

“To Serve or Not to Serve” Debate Lesson

Lesson Title: To Serve or Not to Serve – Japanese-Americans in the American military during World War II

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Contact Information: Cold Springs Middle School

Appropriate for Grade Level(s): 8th Grade

US History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s): CCSS

Discussion Question(s): Should Japanese-Americans have been required, or allowed, to serve in the American military during World War II?

Engagement Strategy: Small group debates

Student Readings (list): “To Serve or Not to Serve” essay by Mike Inskeep
Attached list of short readings

Total Time Needed: 2-3 days

Lesson Outline: The class will be divided into 3 person pro and con teams.

After reviewing materials teams will prepare one minute opening statement, 3 minute expanded argument with evidence from arguments, one minute closing statement, and predict opposition’s key arguments and prepare a counter argument.

The debate format will include the one minute opening statement from each side, 3 minute expanded argument from each side, 5 minute moderated free exchange, and finally a one minute closing argument from each side. The pro side will start each stage of the debate.

During the debate all the other teams will act as debate judges. After the debate the mediator (teacher) will have the judges discuss aloud the strengths and weaknesses of the two positions.

After all the debates have been completed the students will write a summary paragraph giving their final position on the argument. The students will be required to use evidence from the readings and the debates to justify their position.

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
5 minutes	Creating groups	Gathering groups
25 minutes	Monitoring students	Reading and taking notes from essays and selected readings.
30 to 45 Minutes	Monitoring students	Preparing opening and closing statements, expanded arguments, and predicting opposition key arguments.

60-75 minutes	Mediating the debates/mediating the post-debate discussion	Presenting pro and con arguments debating whether Japanese-Americans should have been required to serve in the American military.
20-30 minutes	Monitoring student progress	Writing final position paragraph citing evidence from the readings and debates.

Description of Lesson Assessment: After all the debates have been completed the students will write a summary paragraph giving their final position on the argument. The students will be required to use evidence from the readings and the debates to justify their position.

How will students reflect on the process and their learning? The students will reflect while judging the debates and also in creating their final position essays.

Selected Readings and Discussion Questions:

To Serve or Not to Serve - Documents and Questions

“The Inouyes have great *on* for America...It has been good to us....I would never have chosen it to be this way – it is you who must try to return the goodness of this country. You are my first son and you are very precious to your mother and to me, but you must do what must be done. If it is necessary, you must be ready to – Do not bring dishonor on our name.”

Senator Daniel Inouye’s father

Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II*, Greenwood Press, 2002. Page 73-74.

“The men of the 442nd, who have endured the horrors and traumas of World War II, have a permanent blood relationship that binds those of us from friendly communities in Hawaii with the volunteers from behind barbed wire, such as Min Masuda. The men of the 442nd, who left behind parents and loved ones in the dusty, desolate internment camps such as Camp Minidoka, were a special breed. The question that has long endured in my mind is: “I wonder what I would have done? Would I have volunteered?” I would like to say yes, but not having been herded like cattle into camps such as these, I can’t say what I would have done.”

Senator Daniel Inouye, Hawaii, Medal of Honor Recipient

Minoru Masuda, *Letters from the 442nd*, University of Washington Press, 2008. Page ix.

Questions –

- 1) How can the feelings of both Daniel Inouye and his father be described in regard to duty? (The term *on*, pronounced “own”, describes the Japanese sense of obligation to another group or individual.)
- 2) Would Daniel Inouye’s background influence his decision to volunteer for the military?
- 3) Did Inouye and his father feel a sense of obligation to honor the U.S.?

“Then, into this state of mind came the announcement that the army would be recruiting from the camp to form a segregated regimental combat team. The news fell like a clap of thunder on our incredulous ears. How could the government and the army, after branding us disloyal, after stripping us of our possessions and dignity, and imprisoning us in barbed wire concentration camps, how could they now ask us to volunteer our lives in defense of a country that had so wrongfully treated us? The incredible announcement caused immediate turmoil and split the camp into two. One group reiterated the complete irrationality of the recruitment under the circumstances, and pointed out that once again the government was exploiting us and doing us in. The other group took the longer view and saw the threat posed to the Nikkei if the recruitment failed. A society as irrational and racist as the one that put us into Minnidoka could certainly be expected to follow by saying that the fact there were no volunteers only proved their rightness in calling us disloyal and throwing us into camps.

I wrestled with the problem as both arguments tumbled around inside my head...It was a soul-searching decision, for the possibility of death in the battlefield was real, and, in the Nikkei context, almost expected. I admit, too, despite all the trauma, that an inexplicable tinge of patriotism entered into my decision to volunteer.”

Minoru Masuda, 1970's

Minoru Masuda, *Letters from the 442nd*, University of Washington Press, 2008. Page 7-8.

Questions –

- 1) Why did the Japanese in the internment camps have different reactions to the military recruitment and draft of Japanese Americans?
- 2) What “circumstances “ is being referred to that made recruitment seem irrational?
- 3) What decision did Masuda make, and what contributed to his decision?

“27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States of America on combat duty, wherever ordered? _____

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization? _____”

Excerpt from the Selective Service, “Statement of United States Citizen of Japanese Ancestry”
Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II*, Greenwood Press, 2002.
Page 161.

Questions –

- 1) Why would some Japanese Americans be unwilling to say yes to both of these questions?
- 2) Since an emigrant from Japan could never legally become a citizen at this time, what would be an issue with answering yes to question 28?

“To give you an idea of how “Justice” works, the following were the penalties that various judges dealt to the Nisei resisters even though the charges were identical. Judge Louis A. Goodman dismissed the indictments against twenty-seven draft resisters from Tule Lake, saying, “it is shocking to the conscience that an American citizen be confined on the ground of disloyalty and then, while so under duress and restraint, be compelled to serve in the armed forces or be prosecuted for not yielding to such compulsion.” In Arizona, the judge fined the Poston draft resisters one cent. No jail term. In other camps, the sentences ranged from two to five years [in prison].”

Lawson Fusao Inada, *Only What They Could Carry*”, Heyday Books, 2000.
Page 320.

Questions –

- 1) Why did different judges give out different sentences for the same crime?
- 2) What message were the different judges trying to send?

“I had been really devastated,” Honolulu construction worker Don Seki said, recalling the shock after Pearl Harbor and why he was excited about the 422nd. “I don’t care who it was, Japanese or foreign elements, they bombed our island. I was so disgusted with Japan, so I was thinking, we got to do something about this.... That’s the thing that made me volunteer.”

Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons*, St. Martin’s Press, 2007. Page 60-61.

Questions –

- 1) How did Don Seki feel about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor?
- 2) Why did he want to volunteer for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (this unit was a segregated Japanese American only unit)?

Middle School Debate Rubric

	Poor 1 pts	Fair 2 pts	Good 3 pts	Excellent 4 pts
Used Research	<p>Poor</p> <p>No facts were used and the research was done on opinion.</p>	<p>Fair</p> <p>Only a few facts were used and it was mostly based upon opinion.</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Stats and information was cited, but some sources were missed.</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Stats were used and sources were cited for all stats.</p>
Understanding of Topic	<p>Poor</p> <p>Research and speech show little or no topic understanding.</p>	<p>Fair</p> <p>Research and speech show a moderate level of topic understanding.</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Research and speech show a good level of topic understanding.</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Research and speech show a high level of topic understanding.</p>
Organization & Teamwork	<p>Poor</p> <p>Some group member complete their role. Teacher must redirect team frequently.</p>	<p>Fair</p> <p>Most group members complete their role. Team works together with some teacher redirection.</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Each group member completes his/her role. Team works together with little teacher redirection.</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Each group member completes his/her role. Team works together with no teacher redirection.</p>
Debate Expectations	<p>Poor</p> <p>Does not meet debate expectations or must be reminded 5 or more times.</p>	<p>Fair</p> <p>Meets most debate expectations with 3-4 reminders.</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Meets all debate expectations with 1-2 reminders.</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Speaks only when directed by moderator. Listens carefully to all others speaking. Is polite and respectful to opposing team. Is supportive to teammates.</p>
Speech	<p>Poor</p> <p>Voice is not loud, clear, confident, or expressive. Makes no eye contact with audience.</p>	<p>Fair</p> <p>Voice is sometimes loud, clear, confident, and expressive. Makes little eye contact with audience.</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Voice is mostly loud, clear, confident, and expressive. Makes some eye contact with audience.</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Voice is loud, clear, confident, and expressive. Makes eye contact with audience.</p>

To Serve or Not to Serve:

Why Japanese-American Internees would choose to serve, or not serve, in the U.S. military during World War II

Mike Inskip

The dilemma of the *Nisei*, Japanese-Americans born in the United States to Japanese immigrant parents, was whether or not to serve a country that had removed them from their homes and forced them into internment camps. For many the decision came down to loyalty to their new homeland. Daniel Inouye's father told him as he left to serve in the Army, "Do not bring dishonor to our name."¹ Inouye did bring honor to his family winning the Medal of Honor serving in Europe in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. For other Japanese-Americans the persecution and discrimination would not allow them in good conscience to serve in the American military. These men from the Heart Mountain and Tule Lake internment camps actively protested being drafted into the U.S. military. The truly difficult decision that these men had to make, while being confined to a prison-like internment camp, deserves respect no matter which decision they made.

Many factors lead to the eventual exclusion, removal and detention of almost 120,000 Japanese-Americans, many of whom were actually born in this country.² Preexisting prejudice, before the war, toward Japanese-Americans included laws restricting the purchase of land and prohibiting marriages between Asians and Caucasians. Trade unions discriminated against them by prohibiting them from joining the unions and thus restricting what jobs were available.³ After the attack on Pearl Harbor war hysteria magnified the anger toward Japanese-Americans. It was at this point that President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 that, without naming Japanese-Americans directly, stated "from which

¹ Wendy Ng. Japanese American Internment During World War II, (Greenwood Press, 2002), 74.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ Ellen Levine. A Fence Away From Freedom, (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 2.

any and all persons may be excluded as deemed necessary or desirable” from areas of the west coast that would fall under military jurisdiction.⁴

At first The Japanese-Americans were asked to leave voluntarily, which some did, but then the remaining Japanese-Americans on the west coast were forced to move to evacuation centers such as Santa Anita Race Track or any of the other 15 Assembly areas in California, Washington, Oregon, and Arizona.⁵ No other ethnic groups, including the Germans or the Italians, were subject to removal to internment camps. Only Japanese-Americans were forced to leave their homes and move to the Relocation Centers on the west coast. Interestingly the Japanese-Americans in Hawaii were not forced to move to Internment Camps, probably because they were such a large percent of the population in Hawaii.

Many of the Japanese-Americans had very little time to gather or dispose of their possessions. Some had as little as 48 hours or less.⁶ After spending time at the Assembly Areas they were then moved to the Internment Camps. These camps were hastily built and not designed to protect against the weather conditions in the far flung locations. At Manzanar the barracks were just 20 by 25 foot clapboard barracks covered with tar paper. The wind, snow, and the sand could blow right through them. There was very little privacy with no partitions between the toilets, no shower curtains, or partitions in within the barracks.⁷ Over time the residents transformed these harsh conditions into more livable spaces with gardens, parks, and recreational facilities.

In the beginning of the war Japanese-Americans were not allowed to enlist for military service. There were two exceptions to this. The first was the 100th Infantry Battalion (Separate) that already existed in Hawaii and was made up entirely of Japanese-Americans. This unit was secretly shipped to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin for training, then was later moved

⁴ Ng, Japanese American Internment, 18.

⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁶ Ibid., 23.

⁷ Ibid., 35.

to Camp Shelby in Mississippi.⁸ The second group was the Japanese linguists that became part of the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service. The military continued to train Japanese linguists at the presidio at San Francisco throughout the war. In the beginning of the war all draft eligible *Nisei* were reclassified as IV-C or enemy aliens. As the war progressed the Roosevelt Administration realized that they needed every man they could get for the war effort. Roosevelt then decided that Japanese-Americans should be allowed to serve in the military. On January 22, 1943 the 442nd Regimental Combat Team which included three infantry battalions, the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, and the 232 Engineer Company was formed.⁹ These were completely segregated Japanese-American units with the exception of the officers. In January 1944 following the loyalty questionnaire *Nisei* were allowed to be drafted adding to the ranks of the 100th and 442nd.¹⁰

When the 442nd was originally formed there was concern that they would not be able to raise the 1,500 troops for the all Japanese-American unit. In fact so many volunteered in the islands that the size of the unit was doubled.¹¹ Men joined for many reasons – national loyalty, family honor, and a need to protect their country. Don Seki, a Honolulu construction worker, recalled, “I don’t care who it was, Japanese or foreign elements, they bombed our island. I was so disgusted with Japan, so I was thinking, we got to do something about this.... That’s the thing that made me volunteer.”¹² Some volunteered to prove that they were real Americans and wanted to show everyone that they could, and would, fight for their country. The 100th / 442nd served in the European Theater was the most decorated unit in World War II. They received 9,486 Purple Hearts for killed or wounded soldiers, a total of nearly 5,000 Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, and Distinguished Service Crosses, 21 Medals of Honor, and an

⁸ Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons*, (Thomas Dunne Books, 2007), 42.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰ Ng, *Japanese American Internment*, 71-72.

¹¹ Yenne, *Rising Sons*, 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 60-61.

unprecedented eight Presidential Unit Citations.¹³ These men served their country with extreme courage and honor.

Although many Japanese-Americans did enlist or were drafted in the U.S. military others chose not to. As Mits Koshiyama, a young draft resister said, “That the government has a right to put you in a camp, take away all your constitutional rights, and then force you into a segregated army to fight for the very principles that are denied to you? I said no, that’s wrong. You can’t draft me to fight for something that you’re taking away from me.”¹⁴ Those who chose to resist the draft were arrested, tried, and some were sentenced to prison. Many resisters were persecuted in their communities by other Japanese-Americans that felt they were bringing dishonor to their communities. Many of these “troublemakers”, who refused to say yes to a loyalty oath while in the internment camps, were sent to the Tule Lake camp to be segregated from the “loyal” population.¹⁵ Much attention is given to the soldiers that fought valiantly with the 100th and 442nd, but the men who resisted being drafted by a country that forced them and their families behind barbed wire were just as courageous.

Japanese-American’s were faced with a very conflicting dilemma, should they fight for and defend a country that has locked them and their families up in internment camps without a trial and in violation of their constitutional rights. Some said “Yes” and chose to fight for the honor of their families and the United States. While others said they would fight only if their rights were restored. Both choices carried a serious price, one the possibility of being maimed or killed, while the other could bring prison and revilement from their community. Either way both acted courageously.

¹³ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴ Levine, A Fence Away, 134-135.

¹⁵ Ibid., 133.