

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

March 1, 2017

Article: **MEDIA LITERACY AND JAPANESE AMERICAN WORLD WAR II INCARCERATION**

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Section: Sponsored Newspapers in Education Content (scroll down on menu bar to this tab)

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Objective:

Students will practice their reading skills to explore how the author uses reasoning and evidence to support specific points in the text by using deeper level questions and connecting the content to their personal lives.

Pre-Reading: Get into pairs and go through these questions together. Be prepared to share with the larger group.

- What do you know about Japanese internment during World War II? What historical incident happened that started the chain of events leading to them being imprisoned on American soil?
- 110,000 Japanese Americans were removed from their homes and property simply because they looked like the enemy. Was this fair? Were we in danger? Why do you think this happened? What damage was caused to these people and families? What did they lose in the process?
- How could this happen in a democracy founded on freedom and equality?
- Why did so few of their fellow Americans speak out to defend them?

You can learn a lot from historical images. Examine the picture closely. What do you see? What do you think is going on? What does it make you wonder about?



What emotions does it stir inside you? How would you feel if this was you and your family?

The picture is of Mr. and Mrs. Moji, inside truck, saying goodbye to their dog King on “evacuation day.” Evicted Japanese Americans were forced to leave their pets behind.

Vocabulary:

Look up the definitions for the following words. Write definitions in the space provided, using your own words. Get into pairs and take turns telling your partner the definition of these four words without looking at what you wrote.

Incarceration

Injustice

Misconception

Propaganda

Building Language Skills:

Journalists and politicians used **euphemisms** like “evacuation” and “relocation” to convince the public that Japanese Americans were being treated fairly. Newspapers, including The Seattle Times, told readers this forced migration was merely a safety precaution and anyone who protested was disloyal or unpatriotic.

What is a *euphemism*? Can you use the *context clues* in the rest of the sentence to guess what the word means? Write your guess in the space below. Then, look up the word using a dictionary and write the definition, using your own words.

Your guess:

Definition:

Why would *euphemisms* be used in the media? Would they help sway public opinion about the issue? Why or why not?

Comprehension:

1. Seventy-five years ago, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. What did this authorize?
2. A new war, a surprise attack on American soil, and longstanding prejudice against immigrants who looked and spoke differently created a perfect storm of fear and hysteria. How many Japanese Americans in King County were taken from their homes and imprisoned by armed soldiers?

Post-Reading Class Discussion or Journal Writing Assignment:

Based on media coverage at the time, the public believed this mass removal was justified. Today, many of us still hold misconceptions about the Japanese American incarceration and other injustices in our past.

- What role does the media play in shaping our understanding of history and current events?
- How do we tell the difference between truth and propaganda?
- How do you separate fact from fiction when you read news online or watch it on TV?

