

# What It Means To Be An American

Lesson Plans on Race and  
the Media in Times of Crisis



**Japanese American Citizens League**

## Acknowledgements

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– Japanese American Citizens League

## Japanese American Citizens League

Founded in 1929, the JACL is the oldest and largest Asian Pacific American organization in the United States that focuses on civil rights, education and tolerance training. With a membership of 20,000 in 113 local chapters and 25 states, the JACL is headquartered in San Francisco and maintains offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle and Washington, DC.

## Preface



Americans reacted in horror to the events of September 11, 2001, with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center Towers in New York City and at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Following the immediate shock of the destruction and the deaths of thousands on American soil, news commentators began comparing these events to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941. In drawing the comparison and labeling it as “another Pearl Harbor,” the commentators failed to mention the plight that befell the Japanese American community in 1942 or the manner in which the treatment of Japanese Americans might be a harbinger for the treatment of Arab Americans and Muslims after September 11, 2001.

“Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

— George Santayana

## Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide teachers with a framework to convey to their students an understanding of how prejudice, wartime hysteria and the actions of political leaders affected the lives of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans after September 11, 2001. This understanding is illuminated by historic comparisons to the tragic experience of Japanese Americans following the attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

This booklet contains information on the Japanese American internment during World War II and information and concerns expressed by the Arab American and Muslim American communities following September 11th.

This booklet also contains lesson plans through which students examine how we as a nation define “What It Means To Be An American,” and how that definition can become emotional and fragile in times of crisis.

## Civil Liberties Denied: The Japanese American Internment

Following Japan’s attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, agents of the FBI swept through Japanese American communities in California, Oregon and Washington, apprehending leaders who were identified as “potential threats” to the security of the West Coast. Those arrested were leaders of Japanese American community organizations, ministers of churches, teachers at language and martial arts schools, and editors of Japanese American vernacular newspapers. Despite never having been accused of any crime or acts of treason, and without trial or representation, they were taken away to U.S. Department of Justice detention centers, many for the duration of the war. Their families did not know where they were taken or if they would ever see them again.

On February 19, 1942, two months after the attack at Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which set into motion a series of events that led to one of our country’s most tragic constitutional failures. Executive Order 9066 gave broad authority to the military to secure the borders of the United States and to create military zones from which individuals—citizens and aliens alike—could be forced from their homes. Although the executive order was carefully crafted so that no specific groups of people were singled out, its implementation resulted in the wholesale removal and imprisonment of the entire Japanese American population residing on the West Coast of the United States.



Under the authority of Executive Order 9066, the western portions of California, Washington and Oregon were declared as military zones, and in April 1942, the military imposed a curfew and travel restrictions on Japanese Americans. Singled out by race alone, Japanese Americans became the target of racial policies that stripped them of their rights as American citizens. Soon after the curfew, the military posted notices in all Japanese American communities, ordering all citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry to abruptly leave their homes, schools and businesses and report to assembly areas, bringing with them only what they could carry. The government euphemistically referred to this program as an “evacuation” to “relocation centers,” when in fact it was the forced removal and incarceration of American citizens into detention camps.

Thus, in the spring of 1942, under direction of armed police and the military, Japanese Americans were treated as criminals and were herded onto buses and trains for the forced journey to government detention camps. Without regard for due process or basic constitutional guarantees, over 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, (the Issei, or first generation, were ineligible for citizenship due to discriminatory naturalization laws) were imprisoned in ten camps located in remote, desolate areas in California, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming and Arkansas. Approximately 10,000 people were imprisoned in each camp surrounded by barbed wire and armed military guards.

The treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II remains as one of the most serious violations of constitutional rights in the history of our country. The president signed the executive order with a clear intent to single out Japanese Americans; the Congress supported the president’s actions and gave statutory authority to the order; and the Supreme Court upheld the government’s actions in three test cases that sanctioned the forced exclusion and imprisonment of a group of citizens based solely on race. This all transpired, despite the fact that eight articles and amendments of the Bill of Rights had been denied them.

## **Arab Americans and Muslim Americans**

The first generation of Arab Americans came from a variety of countries in the Arab World comprised of twenty-two countries including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Iran and Turkey are not Arab countries, though they are often associated with the Middle East.

The first significant wave of Arab immigration began in the 1870s. Like many immigrants, they came seeking new opportunities. These first immigrants, primarily Christians, came from Lebanon and Syria. The U.S. restricted immigration after 1920 and immigration slowed from the Arab World.



The second wave of immigration began after World War II. This immigration, which continues today, originates from all parts of the Arab World, especially Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen. Causes for this immigration include regional conflicts such as the Six-Day War in 1967, when boundaries in the region were shifted. The Arab American population is estimated to be three million.

## **The Impact of September 11th on Arab and Muslim Americans**

After September 11, 2001, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans were singled out and associated with terrorists and terrorism simply because the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks were Arab Muslims. Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and Americans of Middle Eastern descent became visible targets of hate, prejudice and discrimination due to their race, religion or what perpetrators perceived or defined as “the enemy.” Many Arab American men and women have been assaulted and beaten, their children have been ridiculed and threatened, Mosques have been defaced, men and women with Arabic names have been forced to leave airplanes with some Muslim women wearing hijab (headscarves) being forced to wear stickers stating that they passed airport security. According to FBI reports, hate crimes against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, Sikhs, and others perceived to be of Middle Eastern descent, increased from 28 in 2000 to 481 in 2001.

In the aftermath of September 11th, governmental policies, including the U.S.A. Patriot Act, affected the civil liberties of Arab Americans and Arabs living in the United States. In October 2002, the Attorney General announced a Special Registration program, which required all men over the age of 16 who were from certain Arab or Muslim countries, and who were not permanent residents, to register and be fingerprinted and interviewed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. By January 2003, the list of countries had been expanded to 25, and all but one was an Arab or Muslim country. The consequence for not registering was deportation. Hundreds of men who showed up to register were arrested and detained. Through this process, 13,000 men were targeted for deportation.

## Myths and Stereotypes

### Japanese Americans and World War II

Underlying the anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States during World War II was fear of the “yellow peril.” The origins of the term derive from the mid-1800s, when the Chinese were seen as coming to the U.S. because of the high birthrate and famine conditions in China. It was feared that this immigration would saturate the West Coast. The military victories by Japan over Russia in 1905 further fueled the myth of the “yellow peril.” It raised images of military hordes overpowering and subjugating the white population.<sup>1</sup>

“Popular writing, the movies and the Hearst newspapers promoted this fear. Japanese immigrants were portrayed as sneaky, treacherous agents of militaristic Japan seeking to control the West Coast. Purported espionage by those of Japanese ancestry in the United States was advanced as one threat from the “yellow peril.” Allegations that persons of Japanese descent were a “secret army” for Japan and the Emperor were constantly repeated by anti-Japanese agitators.”<sup>2</sup>

### Arabs and Islam

Many negative stereotypes of Arab Americans continue to permeate the public consciousness. Arab women are often seen as belly dancers and harem girls with Arab men portrayed as angry terrorists, greedy merchants, oil sheiks and nomadic tribesmen. These stereotypes are perpetuated by television, movies, advertising and computer games.

In Hollywood, the Arab is a favorite villain in numerous movies such as *True Lies*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Back to the Future*, which portray Arabs as terrorists and inhuman killers. Even Disney’s *Aladdin* has caused concern in the Arab American community. The heroes, Aladdin and Jasmine are light-skinned with Anglo features and accent-free, while other dark-skinned characters are portrayed as cruel guards or deceitful merchants with Arab accents and grotesque facial features. In addition, children’s comic books often portray Arabs as the villain to be demolished by the superhero.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Personal Justice Denied, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Personal Justice Denied, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> References: League of Arab States, Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity; Detroit Free Press; 100 Questions and Answers about Arab Americans: A Journalist Guide; Arab American Institute; Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia; Hate Free Zone Washington; Arab American Community Coalition.

## The Impact of Stereotypes

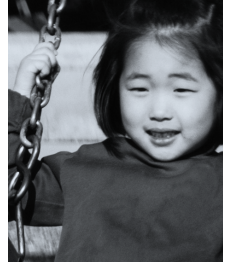
In 1942, the media, the military and our political leaders planted a message in the American psyche that the loyalty of Japanese Americans was questionable and suspect. Japanese Americans, the message went, could not assimilate because of their racial background and therefore could never become “real” Americans. The remnants of that image remain even today. In the months following the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, Muslim and Arab Americans were painted with similar perceptions by the public.

In 1942, the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans were curtailed in the name of national security, solidifying in the public mind that there was an enemy within. In 2002, these same images were conveyed about Muslim and Arab Americans with the passage of the Patriot Act.

Great harm is directed upon vulnerable communities when the public associates them with the enemy. They are often asked, “Where are you from?” and told “Go back to your own country,” with the implication that they are not Americans and that they remain as foreigners in the public mind. After World War II, the fear of being singled out caused many Japanese Americans to refuse to speak the Japanese language and to disassociate themselves from their ancestral heritage. In the aftermath of September 11th, Muslim and Arab Americans reported that they changed their day-to-day routines and lifestyles. Some Muslim women wore hijab in a less traditional style to “blend-in” and children were withheld from school for fear of name-calling and reprisals.

Racial and religious profiling causes real harm to affected communities, especially to the children. The negativity and suspicion they feel, hear and fall victim to on the streets, in schools, by strangers, by their peers, and by law enforcement impacts their self-esteem, their pride in their culture, their language, their religion, their sense of feeling safe.

During World War II, Japanese Americans had few friends and supporters to dispel myths surrounding their loyalty and patriotism. This experience has caused Japanese American organizations and leaders to be outspoken in defending against any intolerance directed at Muslim and Arab Americans based on preconceived stereotypes, which would unfairly portray their community. These actions reflect the larger lesson that we must not repeat the mistakes of our past.





## Lesson Plans on Race and the Media in Times of Crisis

The ultimate goal of this project, *What It Means To Be An American*, is to encourage teachers to provide a unit of instruction to their students on the parallels between the World War II experience of Japanese Americans and the post-September 11th experience of Arab and Muslim Americans. A comparison of these two historic events and the manner in which they affect vulnerable groups of Americans will lead to a greater understanding of the dangers that lie in intolerance and the responsibility each of us has to ensure that Constitutional liberties and protections are accorded equally to all.

### Newspaper Headline During WWII

## Ouster of All Japs in California Near

San Francisco Chronicle

### Newspaper Headline After September 11, 2001

## Muslims Worship Under Watchful Eye of FBI

North County Times

## Lesson: Hidden Truths – The Use of Spin

**Grade Level:** Middle and Secondary

**Relevant Subject Areas:** U.S. History, U.S. Government, English



### **Standards:**

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

X. Civic Ideals and Practices – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Constitution and the Bill of Rights

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will compare the Japanese American experience during World War II with events affecting Arab Americans after September 11th.
2. Students will identify how negative words and statements can be turned into positive “spin.”
3. Students will learn how “spin” is used to persuade the public opinion.

### **MATERIALS:**

#### Session One:

- JACL Curriculum and Resource Guide – *A Lesson in American History: The Japanese American Experience*.
- Optional film: *Days of Waiting* by Steven Okazaki (NAATA: 415-863-0814 or through the Asian American Curriculum Project, [www.AsianAmericanBooks.com](http://www.AsianAmericanBooks.com)).
- Large sheet of paper and felt tip pens.
- Handout: *Their Best Way to Show Loyalty* (San Francisco News – March 6, 1947) Available through the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco (<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/editorial1.html>).
- Handout: Spin ([wordiQ.com](http://wordiQ.com)).

## Session Two:

- Handout: *An Arab American Internment?* by Eric L. Muller (<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/News/911muller.html>).

## Session Three:

- Handout: *The Department of Justice Patriot Act Overview* (see [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)).

## PROCEDURES:

### Session One: **The Japanese American Experience**

1. Teacher explains that the students will be comparing the Japanese American experience during World War II with the events affecting Arab Americans after September 11th. The teacher gives a summary of the Japanese American experience during World War II based on the information from the JAACL Curriculum and Resource Guide; or shows an appropriate film, such as *Days of Waiting* (story about a Caucasian woman married to a Japanese American incarcerated in the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp).
2. Teacher discusses and develops with the students a list of the civil rights that were denied Japanese Americans on a large sheet of paper (keep list for use in later session).
3. Teacher gives the students the handout, *Their Best Way to Show Loyalty*. Teacher explains to the students that this editorial was written in 1942 and describes the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States. Class time should be given to the students to silently read the editorial.
4. Teacher directed questions:
  - What was the writer saying in the editorial?
  - Why do you think he portrayed the incarceration of Japanese Americans as a positive and humane thing to do?
  - Why did you agree/disagree with the editorial?
5. Teacher passes out the handout, *Spin*, and discusses the definition. Teacher and students review *Their Best Way to Show Loyalty* again, identifying the “spin,” paragraph by paragraph. Discussions should include what they thought the Japanese Americans who were being incarcerated felt during that time.

## Session Two: **An Arab American Internment Camp**

1. Teacher gives the students the handout, *An Arab American Internment* by Eric Muller (written after 9/11/01). Students are to be divided into groups of 3-5 (one student designated as group leader and another as secretary). Their assignment is to read and discuss the article based on the following questions:
  - What are the similarities between the Arab Americans post-September 11, 2001, and Japanese Americans following December 7, 1941?
  - How are the circumstances different for the Arab Americans as compared with the Japanese Americans?
  - Why did Eric Muller write this article?
  - What is Eric Muller's hope for the treatment of Arab Americans by the U.S. government?
2. Teacher follow-up:
  - Student groups report back to the whole class.
  - Discuss with students the concept of racial profiling.
  - Discuss with students why they agreed/disagreed with the article.

## Session Three: **The Patriot Act**

1. Teacher gives the students the handout, *The USA Patriot Act Overview*, and reads the introduction with the students and gives a brief explanation of why the Patriot Act was enacted. Teacher discusses with students their definitions of "patriotism" and "patriot" and solicits examples. Teacher also poses a variety of scenarios and asks students if they feel the actions were patriotic or unpatriotic.
2. Teacher divides the students into 4 groups and assigns one section to each group. They are to discuss and become "experts" of their section. After an appropriate amount of time (about 10-15 minutes), students are re-divided into new groups comprised of representatives of the different sections. For the next 10-15 minutes, the students explain to the group their sections of the Patriot Act. By the end of the session, all the students will have an understanding of all the components of the Patriot Act. (This process is known as a "jigsaw")
3. Students stay in the same groups (designate one student as group leader and another as secretary) and discuss the following:
  - If you were an Arab American, what would concern you about this legislation?
  - Are there any components in this legislation that could lead to circumstances similar to those faced by Japanese Americans during WWII?
  - Are there any parts of this legislation that are questionable to you?
  - How does the Patriotic Act make our nation more secure? More insecure?
  - Can one oppose the Patriot Act and still be a "patriot?"

- Is the Department of Justice using “spin” to make this legislation more acceptable to the public? Why or why not?
  - If you were to amend the Patriot Act to balance national security with individual liberties, what would you add, what would you delete?
4. Teacher follow-up:
- Student groups report back to the whole class.
  - Referring to the list of civil rights denied to Japanese Americans (Session One), discuss with the students, which civil rights might be affected by the Patriot Act.
  - Discuss with students whether they think “spin” is positive or negative.
5. Student Assignment; Students are to find in the newspapers or magazines, articles about events of 9/11/01, the Iraq war, terrorists and terrorism, Homeland Security activities, the Patriot Act or public demonstrations for or against the Patriot Act. They are to identify words, phrasing and quotes in those articles that serve as “spin”—articles that “sell” something that is negative as positive, or conversely, articles that “sell” something that is positive as negative. The assignment will be evaluated based on teacher-developed criteria.

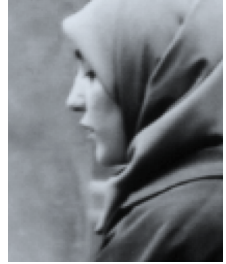
#### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Have the students analyze the Patriot Act in relation to the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Have them write an article using their own “spin” and sell the message that during times of national security, individual rights must be relinquished.
- Have the students select an issue concerning the school and have them write an article with their own spin.
- Select an issue that the class knows about. Divide the class into those that support and those that are against the issue. Have those that support, write a position paper using spin that is *against* the issue. Have those that are against the issue write a position paper using spin *supporting* the issue.
- Select an issue that the Democrats and the Republicans are on opposite sides. Have the students identify the spin being used by both parties, as well as from the White House or any of the administrative departments.

## Lesson: Opinion-Editorials

**Grade Level:** Middle and Secondary

**Relevant Subject Areas:** English, Social Studies, Journalism



### Standards:

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

X. Civic Ideals and Practices – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies)

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Internment of Japanese Americans, WWII Hysteria, “Yellow Journalism,” Attack and Aftermath of Twin Towers September 11th.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand how newspaper opinion-editorials can influence beliefs positively and negatively.
2. Students will analyze similarities between the evacuation of Japanese Americans and events affecting Arab Americans post September 11, 2001.
3. Students will write their own opinion-editorial piece based on the Patriot Act.

### MATERIALS:

#### Session One

- Handout: Current opinion-editorial writing from the local newspaper (teacher needs to provide current article).
- Large sheets of paper and felt tip pens.
- Overhead projector (optional).

#### Session Two

- Handout: *Few Benefits to Questioning Targeted Groups* (August 6, 2004 – San Francisco Chronicle) ([sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/08/06/EDGV682LKA1.DTL](http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/08/06/EDGV682LKA1.DTL)).

- Handout: *Behind the News with Arthur Caylor*(March 2, 1942 – The San Francisco News) (Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco – <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/Caylor5.html>).
- Handout: Remembering Walt Woodward, the lonely voice against the internment ([www.historyLink.org](http://www.historyLink.org) – search “Walt Woodward”).

### Session Three

- Handout: *Core Values of American Constitutional Democracy*([www.aclu.org/safeandfree](http://www.aclu.org/safeandfree)).
- Handout: *Department of Justice USA Patriot Act Overview* ([www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)).
- Handout: ACLU – *The USA Patriot Act and Government Actions that Threaten Our Liberties* ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)).

## PROCEDURES:

### Session One: **Introduction to Opinion-Editorials**

1. Teacher explains that the purpose of opinion-editorial writings in newspapers is to influence readers to a certain position based on events reported in the news. Students are given time to read a current opinion-editorial from the local newspaper. The article should have issues that are known and relevant to the students.
2. Students are given 5-10 minutes to individually write down their opinions to questions about the article:
  - What was the writer’s position?
  - What was believable in the article?
  - What was questionable?
  - Why did you agree or disagree with the writer?
3. Teacher divides the students into small groups (designating one member as the group leader and another member as secretary). The groups discuss the article based on the above questions. About 20 minutes before the class ends, the secretaries report back to the whole class on their groups’ analysis.
4. Teacher follow-up:
  - Summarize student group results.
  - Have students give their reasons why they thought the writer was successful or unsuccessful persuading the reader.
  - Have students define the elements of what they think a good opinion-editorial piece should include (write their ideas on a large sheet of paper titled “Persuasive Opinion-Editorials” and hang on the wall for future discussions).

## Session Two: **Analysis of Opinion-Editorials**

1. Teacher explains that the students will be analyzing opinion-editorials written about the evacuation of Japanese Americans during World War II and an article after 9/11/01. Students will be working in groups, analyzing articles and determining which opinions appeared believable and which were questionable. The analysis includes the following questions:
  - What was the writer’s position?
  - Was the writer persuasive? Why? Why not?
  - What opinions in the article appeared believable? Questionable?
  - How did the members of the group feel about the opinions presented?
  - What do you think the targeted groups felt about the opinions presented?

Before breaking into groups, teacher demonstrates the analysis by using the opinion-editorial from the previous session.

2. Students are divided into small groups of 3-5 students. One member of the group is designated as leader and another as secretary. Each group is given one article and has 10 minutes to analyze the article. Then articles are traded every 10 minutes until all three opinion-editorials are read and analyzed by all groups.
3. About 20 minutes before the class ends, the secretaries report back to the whole class on their groups’ analysis of the various articles.
4. Teacher follow-up:
  - Summarize student group results, specifically focusing on persuasiveness and believability.
  - Discuss with students which articles caused negative and/or positive feelings.
  - Discuss with students how opinion-editorials can influence readers.
  - Add any new items to the list of “Persuasive Opinion-Editorials” list.

### Extension Activities:

1. Discuss how the government policy and the social climate during World War II influenced opinion-editorials against the Japanese Americans; and compare how the post-September 11th social climate and governmental policies affected the public’s perception about national security, civil liberties and Arab Americans.

## Session Three: **Writing an Opinion-Editorial on the Patriot Act**

1. Teacher explains that the students will be writing their own opinion-editorial based on the Patriot Act.
  - Review *Core Values of American Constitutional Democracy*



- Review the “Department of Justice *USA Patriot Act Overview* (www.usdoj.gov) and the ACLU’s *The USA Patriot Act and Government Actions that Threaten Our Civil Liberties*(www.aclu.org).
  - List reactions by the students to the two articles on the Patriot Act.
2. Teacher reviews the “Persuasive Opinion-Editorials” list with students. Teacher explains that each student will be writing their own opinion-editorial and will be evaluated on teacher or student-determined criteria.
  3. Class time should be given for the students to write their first draft. After completing their first draft, students should pair up with another student to critique each other’s article; check for persuasiveness, grammar, spelling, and whether it meets the criteria being used for evaluation.
  4. Final copy to be done in class or as homework. Teacher can do the final evaluation or have students evaluate the articles.

#### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- Send the most persuasive articles to the local newspaper or to the school newspaper.
- Create a bulletin board with the pros and cons on the Patriot Act.
- Students write an op-ed piece supporting the view, “Civil liberties in times of crisis are always paramount.” Next, students write an op-ed piece reacting to a scenario such as: In 2020, a European terrorist organization bombs an airport terminal in a major American city causing extensive damage and loss of life. As a newspaper editor, what actions would they call for to keep our borders, our airports and our country safe?

#### **Newspaper Headline During WWII**

## Deny U.S. Japs Equal Chance, Majority Says

Chicago Sun

#### **Newspaper Headline After September 11, 2001**

## Muslims, Arabs Get New Visits From FBI

Washington Post

## Lesson: Political Cartoons



**Grade Level:** Middle and Secondary

**Relevant Subject Areas:** Social Studies, English, Journalism, Art

### **Standards:**

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies).

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies).

X. Civic Ideals and Practices – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic. (From the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies).

**Prerequisite Knowledge:** Political and social atmosphere during WWII, Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and political and social atmosphere post-September 11, 2001, the rise in hate crimes against those of Middle Eastern descent that followed, and the Patriot Act.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will analyze the significant print (words) and visual (pictures) of political cartoons.
2. Students will draw conclusions about the artist's point of view regarding the issues/ideas presented in the political cartoon.
3. Students will determine how political cartoons can influence the political and social atmosphere of a community.
4. Students will analyze political cartoons post-Dec. 7, 1941 depicting Japan, Japanese, Japanese Americans, "spies," national security, and patriotism and political cartoons post September 11, 2001 depicting Muslims, those of Middle Eastern descent, "terrorists" and national security—and develop a sense for the atmosphere of those time periods.
5. Students will create their own political cartoons to persuade viewers to their perspectives.

## MATERIALS:

### Session One:

- Handout: *Analyzing and Creating Political Cartoons* (Getting It Right In History Class – <http://datadirect.com/Sample/HistoryWriting/HistoryWritingSample.htm> – go to Analyzing and Creating Political Cartoons).
- Handout: Political cartoon from a local newspaper that is relevant to students (teacher to provide political cartoon).
- Handout: Political cartoon by Dr. Seuss – *Wipe That Sneer Off His Face*(1942) – (<http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/pm/1942/21013acs.jpg>).
- Resource: Richard Minear, *Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel*, New Press, 1999.

### Session Two:

- Handout: Political cartoon by Tom Meyer (May 28, 2004 – San Francisco Chronicle) (Internet search: “Tom Meyer cartoons” – go to Meyer’s Take).

### Session Three:

- Handout: *Cartoon Analysis Worksheet*(National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408).

## PROCEDURES:

### Session One: **Introduction to Political Cartoons**

1. Teacher reviews the characteristics of political cartoons using the Analyzing and Creating Political Cartoons handout. Teacher reviews and differentiates between caricatures and stereotypes. Using a current political cartoon from a local newspaper, students discuss the characteristics of the cartoon and analyze what the artist’s point of view is and how it is represented in the cartoon.

### Session Two: **Political Cartoons and Japanese Americans**

1. Teacher hands out the Dr. Seuss political cartoon *Wipe That Sneer Off His Face*(or uses an overhead projector). Students should be divided into two groups and designated as “the general readership” and as “the Japanese Americans” looking at this political cartoon. They should remember that this cartoon was drawn during World War II and they should role-play the attitudes of the day. Have the groups discuss:
  - How does the group feel about the political cartoon?
  - Identify the stereotypes employed and their effectiveness or not.
  - What does the cartoon mean to the group?
  - What does each group feel about the other group?

2. Teacher follow-up:

- Have the groups report back on the above questions.
- Discuss with the students the characteristics of this cartoon (such as, racist caricature of Japanese male, insinuation that the Japanese are laughing at the Americans, eliciting emotions-anger, encouraging the buying of US bonds).
- Solicit from students the message the cartoonist is sending to the public.
- Discuss with students the consequences of this type of cartoon and the eventual internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry using the handout, *A Little Known Side of Dr. Seuss*. Have the students analyze the political cartoon *Waiting for the Signal from Home*. Solicit from students the message the cartoonist is sending to the public, the thinking this cartoon is meant to create in the public's mind about Japanese and Japanese Americans.
- Have the students read Executive Order 9066 and do a political cartoon about EO 9066 and national security/civil liberties, taking a position in favor of it or against it.

Session Three: **Political Cartoons and Muslim & Arab Americans**

1. Teacher reviews the handout, *Analyzing and Creating Political Cartoons*.

2. Teacher hands out the Tom Meyer political cartoon. Students should be divided into small discussion groups of 3-5 students to analyze the cartoon:

- What are the characteristics of the cartoon, the stereotypes employed and their effectiveness or not.
- What is the artist's point of view?
- How would the general readership perceive the cartoon?
- How would Muslim and Arab Americans feel about the cartoon?

3. Teacher follow-up:

- Have the groups report back on the above questions.
- Discuss the events that the artist is trying to capture in his cartoon.
- Discuss with the students their feelings about the political cartoon.
- Compare the Dr. Seuss cartoon with the Meyer cartoon. What are the similarities and differences?
- Have the students read the Patriot Act and do a political cartoon about the Act and national security/civil liberties, taking a position in favor of it or against it.

Session Four: **Creating Your Own Political Cartoon**

1. Students are to be divided into groups of 2-3 to create their own political cartoon. Review the handout, *Cartoon Analysis Worksheet*, so students understand the elements of a political

cartoon. Class time should be used for groups to work together and for the teacher to assist students. Themes for the political cartoons can be as flexible as the imagination of the students or focused on such topics as the following:

- What does it mean to be American?
  - Japanese Americans post-December 7, 1941
  - Arab Americans and Muslims post-September 11, 2001
  - America's reaction to terrorism
  - National security and constitutional rights
  - School-related issues
  - Community-related issues
2. Evaluation of the political cartoons will be based on teacher or student developed criteria.

#### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- Create a bulletin board displaying the political cartoons.
- Invite a Japanese American and/or Arab American speaker to discuss how events and political cartoons affected their communities and personal lives.
- Have the students find and analyze a political cartoon in their local newspaper that depicts and sends a message to the public about terrorism, Homeland Security activities, the Patriot Act, the Constitution, Arab Americans. In their view, what's good about the message, what's dangerous?
- Extend the lesson to include propaganda.

#### **Newspaper Headline During WWII**

## Smith Troy Demands Evacuation of All Japs at Tolan Hearing

#### **Newspaper Headline After September 11, 2001**

## FBI Interviews Said To Be Chilling Free Speech

Contra Costa Times

## Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

	Visuals	Words (not all cartoons include words)
<b>Step One</b>	1. List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.	1. Identify the cartoon caption and/or title.  2. Locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist to identify objects or people within the cartoon.  3. Record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon
<b>Step Two</b>	2. Which of the objects on your list are symbols?  3. What do you think each symbol means?	4. Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so?  5. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.
<b>Step Three</b>	A. Describe the action taking place in this cartoon.  B. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols.  C. Explain the message of the cartoon.  D. What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?	

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**Newspaper Headline During WWII**

# Japanese Americans Fight Backlash—Peace Rally Opposes Ethnic Scapegoats

San Francisco Chronicle

**Newspaper Headline After September 11, 2001**

# Three Muslim Charities Lose Tax-Exempt Status

Associated Press

# What It Means To Be An American

Lesson Plans on Race and  
the Media in Times of Crisis

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