

# I Am an American

## Time

1 class period (30 minutes per period)

## Overview

This final lesson will allow students to consider what they have learned and respond to the Essential Question.

## Objectives

- Students will pull knowledge together and draw conclusions

## Essential Question

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

## Guiding Question(s)

- (See Essential Question)

## 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

- Charts from throughout the unit
- Photos collected in Lesson 4
- Material from Lesson 3, *Handout 3-4: "I Am an American"*

## Opening

- Display the pictures and primary sources collected throughout this unit.
- The majority of the people housed in concentration camps were American-born citizens; others were first-generation immigrants ineligible for citizenship at that time. Use the “likenesses and differences” charts and photo collages to discuss ways in which they continued their American way of life and the hardships that they faced.

## Activities

- Focus on the chart of things that happened to Sumiko that don’t usually happen to American citizens.
  - Why is the photo of the “I Am an American” sign so important to this story and to the history of our country?
  - What other parts of the book show similarly ironic experiences?
    - Chapter 28: Native Americans couldn’t vote but could fight in the military
    - Chapter 29: Moving Japanese Americans to concentration camps, drafting Japanese Americans, and the incarceration of “No-No Boys”
- In the beginning of the book, Japanese Americans had a certain amount of political power because they were shop owners or farmers and leased or owned businesses, farms, cars, and houses. How did they lose this power, and who had more power than they did?
- Even though Japanese Americans worked hard to make life in camp similar to life in other American towns, what things made this difficult or impossible?
- After reading this book, what responsibilities do students recognize that we have as Americans?

## Closing

- Discuss the Essential Question: *Why is it important to treat everybody—including those who may seem different from me—fairly?*
- Discuss with the class what they think happened to Sumiko and her family after the story ended.

## Extension

- Cynthia Kadohata maintains a Web site aimed at young readers about herself and her work: <http://www.kira-kira.us/> (accessed July 24, 2009).

## References

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. New York: Atheneum Books, 2006.

