

Weedflower

Overview

Upon completion of the first two lessons in the “A Friend to All” unit, students should have adequate background knowledge regarding the historical context of the Japanese American incarceration. This third and final lesson provides an in-depth look into the unique circumstances surrounding the Arizona camps; that is, their placement on Native American reservation lands. The chapter book *Weedflower*, provides a fictional “case study” of the conflict, cooperation, and eventual friendship that evolves between a Mohave boy and a young Japanese American girl sent to the Poston Camp on the Colorado River Indian Reservation. Lesson activities are designed to help students build essential vocabulary, describe main events and characters in a story, compare and contrast characters in literary selections, and interpret the moral of literary pieces via a written and illustrated literary response poster.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Use a dictionary to learn the meaning and other features of unknown words.
- Use context clues to determine the relevant meaning of a word.
- Describe key events and main characters in a story.
- Compare and contrast characters within a story and between literary selections.
- Describe examples of stereotyping found in literary selections and in real life and explain the harmful effects of stereotyping.
- Use the internet to gather, research, and interpret information.
- Create a literary response poster that interprets how the power of friendship is a connecting theme in the literary selections read.

Essential Question

- What is our responsibility to make sure we respect all people?

Guiding Questions

- What is a friend?
- How should we treat all people, even if they aren’t friends?
- What is wrong with judging people based on race, religion, and culture?

Arizona State Standards

Social Studies—Grade 4

Strand 1: American History

Concept 8: Great Depression and World War II

- PO 2. Describe the reasons (e.g., German and Japanese aggression) for the U.S. becoming involved in World War II.
- PO 3. Describe the impact of World War II on Arizona (e.g., economic boost, military bases, Native American and Hispanic contributions, POW camps, relocation of Japanese Americans).
- PO 4. Describe how lives were affected during World War II (e.g., limited goods, women worked in factories, increased patriotism).

Reading—Grade 4

Strand 1: Reading Process

Concept 4: Vocabulary

- PO 2. Use context to determine the relevant meaning of a word.
- PO 5. Determine the meanings, pronunciations, syllabication, synonyms, antonyms, and parts of speech of words by using a variety of reference aids, including dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, and CD-ROM and Internet when available.

Concept 6: Comprehension Strategies

- PO 4. Use graphic organizers in order to clarify the meaning of the text.



- PO 5. Connect information and events in text to experience and to related text and sources.
- PO 6. Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect, making inferences, sequencing) to comprehend text.

Strand 2: Comprehending Literary Text

Concept 1: Elements of Literature

- PO 3. Identify the moral of literary selection (e.g., fables, folktales, fairytales, legends).
- PO 5. Describe a character's traits using textual evidence (e.g., dialogue, actions, narrations, illustrations).
- PO 8. Compare (and contrast) the characters, events, and setting in a literary selection.

Strand 3: Comprehending Informational Text

Concept 1: Expository Text

- PO 4. Locate specific information by using organizational features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, glossaries, indices, italics, key words, topic sentences, concluding sentences) of expository text. (Connected to Research Strand in Writing)
- PO 6. Interpret information from graphic features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, illustrations, tables, timelines) in expository text. (Connected to Research Strand in Writing)
- PO 8. Draw valid conclusions based on information gathered from expository text.

Writing—Grade 4

Strand 3: Writing Applications

Concept 5: Literary Response

- PO 3. Write a response that demonstrates an understanding of a literary selection, and depending on the selection, includes:
 - a. evidence from the text
 - b. personal experience
 - c. comparison to other text/media
 (See Ro4-S2C1)

Materials

- Computer and digital projector and/or student computers with Internet access
- Book: *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata
Ideally, one book per student—however one book per cooperative group will work.
- Children's Dictionaries
- Highlighter Markers
- "A Friend to All" Student Packet
 - page 9: *Weedflower*: The Birthday Party Vocabulary Chart
 - page 10: *Weedflower*: The Birthday Party Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 11: *Weedflower*: U.S. Declares War on Japan Vocabulary Chart
 - page 12: *Weedflower*: U.S. Declares War on Japan Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 13: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Vocabulary Chart
 - page 14: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 15: *Weedflower*: Should They Stay or Go? Vocabulary Chart
 - page 16: *Weedflower*: Should They Stay or Go? Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 17: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph Vocabulary Chart
 - page 18: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph Comprehension Worksheet

- page 19: *Weedflower* Internet Research Worksheet
- page 20: Final Wrap-Up Worksheet
- page 21: Friendship Poster Template
- Answer Keys
 - page 9A: *Weedflower*: The Birthday Party Vocabulary Chart
 - page 10A: *Weedflower*: The Birthday Party Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 11A: *Weedflower*: U.S. Declares War on Japan Vocabulary Chart
 - page 12A: *Weedflower*: U.S. Declares War on Japan Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 13A: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Vocabulary Chart
 - page 14A: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 15A: *Weedflower*: Should They Stay or Go? Vocabulary Chart
 - page 16A: *Weedflower*: Should They Stay or Go? Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 17A: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph Vocabulary Chart
 - page 18A: *Weedflower*: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph Comprehension Worksheet
 - page 19A: *Weedflower* Internet Research Worksheet
- Friendship Poster Examples—run off color copies to show students OR show from the computer via digital projector
 - 21A Friendship Poster—Example 1
 - 21A Friendship Poster—Example 2
 - 21A Friendship Poster—Example 3
 - 21A Friendship Poster—Example 4
- Color Pencils or Color Markers
- Exit Cards

Background

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, many Americans began to suspect that all people of Japanese descent, even American-born, were spies

for the Japanese empire. Anti-Japanese hysteria was inflamed by the press with untrue reports of sabotage and ship-to-shore espionage activities along the Pacific coast. Special interest groups, espousing sentiments of racial nativism, pressured politicians to call for an all out removal of Japanese Issei and Nisei. This was particularly true in California, where innovative and hard working Japanese farmers had established a successful niche in the truck produce and agricultural industries. Removal, under the guise of military necessity, would afford Caucasian competitors an opportunity to acquire hundreds of property and agricultural land leases at bargain basement prices.

Widespread fear of an impending Japanese West coast invasion, believed possible due to subversive activities of Japanese Americans, became the norm. The comments of Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, written to Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson on February 14, 1942, demonstrate the serious credibility given to such fear. DeWitt wrote: "In the war in which we are now engaged, racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race, and while many second- and third-generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted.... It therefore follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction are at large today." DeWitt later publicly proclaimed, "A Jap's a Jap, and that's all there is to it."

Against this historical backdrop, *Weedflower*, examines the life of 12-year-old, Sumiko, who lives on a flower farm in southern California. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Sumiko's uncle and grandfather are sent to prison and the rest of the family is taken to an assembly center, where they live temporarily in a horse stable. The family is next shipped off to Poston, a concentration camp located in the hot dusty Arizona

desert. Sumiko makes new friends at camp, grows a garden with a neighbor, and develops a tender relationship with a Mohave boy, Frank. Sumiko learns that the camp is located on reservation land and that their presence there is resented by the Indians. As their friendship develops, Sumiko and Frank discover that the Japanese American incarceration experience holds many parallels with the U.S. government's treatment of the Mohave people. Sumiko and Frank learn how the power of friendship can break through prohibitive racial barriers and empower them with hope in the face of adversity.

Opening

- Tell students to think back to the previous day's lesson. Ask if they remember the names of the two Japanese American concentration camps located in Arizona. (*Gila River and Poston*) Ask if they recall one other "special" characteristic regarding the locations of the two Arizona camps that set them apart from the eight other camps. (*Both Arizona camps were located on Native American reservations.*)
- Explain that the class will be divided into small reading groups and assigned daily reading selections out of a chapter book called *Weedflower*. The main character in this story is a 12-year-old Japanese American girl named Sumiko and the plot revolves around her family's life at the Poston camp.
- Direct students to retrieve their Arizona Native American Reservations map from the previous lesson. Ask if they recall on which reservation the Poston camp is located. (*Colorado River*) Have students locate the Colorado River Reservation on the map. (*SW border of AZ*)
- Explain that during World War II, the Colorado River Reservation was home to the Mohave and Chemehuevi Indian tribes. (Today, the Colorado River Indian Tribes are comprised of the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo tribes.) In the book, *Weedflower*, the main character, Sumiko, befriends a

Mohave boy named Frank.

- Ask students to speculate and discuss the following:
 1. How do you suppose the Indians felt about the government's decision to build these camps on their tribal lands?
 2. Do you think the government asked the tribal council (reservation leaders) for permission first before building the camps there?

Activities—Day 1

- Assign students into small reading groups in which they will meet daily and work to complete all the Lesson 3 activities. Distribute copies of *Weedflower* to each group, ideally, one book per student.
- Explain that students will be assigned daily reading selections from various chapters in the book, along with specific worksheets in the "A Friend to All" Student Packet. Most days there will be a vocabulary chart and a reading comprehension worksheet with pre- and post- reading questions to complete.
- Direct students to take out their "A Friend to All" Student Packet and turn to page 9, entitled *Weedflower: The Birthday Party Vocabulary Chart*. This assignment introduces definitions for essential vocabulary, requires students to divide words into syllables and to compose sentences using the vocabulary words.
- Write the Teacher Definitions for the page 9 vocabulary words on the whiteboard for students to copy. (See page 9A Answer Key provided.)
- Model the correct procedure, by going over the vocabulary tasks together as a class for the first vocabulary term, "stable." Encourage students to work together within their groups to complete the remainder of the Vocabulary Chart assignment.
- Instruct students to consult children's dictionaries for help with the syllabication task.
- **Note:** An online children's dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Word Central can be found at: <http://www.wordcentral.com/home.html> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Once the Vocabulary Chart is completed, students

turn to page 10, *Weedflower: The Birthday Party Comprehension Worksheet*. Students preview the worksheet directions regarding the pre-reading and post-reading questions.

- After students have discussed and recorded answers for the pre-reading questions, they will orally read the assigned selections together as a group. The teacher may need to help students with pronunciation of some of the higher level vocabulary words and words of Japanese origin.
- Note: Japanese vowels follow the same rules of pronunciation for Spanish vowels. In Japanese every syllable is stressed equally.
- For class closure, ask each group to share their insights regarding the way Sumiko was treated at the birthday party. Remind students that the birthday party occurred BEFORE the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Activities—Day 2

- Direct students to turn to page 11, entitled *Weedflower: U.S. Declares War on Japan Vocabulary Chart*. This assignment introduces ten more essential vocabulary, and is similar to the previous day's activities, requiring students to divide the words into syllables and to compose sentences using the vocabulary words.
- Write the Teacher Definitions for the page 11 vocabulary words on the whiteboard for students to copy. (See page 11A Answer Key provided.)
- Once the Vocabulary Chart is completed, students turn to page 12, *Weedflower: U.S. Declares War on Japan Comprehension Worksheet*. Students discuss and record the answers for the pre-reading questions, orally read the assigned selections together as a group, then answer the post-reading questions.
- For class closure, ask each group to share their insights regarding why the F.B.I. arrested Sumiko's grandfather, uncle, and neighbor, Mr. Ono. Ask students if "looking like the enemy" is the same as "being the enemy?" In other words, was it reasonable or fair to assume that Japanese Americans were

spying for the Japanese government?

Note: At the time Executive Order 9066 was put into effect, the U.S. government had proof that not one Japanese American, citizen or non-citizen, had engaged in acts of espionage or sabotage. In fact, only ten people were convicted of spying for Japan. They were all Euro American.

Activities—Day 3

- Direct students to turn to page 13, entitled *Weedflower: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Vocabulary Chart*. Again, this assignment is similar to the previous day's activities, however starting with this vocabulary chart, students will look up the definitions for themselves, rather than copying the Teacher Definitions. Instruct students to consult the online children's dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Word Central for help with the syllabication task and for definitions.
- In cases where it may be difficult for students to determine the "correct" definition (in context of the reading selection), the appropriate number of the definition is notated on the Vocabulary Chart. (Note: For the vocabulary word "bloomers," a Teacher Definition is given since it is not directly accessible on the Word Central Web site.)
- Once the Vocabulary Chart is completed, students turn to page 14, *Weedflower: Sumiko and Frank's Friendship Comprehension Worksheet*. Students discuss and record the answers for the pre-reading questions, orally read the assigned selections together as a group, then answer the post-reading questions.
- For class closure, ask each group to share their insights regarding how they think stereotypes of Japanese Americans contributed to the signing of Executive Order 9066 and the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Activities—Day 4

- Direct students to turn to page 15, entitled *Weedflower: Should They Stay or Go? Vocabulary Chart*. This

assignment introduces ten more essential vocabulary and is similar to the previous day's activities. Instruct students to consult the online children's dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Word Central for help with the syllabication task and for definitions.

- In cases where it may be difficult for students to determine the "correct" definition (in context of the reading selection), the appropriate number of the definition is notated on the Vocabulary Chart. (Note: For the vocabulary words "civil rights" and "organic," Teacher Definitions are given since they are not directly accessible on the Word Central Web site.)
- Once the Vocabulary Chart is completed, students turn to page 16, *Weedflower: Should They Stay or Go?* Comprehension Worksheet. Students discuss and record the answers for the pre-reading questions, orally read the assigned selections together as a group, then answer the post-reading questions.
- For class closure, ask each group to share their opinions regarding whether it was better for Japanese Americans to stay or leave the camps. Ask each group: "Were you surprised by Sumiko's family's decision to stay?"

Activities—Day 5

- Direct students to turn to page 17, entitled *Weedflower: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph* Vocabulary Chart. This assignment introduces eight more essential vocabulary and is similar to the previous day's activities, however starting with this vocabulary chart, students will draw their own illustrations. Instruct students to consult the online children's dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Word Central for help with the syllabication task and for definitions.
- In cases where it may be difficult for students to determine the "correct" definition (in context of the reading selection), the appropriate number of the definition is notated on the Vocabulary Chart. (Note: For the vocabulary words "gestured" and "shoyu," Teacher Definitions are given since they are not

directly accessible on the Word Central Web site.)

- Once the Vocabulary Chart is completed, students turn to page 18, *Weedflower: Sumiko and Frank Introduce Bull and Joseph* Comprehension Worksheet. Students discuss and record the answers for the pre-reading questions, orally read the assigned selections together as a group, then answer the post-reading questions.
- For class closure, ask each group to share the "strongest" similarity they noted in Question 4 on the Comprehension Worksheet.

Activities—Day 6

- Direct students to turn to page 19, entitled *Weedflower: Internet Research Worksheet*. This assignment involves research of a Web exhibit that features photographs of daily life in the two Arizona camps, taken for the War Relocation Authority.
- Students work in their assigned groups to read the information found on the home page of the "Through Our Parents' Eyes" Web site: <http://parentseyes.arizona.edu/wracamps/index.html> (accessed September 5, 2009).
- Using information gleaned from the home page, students then complete the Step One side of the worksheet (questions 1–4).
- Following directions outlined under the Step Two side of the worksheet, students will study the W.R.A. camp photographs and captions, then answer questions 5–10 on the worksheet.
- For class closure, ask each group to share their insights about "the best" and "the worst" aspects of life in the camps.

Activities—Day 7

- Direct students to turn to page 20, entitled *Final Wrap-Up Worksheet*. This activity involves a whole class discussion of, followed by individual student's written responses to, the worksheet questions.
- Instruct students to turn to the final page of the "A Friend to All" Student Packet. Page 21 is a Friendship

Poster Template. These literary response posters serve as the Final Assessment for the unit.

- Direct students to create a poster with one important message about the power of friendship. The message should be one that they discovered from reading the stories. The poster must include a colorful illustration that supports the message. Students work on their posters for the remainder of the work session. Poster presentations will occur the following day.
- Four examples of Friendship Posters are provided for sharing with students.

Closing

- Posters can be shared with the class through one-minute student presentations. Write the following criteria for a one minute presentation on the whiteboard:
 1. Introduction (“Hello, my name is . . .”)
 2. Reading of the friendship message
 3. Description of the illustration
 4. Explanation of how the friendship message connects to one (or more) of the stories read
- Give students a few minutes to rehearse, then proceed with the one minute student presentations of the literary response posters.
- Distribute one Exit Card per student.
- Instruct students to write one way that they can better treat fellow classmates to show respect on the card.

Extensions

- Create a gallery exhibit of the Friendship Posters, posting a number next to each poster. Sponsor a Gallery Walk, inviting parents or other classrooms to view the posters. Give each Gallery Walk participant an index card on which comments can be written for each poster.
- Have students write short stories or poems based upon specific photos from the W.R.A. images of Arizona camp life, found on the “Through Our Parents’ Eyes” Web site: <http://parentseyes.arizona.edu/wracamps/index.html> (accessed September 5, 2009)
- Watch an Arizona *Enduring Communities* team video clips, “What is Friendship?” (two parts) available on the Japanese American National Museum’s Web site: <http://www.janm.org/projects/ec/resources/curricula-media>

References

- Colorado River Indian Tribes official Web site. <http://www.crit-nsn.gov> (accessed September 3, 2009).
- Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006
- Map: Native American Reservations of Arizona from the Arizona Geographic Alliance. <http://alliance.la.asu.edu/maps/AZ-RES3.PDF> (accessed September 3, 2009).
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- Weglyn, Michi. *Years of Infamy, The Untold Story of America’s Concentration Camps*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976.