“No More Manzanars”
Protest Sign, 2017

Student Guide

“What tools are available to shift, expand, or reimagine the story of democracy in the United States?”
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Dear learner,

Thank you for joining the *Democracy: A National Youth Summit Civic Education Series!* This case study is the third in a special series that will ask you to tackle the question: **How do the stories we tell about the past shape our democracy?** In these case studies we will probe examples of civic engagement that go beyond voting, where civic life means active involvement in building and strengthening our communities and civic participation can take on many forms.

This series invites you to examine history as a tool for understanding our present and for shaping our shared future. Each case study will highlight groups and individuals who have worked to create a stronger nation and democracy by widening our country’s historical narrative. Through inquiry and discussion, you will think critically about how history shapes who we are as a people and how we imagine and move toward a democracy that is inclusive and just for everyone.

The third case study focuses on the civil liberties legacy of Japanese American incarceration during World War II. Using the guiding question, “What tools are available to shift, expand, or reimagine the story of democracy in the United States?” we will explore the strategies Japanese Americans employed to tell their stories and seek justice. Join us in learning how sharing the darkest stories of our past can help us build a stronger, more just democracy.

From November 2022 through April 2023, teenagers in classrooms and in museums nationwide will participate in discussions about the same questions. You are invited to share your findings and reflections using the National Youth Summit Padlet. And if you missed the previous case studies on organized American Indian activism in the 1970s and the AIDS Memorial Quilt of the 1980s, you can find the student guides and archived webinars on the National Youth Summit webpage.

The stories of the United States are complex, diverse, and vast. Join us in the important task of evaluating the different perspectives of our past and imagining the possibilities of a more inclusive future!

— The National Youth Summit team

*Democracy: A National Youth Summit Civic Education Series* is made possible by the A. James and Alice B. Clark Foundation and the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation K–12 Learning Endowment.
SECTION 1: PREPARING FOR THE NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT

Rules for Participation

The National Youth Summit brings together students from across the nation to discuss challenging issues in U.S. history that still resonate today. We invite you to join us and be challenged and inspired by the past, as well as to share, debate, learn, and make sense of the contemporary world. All of this will help us move towards a more just future together. Your conversations and dialogues will touch on complex and sensitive topics related to values, identity, and power relationships. To foster conversations that welcome all perspectives, we recommend creating a set of shared norms that will help guide the discussion. What actions and attitudes will help you have a productive dialogue? Some suggested norms include:

- Be respectful and open to new ideas.
- Share the floor.
- Stay on topic.
- Everyone participates.
- Seek first to understand, then to speak.

We also suggest taking time to brainstorm what each norm would look like in practice. What does being respectful to new ideas look like? How will we make sure we stay on topic? Think together as a class and add these practices to your norms. And don't forget to reference the glossary of terms on page 20, which includes a special note on the terminology used in this case study.

Moment of Reflection

Moment of reflection is based on Harvard University’s Project Zero thinking routine Imagine If. Students are encouraged to reflect independently and this information does not have to be shared.

This case study asks you to consider the question: **What tools are available to shift, expand, or reimagine the story of democracy in the United States?** The case study provides a lens for tackling this question but, before you dive in, take a moment to privately reflect on the possibilities of our democratic system using the following prompts:

- In what ways could we tell the stories of our democracy more effectively?
- In what ways could we tell the stories of our democracy more ethically?
- In what ways could we tell the stories of our democracy more beautifully?
SECTION 2: CASE STUDY

Civilian exclusion order number 5. This notice was posted at First and Front streets in San Francisco. It announced the first removal of people of Japanese ancestry. Photo attributed to Dorothea Lange, 1942, courtesy of Library of Congress

Located in California, Manzanar was one of 10 incarceration camps. It housed over 10,000 incarcerees at its peak. Entrance to Manzanar, Manzanar Relocation Center, photograph by Ansel Adams, 1943, courtesy of Library of Congress

History Exploration

“No More Manzanars” Protest Sign, 2017

What tools are available to shift, expand, or reimagine the story of democracy in the United States?

Introduction

During World War II the U.S. government forced over 120,000 Japanese Americans from their homes on the Pacific Coast. These individuals, two-thirds of them U.S. citizens, were sent to 10 camps built throughout the western interior of the United States. Many would spend the next three years living under armed guard, behind barbed wire. Over 40 years later, members of the Japanese community successfully led the nation to confront the wrong it had done and to make amends.

Historical Context

The United States entered World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The attack stunned the nation, creating an atmosphere of fear, anger, and distrust, especially towards communities of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. In February 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the removal of civilians from military areas. Some government officials raised doubts about the

Key Terms

Executive Order

Definitions of key terms are in the glossary at the end of the guide.
constitutionality of the order. Still, in March the U.S. Army began carrying out the **forced removal** and detention of Japanese American residents. Often given only 48-hours’ notice, people had to sell, give away, or leave behind homes, businesses, and other personal items. Those who resisted the government orders were seen as disloyal and faced arrest, imprisonment, and fines in addition to detention in an **incarceration** camp.

Over 120,000 men, women, and children were forced into temporary detention centers before being moved to an incarceration camp. The camps were geographically isolated and guarded with wire fences, armed guards, and surveillance towers. Incarcerees had very little privacy; they were forced to use communal bathrooms and eat their meals in mess halls. To make their incarceration more bearable, people confined within the camps worked together to re-create elements of their normal lives—they went to school, attended religious services, played sports, ran newspapers, and participated in other recreational activities. But they were never able to escape the fear and indignity of life in the camps.

In December 1944, the U.S. government issued Proclamation No. 21, allowing Japanese American incarcerees to leave the camps. However, housing shortages, scarce jobs, and lingering discrimination made resettlement difficult for many. Early efforts at **redress** like the 1948 Evacuation Claims Act provided some compensation to incarcerees for lost property but admitted no wrongdoing by the government and required burdensome documentation.

People of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast were forced to leave their homes under the U.S. Army war emergency order.

Photo at the Santa Anita reception center, Los Angeles, California, by Russell Lee, 1942, courtesy of Library of Congress

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**Key Terms**

Forced Removal
Incarceration
Redress

*Definitions of key terms are in the glossary at the end of the guide.*
No More Manzanars!

The campaign for redress took years and caused disagreements over the best strategy for success. However, through grassroots organizing, court action, legislation, and lobbying, the Japanese American community led the nation to confront the injustice done to them during World War II.

After the traumatizing experience of the incarceration camps, many of the Issei and Nisei incarcerees did not talk about what had happened to them. This silence was disrupted in the 1960s and 1970s as the younger generations, influenced by the civil rights activism of those decades, began to question and talk about the forced removal and incarceration. Activists formed groups like the Manzanar Committee, which organized pilgrimages to the camps to remember those who had been incarcerated and to push for public recognition and preservation of this history.

Other organizations, like the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), began to push for monetary redress in the 1970s. They created grassroots campaigns to lobby the government to officially rescind Executive Order 9066 and to form a special commission to study the government’s violation of constitutional rights. The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), established in 1980, conducted research and heard testimony from over 750 witnesses in 20 cities. Many of the people who testified had never shared their stories of incarceration before, and their accounts helped galvanize a broad coalition of support for the redress movement. The commission’s report, Personal Justice Denied, established an official record of wrongdoing by the U.S. government; it determined that there was no military necessity for incarcerating Japanese American citizens and residents during World War II and recommended terms of redress. Japanese American politicians and activists used the report to build a public pressure campaign and recruit congressional co-sponsors for legislation that would implement the recommendations of the CWRIC.

Key Terms

Issei
Nisei

Definitions of key terms are in the glossary at the end of the guide.
The legislation that ultimately passed was the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, the law acknowledged the injustice of Japanese American incarceration, apologized for it, provided a $20,000 cash payment to each surviving person who had been incarcerated, and established a public education fund.

The Japanese American redress movement was a powerful example of a community coming together to confront injustice. Efforts to preserve the lessons of their mass incarceration persist. February 19, the anniversary of Executive Order 9066, is observed as a Day of Remembrance. Annual camp pilgrimages continue to this day, honoring the history and memories of incarcerees and encouraging political awareness of the ongoing threats to civil liberties other communities face. Japanese Americans have been vocal critics of racial profiling and unconstitutional detentions by the government, particularly as a result of the post-9/11 “War on Terror.” Their stories remind us to stay vigilant in standing up for the rights of all people, even in the face of fear and uncertainty.

Key Terms

Civil Liberties

Definitions of key terms are in the glossary at the end of the guide.

1969
The first organized pilgrimage to Manzanar took place. This started an annual tradition at Manzanar and other World War II incarceration sites. Learn about the Manzanar Pilgrimage in 1969 from the former co-chair of the Manzanar Committee, Sue Kunitomi Embrey | youtube.com.

1970
The Manzanar Committee was formed to educate and lobby government officials at the local and national levels to recognize Manzanar as a historic landmark. California designated Manzanar a state landmark in 1972. It became the Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992, established to preserve the camp’s history and educate the public. Watch a video tour of Manzanar National Historic Site with Saburo Sasaki, a former internee at Manzanar | youtube.com.

1973
The popular memoir *Farewell to Manzanar* was published, telling the story of one family’s forced removal through the eyes of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston as a young girl.

"Pilgrimage ceremony in front of the Manzanar Cemetery Monument" (ddr-manz-3-13), Densho, Courtesy of Manzanar National Historic Site and the Evan Johnson Collection
Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America’s Concentration Camps was published. Carefully researched by Michi Weglyn, the book documented the abuses of power by the U.S. government and influenced the social activism of many Japanese Americans.

After pressure from Japanese American groups, President Ford signed Proclamation 4417, officially rescinding Executive Order 9066. Read President Gerald R. Ford’s Proclamation 4417 | fordlibrarymuseum.gov.

The first Day of Remembrance is held in Washington state. Communities across the country continue to hold yearly events and activities to remember and educate others about the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II.

President Carter signed S. 1647 to create a commission to investigate the internment of Japanese Americans and Alaskan Aleuts during World War II. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) saw the commission, which was first proposed by Senator Daniel Inouye, as an important educational and political tool in their pursuit of redress.
Timeline (Continued)

1981

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) started holding public hearings as part of its investigation into the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Approximately 750 witnesses testified.

1982

At the state and local level, West Coast activists lobbied for official apologies and compensation for treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II. In August 1982, California passed AB 2710, providing $5,000 in compensation for 280 Japanese Americans fired from their state jobs after Pearl Harbor. Learn more about these efforts at Redress for fired state, country, and city employees before 1988 | densho.org.

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) was created by an act of Congress on July 30, 1980. The committee was formed to “gather facts to determine whether any wrong was committed against those American citizens and permanent resident aliens affected by Executive Order 9066.” Hearings were conducted in 20 cities beginning in 1981.

“Redress hearings” (ddr-densho-37-370), Densho, Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration
The CWRIC published its report titled *Personal Justice Denied*. This report found that Executive Order 9066 was not based on military necessity, but rather on “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.” This report played a significant role in raising public awareness of the injustices committed against Japanese Americans. Find the full report and its recommendations at [Personal Justice Denied](https://archives.gov).

Based on the findings of the CWRIC, lawyers petitioned to reopen wartime court cases brought by Minoru Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Fred T. Korematsu. All three men, previously convicted for defying EO 9066, had their convictions vacated through a procedure used to correct injury caused by the courts.

Minoru Yasui was instrumental in testing the constitutionality of laws enacted after Executive Order 9066. After Yasui challenged a curfew in Portland, Oregon, it was ruled unconstitutional if applied to American citizens. However, the judge in the case then revoked Yasui’s citizenship. The U.S. Supreme Court reinstated his citizenship on appeal in 1943 but declared the curfew constitutional. He was subsequently imprisoned in several locations, including Idaho’s Minidoka internment camp.

After his release in 1944, Yasui worked as a civil rights attorney. In the 1980s, he chaired the Japanese American Citizens League’s National Committee for Redress, whose work was crucial to the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

Minoru Yasui, 1946. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gif in loving memory of Minoru and True Yasui

The decision to pursue a special commission, which some felt would slow down progress toward redress, divided Japanese American activists. Members of the National Council for Japanese Americans Redress (NCJAR) broke from the JACL to initiate a class action lawsuit against the U.S. government for damages caused by their wartime incarceration.

Appeal by the National Council for Japanese American Redress for money to support a class action lawsuit against the United States. “Appeal for redress support” (ddr-densho-274-28), Densho, Courtesy of Shosuke Sasaki
1983

The National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR) filed a class action lawsuit against the U.S. government for $27 billion for injuries suffered because of the forced relocation and incarceration during World War II. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court but failed when the court declined to reconsider it in 1988.

1988

President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 into law in August. Redress checks for $20,000 and formal letters of apology from President George H. W. Bush were sent starting in October 1990. Listen to former Congressman Norman Mineta describe Witnessing the Signing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 | youtube.com.

Grayce Uyehara was a pivotal Redress Movement activist who helped lead the reparations campaign for the wrongful incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. As a member of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), she used her skills to educate and organize in pursuit of redress. Her philosophy was “If you’re going to do it, you do it right. You just don’t talk about it.”

Grayce Uyehara Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution
“NO MORE MANZANARS” PROTEST SIGN, 2017

The thinking routines in this section were developed by Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

“An injury or injustice to one is an injury and injustice to all.”

Yuri Kochiyama (1921–2014) was incarcerated at the Jerome camp in Arkansas as a young woman. After the war she moved to New York City with her husband Bill, a fellow incarceree and soldier. She became a prominent activist during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Influenced by her wartime incarceration and her interactions with Malcolm X, her activism bridged many causes including Black nationalism, nuclear disarmament, the release of political prisoners, and Puerto Rican independence. In the 1980s she and her husband organized to support the redress campaign that resulted in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Read more about Yuri Kochiyama’s life | densho.org and go behind the scenes of another iconic image of Yuri Kochiyama’s activism | smithsonianmag.com.

Observe

Start by looking closely at the protest sign. Take time to make lots of observations with See, Feel, Think, Wonder:

- What do you see in this protest poster?
- What feelings emerge for you as you look at the protest poster?
- What does the protest poster make you think about?
- What do you wonder about the protest poster?

Analyze

Drawing on the case study and your observations, use these modified Circles of Action questions to dig deeper with a partner:

1. How have the actions of Japanese Americans contributed to their inner circles?
   - How did telling their stories make a difference for their family and friends?

2. How have the actions of Japanese Americans contributed to their community?
   - How did telling their stories make a difference for others in the Japanese American community?

3. How have the actions of Japanese Americans contributed to the United States?
   - How did telling their stories make a difference for other Americans?
   - How can telling their story continue to make a difference for all Americans?
**Discuss**

Time to discuss! Use the Think-Pair-Share structure to take time to think about your response to each question, then connect with a partner or small group to share your thoughts. Remember to listen carefully and ask questions of each other to understand different perspectives.

1. To which democratic values does the story of Japanese American incarceration during World War II connect? With which values is the story of Japanese American incarceration during World War II in conflict? Brainstorm several thoughts.

2. What questions of our national history and identity does the story of Japanese American incarceration during World War II and the campaign for redress raise?

3. Acts of civic participation and engagement can be big or small, local or global. How do you already contribute in your community? What could you start doing to contribute in your community? What barriers do you feel limit your civic participation?
Process

Why is it important to include multiple identities and perspectives in the story of U.S. democracy? Review what you have learned from this case study, then go to the National Youth Summit Padlet and share the takeaways from your discussions.

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Learn More

Sharing their stories of incarceration was a path to political activism for many Japanese Americans. Hear stories directly from the narrators—the interview subjects of oral histories in the Densho Digital Repository—and consider the following questions:

- Choose a specific individual or family affected by Japanese American incarceration and analyze their story. What challenges did they face and how did they respond to them? What insights can be gained from this personal perspective?
- Reflect on the power of storytelling in the Japanese American redress movement. How did personal narratives and testimonies shape the public perception of this issue and help build support for the movement?
- In what ways can the Japanese American redress movement serve as a model for your own civic engagement? What lessons have you learned from the strategies and tactics employed by the movement, and how might they be applied to a current issue that matters to you?

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Letter to John Silva from Yuri Kochiyama with budget, 1981 (ddr-densho-352-191), Densho, Courtesy of Sasha Hohri Collection
Key Milestones in Japanese American History

1922 – The Supreme Court case Takao Ozawa v. United States challenged the Naturalization Act of 1790 which limited citizenship to “any Alien being a free white person.” The Supreme Court upheld the government’s right to deny U.S. citizenship to Japanese immigrants.

1924 – The Johnson-Reed Act, or Asian Exclusion Act, passed, drastically cutting the total number of immigrants allowed each year and cutting off most immigration from Asia. The 1924 Law That Slammed the Door on Immigrants and the Politicians Who Pushed it Back Open | smithsonianmag.com

1929 – Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) formed to foster “good citizenship and civic participation.”

1941 – Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, triggering U.S. entry into World War II. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began arresting Japanese community leaders (1,291 arrested), most of whom were incarcerated for the duration of the war.

1942 – President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 granting the War Department broad powers to create military exclusion areas. A curfew for Japanese Americans went into effect and relocation began. Four Japanese Americans brought court cases that challenged the constitutionality of the exclusion orders: Fred T. Korematsu, Mitsuye Endo, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui.

1943 – Segregated unit of Japanese American soldiers formed, calls for volunteers from Hawai‘i and men incarcerated in camps; U.S. Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of curfew order in Hirabayashi v. United States.

Fred T. Korematsu refused to go to an incarceration camp. He was arrested and convicted for defying the government orders. He appealed his case to the Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court ruled against him in 1944. In 1983, he rejected a government offer of a pardon and successfully overturned the criminal conviction. He was a lifelong activist who helped lobby for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1988. He was also an outspoken critic of the national security measures taken by the government after 9/11 and warned against repeating the mistakes of the past.

Fred T. Korematsu, c.1940, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of the Fred T. Korematsu family.

More than 30,000 Japanese Americans volunteered for military service during World War II (even as their families were incarcerated). Most were members of the 100th Infantry Battalion from Hawai‘i and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, both segregated units, that were among the army’s most decorated units.


Naval dispatch from the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) announcing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
1944 – War department imposed the military draft on Japanese American men. In October the Supreme Court decreed the government had no legal right to detain citizens who were loyal to the United States based on the writ of habeas corpus (challenging her unlawful detention) filed by Mitsuye Endo. Public Proclamation No. 21 allowed Japanese Americans to return to West Coast. Ex Parte Endo decision | loc.gov

1946 – Tule Lake “Segregation Center” was the final incarceration camp to close in March.

1948 – The JACL lobbied for, and President Truman signed the Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act which paid out $38 million (an average of $200 for each family that filed a claim).

1952 – McCarran-Walter Act became law, granting Japan an immigration quota and allowing Japanese immigrants to become naturalized citizens.

1976 – President Ford signed Proclamation 4117, officially rescinding Executive Order 9066.

1982 – The CWRIC published their Personal Justice Denied report, recommending a national apology and a $20,000 redress payment for surviving incarcerees.

1988 – Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed by President Reagan.

1990 – First redress payments of $20,000 made. The Office of Redress Administration would pay $20,000 to over 82,000 former incarcerees for a total of more than $1.6 billion.

1992 – House Resolution 543 created the Manzanar National Historic Site. Manzanar National Historic Site | nps.gov


2022 – President Biden reaffirmed the government’s formal apology to Japanese Americans and declared February 19, 2022, a Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II | whitehouse.gov.
Glossary of Terms

A note on language from the Japanese American National Museum:

“The words and phrases used to describe this history vary considerably amongst scholars, government officials, and even those directly affected by Executive Order 9066: “relocation,” “evacuation,” “incarceration,” “internment,” “concentration camp.” There is no general agreement about what is most accurate or fair.

Officially, the camps were called “relocation centers.” Many now acknowledge that “relocation center” and “evacuation” are euphemisms used purposefully by the government to downplay the significance of its actions.”

The primary source documents and objects may reflect the terminology used by the government of the time, but the background information of this case study uses the terminology recommended by the Japanese American Citizens League’s Power of Words Handbook: A Guide to Language about Japanese Americans in World War II.

**Civil liberties**: personal freedoms guaranteed by the government, such as through the Bill of Rights.

**Executive Order**: a directive from the President of the United States that has much of the same power as a federal law.

**Forced removal**: the government used the term “evacuation” to describe the removal of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Forced removal better reflects the lack of choice Japanese Americans had in leaving their homes.

**Incarceration**: this term is preferred to that of “internment.” Incarceration more accurately describes the circumstances and prison-like conditions of the camps.

**Issei**: term for first generation Japanese immigrants to the United States. In the United States this term is understood to apply to those who came to the United States prior to the Immigration Act of 1924.

**Nisei**: term for the children of Japanese immigrants. In this context, the term applies to American-born and thus U.S. citizen children of Japanese immigrants.

**Redress**: compensation for wrong or loss, reparation.
Supplemental Resources:

- Articles, documents, photos, and personal stories of Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II: densho.org


- Online resources from the National Museum of American History exhibit Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II americanhistory.si.edu/righting-wrong-japanese-americans-and-world-war-ii

- President Reagan’s Remarks at the Japanese American Internment Compensation Bill signing on August 10, 1988: youtube.com/watch?v=kcaQRhcBXKY

- Stanford History Education Group lesson on Japanese Incarceration: sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons/japanese-american-incarceration

- Virtual visit information for the Japanese American National Museum: janm.org/visit/virtual

- Virtual museum exhibit from the Manzanar National Historic Site: nps.gov/museum/exhibits/manz/index.html


Oakland, California, March 1942. A large sign reading “I am an American” placed in the window of a store on December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor. The store was closed following orders to persons of Japanese descent to evacuate from certain West Coast areas. The owner, a University of California graduate, was housed with hundreds of evacuees in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration of the war.

Photograph, 1942, Dorothea Lange. Courtesy of Library of Congress