

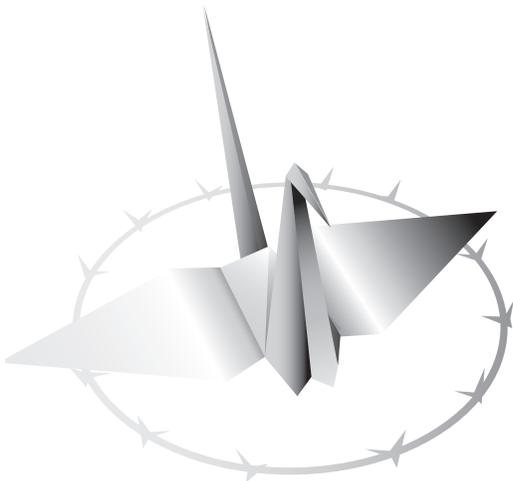
*“Memorials are about loss and sacrifice,
but also about perseverance and triumph.
They are about making sense of what has happened,
and about the impulse to send lessons into the future.”*

Delia M. Rios, “Memorials, Like Memory Itself, Can Be Complex,”
San Jose Mercury News, May 30, 2004, page 3P.

Classroom Guide for the Japanese American National Memorial to Patriotism



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Introduction

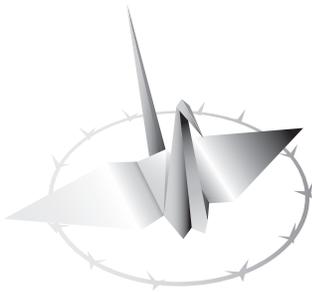
On May 29, 2004, the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, was held. At the dedication, President Bush said, “At this place, at this memorial, we acknowledge a debt of long standing to an entire generation of Americans—those who died, those who fought and worked and grieved and went on.” Thousands of World War II veterans attended the dedication, including members of the Japanese American Veterans Association. Japanese American veterans of World War II also have a memorial in Washington, DC, dedicated in their honor. This memorial is called the Japanese American National Memorial to Patriotism.

Overview and Rationale

This classroom guide offers a brief overview of the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism and provides recommendations for using the short film, “Site to Patriotism,” by Kerry Yo Nakagawa as well as activities (focused on the Memorial) for teaching about Japanese American internment in U.S. secondary classrooms. Japanese American internment is a topic in the *National History Standards* for U.S. schools as well as a topic in most state history/social science standards. Current textbook coverage of Japanese American internment at the secondary level focuses on the civil rights of Japanese Americans during World War II, life in the camps, and the role of Japanese Americans who fought in the war—many of whom volunteered or were drafted from the camps.

Since the acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001, the phrase “civil rights during times of crisis” has become a topic of many news stories and debate. Parallels have been drawn between what Arab Americans are facing today and what Japanese resident aliens in the United States and Japanese Americans faced following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Through his film on the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism, Kerry Yo Nakagawa and the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) hope that students will consider the importance of their civil rights and learn from the internment experiences of Japanese Americans and Japanese resident aliens.

It is important to note that the Japanese immigrants or *issei* (literally, “first generation”) were prohibited by U.S. law from becoming U.S. citizens until 1952. Prior to 1952, the *issei* were “resident aliens” in the United States and its territories like Hawaii. Their U.S.-born children, the *nisei* (literally, “second generation”), became U.S. citizens at birth. Children of the *nisei* are *sansei* (literally, “third generation”). Of the approximately 120,000 people who were interned during World War II, approximately 70 percent were U.S. citizens—mostly *nisei* and some *sansei*. The others were *issei*.



Procedures

1. Before showing the film, you may want to visit the NJAMF web site (<<http://www.njamf.com>>). Share the following information (from the web site) with your students.

Dedicated on November 9, 2000, this Memorial honors the loyalty and courage of Japanese Americans during World War II, commemorating not only the heroism and sacrifice of Japanese Americans who fought and died for their country, but it also tells the story of 120,000 brave men, women, and children who, despite the abridgement of their civil rights and even relocation to desolate camps, maintained their loyalty and supported their nation on the home front. It is an important story for all Americans.

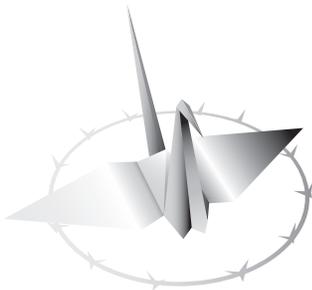
The purpose of this Memorial is two-fold: To preserve for posterity the story of a brave and loyal people. And, to tell this nation that what happened during World War II to these people must never again happen to any other people because of their race, creed, or national origin.

The Memorial also honors the nation itself for its admission of error committed in the hysteria of war; and its forthright apology through the Civil Liberties Act enacted by Congress in 1988, and the recent awarding of the Medal of Honor to 22 Asian Americans, 20 of them Japanese Americans. By these actions, Americans acknowledge the injustice of withholding the very liberty this nation's sons and daughters fought to protect.

This rededication to fairness is a new commitment to America's democratic principles and a demonstration of faith to freedom loving people everywhere.

As a class, discuss the following:

- What is a memorial?
- Why are memorials built? (You may want to share the quote at the top of the cover page.)
- Who or what types of events should be memorialized in memorials or monuments?
- What are some important memorials or monuments in Washington, DC? In other states or countries?
- Discuss how the development of a memorial can lead to controversy in terms of design, e.g., World Trade Center memorial; in terms of content, e.g., Smithsonian exhibit of the Enola Gay (the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima); in terms of who or what event is deserving of a memorial, e.g., Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham

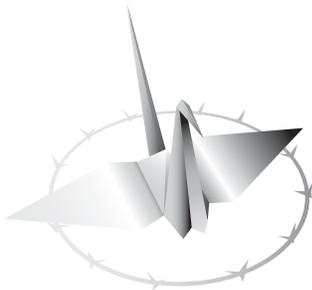


Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt have monuments in Washington, DC, but not other presidents.

2. Have students review information about Japanese American internment in a high school U.S. history textbook. Have them discuss the following:
 - Describe the precarious situation Japanese Americans faced following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
 - What was Executive Order 9066?
 - Were all Japanese American affected by this order?
 - Describe the experiences of Gordon Hirabayashi, Min Yasui, and Fred Korematsu.
 - What were the assembly centers?
 - Where were the ten permanent camps (usually referred to as “internment” or “relocation” camps in textbooks) located? There is much controversy about the terms used to describe the ten permanent camps. In addition to “relocation camps” and “internment camps,” other terms used to describe the camps are: detention, concentration, imprisonment, and incarceration. Which term(s) do you think best describes the camps and why?
 - Briefly describe life in the camps.
 - Describe the experiences of the Japanese Americans who fought in World War II. Describe their experience in both the European and Pacific theaters.
 - What happened to the Japanese Americans in the camps after the war ended?
 - Did all Japanese Americans who were uprooted from the West Coast of the United States eventually return to their homes on the West Coast?
 - Briefly discuss the movement for “redress and reparations.”

Students could also obtain important information on internment at the following web sites:

- Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project:
<<http://www.densho.org>>
- Japanese American National Museum:
<<http://www.janm.org>>
- National Japanese American Historical Society:
<<http://www.njahs.org>>
- National Japanese American Memorial Foundation:
<<http://www.njamf.com>>



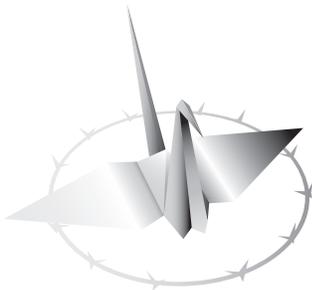
3. Inform students that they will be watching a short film, “Site to Patriotism,” which focuses on the Japanese American National Memorial in Washington, DC. Show the film, which is seven minutes long.

4. Following the film, ask students to comment on the following:
 - What did you like about the film? Why?
 - What didn't you like about the film? Why?
 - What were some of the film's key themes? (Note: Three key themes were listed in the film. These were "patriotism, tolerance, and diversity.")
 - What impressed you most about the Memorial?
 - Would you have constructed the Memorial differently? If so, how?
 - Would you like to visit the Memorial? Why or why not?
 - What are civil rights? Were the civil rights of Japanese Americans affected during World War II? If so, how?
 - Who are Daniel Inouye and Norman Mineta?
 - How might the lessons learned from the Japanese American experience during World War II be important today?
 - Compare the Japanese American experience after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the experience of Arab Americans after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
5. Activities

The following activities are recommended after students have had a chance to debrief the film. The activities are grouped into seven sections: Symbolism; Quotes; Intergenerational Issues; the Question of Loyalty; Camps; Memorials and Controversy; and Closing Activity.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a very important feature of the Memorial and film, "Site to Patriotism." Have students research the symbolic significance of the following in Japanese culture: crane, temple bell, cherry blossoms. Point out that a central feature of the Memorial is a sculpture by Nina A. Akamu. Share the following, which was taken from the JANMF web site:



With a height of 14 feet, the upper portions of the monument will be visible above the confines of the Memorial wall, symbolic of rising beyond limitations. The base of the sculpture is rough cut from green Vermont marble, which has a beautiful serpentine texture. The identical position of the bronze cranes represents the duality of the universe. Their bodies are nestled side-by-side with their free wings pressed against each other, symbolizing both individual effort and communal support, emphasizing interdependency.

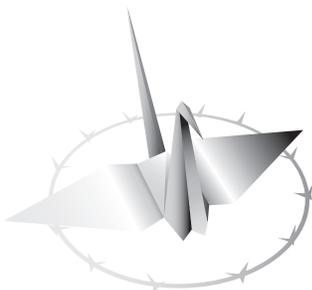
Their right wings are held flush to the sides of the base by an incuse strand of barbed wire. The birds have grasped the wire in their beaks in an attempt to break free. The sculpture is symbolic not only of the Japanese American experience, but of the extrication of anyone from deeply painful and restrictive circumstances. It reminds us of the battles we've fought to overcome our ignorance and prejudice and the meaning of an integrated culture, once pained and torn, now healed and unified. Finally, the monument presents the Japanese American experience as a symbol for all peoples.

Activity: Have students examine a photograph of this sculpture on the NJAMF web site. Have students write about their experiences with "battles" they have fought to overcome ignorance and/or prejudice. Also, have each student draw a visual representation of their efforts. Though not mentioned in the film, the Memorial also has boxes of sand from each of the ten permanent camps. Have students write poems that focus on the symbolism of this sand.

Quotes

Several panels at the Memorial feature quotes that focus on "the importance of the Japanese American struggle for equality and redress as well as honoring those who continue to seek justice and hold the Japanese American experience as an example of triumph over adversity and reminder of dark days which must never be repeated." You may want to share some of these quotes from the NJAMF web site with your students and have students in small groups discuss each quote.

Activity: Have students discuss the selection of quotes used on the Memorial. Do they agree with these choices? Why or why not? Using the NJAMF web site or other web sites listed on page three, have students in small groups make recommendations for additional quotes. Lastly, point out that one of the inscriptions on the Memorial is a poem written by Akemi Matsumoto Ehrlich. Have students write a poem that captures their thoughts on the Memorial, the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II, or their own triumphs over adversity.



Intergenerational Issues

The film, "Site to Patriotism," features intergenerational dialog between people. Remind students that the purpose of the Memorial is two-fold: "to preserve for posterity the story of a brave and loyal people. And, to tell this nation that what happened during World War II to these people must never again happen to any other people because of their race, creed, or national origin." Have students discuss how effectively the film addresses this purpose.

Activity: Have students interview a relative or someone else who lived during World War II, the Korean War, or Vietnam War. Students should develop interview questions that elicit information (from interviewees) that helps to preserve the interviewees' experiences for generations to come. Summaries of the interviews can be compiled in a journal format.

The Question of Loyalty

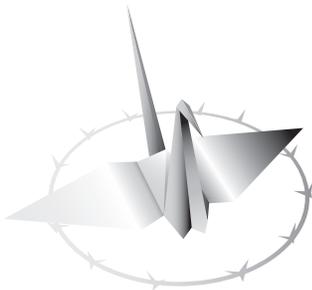
In February 1943, after the internment of Japanese Americans from the West Coast had been completed, the War Department and the War Relocation Authority required all of those interned, 17 years of age and older, to answer a questionnaire, which presumably tested their "loyalty" to the United States. Two questions proved to be particularly troubling.

- Question #27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?
- Question #28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

Activity: Point out that "yes-yes" answers to the questions made *nisei* of draft age eligible for service in the U.S. Army. As a class, have students debate whether the government had the right to ask Japanese Americans in camps to serve in the military. Also, discuss the specific wording of both questions. Would students have volunteered to fight for the U.S. Army had they been in the camps? How would they have answered these questions?

Camps

Information about each of the ten permanent camps is an important part of the Memorial. This information can also be found on the NJAMF web site. There were many other camps as well, e.g., assembly centers, Department of Justice internment camps, citizen isolation camps. Information about these can be found on the web sites listed on page three or on the "resource links" page of the NJAMF web site.



Activity: Divide the class into partner pairs. Have each pair of students research one of the assembly centers, Department of Justice internment camps, or citizen isolation camps. Have each pair develop a summary for placement on a "memorial" wall in your classroom.

Memorials and Controversy

As mentioned on page two, the construction of memorials can sometimes lead to controversy. One group, Japanese American Voice, has a web site (<<http://JAVoice.com>>) that focuses on a controversy surrounding the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism. The web site notes:

This web site honors those who served heroically in the United States armed forces as well as those who courageously endured the hardships of the camps, and those in our community who, in good faith and without personal gain, urged cooperation with Executive Order 9066. However, we also honor those who were without support during the camp years—the resisters, the objectors, the “no-no’s,” the strikers, and those who fought against the camps in the courts. They are all a part of our history, our community, and our legacy. Our history is more than the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the Military Intelligence Service, and the camps. The best evidence of our patriotism has been the cumulative struggle of thousands of women and men to make a life in the United States despite the challenges and difficulties presented to us, and our contributions to the growth and prosperity of all the people of this country.

Activity: Have students research “the resisters, the objectors, the ‘no-no’s,’ the strikers, and those who fought against the camps in the courts.” Some important names for students to research are Frank Emi, Mitsuye Endo, Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu, James Omura, and Min Yasui. Encourage students to carefully consider the various perspectives surrounding the controversy, summarize the controversy, and debate the key issues. An interesting debate might focus on whether or not a quote(s) from one of the people mentioned above should have been included on the Memorial.

Closing Activity

Have students design a memorial that captures the history of their ethnicity or heritage. They should also decide where they would build it and why, and consider if controversies could arise from such a memorial. Lastly, how would they raise the money to build it?

