After the attack on Pearl Harbor, which officially entered America into World War II, the American deemed Japanese-Americans to be a threat and evacuated over 120,000 of them (many of them United States citizens) from their homes on the West Coast to isolated internment camps throughout the United States. The internees were ordered to bring only what they could carry to the barracks which would serve as their home from 1942 to 1944. This WebQuest is designed to create better understanding of the plight of the Japanese-American internee as well as understand the political influences behind their internment through documented sources, images and video, and online interactives. Throughout the activity you will demonstrate your comprehension of the topic by answering questions about the internment process, life in internment camps, and whether the exclusion order was a constitutionally supported act.

Your task is to examine and evaluate the sources provided in this WebQuest. Utilize the videos provided in order to understand the plight of the Japanese Internees from their perspective. Read the documents and engage in the digital interactives to learn about the events leading to the internment, the process of the internment, and the conditions and everyday life of the camps. After evaluating these sources, you will demonstrate your understanding by answering a series of questions and providing an essay about your perspective on the internment experience.

Step 1: Evaluation of sources
Untold Stories: Manzanar: "Never Again" is a PBS documentary that explores the interconnected stories of actual Manzanar internees as well as explains the importance and need of the preservation of this site and its role in educating future generations to ensure that something like the Japanese Internment will never happen again. Ansel Adam's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar is a collection of photographs from Ansel Adam's observations during a visit to Manzanar War Relocation Center in California. They document the internees lives behind the barbed wire. Dear Miss Breed: Letters From Camp is a website with information about the Japanese Internment and contains letters written by internee children to Miss Clara Breed, the children's librarian at the San Diego Public Library. This is an excellent website providing insight into camp life through the eyes of children. A More Perfect Union offers a digital interactive examining the events leading up to the evacuation order, the removal and internment of Japanese-Americans, life within the camps, and the constitutionality of the exclusion order and unlawful detainment of American citizens.

Step 2: Applying the information
Answer the following questions to demonstrate a comprehension of the information reviewed:
#1. What are two key factors leading to the President's signing of Executive Order 9066?
#2. What are three similarities between the internment experience of Japanese-Americans in the United States to that of internees in German concentration camps?
#3. What were the conditions of the internment camps and what was the general attitude of the internees towards these conditions?
#4. What were some of the activities and past times of the internees, and how are they similar to that of a "normal" community?
#5. What were the consequences of answering "No, No," to questions #27 and 28 on the loyalty questionnaire? How would you answer?

Break into small groups for the following two activities:
#1. "Only What We Could Carry." As a small group you will represent a family unit. You have been ordered to report to a relocation center for processing and are only allowed one suitcase each. What do you bring, and why? Write down the items in order to present to the class during discussion.
#2. As a group, come up with ideas for activities that you feel would break up the monotony of camp life. How does this activity raise morale? What are the logistics of this activity? Keep in mind the limited resources and privileges available to the internees. Write a one page essay for the following question:
#1. Executive Order 9066 led to the unlawful detainment of United States
citizens. Not one internee was ever convicted of espionage or treason. During wartime is such an act constitutional? Are the “safety” of many more important than the constitutional rights of a few? What is your opinion on Executive Order 9066?

Evaluation

Participation in the activities and the completion of the questions are the basis for this unit's grading. Not only will I be checking for accuracy, but for comprehension of the topic and evidence of critical thinking. The grading rubric is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Below Basic</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>Student has completed the entire assignment, provides detailed answers to unit questions.</td>
<td>Student has completed the entire assignment, answers lack detail.</td>
<td>Assignment incomplete, basic answers.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Student engages in discussion, and contributes many ideas.</td>
<td>Student contributes, though may only offer a few ideas.</td>
<td>No participation or contribution to discussion.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Evidence of critical thinking and obvious connections to the subject matter.</td>
<td>Slight evidence of critical thinking, makes a few connections to subject matter.</td>
<td>Lack of critical thinking and no connections to subject matter.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Score

Conclusion

As this unit comes to a close I challenge you to think about how, as Americans, we can learn from this experience. Have we seen similar actions in our recent history? What can we do to ensure that this will never happen again? As Californians, we are fortunate to be within a day's drive from one of these internment camps. I challenge you to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site one day and walk the grounds where thousands of internees spent a part of their lives, imprisoned only because of the racial heritage.

Teacher Page

This WebQuest is designed to connect the student to the experience of a Japanese-American internee. Through understanding the unlawful imprisonment of American citizens who were interned for merely being of Japanese descent, the student is able to understand the social and constitutional injustices as well as understand the role of race relation and cultural sensitivity. Due to similar sentiments experienced shortly after the attacks on 9/11, it is imperative to establish these historical connections in order to ensure that racism is unable to affect civil liberties again.

Reviews

Footer

This WebQuest is created and published by using zWebQuest (http://zunal.com)
Copyright © 2003 - 2008 | All rights Reserved
The WebQuest engine code and templates designed by zunal.com (Zafer Unal, PhD.)
All WebQuests published with this tool are property of their creators. However, permission is granted for others to print/distribute, share, use and modify this WebQuest for educational, non-commercial purposes as long as the original authorship is credited.