

Putting it all Together

Time

1 class period

Overview

As its title suggests, this lesson closes the unit by tying together all of the processes of oral history. It is hoped that students will be inspired to continue to hone their skills and eventually upload their oral histories via the Japanese American National Museum's "Nikkei Album" on the Museum's Discover Nikkei Web site at <http://www.discovernikkei.org/nikkeialbum/> (accessed August 4, 2009).

Objectives

- Students will reflect on their oral history experience and on oral history as an important and accessible technique for preserving history.
- Students will understand that oral histories of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache are a valuable instrument for ensuring that those stories become a part of the historical record.
- Students will identify their "next steps" in the oral history project.

Essential Question

- How does preparing for, conducting, and processing oral histories contribute to the interviewer's understanding of history, specifically the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache, Colorado?

Guiding Question(s)

- (See Essential Question)

Colorado Model Content Standards (2008)

- History 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- History 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of historical information.

- History 5: Students understand political institutions and theories that have developed and changed over time.
- History 5.1: Students understand how democratic ideas and institutions in the United States have developed, changed, and/or been maintained.
- History 5.3: Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used, and/or lost throughout history.

Materials

- None

Opening

- Begin this lesson by asking students to reflect on their experience with the transcription process.
 - What surprised students about the transcription process?
 - What challenges were faced when transcribing their interviews?
 - What went well?
 - How might the process be changed to make it easier and/or more efficient?

Activities

- Explain to students that they have completed the unit on oral history and are now ready to take the "next steps," which could entail working on a project to interview Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at Amache.
- Ask students to think about the oral history process and the interviews they conducted.
 - Which parts did they enjoy most? Least? Why?
 - Which parts of the process would they like to improve on?
 - How might the teaching of the process be changed to make it more effective for students?
 - Which skills do they think would be most useful for them now and in the future?
- Ask students to think about the primary source documents they analyzed.

- How was the learning they did in constructing questions from documents different from the way they normally learn about history?
- How do the questions they developed for their interviews demonstrate their understanding of the Japanese American experience in Colorado?
- What additional information would students like to have about the Amache experience? How might they find that information?
- In looking back on the questions developed from the documents, what others might they like to ask?

Closing

- Refer students back to the Essential Question for this unit and ask for their responses: *How does preparing for, conducting, and processing oral histories contribute to the interviewer's understanding of history, specifically the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache, Colorado?*
- Draw students' attention to the current age range of those who experienced Amache and ask them to comment on the importance of a project like the one described throughout the unit, which is designed to capture individual stories before those who experienced Amache are no longer living.
- Arrange for students to become involved in the Japanese American National Museum's Discover Nikkei "Nikkei Album" at <http://www.discovernikkei.org/nikkeialbum/> (accessed August 4, 2009) where they can use their skills to capture the history of those whose voices have not yet been heard.