

Intermediate-Level Activity

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- examine various versions of a photograph and explore possibilities in **cropping** and **composition**;
- read **primary sources** documenting life in Japanese American **internment camps**;
- discuss how World War II caused Japanese Americans to be relocated to internment camps;
- crop a primary source photograph so that it tells a different story than the original.

Materials

- Reproduction of *Pledge of Allegiance, Rafael Weill Elementary School, San Francisco* by Dorothea Lange
- Reproduction of *Display of Flag and Japanese Family Photographs* by Dorothea Lange
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about the photographs
- "20 Views of the Manzanar War Relocation Authority Center," available on the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco Web site (www.sfmuseum.net/views/manzanar.ppt)
- Copies of the article "S.F. Clear of All But 6 Sick Japs," published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 21, 1942, and available on the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco Web site (www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/evac19.html)
- *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002) (optional)
- Student Handout: *Cropping and Composition*
- 3 x 5 inch index cards with a small rectangular hole (about 1/2 x 1 inch) cut out of the top center of each card
- Grease pen or marker

Lesson Steps

1. Display a reproduction of *Pledge of Allegiance, Rafael Weill Elementary School, San Francisco*. Refer to grade-appropriate discussion questions in step 1 of the Beginning-Level Activity, then ask students the following questions:
 - Where was the photographer standing in order to take this picture?
 - Who is the main subject in the photograph? How do you know this?
 - How much of this figure can you see in the photograph?
 - How is this figure different from the rest of the figures in the picture?
2. Discuss what it means to be an American citizen. Ask students what rights American citizens have. Inform students that they will learn about individuals who were treated unfairly even though they were American citizens.
3. Explain to students that the girl in Lange's photograph, whose name is Helene, and over one hundred thousand other Japanese Americans from California were relocated a few weeks after the photograph was taken. Review and discuss a selection of images depicting life at the Manzanar camp on the digital slide show "20 Views of the Manzanar **War Relocation Authority** Center,"

available on the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco Web site (www.sfmuseum.net/views/manzanar.ppt). Between April and July 1942, the photographers Clem Albers and Dorothea Lange shot these photographs for the War Relocation Authority (WRA) in California's high desert.

4. Read and discuss primary sources documenting life in internment camps and discuss how warfare affected a racial group, specifically in regard to Japanese American internment. Distribute copies of "S.F. Clear of All But 6 Sick Japs," published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 21, 1942, and available on the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco Web site (www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/evac19.html). You may also wish to read selections of *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston.
5. Point out that many of those forced into camps were American citizens—people who may have, for example, served in the U.S. military or had businesses that bolstered the U.S. economy. Ask students how they think the U.S. government could justify treating its citizens this way. Should these individuals have been protected under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution? You may wish to refer students to the text of the Constitution, available on the National Archives Web site *The Charters of Freedom* (www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters.html). Display a reproduction of *Display of Flag and Japanese Family Photographs*. Tell students to take time to look closely at the photograph, then ask them to share what they see. Remind students that Japanese American evacuees were permitted to bring only those items they could carry. Why do you think a family who was evacuated would bring an American flag? Do you think the family is patriotic? If so, what do you think of a family who is still patriotic despite being treated harshly by the U.S. government? How would you imagine this kind of treatment affecting the future of this family or group of people?
6. Direct students to work in pairs. Have them research the history of Japanese immigration and compare it with the history of German immigration. Instruct students to write three things that are similar and three things that are different about these histories. The following resources may be helpful:
 - "U.S. Immigration" on the PBS Web site *Destination America* (www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/usim.html)
 - *Immigration...* on the Library of Congress Web site (memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/introduction.html)
 - "Ellis Island" on the Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., Web site (www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island.asp)
 - "Immigration Station" on the Angel Island State Park Web site (www.angelisland.org/immigro2.html)
7. Follow up with your students by asking them again what it means to be an American citizen and discussing the following questions:
 - What role does immigration play in U.S. citizenship?
 - How does an immigrant "earn" U.S. citizenship? (*Contribute to the U.S. workforce and economy, join the military, go through the naturalization process, etc.*)
 - Why was there a massive wave of immigration in the early twentieth century? (*A demand for cheap labor.*)
 - How did some immigrants escape prejudice while others did not?

HISTORICAL WITNESS

★ SOCIAL MESSAGING ★

8. Explain to students that Lange was on assignment to document Japanese Americans before and after they were relocated to relocation camps. She made *Pledge of Allegiance* at a public school a few weeks before citizens were sent to the camps, where many remained until the end of World War II in 1945. The purpose of this War Relocation Authority (WRA) assignment was very different from Lange's earlier assignment for the **Farm Security Administration** (FSA), in which she documented migrant farmworkers. Her images for the FSA, which depicted the hardships endured by the workers, provided evidence of the compelling power of photographs to move people to action. Rather than using the photographs of Japanese American internment for propaganda, the government kept these images for their records. Why would a government want to keep images of Japanese Americans, before and after they were imprisoned, out of the public eye?
9. Point out that both governments and artists can contribute to the way history is understood, not only by what they communicate to the public but also by what they don't communicate.
10. Distribute the handout *Cropping and Composition* to students. Ask them to work with a partner and answer the questions about the different versions of the image of Helene and her classmates. Share findings with the class. Ask students how cropping the picture changes the story.
11. Have students imagine that they are writing a newspaper article for the U.S. government during the Japanese American internment. They must find a primary source photograph online or in their reference books that they think the U.S. government would want to publish. Have students "crop" the primary source photograph so that it tells a story they think the U.S. government would want to tell during the time of the Japanese American internment.
12. Provide each student with a 3 x 5 inch index card with a rectangular hole (about 1/2 x 1 inch) cut out of the top center of the card to simulate a viewfinder on a camera. Explain to students that many photographers carefully choose which elements to include in their photographs by looking through a camera's viewfinder and positioning it until they find the best composition to tell a particular story. Ask students to move the index card viewfinder close to and away from their eyes while viewing a primary source photograph. Tell students that they should try different ways of creating a new image that tells a different story than that of the original photograph. Have students use a grease pen or marker to draw new cropping lines on the primary source photograph. Instruct students to cut out or draw the new composition and write a caption that tells a story about the new version of the photograph.

Assessment

Assess students on their ability to contribute to class discussions on the rights of American citizens. Also assess students' ability to crop an image in order to tell a new story and to write a caption using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

