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Japanese Internment in the US

## Japanese Internment in the United States 1942 – 1945

**Target Group:** International Baccalaureate Diploma Program students in grades 11 and 12. Length of lesson = three days maximum.

**Purpose:** To provide students with a historical overview of Japanese Internment in the United States during World War II. To stimulate discussion of such a policy of internment.

**Essential Questions:**

1. Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?
2. By what order of the United States government did this occur?
3. When did this happen?
4. Where were the internment camps?
5. What was life like for those in the camps?

**Rationale:** Consideration of the impact of World War II in the United States.

Consideration of policies that grow out of such conflict.

**Materials/Resources:** use of websites/ access to internet on a computer  
[www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson\\_plans/japanese\\_internment/index.html](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/japanese_internment/index.html) (Smithsonian Institution)

[www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org) (Japanese American National Museum)  
see exhibitions, Clara Breed collection

google search for Japanese Internment and go to Top Images of Japanese Internment - great photo collection

[www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history](http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history)  
see eo9066, camps, timeline

**Activities:** use websites to present material in order

1. Executive Order 9066

- look at wording and date
- War Relocation Authority
- use timeline to explain reasoning
- show example(s) of posters explaining the executive order

2. Internment Camps

- show photos of people going off to the camps
- look at the list of locations of camps
- look at photos of the camps themselves

3. Life in the Internment Camps

- brief biography of Clara Breed
- introduce the work, Dear Miss Breed: Letters from Camp
- use the Clara Breed collection online to show students the book contents
- go over 4 letters with students in detail
  - Letter to Clara Breed from Fusa Tsumagari, Arcadia, California, May 22, 1942
  - Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo (Ted) Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, November 16, 1942
  - Letter to Clara Breed from Louise Ogawa, Poston, Arizona, November 14 – 15, 1943
  - Letter to Clara Breed from Louise Ogawa, Poston, Arizona, August 17, 1943
- use details from the letters to discuss life in the internment camps:  
e.g., weather (heat/ cold/ storms/ wind/ dust)      visitor policies  
policy on bringing in food and also on food options in camps  
moving within the camps/barracks      rationing      furnishings

possibility of release from the camps      work in the camps  
medical/ dental facilities      equipment/ kitchen utensils  
entertainment (dancing/ swimming/ ball games)  
school (subjects and facilities)

- discuss tone/ attitude of the letters

**4. Final Discussion:** possible topics

- Supreme Court decisions and reparations

- gaman – Japanese attitude – way to endure

**Assessment:**

1. final discussion – participation grading on individual contributions

2. analysis of another letter from the Clara Breed collection.

Individual student chooses a letter and explains at least two additional pieces of information about the camps from that letter that we had not previously addressed.

3. essay in class on the reasons for the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II