

STORY  
PRESERVATION  
INITIATIVE™  

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LEARNING LAB

**INTERMENT: CULTURE, FREEDOM, AND GOVERNMENT**  
**With the story of Max Ebel: German-American Internment**  
**Grade Level: High School**  
**History, English Language Arts, English Literacy**

**Lesson developed for Story Preservation Initiative by:**

Brian Nicol as part of Story Preservation Initiative Course, New England College Summer Institute

**Name of Project:**

Internment: Culture, Freedom, and Government

**SPI Audio Engagement:**

Humanities / American History / Max Ebel

**Grade Level:**

11,12

High School

**Subject / Course:**

History

English Language Arts

English Literacy

**Essential Questions**

1. How does culture/society respond to conflict?
2. Is the restriction of freedom ever justified?

## **Introduction**

Students will listen to the audio and read the transcript, German-American Internment: The Max Ebel Story, in order to understand the experience of someone who dealt with the controversial internment program within the United States during World War II. Students will be asked to examine the story in the context of the two essential questions listed above as well as provide further research into the questions. Upon completion of research, students will write a three page reflection that touches on their reaction to the story, their furthered research relative to the essential questions, framed within the context of the story, and, based on their research, their thoughts re: the two essential questions. In addition, students will be asked to make a five-minute presentation focusing on their reflections as well as any further thoughts they may have on the lesson in general.

## **Desired Results: Standards Met, Understandings, Knowledge and/or Skills**

### Standards

- SS: HI: 12: 3: 1: Evaluate how individuals have developed ideas that have profoundly affected American life, e.g., transcendentalism or relativism. (Themes: E: Cultural Development, Interaction, and change, H: Individualism, Equality and Authority, J: Human Expression and Communication)
- SS: WH: 12: 2.2: Evaluate how military encounters have often led to cultural exchanges
- CCSS. ELA – Reading Literacy. SL. 11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
- CCSS. ELA – Writing Literacy. H/SS. 11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

### **Students will understand:**

1. Students will understand the development of government rights versus individual rights.
2. Students will understand the factors and the ‘why’ the internment program was installed.
3. Students will understand how the ideas behind Roosevelt’s decision to enact the Enemy Alien Act.
4. Students will understand the different responses to the internment program by politicians, media and the natural United States citizens.
5. Students will understand how to contextualize with modern day examples of government overreach and populace opposition.

6. Students will understand the modern day opinions of the internment camps and how history has generally remembered them.

**Students will be able to:**

1. Students will know the details of Pearl Harbor.
2. Students will know the details of the Enemy Alien Act.
3. Students will know the details of the three Presidential Proclamations.
4. Students will know the specifics of the internment camps.
5. Students will know the number of German, Italian and Japanese citizens that were interned.
6. Students will know the types of people (POWs, refugees, citizens) that were interned in the camps.

**Introduction or Hook to the Project**

At the beginning of the lesson, the students will listen to one or two audio clips from Max Ebel's story. They will then write a letter to Max. In this letter the students can comment on Max's resiliency, his perseverance through such a difficult time as well as asking him questions about his internment and how he was able to cope with his situation. This will ignite the students' interest in hearing the full Max Ebel story as well as prepare them to think about the two essential questions.

**Assessment Evidence**

**Formative**

Students will be given time in class to write down three things based on their reading, class discussion or research conducted thus far. Those three things will demonstrate / address: Information on which they have a solid grasp; areas of uncertainty / lack of clarity and define focus relative to additional research. This will allow the teacher to understand and / or advise re: further research.

**Summative**

At the end of the lesson period, students will write a three-page reflection, highlighting the story, addressing the essential questions, and their research in the context of both the story and the essential questions. In this presentation, students will be expected to react to the story, share some sources of research, and, ultimately, share with the class as a whole their final ideas and conclusion.

### **Learning Activities**

- Students will have the opportunity to take part in open discussion so that they can share their ideas and get feedback.
- Students will learn to research both primary and secondary sources that will aid in their understanding of the story and the essential questions as well as develop original thoughts and opinions on the subject matter.
- Students will write brief notes that will help them improve note-taking skills, maintain organization as well as help them keep a work record.

### **Resources**

- <https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/enemy-aliens-overview.html>

### **Suggested Reading:**

When the Emperor Was Divine by Julie Otsuka, published by Anchor Books, New York, 2003.