

# The Tragedy of War: Japanese American Internment



## Traveling Exhibit Self Guide | Grade 9-12

*This Self Guide was written and researched by Lauren Hohn for the Museum of History and Holocaust Education*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Museum of History and  
Holocaust Education

As you explore this traveling exhibit, you will have a choice of questions to answer. The list of questions appears in the first column. Write your answers in the second column.

## The Tragedy of War: Japanese American Internment



*Choose ONE question from these two.  
Circle the question you are going  
to answer.*

1. What does the word "internment" mean? Why is it misleading to describe the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II using this term?
2. At what point should the rights of citizens be limited or denied in the name of national security?

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# The Issei and Nisei



*Answer ALL THREE questions.*

1. Analyze Harvey Watanabe's quote: "If anything happens between the U.S. and Japan, I'm staying here. And I want you to remember you're an American citizen." What do you think Harvey's father meant by this?
2. Explore the three photographs on this panel. How do the photographs' subjects present themselves? What does this tell us about their relationship to the United States?
3. The younger Nisei and Sansei generations embraced American culture more than the Issei generation. In what ways are these generational differences similar to the experiences of other immigrant groups in America? How are they different?

1.

2.

3.

# Lives Interrupted



Choose *THREE* questions from these four. Circle the questions you are going to answer.

1. Describe the experience of Japanese Americans after Executive Order 9066 was issued?
2. Can you think of more recent examples of Americans' civil liberties being restricted? How are they similar to or different from the experiences of Japanese Americans?
3. Read about Executive Order 9066. Does this change the way you think about President Franklin D. Roosevelt? Explain your answer.
4. President Roosevelt learned that "There is no Japanese 'problem' on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese." Why did he still proceed with Executive Order 9066?

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# WRA Camps: “A desert, no green”



*Answer BOTH of these questions.*

1. Describe the ways that families adjusted to life in the camps. What strategies did they use to cope with traumatic conditions?
2. Study the map of WRA camps and assembly centers. What does this map tell us about Japanese American internment during World War II?

1.

2.

# Life in Camp



Choose *THREE* question from these four. Circle the questions you are going to answer.

1. Analyze the photos on this panel. What do they tell us about life in the camps? How are they similar or different?
2. Why do you think some internees chose to "continue their lives as full as possible" while others resisted and rioted?
3. Study the hand-drawn image of the Minidoka camp, Idaho. Describe the image and discuss what you think the image's composition says about life in camp.
4. The word *Gaman* is associated with the art created in the camps. *Gaman* translates as "enduring the unbearable with patience and dignity." How does this word describe the experiences of Japanese-American internees?

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