

The Bainbridge Island Internment Experience Lesson Plan

Students examine the Internment Experience through filmed oral history interviews, first-hand accounts.

This may be used as a Dig Deep Classroom-Based Assessment for elementary school students.

OVERVIEW

In this five day (8-13 hour) exercise students will explore the HISTORY section of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) website to view both primary sources (photographs and clips from oral history interviews) and secondary sources (text and short films) that describe the experiences of the Japanese Americans living on Bainbridge Island during World War Two. Ideally each student or pair of students will have access to his or her own computer with Internet access so they can explore the BIJAC website on their own.

After a teacher-guided lesson in the background of internment, students will be broken down into small groups. Each group will explore a specific topic on the internment experience. By viewing several first hand accounts on their topic each group will gain an understanding for the personal experiences of those who lived through the actual events. They will then design a short skit to perform before the class that recreates events from their topic and/or illustrates the perspectives of those who lived through exclusion and internment.

In a culminating exercise students will write a short paper with conclusions about one or more questions on the internment experience. They will use their notes from watching the skits, class discussions, and their own research to complete their paper.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did Executive Order 9066 affect the lives of those who were exiled from their homes and forced to live in internment camps?
- How was the experience of exclusion and internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two different for the *Issei* (first-generation) and *Nisei* (second-generation)?
- How is community support and cooperation important during a time of crisis, such as the exclusion and internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two?

- How did life in internment camp affect or change the family dynamic?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bainbridge Island is located in Puget Sound in western Washington. To the south, it is a short 35-minute ferry ride to downtown Seattle, and to the north it is connected by bridge to the Kitsap Peninsula. During World War Two the only access to Bainbridge Island was by ferry.

In 1941 there were approximately 276 people of Japanese descent living on Bainbridge Island. Most were strawberry farmers. A few others owned small businesses. At that time Bainbridge was a small rural community with a diverse population.

During the war the Navy regarded Bainbridge Island as a highly sensitive area. Fort Ward, a strategic military listening post monitoring communication in the Pacific, was located on Bainbridge Island. To the west were the Bremerton Naval Shipyard and the Naval Torpedo Station at Keyport. To the east were the Boeing Aircraft Company, Seattle shipyard, and Sand Point Naval Air Station. Bainbridge Island was selected as the first community to be evacuated and detained, most likely because of its close proximity to several military installations. Many also speculate that Bainbridge Island was chosen as the first “test” case because it is an isolated community surrounded by water. Terminal Island in California was evacuated weeks before Bainbridge Island but those Japanese residents were not sent to a relocation center. They were evicted from their homes and forced to live as refugees in the greater Los Angeles area.

In January 1942 the FBI began to raid the homes of the Japanese families living on Bainbridge Island. They were searching for and seizing war contraband. On February 4, 1942 the FBI arrested, questioned, and confined several Japanese *Issei* who born in Japan. President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, allowing for the creation of areas from which "any and all persons may be excluded." On March 24, Civil Exclusion Order No. 1 was issued, designating Bainbridge Island as the first area from which American citizens and their alien parents would be forced to leave. Islanders were allowed six days to prepare. On March 30 they were evacuated to the then called Manzanar Assembly Center (later became a Relocation Center.) In February 1943 most of the Bainbridge Island families were moved to the Minidoka Relocation Center where many of their friends and family from the Seattle area were already detained. After the war more than half of the original Bainbridge Island families were able to return to their homes and re-build their businesses. All were grateful to Walt and Milly Woodward, owners of the Bainbridge Review newspaper. Through editorials, their open forum letters to the editor, and by posting news from the camps, the Woodwards helped make sure their Japanese American neighbors were not forgotten while they were away and were welcomed back home. Today a memorial in honor of the Japanese Americans excluded from living on Bainbridge Island during World War Two and the community that stood behind them, is being built at the sight of their departure, the Eagledale Ferry Landing.

KEY WORDS

Nikkei: (“nee-kay”) A person of Japanese ancestry.

Issei: (ee-say”) the generation of people who were born in Japan and immigrated to the United States primarily between 1885-1924. Direct translation is "first generation."

Nisei: (“nee-say”) the first generation of people of Japanese ancestry who were born in the United States. Direct translation is "second generation."

Internment: The true definition of internee is a civilian enemy alien who is imprisoned in a time of war. During World War Two the U.S. Justice Department arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned hundreds of *Issei* (first-generation) men who were born in Japan and were living in the U.S.. Many of these men were held in internment camps, or Department of Justice Camps. Today, many refer to the “Relocation Centers” where thousands of Japanese Nationals and Japanese Americans were held during the war as “Internment Camps.” It is important to note the difference between the two uses of “Internment.”

For other key terms refer to the [glossary](#) on the BIJAC website.

ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC LEARNING REQUIREMENTS (EALRs) and GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS (GLEs)

This lesson meets the following Washington State EALRs for Fourth Grade Social Studies: 4.1.1, 4.3.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.4.1, 5.4.2. For a full description of the OSPI EALRs and GLEs go to the [Online Grade Level Standards and Resources](#).

LESSON

Part 1 (1-3 hours): Background Information and How to Use the BIJAC Website

- Show the [map of Bainbridge](#) Island to orient students with its size and location as well as the locations of key military installations and other areas of interest in World War II
- Hand out the blank [timeline](#), [graphic organizer](#), and [bibliography](#) for students to take notes on throughout the lesson. You can assign an essential question(s) or allow the students to choose from the list above. Be sure to demonstrate how to fill each out.
- Review the background information given above. Ideally, through the use of a smart board or similar technology, you can demonstrate how to explore the BIJAC website to the entire class and at the same time give an overview of the Bainbridge Island internment experience.

- Start with the section: **HISTORY: BI Before WWII**. Read the text, view the slideshows (be sure to read the captions), and watch one or several of the oral history film clips. Be sure to note the transcript to the right of each film clip window and the information about the narrator (person who was interviewed) that is below each film clip window. You can also use the oral history film clips from the page **Pre-WWII – Lives of Bainbridge Island Nikkei Before the War** to demonstrate how to create a skit for the exercise below.
- Briefly go through the rest of the sections in the HISTORY section of the website. To cover the internment experience read the text at the beginning of each topic. Show the students how to find the slideshows and oral history film clips that they will explore on their own.

Part II (5-7 hours): Inquiry – Perform a Skit Illustrating a Specific Internment Topic

- Divide the class into 5-10 groups.
- Assign each group an Internment Topic and give them the appropriate student **skit instruction** sheet. Priority should be given to the topics 3-7: Pearl Harbor, FBI Instructions and Roundups, Exclusion Order and Preparing to Leave, Evacuation, Manzanar and Minidoka.
- Go over the skit assignment. Assign a deadline for the skit performance. Characters in the skits can be fictional and based roughly on the people they see in the film clips or they can choose to play the actual people they learn about in the film clips.
- Allow groups time to explore their topic on the BIJAC website, ideally through time in a computer lab or in the classroom with at least one computer per group.
- Remind students to take notes on any significant incidents that they learn about by watching the oral history film clips. They should try to imagine what it was like for the narrator (person interviewed in the film clip) as they lived through these events.
- Provide time for the groups to design and practice their skits. You can guide them on how elaborate each skit is. How much written dialog and stage directions are required? And, are backdrops, props, and costumes required?
- After each skit is performed have a class discussion on what was learned and important events that were re-created. Be sure to highlight any areas that apply to your essential question(s). Remind students to continue to take notes on their graphic organizers.

Part III (2-3 hours): Final Assessment: Write a Short Essay/Paper

- Using their graphic organizers students are to write a short paper answering one or more questions on the internment experience.
- Hand out another blank **graphic organizer** for students to place their final ideas on.

- Give each student a copy of the **CBA Scoring Rubric** and go over the scoring guidelines.
- Remind students how to include quotes in their paper as evidence of a primary source. They can cut and paste from the transcripts provided on the website.
- Remind students to include a timeline or a description of a timeline of the events in the internment experience in their paper.
- Remind students to include a final copy of their bibliography with citations for any website pages and oral history interviews they used as a source in their paper. You may need to hand out another blank copy of the **bibliography** for their final paper.