

TITLE Civil Rights of Japanese-American Internees

GRADES 9–12

SUBJECT AREAS

- History
- English

OVERVIEW

The Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution guarantees Americans many freedoms: freedom of speech, religion and the press and freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. In addition, in decisions spanning more than a century, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Constitution's guarantees apply to every person within U.S. borders, including "aliens whose presence in this country is unlawful." In other words, even undocumented immigrants have the right to freedom of speech and religion, the right to be treated fairly, the right to privacy and the other fundamental rights U.S. citizens enjoy. Were any of these rights violated when Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps? In this lesson, students answer this question and analyze basic civic and human rights.

MATERIALS

- The film **Rabbit in the Moon**
- Article "Colorado Set to Pass School Bullying Law"
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/US/DailyNews/bullying010319.html>
- Copies of "Camp Harmony News-Letters"
<http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Newsletter/default.htm>
- Copies of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union briefing paper "Rights of Immigrants"
<http://www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/billrights/billrights.html>
- The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<http://www.udhr.org/UDHR/default.htm>
- ACLU briefing paper "The Rights of Immigrants"
<http://www.aclu.org/library/pbp20.html>

MEDIA COMPONENTS

<http://infoplease.lycos.com/spot/humanrights1.html>

Includes links to the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a definition of "human rights" and more

<http://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrant/hmir.html>

ACLU's immigrants' rights home page

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand and be able to analyze basic civil rights.
- Students will be able to examine and discuss current issues in civil rights.
- Students will be able to analyze text from original internment-camp newsletters.
- Students will be able to locate and present to their class ways in which the rights of Japanese Americans were violated during WWII.
- Students will be able to create a generic master list of rights violations.

TIME Two class periods (60 minutes each)

PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS

If computers are not readily available in your classroom, you may want to download from the Web pages listed above copies of the Camp Harmony Newsletters, the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ACLU's "Rights of Immigrants." During the postviewing activity, your class will be working in groups of three or four. You may want to divide up these materials so that each group has a fairly equal amount of information to work with.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Read:

"Colorado Set to Pass School Bullying Law"

Discuss:

- Why is the state of Colorado requiring all school districts to create anti-bullying policies?
- According to the Newport-Mesa school district in California, a student who makes a derogatory comment to another student could potentially be suspended from school. Do you consider this a violation of freedom of speech?
- Do you think bullying behavior and derogatory comments can lead to violence in schools?
- Which right do you consider more important: freedom of speech or freedom from potential violence? Why?
- Should a person's freedom of speech be limited if the government views this speech as a threat to the safety of others?
- Why do you think Japanese Americans' freedom of speech was limited during World War II?

FOCUS FOR VIEWING

Tell the students that while they're watching the video, they should think about ways in which the freedoms of Japanese Americans were taken away when they were forced into internment camps.

POSTVIEWING ACTIVITY

1. Divide students into groups of three or four.
2. Assign each group a section of The Bill of Rights, the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ACLU's "Rights of Immigrants."
3. Have each group read and discuss its assigned information to get a basic understanding of the rights it guarantees. Each group should then take a few minutes to present a summary of these rights to the class.

4. As each group is presenting its summary, have a student record a brief description of each right on the board, overhead projector or sheets of paper taped to the walls of the classroom. Once all of the groups have reported, the class should have a master list of basic human rights from which to work.

5. Next, assign each group a different copy of "The Camp Harmony News-Letter." Have each group read the newsletter to find specific instances in which the civil rights of Japanese Americans were violated. As the groups are reading, they may refer to the master list posted in the classroom.

6. Have each group make a short presentation to the class detailing rights violations they discovered by reading "The Camp Harmony News-Letter." During the presentations, the class may make a master list of rights denied to Japanese-American internees.

FOLLOW-UP/WRAP-UP WRITING ACTIVITY

Choose one of the rights you learned about during this exercise. Can you think of a situation in which the U.S. government would be justified in denying a person that right? Describe such a situation. Do you feel that the U.S. government was justified in any of its actions toward Japanese Americans during World War II?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

History: Have groups of students research the debate behind the creation of the Bill of Rights. Students can then re-create the historic debate in class.

Culture: Rabbit in the Moon theorizes that Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps so they could be used in future exchanges for American prisoners of war. Research Japanese military culture and how it differs from American military culture.

Economics: Have students discuss economic rights. Students can then use an example from the video to figure out the dollar value of actual losses of Japanese Americans whose land, homes and businesses had to be sold. Further, in order to figure out amounts for reparations, students must take inflation into account and even the profits that would have been made had the businesses not been sold.

Current Events: After discussing the reparations received by Japanese Americans, students can extend this discussion to a topic that is currently in the news: reparations for African Americans. Students can debate the idea of reparations for African Americans.

STANDARDS

Language Arts: Grades 9 and 10

COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS OF GRADE-LEVEL-APPROPRIATE TEXT

- Students paraphrase ideas from several sources and connect them to related topics to demonstrate comprehension.
- Students extend ideas presented in primary or secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation and elaboration.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

- Students formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.
- Students convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.
- Students make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts and ideas.

Language Arts: Grades 11 and 12

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

- Students analyze the techniques used in media messages for a particular audience and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Students deliver oral reports on historical investigations.

History Grades: 9 through 12

HISTORICAL RESEARCH, EVIDENCE, AND POINT OF VIEW

- Students collect, evaluate and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in written presentations.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

- Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
- Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

U.S. History: Grade 11

- Students discuss the constitutional issues and impact of events on the U.S. home front, including the internment of Japanese Americans.

Principles of American Democracy: Grade 12

- Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy in the U.S. Constitution.
- Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens.
- Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are.