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Name of Unit

The World War II Japanese American Experience:
Political Cartoons and Artwork

Suggested Grade Level(s)

7, 8

Suggested Subject Area(s)

United States History and Utah Studies

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Hisako Hibi
A Stroll, 1944
Gift of Ibuki Hibi Lee
Japanese American National Museum (96.601.25)



Unit Map

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Number of Class Periods Required

8 to 9 class periods (45 minutes per period), plus additional time for the creation of museum exhibits

Enduring Understanding

- Diversity in the United States helps democracy to function.

Essential Questions

- What is the Topaz “Relocation Camp”?
- Is it more important to have safety or liberty?
- How does racism affect the American experience?
- How do communities endure?
- Who is the “We” in “We, the People”?
- What is the process of social justice?

Teacher Overview

This unit is designed to teach students about the World War II Japanese American experience by examining political cartoons and artwork from that period, thus providing additional insight into the complexities of the Japanese American World War II experience.

The final lesson in this unit encourages the class to partner with a community organization to create and display museum exhibits about the Japanese American experience.

Key Words

- Immigration
- Japanese Americans
- World War II
- Topaz
- Propaganda
- Artwork
- Primary sources
- Glossary
- Vocabulary
- Illustrate
- Research project
- Museum exhibit

Ties to Utah Core Curriculum

United States History I

- Standard 2, Objective 2: Analyze how contemporary concerns and events affect and are affected by history.
- Standard 6, Objective 4: Analyze the rights, liberties, and responsibilities of citizens.

Utah Studies

- Standard 5, Objective 1: Assess the cultural diversity of Utah.
- Standard 5, Objective 3: Assess the diverse cultural and recreational opportunities available in Utah.

Group Size

- Whole class
- Small group
- Individual
- Pairs

Life Skills

- Complex thinking
- Effective communication
- Collaboration
- Lifelong learning
- Responsible citizenship

Career Connections

- Social/Humanitarian
- Artistic
- Business information
- Management