KEY TERMS

TEACHER

Students and teachers will encounter various key terms and new vocabulary within the lessons. Use these key terms to provide more context for the students. A student key terms sheet is also available.

4-C ENEMY ALIEN This designation was assigned to Japanese American men of draft age when the US entered WWII, rendering them unable to serve in the military.

442nd REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM Organized on March 23, 1943, this segregated military unit was comprised almost entirely of Japanese Americans and became the most highly decorated regiment in the history of the US military for its size and length of service.

ALIENS Resident alien: a legal term used to describe people who are not citizens of the nation in which they live. Japanese immigrants living in America were not allowed to become citizens until 1952.

ALLEGIANCE The fidelity or loyalty owed by a citizen or subject to a government, group, or cause.
Synonym for students: loyalty, faithfulness.

ALLIES A person who cooperates and supports a group or cause.
Synonyms for students: supporters, friends.

ASSEMBLY CENTERS Temporary detention centers that held Japanese Americans during the summer of 1942. Most assembly centers were located at fairgrounds, racetracks, or former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps.

COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION & INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS (CWRIC) A Congressional commission established in 1980 to "review the facts and circumstances surrounding Executive Order 9066" and to "recommend appropriate remedies."

CONCENTRATION CAMP Camps that are outside of the normal criminal justice system and designed to confine a specific group based on race and ethnicity. "A place where people are imprisoned not because of any crimes they have committed, but simply because of who they are."
— American Jewish Committee, Japanese American National Museum Joint Statement (1998).
Note: The term "concentration camp" is intended to accurately describe what Japanese Americans experienced during WWII. It is not meant to undermine the experience of Holocaust survivors.

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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE First held in Seattle in 1978, a Day of Remembrance is a public event, commemorating the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII.

DUE PROCESS The formal legal proceedings that must be followed when someone is accused of a crime. Japanese Americans were not given due process during the mass incarceration.

EUPHEMISM Based on Greek roots meaning "to speak well" or "fair of speech," euphemisms are positive words or phrases that are used when more accurate words or phrases might seem too harsh, blunt, or disturbing.

EVACUATION The process of temporarily moving people away from immediate danger. A euphemism for the exclusion and forced removal of Japanese Americans.

EXCLUSION ZONE Areas from which all Japanese Americans were removed.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 This order was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942 and was the basis for the removal of all Japanese Americans from the West Coast during WWII.

FAMILY NUMBER A number assigned to each family unit or individual living alone during registration for the forced removal. The numbers were used for administrative and property identification purposes.

FIFTH COLUMN A group of secret supporters of an enemy that engage in sabotage from within their own country or group.

FORSWEAR ALLEGIANCE To agree to give up one's loyalty to a group or nation. ***Synonyms for students:*** reject, give up.

HABEAS CORPUS The right of individuals to not be illegally imprisoned or held without legal cause.

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INTERNMENT The confinement or imprisonment of enemy aliens (non-citizens) during a war. An inaccurate term when describing the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were American citizens.

ISSEI A first generation Japanese American; an immigrant from Japan.

JAP An insulting slur used against people of Japanese ancestry.

J-TOWN Japantown, ethnic enclaves of people of Japanese ancestry outside of Japan. Usually a segregated community during the pre-WWII era.

LOYALTY QUESTIONNAIRE (STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES CITIZEN OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY) In 1943, the War Department and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) created a questionnaire to assess the loyalty of Japanese Americans. Responses to this questionnaire were meant to aid the War Department in recruiting Nisei into a segregated Japanese American combat unit. The questionnaire also assisted the WRA in authorizing those deemed loyal for resettlement outside of the camps.

MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES A group that is excluded from the mainstream narrative in social, economic, or political ways. ***Synonyms for students:*** overlooked, oppressed.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE A branch of the US Army in which many Japanese Americans served during WWII. They used their language skills in the Pacific to translate enemy documents, interrogate Japanese prisoners of war, and persuade enemy units to surrender.

MINIDOKA RELOCATION CENTER One of the 10 US concentration camps, where over 13,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated during WWII. The majority of incarcerees came from Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and California. Minidoka was also referred to as Hunt Camp.

NISEI A second generation Japanese American; American citizen by birthright.

NIKKEI A person of Japanese ancestry living outside of Japan. Issei, Nisei, and Sansei, etc. are Nikkei.

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NON-ALIENS A euphemistic term used by the US government to refer to Japanese Americans who were US citizens. By including the word "aliens" rather than "citizens," the term denied or downplayed the legal status and rights of these Japanese Americans.

NO-NOS A name given to Japanese Americans who answered "no" to questions 27 and 28 on the loyalty questionnaire. These people were transferred to Tule Lake Segregation Center, a maximum-security prison in California.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION A belief or opinion often held by many people.
Synonyms for students: ideas, opinions, views of the public.

REDRESS & REPARATIONS Terms used to refer to the apology and compensation made by the US government to Japanese Americans for their wartime detention in war relocation centers. Reparations refer to the monetary compensation, while redress also includes the official apology from the government.

RELOCATION To move from one place to another. A euphemism for the forced removal of Japanese Americans.

RESETTLEMENT The term used by the War Relocation Authority to describe the process for Japanese Americans to leave the concentration camps to the Midwest and East Coast before the evacuation orders were lifted. The term was also used to refer to the return of Japanese Americans to the West Coast after the evacuation orders were lifted in January 1945.

SANSEI Third generation Japanese Americans; children of the Nisei and grandchildren of the Issei.

SEGREGATED To be set apart or divided along lines of identity.
Synonyms for students: separated, isolated.

KEY TERMS

VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT The "voluntary" moving and resettlement of Japanese Americans from designated West Coast military areas. Voluntary resettlement occurred for a three-week period in March 1942 after the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and before the forced removal.

WAR HYSTERIA Irrational beliefs or behavior resulting from the tense emotions that develop because of wartime. These feelings may be intensified by propaganda.

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY (WRA) The government agency responsible for the administration of the war relocation centers where Japanese Americans were being held during WWII. The WRA was created by Executive Order 9102 on March 18, 1942. It was an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

WAR RELOCATION CENTER The term used by the War Relocation Authority to describe the concentration camps in which most Japanese Americans from the West Coast were held during WWII. The WRA administered ten such centers, most surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by military police. War relocation centers are also referred to as 'incarceration camps," "incarceration centers," "prison camps," "internment camps," and "concentration camps."

WARTIME CIVILIAN CONTROL ADMINISTRATION (WCCA) Established on March 11, 1942 by General Order No. 34, the WCCA supervised the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast as part of their responsibilities for the "formulation of policies, plans and directives" pertaining to "control and exclusion of civilians" during WWII.

WORLD WAR II (WWII) 9/1/1939 – 9/2/1945. Fought between two military alliances: Allies and Axis powers. The big three nations of the Allies were the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom. The major Axis powers were the German Reich, the Kingdom of Italy, and the Empire of Japan.

YELLOW PERIL A racist & propagandistic belief that people of Asian ancestry represent an invasive threat.