

UPROOTED

Japanese American
FARM LABOR CAMPS
during World War II

LESSON TWO: Evaluating documentary videos as a historic source

Developed for the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission by Peter Pappas, School of Education, University of Portland, Portland Oregon

UprootedExhibit.com

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(pdf includes live links to videos)



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Lesson 2 Teacher's Guide

Essential question: How reliable are documentary videos as a historic source?

Lesson Goals

- + Demonstrate Common Core close reading of source material. Move students through three steps of close reading – what does the source material say, how does it say it, what does it mean to me?
- + Foster student and teacher skills in historic thinking – evaluating videos and other visual sources.
- + Give students guided practice formulating and defending arguments.

Materials needed

- + Video: “Uprooted” Available at website or on Vimeo
<http://vimeo.com/99795145>
- + Video: “Japanese Relocation” (ca. 1943) Available at Internet Archive and at YouTube
archive.org/details/Japanese1943
- + Lesson Materials from this packet
- + Optional video: “Mr. Blabbermouth! (1942)” available at the Internet Archive.
archive.org/details/Mr.Blabbermouth

Note: for simplicity both video and video content will be referred to as video.

Lesson Steps

1. Introduction

Teacher introduces the lesson by telling students that they are about to watch two short videos about the experience of some Japanese Americans during World War II. The first video was made in 1943 by the US government as an informational service to the US public. It features video shot in 1941 and 1942 and narration by a government official. The second video was made in 2014 by documentary filmmakers to accompany the Uprooted Exhibit. It features historic video from World War II as well as oral history interviews with Japanese Americans that the filmmakers shot in 2013 and 2014. The narration is taken from the interviews.

Before the videos are shown, ask the students which video they think will be a more reliable historic source. Be sure to have them justify their thinking to their peers.

- + A video made in the era being studied or a video made over seventy years later?
- + A video made by the United States government or a video made by documentary filmmakers?

- + A video narrative by a government official or a video narrated by people who participated in the event?

Key themes to be examined

- + What does source material say?
- + How does source material say it?
- + How does source material connect to me?

2. What does the video say?

The first view of the video should be objective cataloging of content, including:

- + Visual elements: camera angles, lighting, editing, special effects, shot composition, use of narrator or live action, graphics.
- + Audio elements: music (instrumentation, tempo, mood), narration.
- + Contrast in how audio and video technology has changed over the last seventy years.

Activities could include

- + Show each video and have students use T-charts (visual/audio) to track their observations.
- + Isolate the visual and audio track – show with the sound off. Play audio track while covering the screen. Discuss and compare visual and audio elements.
- + Ask students to work in small groups to compare the similarities and differences in the content included in each video. For example: both discuss the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. “Uprooted” spends nearly half the video on the farm labor camps while “Japanese Relocation” only briefly mentions the subject.

3. How does the video say it?

In this phase of the lesson students can begin to examine the messages and meaning of each video and compare them.

Key questions include

- + Who made these videos and what was their purpose in making the videos?
- + What was the essential message of each video? What makes you think that?
- + What audio and visual elements are used to support the message of the video? Cite specifics.
- + How effective are these videos in communicating their message?

This portion of the lesson could be accomplished with small group discussion or as a full class.

Another option could include a **“fishbowl” discussion group**. Have a group of three to six students agree to have a conversation “in the fishbowl” while others observe and track their

conversation. The students in the fishbowl can respond and discuss to the three questions in this section of the lesson.

The rest of students should form a circle around the fishbowl and be asked to fulfill a task that requires them to focus on the fishbowl discussion. They could be given a basic task of simply tracking the answers student in the fishbowl have for the prompts.

Student could complete two-column notes of the discussion. In the left column they write at least three important ideas that the group discussed. In the right column they write their own response to each idea.

Students could record important ideas that they feel were not discussed in the fishbowl.

4. How does the video connect to me?

In this phase of the lesson student reflect on their reactions to the videos, the historic events, and broader themes they depict.

Key questions include

- + How is each video a product of its time?
- + Do the videos rely on fact or opinion? Do they appeal to the viewer's reason or emotion? Cite specifics.
- + How do these videos communicate in ways that would differ from a textbook?
- + What is my reaction to the videos and the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II? How might others see these videos in different ways than me?

5. Assessment

Students self assess by summarizing three things they have learned about the value of documentary videos as a historic source. Represent in one of three ways:

- + Quick write: In five minutes write down what you have learned. Work on getting ideas on paper, not on writing style.
- + Design a diagram or graphic that represents what you have learned.
- + Discuss with a partner and agree on three elements.

Extension activity

The parallels between the two films can be the basis of a 1942-based, role-playing dialogue between Milton Eisenhower, the narrator of "Japanese Relocation," and the Japanese Americans interviewed in "Uprooted."

The setting

Milton Eisenhower and his aides are invited to speak to West Coast citizens on plans for the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. They outline their plans and take

questions from Japanese Americans and other people in attendance.

Assign roles

Let students choose or be assigned roles.

- + Assign a small group to play Milton Eisenhower and few of his aides. Ask them to study the explanations given by Eisenhower in the film
- + Assign students to represent Japanese Americans interviewed in “Uprooted.” Ask them to review the statements made in that film.
- + Assign a few students to represent Americans living in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Assign them readings to give them a feeling for the public fears following Pearl Harbor. One film from that era that captures the anti-Japanese paranoia is “Mr. Blabbermouth! (1942)” available at the Internet Archive.
archive.org/details/Mr.Blabbermouth
- + The rest of the students can be assigned to track the arguments made by each of the three groups for accuracy and effectiveness.

Following the simulation all students can revisit the questions that were used to introduce the lesson –which of these two films is the more valuable historic source?

Common Core Skills

Key Ideas and Details / What does source material say?

Grades 6-8

6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Grades 9-10

9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Grades 11-12

11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Craft and Structure / How does source material say it?

Grades 6-8

6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion, or avoidance of particular facts).

Grades 9-10

9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Grade 11-12

11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas/ How does source material connect to me?

Grades 6-8

6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Grades 9-10

9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Grades 11-12

11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.