

Name:	Location:
Class/Topic: US HST	Time:
Grade Level: 11/12 <sup>th</sup> grade	Date:

**Overview of the Japanese-American Incarceration Experience:** What would it feel like to have family and friends rounded up and ‘deported’ because of their race? In this lesson, students will gain a sense of what the experience may have been like for Japanese-Americans from Portland, Oregon’s Japantown during World War II. This lesson would fit it reasonably well with students who have already studied WWII, the bombing at Pearl Harbor, and constitutional history.

**Goal:** To analyze the Japanese-American experience of leaving their homes for years of incarceration. To observe and analyze the photographs and newspaper articles that describe this experience. To interpret the internment policy as constitutional or not.

**Standards: Common Core**

**Objectives(s):** **1.** Students will be able to analyze photographs and newspaper clippings from the time period in which Japanese-Americans were interned. **2.** Students will be able to write a reflection that explains the experience of these Americans making connections from prior knowledge, experience, images analyzed. **3.** Students will be able to interpret the U.S. Constitution to uphold or reject the internment policy; discuss the constitutional issues in conflict during this time (habeas corpus, treason, equality before the law, citizen rights, search and seizure).

**Time:** Approx. 1 ½ to 2 hours

**Resources:** Museum in a Suitcase, whiteboard, notebook paper, pencils, document camera, U.S. Constitution

**Procedure:**

**Previewing (20-30 min):** Have students imagine that they are Japanese-American high school students during the time of May 1942. Have them take a look at the document that represents the notice of internment (E1) that requires all persons of Japanese descent to move away from the west coast. Have students write a diary entry describing their personal feelings, thoughts, concerns, and fears (social, economic, and political) about this poster.

**Questions to think about:** Why should you have to leave just because you’re of Japanese descent? Is this decision constitutional? What might you lose if you leave your home? What do you have to gain if you do not go away as the government has ordered? What will this new place (internment camp) look like? Will you stay together with your family?

To give students a sense of what Japantown looked like at the time, show them a series of images from the suitcase (teacher's choice of which images to show)  
Define: relocation and internment (show map, H1).

**Observe & Interpret (20 min):** Have students find newspaper articles from 1942 (E2, I7) and interpret a possible rationale for interning Japanese-Americans and the community reactions for a class discussion. Have them write down their feelings and/or reactions to the newspaper articles as if they were non-Japanese-Americans (Again, social and political). Then, have students compare and contrast their original diary entry with their new reactions to the newspaper article in written form.

**Questions to think about:** Should you fear the Japanese-Americans? Are they citizens or not? Were they connected to the bombing at Pearl Harbor? Is it constitutional to intern these people?

**Constitutional Role-playing (Optional; Approx. 1 hour)** Based on their previous knowledge, have the class list potential legal conflicts with the order (e.g. federal government's role in defending the country, habeas corpus, treason, equality before the law, search and seizure, presidential powers, balance of powers, citizens rights). Put these on the board (5 min).

Divide the class into groups of nine. Each student is a justice who will argue one of the above constitutional points; a chief justice should be appointed on each team who is responsible for assigning issues of interest to each justice (5 min).

Have students read the Constitution to find text bearing on their issue in relation to the treatment of Japanese Americans. (Have students find the US Constitution online [www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.overview.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.overview.html) or [www.usconstitution.net/](http://www.usconstitution.net/)). Quoting text from the Constitution, have students draft a 1-page argument supporting or denying the constitutionality of the order (15-20 min).

Have each chief justice call his/her court to order. Each justice should present his/her case and is responsible for listening to the arguments of his/her colleagues. After all 9 have presented, have the chief justice call a vote (10 min).

Have all chief justices report the decision and main arguments back to the whole class. If the courts agree that internment of Japanese Americans was unfair, have them make recommendations for reparation. Then have students research and evaluate what reparations were actually offered and when. Discuss: Could this history be repeated? Why or why not? Are there any similar situations today? What role do citizens have in upholding the rights guaranteed to individuals in the Constitution? What recourse do citizens have to violations of rights? (20 min)

**Assessment:** Review students' diary entries as well as their comparisons to the newspaper articles. Assess student understanding of the sequence of events and experiences felt by Japanese-Americans. Assess students' understanding of the U.S. Constitution through written argument of internment and its supporting evidence; also, observe how students role-play in groups.