Objective:
Students will learn about the personal experiences of Japanese American incarcerees during World War II and will practice communicating information concisely by developing an original comic.

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Description:

According to the School Library Journal’s article Teaching with Graphic Novels, the advantages* of teaching with comics and graphic novels as supplemental texts includes:

- supporting low readers and promoting memory through pairing of image and text
- modeling concise verbiage for skilled readers
- reinforcing left-to-right sequence
- communicating ideas efficiently

Martin Luther King, Jr. contributed to a comic book titled The Montgomery Story, a copy of which can be found in the museum’s archive (a related teacher guide can be found here http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_MLK.pdf). That work inspired Congressman John Lewis to tell his own story of the civil rights movement through comics in the New York Times bestseller March. Some famous examples of graphic novels on civil-rights topics are Maus, Art Spiegelman’s series about his family’s experiences during the Holocaust, and Persepolis, Marjane Satrapi’s autobiographical series about her childhood in Iran.

In addition, graphics and illustrations have a long tradition in Japanese art, including scroll paintings, anime, and manga (literally “random sketches” or doodles, but now used to refer to comic books or illustrated entertainment). See this video [http://pulverer.si.edu/node/184] from the Smithsonian’s museums of Asian art on the evolution of Japanese graphic art. Comics were also a method for Japanese American incarcerees in World War II to express their experiences. Most famous among these artists was Miné Okubo, who was incarcerated in the Topaz War Relocation Center in Utah during World War II. Okubo’s drawings take the reader through her time at the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno, California, and eventually the Topaz camp. Her artwork inspired her book Citizen 13660, which was published in 1946.
TEACHING JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION THROUGH COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS


Teen participants in the National Museum of American History’s Youth Civic Engagement Program collaborated with Evan Keeling, an artist and exhibits fabricator from the Smithsonian Exhibits, and teens at the Hirshhorn Museum’s ARTLAB+, to create this series of original comics on the Japanese American experience during World War II. The comics represent oral histories from survivors of Japanese American incarceration camps.

Use these comics to introduce this period in history to students or to prepare students to view and participate in the National Youth Summit on Japanese American Incarceration [http://americanhistory.si.edu/nys/national-youth-summit-japanese-american-incarceration-world-war-ii]. As an assessment for this or other topics, use the comic template included here to allow students to create their own comics based on their studies, including examining primary sources such as oral histories. Find oral histories and other primary sources on Japanese American incarceration at the Densho Digital Archive.

*The vivid imagery in comics and graphic novels may cause concern among some parents, so graphic novels should be carefully chosen and discussed with parents and administrators.*
Resources


Yuri Kochiyama: http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Yuri_Kochiyama/
http://www.democracynow.org/2006/2/21/civil_rights_activist_yuri_kochiyama_remembers

Fred Korematsu: http://www.korematuinsititute.org/fred-t-korematsu-1/

Chizu Iiyama: http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/ciiyama/index.html


Paul Ohtaki: http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/pohtaki/index.html
Dad! They took away my baseball bat!

"I've only seen my dad cry three times... The second time was when we were leaving San Jose, not knowing if we would ever see it again."

-Norm Mineta

Dust storms and -30 degree temperatures plagued The Heart Mountain War Relocation Center.

Some scouts from the town of Cody are going to join our scout meeting.

Are there any Scouts out there?

Alan K. Simpson

Yes, these are American citizens. I thought they were spies.

Norm, why don't you work with Alan?

Alan K. Simpson

Come on boys, time to go...

They remained friends and both went into politics. While Norm was a Congressman and Alan was a Senator, they sponsored H.R. 442, which became the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

On September 21, 2001, Mineta sent a letter to all U.S. airlines forbidding them from practicing racial profiling, or subjecting Middle Eastern or Muslim passengers to a heightened degree of pre-flight scrutiny. He stated that it was illegal for the airlines to discriminate against passengers based on their race, color, national or ethnic origin or religion.

I hope we see each other again soon.

This law included an apology and provided reparations to thousands of surviving Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II.

Norm was appointed United States Secretary of Transportation by President George W. Bush in 2001.

Smithsonian Institution

http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program

Norm Mineta — would you ever see it again? Say goodbye, not knowing if we will ever see you again."

NORM MINETA
In 1980, a presidential commission found the incarceration of Japanese American unconstitutional. This allowed for Fred’s case to be re-opened.

On November 10, 1983, Judge Marilyn Hall Patel overturned Fred’s conviction in California.

Fred started lobbying the U.S. government for a bill that would grant a formal apology and compensation for the surviving Japanese Americans who were incarcerated.

His work is carried on by his daughter Karen Korematsu, founder and executive director of the Fred T. Korematsu Institute.

His goal was realized in 1988 when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act. In 1998 Fred was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He passed away in 2005.

As long as my record stands in federal court, any American citizen can be held in prison or concentration camps without a trial or a hearing. I would like to see the government admit they were wrong and do something about it, so this will never happen again to any American...

This however did not overturn his conviction in the U.S. Supreme Court.

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On May 30, 1942, Fred was arrested in San Leandro, California...
Can I help you?

I keep begging for them to send him to a hospital. He needs care!

Mom, come home! The FBI just took Pop! They are holding your father because he is a fisherman and might be helping the Japanese.

What's going on?

Is there a Seichi Nakahara living here? We are from the FBI. Seichi was released to a hospital where he was surrounded by servicemen wounded at the Battle of Wake Island.

I'm sorry, but Mr. Nakahara has died.

THE NEXT DAY
Now they are putting us all in prison!

Yuri's experiences led her to become a lifelong civil rights activist. She fought for Asian American rights, Puerto Rican independence, African American rights and the release of political prisoners...

April 2, 1942

While incarcerated Yuri organized welcoming parties for new arrivals and a group called the Crusaders that wrote letters to Nisei* soldiers. The Jerome Camp newspaper shared samples of the letters with Yuri's column, Nisei in Khaki.

And famously cradled Malcolm X's head after he was shot on February 21, 1965.

Smithsonian Institution

*Term for 2nd generation Japanese Americans

http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program
I never looked back
Land of the free?
I don't think so.
A sugar farm recruited some of us, and...
Everything was fine when we were young...
I fell ill before the bombs dropped

Land of the Free
The Story of Paul Ohtaki

Smithsonian Institution

http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program

*A negative racial epithet.*
My name is Masaru Kawaguchi.

Every day after school, my friends and I would go to the basketball court.

But one day, I noticed a sign. It looked more like a prison.

I heard from the others that we were being taken to a camp.

In 1941, I saw the poster. What's going on?

"Pack your things. We have to leave tomorrow morning."

"Why? We're not sure. It has to do with the war."

Why? We're not sure.

But then every day when I've finished my work...

"The court we made ourselves."

"I would play basketball with the other children on the basketball court."

"The story of Masaru Kawaguchi."

*A negative racial epithet.*
A negative racial epithet.

Smithsonian Institution

*y A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.*
On December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, killing 2403 U.S. service personnel.

On October 26, 2001, President George W. Bush signed into law the Patriot Act, which greatly expanded the government’s ability to monitor the daily activity of ordinary individuals. "... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. American citizenship does not necessarily determine loyalty. It’s easy to dismiss this as an isolated mistake in history... but the echoes of the past still haunt us.

Together we need to protect civil liberties for everyone.

If you have the feeling that something is wrong, don’t be afraid to speak up.
-Fred T. Korematsu

What are examples of people acting out of fear that you see today?

What should we do to make a difference?

On September 11, 2001, the terrorist group Al-Qaeda coordinated attacks on the U.S., killing 2977 people.

On April 13, 1943, I fear that Muslims in this country are tied to terrorism. It’s easy to dismiss this as an isolated mistake in history… but the echoes of the past still haunt us.

- Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order 9066, which ultimately laid the groundwork for the imprisonment of approximately 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry.

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NOW

NOW

DRAW!

GOT A ZINE!

NOW YOU'RE

WELCOME.

How to make this zine

1. Get some paper 8.5 x 11
2. Hamburger it
3. Hold it up
4. Butterfly it

You're welcome.

Instagram: @bellicosebeauty
Tumblr: bellicosebeauty
Twitter: @bellicosebeau

Created at the Hirshhorn's ArtLab+ Program. For more information, please visit: http://artlabplus.sle.edu/