

Japanese-American Diaspora — Paths Out and Forward

Teacher Lesson Plan

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SUBJECT

AR History / US History

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 7–12

DURATION

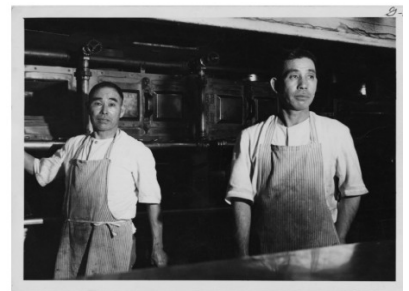
55–60 minutes

FORMAT

Inquiry + discussion

Rationale and Explanation

This lesson encourages students to use maps and archival materials from the [Rising Above in Arkansas](#) website to gain and/or deepen their knowledge of Japanese American diasporic movements during incarceration during World War II. By analyzing maps and various primary sources, students will analyze the politics of diaspora in general, and in this context, the role of power and policy in driving and creating diasporic communities over time.



Norima Kitaoka and Yoshito Sera in the kitchen at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, Illinois.

Lesson Objectives

Knowledge

Identify reasons for temporary and permanent leave from the Rohwer and Jerome camps during and after incarceration.

Analysis

Interpret map data by comparing and contrasting information related to temporary leave, transfers, closings, and returning home.

Critical Thinking

Evaluate the role of power in the diaspora, including whether movement is a choice or means of control.

Communication

Explain reasoning orally or in writing using evidence from maps and/or primary sources.

Arkansas State 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 soldiers off to war, war casualties, women at work, Japanese-American internment (incarceration is becoming the more accepted term) camps, victory, and war production plants.
United States History Since 1929 (Grades 9–12)	H.5.U.S.H.4	Analyze primary and secondary sources to evaluate the social impact of historical events on the American people.

Note

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

Lesson Outline

STEP 1

5 minutes

Define Diaspora

Begin with a definition of diaspora, which can be shared on the board or in slides.

Diaspora: the dispersion of people from their homeland, often shaped by force, constraint, or unequal power.

Next, have students do a [“Think, Pair, Share”](#) over the following discussion questions:

- 1) What might cause a diaspora?
- 2) Is movement always a choice? Link this discussion to the Japanese incarceration camps in World War II. This discussion should include:
 - Incarceration as a diaspora, and how it was used purposefully to control and/or break down Japanese enclaves in the West
 - The various reasons for which individuals moved from the camps, whether by choice or not

Helpful Resources: Government Intent with Incarceration

- [Article](#) discussing government’s intent to permanently relocate and “break up” communities
- Local newspaper [article](#) that states that the government’s goal was permanent relocation
- [The Pen](#), a magazine published by the Rohwer Outpost; this includes the perspective of Japanese Americans on their own dispersal and relocation

STEP 2

10–15 minutes

Introduce Map & Digital Archives

Begin with an overview of the [Rising Above interactive map](#) and its functions. Direct students to the “Forced Relocation” chapter and discuss how evacuation is the first phase of the diaspora – removing people from their homes and placing them in temporary detention centers. Also point to the “Diaspora and Return” chapter.

Show students how to navigate the map. Demonstrate the following key functions:

- Read the narrative in the left side bar and select different sub-chapters (light blue) within a chapter (dark blue) for more information. When you choose a subchapter, the map data updates to highlight and label the layers for that chapter.
- Select a feature in the map to obtain more information with photos and other primary sources relevant to that feature.

Next, show students how to use the [Rising Above archive](#). Use the Filters button at the top right to illustrate search functions.

- Key filters to encourage include:
 - **Dates:** Use the sliding bar to create a date range. Direct student to narrow their search to the years of the incarceration (1942–1945)
 - **Item Type:** 3D Object, Artwork, Audio, Photos, Correspondence, etc.
 - **Topics:** *Suggested topics to filter (using the filter tool)*
 - *World War II – Leaving Camp – Resettlement*
 - *World War II – Leaving Camp – Returning Home*
 - *World War II – Leaving Camp – Student Leave*
 - *World War II – Leaving Camp – Work Leave*
 - *Permanent Agricultural work leave*
 - *Temporary agricultural work leave*
 - *Military service*

STEP 3

30 minutes

Focused Map & Archive Inquiry

Assign each student or small group (2–3) one specific reason for movement.

- Military enlistment
- College enrollment
- Labor/work relocation
- Family reunification/camp transfer
- End of war release

Students will use the map and archives to find the answers to these questions. A more challenging layer to this assignment could be requiring students to cite their evidence from the map and a primary source.

Questions for the students to consider:

- Who could leave this way?
- What did they need (permission, sponsorship, etc.)?
- Where did they go?
- Does this pathway look more like choice or constraint (choice made by someone in power)? Why?

Note for Students

Students will need to read the descriptions beneath each map heading on the left menu. The descriptions, coupled with sources from the archives, will help to narrow down paths of movement for more specific reasons. While students are encouraged to select sources that interest them, the example records below may serve as helpful guides for students who need support navigating the archive.

Example sources from the archive related to relocation during/after incarceration

- [Telegram](#) between Gov. Adkins and Dillon Myer reinforcing that Japanese Americans are not allowed to work in the state
- [Article](#) about a Senate subcommittee investigation; includes answers to rumors about the WRA's plans for incarcerated Japanese-Americans following the war
- [Recommendation letter](#) for Kyuji Hozaki by Nathaniel R. Griswold
- [Recommendation letter](#) for Michimasa Inouye by John F. Mailes
- [Reference request](#) for Masae Gohata
- [Biographical essay](#) by Shizuko Minami about life in camps, work, etc.
- [Telegram](#) between Gov. Adkins and Asst. Sec. of War John McCloy about the negative effects of allowing Japanese into Arkansas' colleges
- [Biographical essay](#) by Jeanne Nishimoto about thoughts/feelings on resettlement

STEP 4
10 minutes**Share & Pattern Building**

Lead students in a quick share-out of their research. While they share, create a chart on the board to organize their information and find patterns. Push the conversation to identify the patterns through prompts such as: did certain groups have more or less choice? Which paths required approval? Was relocation more often a result of choice or constraint?

<i>Path</i>	<i>Who traveled?</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Choice or Constraint?</i>

Key Takeaways

- Diaspora is not one movement or event; it is a series over time.
- Some people left earlier than others but may have had stricter conditions.
- Others had to wait until the war ended.
- Movement does not necessarily equal freedom.

STEP 5
10 minutes**Reflection**

Students should respond to this exit ticket at the end of class.

Exit Ticket Prompt

Choose one pathway from the map. Explain how it shows both choice (or opportunity) and constraint in the Japanese-American diaspora.

Exit tickets may be collected digitally, on paper, or through discussion.