

## LESSON 3: PRELUDE TO INCARCERATION

### Organizing Questions

- In what ways do you think media images contributed to the mass removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast?
- In what ways did the Japanese American community respond to the possibility of being ordered to leave their homes and be incarcerated?

### Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze popular media depictions of people of Japanese descent after the U.S. entry into World War II. They also analyze Japanese American responses to the mass removal from the West Coast. It is recommended that students engage in both activities in this lesson.

### Objectives

#### *knowledge*

- to learn about the nature of wartime hysteria
- to analyze differing Japanese American responses to the mass removal

#### *attitude*

- to appreciate the diversity of the Japanese American responses to the mass removal

#### *skill*

- to work effectively in small groups
- to critically analyze popular media coverage and congressional testimonies

### Reading: *Prelude to Incarceration*

Before beginning the activities in this lesson, discuss *Prelude to Incarceration* with the following questions:

- In what ways do you think the media contributed to the order to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast?
- What were the differing visions of the Department of Justice and the military with respect to the Japanese Americans on the West Coast? How might the nature of these offices account for the differences?
- In what ways did the Japanese American community respond to the mass removal? Why do you think Japanese American opponents of the mass removal were ineffective in their efforts?
- What do you think were the merits and/or demerits of cooperating with federal authorities?
- What do you think were the merits and/or demerits of resisting federal authorities?

### Activities

#### **Activity 3-1: Perspectives Through Popular Media**

Students examine articles and cartoons that present diverse reactions to the incarceration debate.

#### **Activity 3-2: Japanese American Perspectives Through Congressional Testimonies**

Students examine testimonies of two Japanese Americans given before a congressional committee.

## ACTIVITY 3-2: JAPANESE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES THROUGH CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONIES

### Introduction

In this activity, students will examine the testimonies of two Japanese Americans at a congressional committee hearing in San Francisco, California, in order to understand how the Japanese American community responded to the possibility of mass removal and incarceration. Working in small groups, students will then develop their own positions on the issue and vote, as if the year were 1942, on how the "threat" of Japanese Americans on the West Coast should be resolved.

### Time

One to two class periods

### Materials

- Handout 3-2a: Testimony of Mike J. Masaoka (one copy per group of five students)
- Handout 3-2b: Testimony of James M. Omura (one copy per group of five students)
- Handout 3-2c: Task Sheet (one copy per group of five students)
- Transparency: Options for the Select Committee

### Procedure

1. Download and print the PDF file of Activity 3-2 handouts and transparency. Make copies as indicated above.
2. Inform students that the U.S. government formed a "House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration" to discuss the possible incarceration of Japanese Americans for security reasons. This Committee held hearings in several locations where people were allowed to present materials and testify before Committee members. Many of the testimonies were from the Japanese American community. Two divergent testimonies from a San Francisco hearing are provided for the students' consideration.
3. Split the class into groups of five. Distribute handouts 3-2a through 3-2c to each student. Allow each group 30 minutes to read the handouts and complete their task.
4. Tell the students that they will now simulate a hearing of the House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. All class members except those presenting testimonies will be Committee members. The teacher will be the Committee Head, to whom all testimonies will be submitted. Each group's reporter should appear before the class and read the group's testimony in turn. Be sure to collect the testimony of each group. These can be used to evaluate group work.
5. After all the groups have given their testimonies, display the transparency: *Options for the Select Committee* on the overhead. Ask students if they can think of any other options to add to the list of possibilities. Add any appropriate suggestions to the list.
6. Each group is allowed one vote. Give the groups five minutes to debate which option to choose. The recorder should write the number of the group's choice on a piece of paper, fold the paper, and deliver it to the Committee Head (the teacher).

7. After the allotted time has passed, count the vote totals and announce the option that received the most votes.
8. Discuss the activity with the following questions:
  - Which option did you expect would get the most votes?
  - Why did your group choose the option it did?
  - What were the main issues debated in your group?
  - How did your group make its decision? By consensus? By vote? By agreeing with one person's opinion?
  - What was the quality of your group's interaction?
  - How did you feel while debating these options in your group?
  - How do Masaoka's and Omura's conceptions of Americanism differ? How do these notions impact their responses to the proposed mass removal and incarceration?
  - How did the testimonies of Masaoka and Omura influence your group's position?
9. Assign Reading: *The Incarceration Years*.