

A Hero's Story

Overview

Students use reading analysis (details and summary) to investigate the choices Japanese Americans made in regard to their own lives. Kazuo Masuda was one of many young men who decided to fight for his country, in spite of the way his country had treated him and his community. His story is important because it did draw national attention, and was actually part of the background 40 years later of the eventual redress bill and apology that was made to all living persons of Japanese descent who had been incarcerated during World War II.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze historical facts about one American patriot, and recognize race/ethnicity plays no part in what makes an American or a hero.
- Recognize key terms about the Japanese American incarceration and Japanese culture.
- Use context clues to determine the relevant meaning of a word.
- Discuss context clues and comprehend that loss of Constitutional rights occurred in U.S.

Essential Question

- What are the responsibilities that every American must follow in order to protect the rights of other Americans?

Guiding Questions

- What was the true reason for the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans by the U.S. government?
- How did most people in the U.S. react to the Japanese American incarceration?
- How did Japanese Americans react to the incarceration?

National History Standards

Part Two—United States and World History
Grades 5–12

Chapter 2: Historical Thinking

- Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 3: U.S. History Standards

- Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929–1945)
- Era 9: Postwar United States (1945–1970's) to early Standard 3: The causes and course of WWII, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.
- Standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties.

Arizona State Standards

Social Studies—Grade 8

Strand 2: American History

Concept 8: Great Depression & WWII.

- PO 2. Describe how Pearl Harbor led to U.S. involvement in WWII.
- PO 4. Explain how the following factors affected the U.S. home front during WWII.
 - a. internment of Japanese, German, and Italian Americans.
- PO 5. Describe Arizona's contributions to the war effort:
 - e. POW and internment camps

Strand 2: World History

Concept 1: Research Skills for History

- PO 4. Formulate questions that can be answered by historical study and research.

Strand 3: Civics/Government

Concept 3: Functions of Government

- PO 8: Describe the impact of the following executive orders and decisions:
 - a. Executive Order 9066—creation of internment camps on U.S. soil.

Strand 4: Geography

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- PO 4. Locate physical and cultural features (e.g., continents, cities, countries, significant waterways, mountain ranges, climate zones, major water bodies, landforms) throughout the world.
- PO 5. Interpret thematic maps....depicting various aspects of the U.S. and world regions. (Apply to regions studied).

Concept 2: Places and Regions

- PO 4. Identify how the role of the media, images, and advertising influences the perception of a place.
- PO 5. Describe how a place changes over time. (Connect with content studied).

Concept 4: Human Systems

- PO 6. Describe the aspects of culture (e.g., literacy, occupations, clothing, property rights) related to beliefs and understandings that influence the economic, social, and political activities of men and women.

Concept 6: Geographic Applications

- PO 2. Describe ways different groups of people (i.e., Native Americans, Hispanics, retirees) create and shape the same environment.
- PO 3. Use geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing patterns, mapping, graphing) when discussing current events.

Reading—Grade 8

Strand 1: Reading Process

Concept 4: Vocabulary

- PO 2. Use context to identify the intended meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., definition, example, restatement, synonym, contrast).

Concept 6: Comprehension Strategies

- PO 1. Predict text content using prior knowledge and text features (e.g., illustrations, titles, topic sentences, key words).
- PO 2. Confirm predictions about text for accuracy.
- PO 3. Generate clarifying questions in order to comprehend text.

- PO 7. Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect, making inferences, sequencing) to interpret text.

Strand 2: Comprehending Informational Text

Concept 1: Expository Text

- PO 1. Restate the main idea (explicit or implicit) & supporting details in expository text.
- PO 2. Summarize the main idea (stated or implied) and critical details of expository text, maintaining chronological, sequential, or logical order.
- PO 10. Make relevant inferences about expository text, supported by text evidence.

Writing—Grade 8

Strand 2: Writing Elements

Concept 1: Ideas and Content

- PO 1. Use clear, focused ideas and details to support the topic.
- PO 2. Provide content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose.
- PO 3. Develop a sufficient explanation or exploration of the topic.
- PO 4. Include ideas and details that show original perspective.

Concept 5: Sentence Fluency

- PO 1. Write simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- PO 2. Create sentences that flow together and sound natural when read aloud.
- PO 3. Vary sentence beginnings, lengths, and patterns to enhance the flow of the writing.

Strand 3: Writing Applications

Concept 2: Expository

- PO 2. Write a summary based on the information gathered that include(s): a topic sentence, supporting details, and relevant information.



Materials

- (3-A) Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story, Article/Worksheet and KEY
- Kazuo Masuda—photo must be downloaded from the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 Youth Group of Orange County at <http://vfwyouthgroup.org/forms/kazuoi.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2009)
- (3-B) Letter from June Masuda Goto to President Ronald Reagan
- (3-C) How Racial Discrimination Feels Activity Instructions and Ballots

Opening

Teacher asks students to write a paragraph answering the question: Why, after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. government's policies involving persons of Japanese descent, would Japanese Americans be willing to fight as soldiers for the U.S.? (5 minutes)

Activities—Day 1

Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story Student Reading Analysis

- Distribute Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story (3A) article and worksheet (20 minutes)
The article may be read individually, in partnerships, or as a class. Ask students to complete questions and be prepared to discuss. Emphasize that the answers need to be in complete sentences.

Discussion: Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story (20–30 minutes)

Teacher Instant Expert Notes (Numbers align with worksheet questions).

2. The Japanese generations each have a particular reference name. Issei are those who were born in Japan and emigrated. They are the first generation. Many of the Issei generation did not speak fluent English, but nonetheless tended to be the community leaders. Nisei are the second generation, born in America. They were usually

fluent in both Japanese (at least for purposes of basic communication) and English, as they were raised attending American schools. The third generation was known as Sansei, and the fourth generation as Yonsei. The total population of Japanese Americans on the American mainland was 150,000 in 1941, and 120,000 were sent to concentration camps. Two-thirds of the 120,000 were native-born citizens who were stripped of their rights without due process. In Hawaii, where almost 50% of the population was of Japanese descent, only a relative few were confined.

3. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team distinguished itself for bravery. It was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in U.S. military history and is reported to have suffered a casualty rate of 314 percent (i.e. on average, each man was injured more than three times). The 4,000 men who initially came in April 1943 had to be replaced nearly 3.5 times. In total, about 14,000 men served. 18,000 total awards were bestowed upon the 442nd, including 9,486 Purple Hearts, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, eight Distinguished Unit Citations, and twenty-one Congressional Medals of Honor.
4. This is a good place to display a map of Italy showing the boot shape, and of perhaps following the path of the 442nd in Europe. The Regimental Combat Team was trained in Camp Shelby, Mississippi. They landed in Italy and worked their way up the Italian boot to Naples, through Anzio to Rome, across the Arno River and into southern France, eventually helping to liberate the Dachau Death Camp in Germany.
5. The Masuda family was originally sent to a concentration camp at Jerome, Arkansas from October 1942 to June 1944. They were then transferred to Gila River just south of Phoenix, Arizona and lived there from June 1944 to July 1945. When Gila River was being closed the oldest sister, Mary, scouted the family's return to their

former home in Orange County, California and was warned not to return by a self-appointed group of vigilantes who told her Japanese were not welcome there. She defended her family's return in spite of repeated warnings based on her family's endurance of the incarceration, her brothers' service in the military, and Kazuo's death fighting for America. She received support from all over the county, and the Masuda family returned home to the same place they had left.

6. After the ceremony where General Stillwell presented the medal to the Masuda family, a public gathering was held, called the United America Day at the Santa Ana Bowl, and Captain Ronald Reagan spoke. Reagan thanked Masuda's parents for their son's sacrifice: "The blood that has soaked into the sands of the beaches is all one color," he said. "America stands unique in the world—a country not founded on race, but on a way and an ideal. Not in spite of, but because of our polyglot background, we have had all the strength in the world. That is the American way."
7. The manager of the cemetery told the Masuda family the Westminster Memorial Cemetery was a racially restricted cemetery and S/Sgt. Masuda could not be buried in a "desireable" location, meaning a place where grass would grow and in a central area of the cemetery. Public pressure was intense, and the manager changed his rule and allowed the family to have the plot they wished for the burial of Kazuo Masuda.
8. A Hollywood movie was produced called "Go For Broke!" starring Van Johnson in 1951, based on the exploits of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.
9. It is interesting that Ronald Reagan was the president in office when the redress bill for incarcerated Japanese Americans occurred. The bill provided for a payment of \$20,000 to anyone of Japanese descent who spent time in America's concentration camps. Those no longer living

were not eligible. The idea of the bill was not to reimburse, but to apologize. There was no way that people could be paid for losing their civil liberties and enduring the humiliation of being incarcerated simply because of their ancestry. See a copy of the attached letter from June Masuda Goto (3-B) to President Reagan. The teacher might choose to read it out loud to the class.

- Display war photo of Kaz Masuda digitally or on prepared overhead.
- **Close:** Teacher leads short discussion considering the question: Why did the U.S. government offer redress payments to Japanese Americans?
- **Pair-Share:** Partners discuss their opinions as to whether it was a correct or an incorrect thing to do.

Activities—Day 2

How Racial Discrimination Feels – An activity designed to help students understand the pain of discrimination.

- Teacher prepares before class by reviewing the Activity Instruction sheets, How Racial Discrimination Feels (3-C & 3-C2). Ballots (3-C3 & 3-C4) should be reproduced and cut apart for distribution.
- Teacher explains activity to students and distributes ballots. Activity is conducted. Do not rush the activity. Part of the experience is kinetic. Students need time during and after the activity to process the experience.

Closing

Ask students to write two paragraphs: "What is the real damage of discrimination? If it is tolerated, what happens to a society? Explain."

Extensions

- Do an internet research project on the record of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Ask students to locate specific statistics, such as number of Purple Hearts awarded, number of soldiers who died in



battle, where the 442nd fought, etc.

- Invite somebody who was incarcerated during World War II to visit the classroom. Even though it is sometimes difficult to recount their experiences, there are people in the Phoenix area who can be contacted through local museums or the JACL (Japanese American Citizens League.)
- Compare the World War II Japanese American experience with the treatment of American Muslims after 9/11. Ask classes to discuss the dangers of a discriminatory society.

References

Go for Broke National Education Center. <http://www.GoforBroke.org>. (accessed September 3, 2009).

Hoobler, Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler. *The Japanese American Family Album*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 96-103.

Murray, Alice Yang, ed. *What Did the Internment of Japanese Americans Mean?* Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.

Parker Unified School District. "WebQuest: Japanese American Internment Camps." <http://www.parkerusd.org/phs/library/lisstudents/postoncamp>. (accessed September 3, 2009).