

Lesson Title: "Studying Japanese Internment with Primary Documents"

Lesson Design by: Arlene Anderson, West Nodaway R-I, Burlington Jct., MO, American Literature (11th grade)

2006

**Traditional American History Program**  
Funded by U.S. Department of Education  
Mike Lair, Project Director  
<http://www.chillihistoryproject.com/>

Lesson Overview: Lecture on WWII background and perusal of primary source photographs of Japanese internment will give students historical context. Students will then analyze Executive Order 9066 for the main idea and write a summary of that main idea.

Essential Questions: Why did FDR enact Executive Order 9066? What is the main idea of the order? Although 9066 does not seem to pinpoint any particular person(s), considering the historical context, for whom do you think it is primarily intended?

Objectives: After completing this lesson the student will be able to:

- Evaluate multiple primary sources
- Clarify meaning in multiple sources
- Access prior knowledge to aid comprehension
- Apply post-reading skills to draw conclusions
- Summarize the main idea of Executive Order 9066

Assessment:

- Check of lecture notes for organization and completeness
- Check of comprehension worksheet for the following key points:
  - (1) Why was the order written? (because to be successful in the war it is necessary to protect against espionage and sabotage)
  - (2) Who does this order target? ("any or all persons" the Secretary of War designates)
  - (3) Where are "they" sent? ("military areas in such places and of such extent as [the Secretary of War] may determine.")
  - (4) What will be provided for "them"? ("transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary.")
  - (5) How will this order be enforced? ( the President will "authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable [ . . . ] including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.")
- Classroom discussion of essential questions
- Check of group summaries of 9066 for main idea

Materials: Copies for each student and/or power point overhead of Executive Order 9066, copies and/or power point overhead of Japanese Internment photographs. Both available at [www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/odex9066.html](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/odex9066.html). Copies for each student of comprehension questions worksheet.

Class Time: Two 45 minute class periods.

Teacher Input: Lecture on precipitating historical events which led up to Order 9066. Students should have previous knowledge of and practice at summarizing.

Activities:

*Day one:*

1. As students enter the room, affix sticky notes to a particular subset of students (blondes, wearers of glasses, etc.). Do not explain. After all students are seated, tell the selected students that they must sit at the back of the room on the floor. When they ask "why," explain to them that the some members of their "type" have been vandalizing schools in Iowa; therefore, the public and administration is suspicious of all of their "type," so they are to be segregated and watched closely until the vandalism problem is over.
2. A class discussion will certainly follow. Continue playing the scene out until the point is made. Then introduce the idea of Japanese internment in WWII. Explain that exactly this type of behavior was practiced in America during that time.
3. Teacher will lecture to fill in relevant historical background. (Basic points of WWII through the bombing of Pearl Harbor)
4. Put up on power point Japanese internment photos (and/or hand out copies). Go through slowly, allowing comments and discussion.
5. Closure: Ask students who were segregated, "How did you feel? Did you think you were unfairly targeted for segregation?" Ask other students, "What if your car had been vandalized? Would you think it was fair to detain and watch these people?"

*Day Two:*

1. Introduce day two with prompt: "Who can remind us what we talked about yesterday?" Have students give input and list on board as they do.
2. Group students for collaborative learning activity.
3. Put up on overhead and hand out copies of Executive Order 9066.
4. Have students read the document together in groups to decipher the "legalese" and discuss and answer the comprehension questions on worksheet.
5. Lead group discussion to "check" answers to comprehension questions. Students may revise their answers as needed.

5. After answering comprehension questions, groups should work together to write a summary of the main idea of the document.
6. Have one member of each group read his/her group's summary aloud. Come to a consensus on key points a good summary should include.

Questions for review: Teacher should lead a class discussion reviewing and clarifying the answers to the essential questions.

1. Why did FDR enact Executive Order 9066? (*Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor and many Americans were suspicious of all persons of Japanese descent—American citizens or not.*)
2. What is the main idea of 9066? (*In order to protect against espionage and sabotage, the government may round up and detain anyone they have any suspicions of in military areas of the government's choice for as long as the government deems it necessary. The government will provide the necessities of life for those people. Any "appropriate" steps may be used by Federal authorities to enforce compliance with this order.*)
3. Although 9066 does not seem to pinpoint any particular person(s), considering the historical context, who do you think it is primarily intended for? (*Persons of Japanese descent*)

Closure: "Ticket Out"—Have each student write down his/her opinion of the actions of the government concerning Japanese Internment. The student must include "why" he/she feels that way.

Extension: Each student could write a journal entry on a time when he/she experienced or watched another person experience prejudicial treatment. **\*\*OR\*\*** Students could write an essay comparing the feelings of Americans toward Japanese Americans during WWII after the bombing of Pearl Harbor with the feelings of Americans toward Muslim/Iranian Americans after the attacks on 9/11.

References:

"Our Documents: Executive Order 9066," Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 19, 1942, "Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum." [<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/odex9066.html>]. 19 June 2006.