans led President Roosevelt to order an investigation of Japanese Americans in the West Coast and Hawaii

Questions for discussion after students develop the timeline:

- **Does every event impact something else?**
- **To what extent have the events of the past impacted life today?**
- **Will what we do today impact our future?**

Lesson #10	Standards Addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1
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Read Camp Nowhere with students (*See Resources for Teachers*). Take note of the dates throughout the book and how they line up with the timeline created in the past two lessons.

Stop on page 9: “How can you even think about helping a government that treats us like criminals?”

- Ask “If you and your family were incarcerated based on your Nationality or Race and then were asked to fight by the country that was incarcerating you, would you fight? Why or why not?”

Lesson #11

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Point of View - Camp Nowhere

As a group, students will choose one character from the graphic novel. Together, the group will write a narrative from that character’s point of view. Have students share events that happened to that character, and then write the narrative as if you are the character. Make sure to avoid any events that the character wouldn’t have knowledge of, or wasn’t present for.

Students should have & use their Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log

Lesson #12

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

CPI #2

Video: Reagan’s Speech during the signing of the Japanese American Compensation Bill (*See Resources for Teachers*)

Today students will participate in their second Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) Discussion (CPI feature and main parts are outlined in the “Content Research” section of this CU). Unlike the first, this CPI should be more student-guided. Students should be encouraged to ask each other questions or expand on each other’s ideas.

Tell students that today we’ll be watching Reagan’s Speech during the signing of the Japanese American Compensation Bill (0:50-3:26), and participating in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) discussion about it.

Let students know that they will:

1. For the prompt, students will watch President Reagan’s speech (0:50-3:26 min) (4 min)
2. Have some time to reflect on what they read. (3 min) Students can draw or write their reflections before sharing.
3. Share questions that emerged for them (2 min)
4. Participate in a discussion about their questions (10 min)
5. Teacher will recap the discussion (1 min)

Complete CPI rubric (*Appendix 3*) for each student’s participation.

Sample question/topics for discussion (if needed):

- President Reagan says: “No payment can make up for those lost years.” - Do you agree? **Can**

you put a price on freedom?

- President Reagan makes the claim that the bill had less to do with property and more to do with honor, then admits that the U.S. admits a wrong.
 - **Does admitting a wrong have an impact on people? What impact is that?**
- “We reaffirm our commitment to equal justice under the law.” - **What does equal justice look like? Do you think the U.S. shows equal justice under the law?**

Lesson #13

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Tell students that today they’re going to make connections between events in history. They have been learning about Japanese American incarceration, but a lot of what happened to Japanese Americans has happened to other groups of people throughout history.

Ask students: **What is identity? Can you have multiple identities?**

- Can you think of any events in which people were discriminated against based on their identity? (Allow students to share any identities and events that come to mind, but the main focus here will be on ethnic/racial identities).

Develop a list of events with students.

Examples:

- Anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States post-9/11
- Concentration camps for Jewish people during WWII
- Anti-Asian hate crimes surrounding COVID-19
- Trail of tears & the removal of Indigenous People
- Slavery
- Jim Crow & Segregation
- Treatment of immigrants at the U.S. border

Have students think through similarities and differences between the events mentioned. All of them occurred because a group was marginalized by a larger group based on a part of their identity.

If students don’t bring it up, emphasize the rise in Anti-Asian hate crimes in the U.S. during COVID-19. Some Americans were fearful of a disease that they believe came from China and as a result, they harmed Asian Americans. We’re seeing that even after all this time, fear, generalizations, and misinformation can and does lead people to hurt others.

Lesson #14

Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

Writing Prompt

Students answer the prompt:

“Do you feel responsible to act in situations of injustice? Why or why not? What actions can you take to change discrimination towards others in situations of injustice? Support your thinking with ideas or evidence from our Japanese-American Incarceration unit”

Respond in the form of a paragraph, providing clear reasons and explanations for your response.

Complete opinion writing rubric (*Appendix 2*) for each student’s writing.

Students should have & use their Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

- All discussion questions require students to understand the text and be able to explain what is happening (explicitly or by drawing inferences). This understanding is foundational to any philosophical conversation that stems from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2

Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

- Students will discuss the factors that led to Japanese American incarceration. This requires them to support their ideas with details found in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

- Students will identify major events and create a timeline of Japanese-American Incarceration. They will then explain the relationship between each event, explaining how events are interrelated.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.

- Students will find the meaning of domain-specific words in order to complete their Japanese-American Vocabulary Log using the text “Japanese American Incarceration During World War II”.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

- Students will use the information they have learned from multiple text and video sources to write and speak about Japanese-American Incarceration in both their writing assignments and their Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6

Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

- Students, after reading “Camp Nowhere”, will take on the point of view of a chosen character and rewrite a narrative from their perspective.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information

- Students will write 3 opinion pieces in paragraph form over the course of the unit.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- In their point of view narratives, students develop a character's experience with details and a clear sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Students will engage in collaborative conversations, building on each other's ideas and expressing their own as part of their two Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussions.

Appendix 2: Opinion Writing Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Response to Prompt	Student responds thoughtfully to all aspects of the prompt.	Student addresses all parts of the prompt, but responses are not thorough.	Student responds to some parts of the prompt.	Student does not respond to the prompt.
Personal Ideas	Student forms a focused and well-developed personal opinion and shares that opinion clearly.	Student forms a personal opinion that is somewhat unclear or under-developed and shares that opinion.	Student attempts a response, but lacks an opinion that relates to the prompt.	Response is inappropriate for the given prompt.
Elaboration	Student elaborates on their personal opinion, providing clear and relevant reasons and explaining their thoughts.	Student somewhat elaborates on their personal opinion. Reasons and explanations are limited and/or somewhat relevant.	Student attempts to elaborate on their opinion, but reasons and explanations are irrelevant to their ideas.	Student does not elaborate on their opinion.

Appendix 3: Community of Philosophical Inquiry Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Develops Philosophical Questions	Student develops philosophical questions and ask them to peers in order to move discussion further.	Student develops and asks philosophical questions with some guidance or support in their thinking.	Student asks questions that are not philosophical in nature.	Student does not ask questions.
Responds to Others	Student responds thoughtfully and insightfully to the questions of the peers and/or facilitator.	Student responds with somewhat relevant information or thoughts to the questions of peers and/or the facilitator.	Student responds with irrelevant information to the the questions	Student does not respond to the prompt.
Expands on Ideas	Student expands on their own ideas or the ideas of others in a way that contributes meaningfully to the conversation.	Student expands on their own ideas or the ideas of others in a way that contributes somewhat meaningfully to the conversation.	Student tries to expand on their own ideas or the ideas of others, but it does not contribute meaningfully to the conversation.	Student does not expand on their own ideas or the ideas of others.

List of Materials for Classroom Use

Materials for Students and Teachers

Laptop/Chromebooks

The two books in this unit are accessible through Learning A-Z. Books may be printed from the website, downloaded by the teacher, or assigned to students and accessed through their accounts.

Pencil & Paper

Students will need pencil and paper to complete all writing assignments, vocabulary logs, and to prepare for their Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussions.

Japanese American Incarceration Vocabulary Log

Students will complete their vocabulary log throughout the unit and use it during writing assignments and Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussions.

<https://bit.ly/3FaNh5y>

Japanese American Timeline Sort

Students will complete the timeline sort in pairs, ordering the events.

<https://bit.ly/3DhBdPn>

Construction Paper & Glue

After completing the Japanese American Timeline Sort, students will create a timeline using construction paper and glue. It is on this timeline that they will write how events are impacted by and interrelated with one another.

Resources for Students

Additional Books for Students

The books below are provided by CMS through the EL Education supplemental texts. Each 5th grade classroom should have a copy of these texts that students can read for additional information or for interest.

Fred Korematsu Speaks Up

This book follows the life of Fred Korematsu, a Japanese-American activist who spoke out about discrimination, exclusion, and confinement.

Sylvia and Aki

This book is based on a true story. It follows the story of two girls, both 3rd graders during World War II. Each girl faces discrimination as Sylvia is unable to enroll at school because of the color of her skin and Aki is displaced from her home and forced to move to an incarceration camp.

Uprooted

This book is a nonfiction book that chronicles the events and sentiments that led up to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Japanese American incarceration.

Resources for Teachers

Texts

“*Japanese American Incarceration During World War II*” by Sean McCollum

This is a nonfiction book about Japanese American Incarceration. It begins with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and continues with the evacuation of Japanese Americans, descriptions of incarceration camps, the U.S. government recruiting Japanese Americans to fight in WWII, and reflecting on the past.

“Camp Nowhere” by John Rouselle

This is a historical fiction graphic novel that follows a Japanese American family’s experience enduring incarceration from evacuation to freedom.

Both of these texts are copyrighted by Learning A-Z. They may be accessed with a subscription to Raz-Kids, which is part of Learning A-Z. If teachers do not have an account, I recommend asking their school to purchase one for them. Alternative options include a 14-day free trial offered by the site, teachers purchasing a subscription, or teachers using a platform like Donors Choose to raise funds for a subscription.

<https://www.raz-kids.com/>

Videos

CPI Video 1: President Franklin D. Roosevelt Declares War on Japan

This will be the video used in the first Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussion. The video is an impassioned speech by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in which he declares war on Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

<https://bit.ly/3oktwl6>

CPI Video 2: President Reagan's Remarks at the Japanese-American Internment Compensation Bill signing on August 10, 1988

This will be the video used in the second Community of Philosophical Inquiry discussion. The video is a speech by President Ronald Reagan in which he announces the signing of the Japanese-American Internment Compensation Bill.

<https://bit.ly/3nfhjPn>

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