

# Life in “Camp”

## Time

5 class periods (30 minutes per period)

## Overview

Lesson 4 covers Chapters 13 through 28 (123 pages). These chapters are about life at Poston Camp in Arizona and reveals how the inmates worked to try to keep their lives “normal.”

Students will need two sessions devoted to research (which could take place during a different part of the day from read-aloud time), two sessions devoted to presenting research, and then the class will need one session to tie the unit together.

For their research, students will locate pictures and other primary sources online and create displays showing life in “camp.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or in groups for online research. In addition to reading about life at Poston, students will also study the Amache concentration camp in Granada, Colorado.

Note: As an alternate activity for students with no computer skills or minimal computer access, teachers may wish to select and print a collection of photos from each of the possible topics listed in “Activities.” Students could then do their research from this pool of photos.

## Objectives

- Students will understand that while Japanese Americans worked to make their concentration camps similar to small towns in America, [delete but] they were still living behind barbed wire and being watched by guards.

## Essential Question

- Why is it important to treat everybody—including those who may seem different from me—fairly?

## Guiding Question(s)

- What was life like for Japanese Americans in World War II concentration camps?

## Colorado Model Content Standards (2008)

- History 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.
- History 5.3: Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used, and/or lost throughout history.

## Materials

- Poster board, butcher paper, or wall space for displays
- A copy of the map entitled “Japanese American Confinement Sites in the United States During World War II” found in the Appendix of this curriculum
- *Handout 4-1: Research Topics*
- Computers with Internet access and printers
- Web sites bookmarked in advance to ease student research. Here are directions for locating the sites students will use in their research for further information about Amache:

Web site #1: Colorado State Archives’ Granada—Amache Japanese Internment Camp Photographs

1. <http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/grphoto.htm> (accessed July 16, 2009).
2. Scroll through the 13 photographs.

Web site #2: Amache: August 27, 1942–October 15, 1945, produced by the students of Granada High School’s Amache Preservation Society

1. <http://www.amache.org/> (accessed July 16, 2009).
2. Scroll through the site to see photos about various aspects of Amache.

Web site #3: Online Archive of California’s Collection from the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley

1. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/institutions/UC+Berkeley::Bancroft+Library> (accessed September 6, 2009).

- Browse the collection for the “War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement.”
- Enter “Amache” or “Granada” in the search box. There are 460 and 692 images, respectively.
- To narrow the search, select “Online Items.”

#### Web site #4: Denshō: The Japanese American Legacy Project

- <http://www.densho.org> (accessed July 16, 2009).
- Choose “Archive” from the menu at the top of the home page.
- Choose “Enter the archive” from the menu on the left.
- On the left is a list of Photo/Document Collections’ Private Collections.
- Scroll down to “George Ochikubo Collection.” There are 303 images.

#### Background

In the effort to move those of Japanese ancestry from coastal areas of the United States to the interior of the country, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) established 10 concentration camps. All of the camps were in harsh locales in remote areas; Amache in Colorado was located fairly close to the small town of Granada in the Arkansas River Valley of Colorado, east of Lamar. Population of the camps ranged from 7,000 to more than 18,000 people. Most Japanese Americans who lived in Colorado before the outbreak of World War II were not forced to move—the Japanese Americans in Amache were primarily from California.

The WRA decreed that certain criteria had to be observed in selection of sites large enough to accommodate thousands of people and keep them under guard:

- Land had to be government owned;
- Land had to have power and water;
- Railroad access was necessary to bring in food and other supplies;
- Barracks were needed to house inmates;
- Sites also needed hospitals, fire stations, and schools.

(Bill Hosokawa, *Colorado’s Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present*, pages 100–01)

#### Opening

- Display the map showing the locations of confinement sites throughout the United States. Explain that over the next few days, while students listen to the story about Sumiko’s life at Poston in Arizona, they will also be doing online research about a specific aspect of life in camp and will download pictures that illustrate it. They will focus on the camp in Granada, Colorado, called Amache.

#### Activities

- Continue to chart vocabulary words introduced in the text:
  - sumimasen* (Chapter 14, page 109): “excuse me”
  - shikata ga nai* (Chapter 16, pages 129 and 130): an expression roughly meaning “This cannot be helped.”
  - inu* (Chapter 16, page 131): literally, “dog,” but in this context the implied meaning is “dirty dog” or “snitch”
  - Nisei* (Chapter 23, page 177): second-generation Japanese Americans who were born in the United States
  - shoyu* (Chapter 28, page 215): soy sauce
- Continue to read aloud and discuss *Weedflower* using the questions at the end of this section.
  - Show the map showing locations of the confinement sites.
  - Introduce students to Amache, the camp located in Granada, Colorado. Show and discuss photos of people arriving in Amache. Take time to have the class explore Colorado’s State Archives’ Web site: <http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/grphoto.htm> (accessed July 16, 2009).
  - At this point, students will work in groups to research an aspect of life in camp, focusing on Amache in Colorado. Ideally students should have time to work on this at another time during the day while the chapters in Lesson 4 are being read aloud.
  - Some possible topics: passing the time, living conditions, school, responsibilities of inmates while in camp, gardens, outside the barracks and around

- camp, inside the barracks, standing in line, jobs.
- Allow adequate time for students to look through the photo collections, gather photos, and complete *Handout 4-1: Research Topics*. For more efficient coverage of the photo collections, teachers may wish to divide up the photos so that each student group looks at a different set of photos. For example, Group 1 looks at page 1, Group 2 looks at page 2, etc.
  - After research time, students should share their pictures with the class. When presenting to the class, students should be prepared to answer the questions from *Handout 4-1*:
    - What aspect of life in camp was researched?
    - Why were these pictures chosen?
    - What do these pictures tell us about life in camp?
    - What would be difficult about living in a concentration camp?
    - After doing this research, how do the students in this group feel about life in camp?
  - While reading Chapters 13 through 28 and studying the photos collected, discuss the following questions in the appropriate chapters:
    - General questions:
      - What further hardships did Sumiko’s family endure after they moved to Poston?
      - After moving to the concentration camps, many people noticed a breakdown in family structure. In what ways did families no longer stick together?
    - Chapters 16 and 17:
      - What things did Sumiko’s family and other families do to make things more comfortable in concentration camps?
      - List things that people did to make the camp similar to a small town in America rather than a concentration camp. For example: schools, baseball and basketball games, graduations, gardens.
      - The phrase *shikata ga nai* means “This cannot be helped.” What do you think people meant when they used it?
    - Chapter 20:
      - By September, the government wanted Japa-

nese Americans to resettle outside camp. Why weren’t families willing to go?

- Chapter 23:
  - How do Ichiro’s friend and Auntie differ in their opinions about why they were in camps?
  - What do you think Bull meant when he said he was willing to “fight anyway?”
- Chapter 28:
  - Discuss the conversation between Frank, Sumiko, Bull, and Joseph. Note that Native Americans in Arizona were U.S. citizens who couldn’t vote but could go to war, whereas Japanese Americans were U.S. citizens who were in concentration camps.

### Closing

- After all groups have presented their research, display the photos and allow the students to do a “gallery walk.”

### Extensions

- Arrange a public display of the collected photos in the hall or library.
- Read aloud *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki.
- Instead of having students print the photos that they locate, create a slide show by having students turn in photos electronically to a previously created folder on a school network or via email.

### References

- Hosokawa, Bill. *Colorado’s Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present*. Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2005.
- Japanese American National Museum. <http://www.janm.org/> (accessed July 24, 2009).
- Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. New York: Atheneum Books, 2006.
- Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. New York: Lee and Low Books, 1993.
- Parker, Walter C. “Using Pictures to Aid Comprehension.” In *Social Studies in Elementary Education*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1997.

# Research Topics

Handout 4-1

22

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What did you research? \_\_\_\_\_

Number each picture. Write the numbers at the top on the right hand side of each picture.

Choose one picture that you feel is important.

Write its number here \_\_\_\_\_

What does this picture show? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this picture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does this picture tell about life in camp?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would be difficult about living in a concentration camp? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_