

Gaman Gallery

Teacher Lesson Plan

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SUBJECT	GRADE LEVEL	DURATION	FORMAT
AR History / US History	Grades 7–12	3 class periods	Gallery + analysis

Rationale and Explanation

Delphine Hirasuna, curator of *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942–1945*, describes the Japanese concept of gaman as “bear[ing] the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.” This lesson guides students to analyze how the artifacts of the Rising Above collection communicate the “gaman” of the incarcerated people.

Lesson Objectives

Understanding	Exploration	Creation
Develop understanding of the Japanese concept of gaman.	Explore the Rising Above website and analyze objects through the lens of gaman.	Select an object, write an informative description of the object, and analyze how the object reflects the concept of gaman.

Arkansas State History Standards & College/Career Readiness Anchor Standards

Course / Grade Band	Standard	Relevant Focus
Arkansas History (Grades 7–8)	H.1.AR.H.11	Investigate social, economic, and political effects of World War II on various segments of the population in Arkansas, including ... Japanese-American internment camps.
Arkansas History (Grades 9–12)	H.5.AR.H.7	Analyze social, economic, and political effects of World War II on various segments of the population in Arkansas, including ... Japanese-American internment camps (i.e., Jerome and Rohwer).
CCSS ELA — Reading	CCRA.R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CCSS ELA — Writing	CCRA.W.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
CCSS ELA — Writing	CCRA.W.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
CCSS ELA — Speaking & Listening	CCRA.SL.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS ELA — Speaking & Listening	CCRA.SL.5	Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Lesson Outline

CLASS 1
45 minutes

Introduce & Plan
45 minutes

Note

Previous lessons provide an introduction to the Japanese American incarceration. This lesson assumes background knowledge from those lessons or another source.

1. Imagine you have 48 hours to pack one suitcase of belongings. You will be staying at an unknown location within the continental United States for an unknown duration of time. What would you bring? *(2 minutes)*
2. Share and discuss the connections to the incarceration. *(2 minutes)*
3. View [The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Incarceration](#) (4:59)
4. Discuss the video. What thoughts and questions do you have? *(3 minutes)*
5. As a group, analyze an artifact through the lens of gaman. *(10 minutes)*

Teacher Note

Use [Block Dance Break #1](#) from Crystal Bridges to model this activity so that no artifacts students could potentially use are taken. This also models how museums use tombstones and label text. See the Block Dance Break #1 page appended to this document.

6. Introducing the activity. *(10 minutes)*
 - We are going to create a Gaman Gallery. We will select artifacts and analyze how they tell a story of gaman, which the Smithsonian video describes as “to bear the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.”
 - You have 10 minutes to browse the website and choose your artifact. Once an artifact is claimed, no one else may use it. You will then have the remainder of class to complete three slides.

Gaman Gallery Assignment	
Tombstone	Gather the foundational, factual information about the artifact: • The name of the artist, birth year, death year • Title of the artifact • Year the artifact was created • Medium • Owner • City and state <i>Note: Tombstone information may not be available and can be marked as unknown. Why might the information be missing? What is the impact of this loss?</i>
Label Text	If this artifact were on display in a museum, what information would be essential and compelling to the viewer? Since label text must be succinct, keep your description under 300 words.
Gaman Connection	Reflect on the concept of gaman: “to bear the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.” How does the artifact reflect gaman to you?

7. Begin selecting an artifact. *(12 minutes)*

Teacher Note: Modifications

While this activity focuses on a gaman gallery, it can be modified in a variety of ways, such as:

- Students could curate the objects they find most powerful.
- For an extended lesson, students could curate a micro-exhibit of four different types of objects, then explain how their four objects uniquely tell the story of Jerome and Rohwer.
- Students could collaborate on a shared gallery that focuses on one type of object: artwork, school memorabilia, everyday objects, etc.

CLASS 2

45 minutes

Creating

45 minutes

8. Finalize artifacts and create slides.

CLASS 3

45 minutes

Sharing

45 minutes

9. Share projects in partners, small groups, or whole class presentations.
 - **Speed Sharing:** Create two seated lines. Allow partner 1 to share for 2 minutes, then switch to partner 2. Shift one line down a person to create new partners, then repeat. Close with a whole class discussion: what did you find powerful in your peers' work?
 - **Four Square:** Create groups of four to share with one another, then synthesize their sharing for the whole class.

Sources

[The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942–1946](#) (Smithsonian)
[Gaman: Remembering Arkansas's Internment of Japanese-Americans](#) (First Security: Only in Arkansas)
[Roger Shimomura, Block Dance Break #1](#) (Clarity)

Block Dance Break #1

Roger Shimomura, 2006

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art • Bentonville, Arkansas

