



POWER OF WORDS

LESSON PLAN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON DESCRIPTION.....	3
OBJECTIVES	3
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	3
STANDARDS	3
HOW TO	3
PRE-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES	4
SHORT FILM VIEWING.....	7
COMPREHENSION WORKSHEET.....	8
POST-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES	9
ASSESSMENTS	13
MATERIALS	15

LESSON DESCRIPTION

LESSON DESCRIPTION Students will examine how language shapes public perception through an analysis of the short film “Power of Words.” In the film, experts highlight the various euphemisms used by the US government to describe the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans and how the language used to describe this event did not match the reality.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to identify the various euphemisms used to describe the exclusion, forced removal, and mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII.
2. Students will be able to practice media literacy and analyze how filmmakers construct an argument in their work.
3. Students will be able to analyze the propagandistic language in historical primary source documents.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why did the American government use words like “evacuation” and “relocation” to describe the forced removal of Japanese Americans during WWII?
2. How do euphemisms shift public perception?
3. Why are the words we use to describe history important?

STANDARDS Suggested for 6th to 12th grade students. For the standards breakdown, please refer to the National and State Standards Alignment Document. Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and History/Social Studies as well as the state History/Social Studies standards for Oregon, Washington, and Idaho are included.

HOW TO In this lesson educators will find (3) pre-short film activities, (1) short film comprehension worksheet and general discussion questions, (4) post-short film activities, and (2) assessment activities. Feel free to use all these activities or mix-and-match. A 60-minute lesson plan will typically have (1) of each activity type.

Key Terms and Minidoka Timeline documents, for educators and students, are available on the website. Use these documents to provide background knowledge to supplement each lesson.

PRE-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

PRE-SHORT FILM ANTICIPATION GUIDE (10 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to express their opinions about ideas before they encounter them in a text or unit of study. Completing anticipation guides helps students recognize and connect to themes that surface in their learning.

MATERIALS: “Power of Words” Anticipation Guide Worksheet

ANTICIPATION GUIDE STATEMENTS:

1. History should reflect the good and bad parts of our past.
2. In a time of war, a country should be transparent about its actions.
3. Bad news should be delivered as is, without any sugarcoating.

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the “Power of Words” Anticipation Guide Worksheet.
2. As a class read/review the anticipation guide statements.
3. Have the students individually answer their responses on the worksheet.
4. Have the students pair/share or whole class share their responses.

PRE-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #2

CROP-IT PHOTO ANALYSIS (15-30 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: In a Crop-It activity, students spotlight a portion of an image and then discuss their choice with classmates. This strategy requires students to notice, identify, and respond to specific portions of an image before interpreting the image's overall meaning and impact.

MATERIALS: Crop-It Photo Analysis Worksheet, Image #1 Camp Harmony, Image #2 Closing Out Evacuation Sale

CROP-IT STATEMENTS:

1. Identify a part of the image that stood out to you first.
2. Identify a part of the image that you have questions about.
3. Identify a part of the image that shows a problem, tension, or a dilemma.

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Crop-It Photo Analysis Worksheet and display Image #1 “Camp Harmony” at the front of the class.
2. Instruct students to look at each image closely. Read each Crop-It statement out loud and give students time to identify the part of the image that relates to the statement.
3. Have the students discuss their choices with a classmate or small group.
4. Using the photo caption information, reveal to the class that this photo is from the Puyallup Assembly Center, a temporary detention center in Washington state during WWII. This place was nicknamed “Camp Harmony” by the US government.
5. Repeat this activity with Image #2 “Closing Out Evacuation Sale.”

CAPTIONS:

IMAGE #1: Camp Harmony: During the spring of 1942, Japanese Americans living on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their homes into temporary detention centers while permanent concentration camps were being built. The Puyallup Assembly Center, also called “Camp Harmony,” was hastily constructed at the Washington State Fairgrounds and incarcerated over 7,000 Japanese Americans mostly from Washington and Alaska.

IMAGE #2: Closing Out Evacuation Sale: During the spring of 1942, Japanese Americans living on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their homes. This photo taken on April 1, 1942, shows customers entering the Okano Brothers Cut Rate Store in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles. A sign that reads “Closing Out Evacuation Sale” hangs on the front window.

PRE-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #3

VOCABULARY BUILDING: EUPHEMISM (15 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to recognize and analyze euphemisms by examining common examples.

MATERIALS: Vocabulary Building: Euphemism Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Vocabulary Building: Euphemism Worksheet.
2. Define the term euphemism for the class. Then as a class determine the accurate phrase for each euphemism example.
3. Use the discussion questions to determine when euphemisms may be appropriate and not appropriate.

SHORT FILM VIEWING

"POWER OF WORDS" VIEWING (15 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: "Power of Words" Comprehension Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the "Power of Words" Comprehension Worksheet.
2. Instruct students to answer the comprehension questions as they watch the film.
3. Watch the short film "Power of Words" as a class.
4. Use the Teacher Copy Comprehensive Worksheet Answers on the next page to review the correct answers with the class.
5. Use the discussion questions to guide a conversation about the film with your students.

TEACHER COPY

COMPREHENSION WORKSHEET ANSWERS

1. Over 120,000 Japanese Americans, *two-thirds* who were American citizens, would be ***incarcerated** during WWII.
2. The *War Relocation* Authority was the government agency that developed the ***propaganda** newsreels.
3. What ***euphemism** was used to describe Puyallup Assembly Center? *Camp Harmony*
4. Where were most Japanese Americans from the Pacific Northwest sent to? *Minidoka*
5. For how long were some Japanese Americans incarcerated? *3 1/2 years*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the American government use words like “evacuation” and “relocation” to describe the forced removal?
2. What effects did the government propaganda films about the forced removal have on how Japanese Americans were perceived during WWII? After WWII?
3. How do euphemisms shift public perception?
4. Why are the words we use to describe history important?

***Incarcerated:** Imprisoned, confined

***Propaganda:** Disinformation, putting a spin

***Euphemism:** An understatement, to soften

POST-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #4

VOCABULARY BUILDING: TERMINOLOGY (10 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to build their vocabulary on Japanese American terminology by comparing images to euphemisms.

MATERIALS: Vocabulary Building: Terminology Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Vocabulary Building: Terminology Worksheet.
2. Read the euphemisms and accurate phrases as a class.
3. Discuss the explanation as a class.
4. Discuss with the class why the accurate phrases match the images better than the euphemisms.

A NOTE ON “CONCENTRATION CAMP”

Scholars and historians who have examined the use of the term concentration camp to describe the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans broadly agree that the term is an accurate one. In 1998, the Japanese American National Museum and American Jewish Committee issued a joint statement in New York addressing the usage of “concentration camp.”

The joint statement defined a concentration camp as “a place where people are imprisoned not because of any crimes they have committed, but simply because of who they are.”

Classes are encouraged to consider how euphemisms are used to describe the atrocities during the Holocaust, also known as the Shoah.

POST-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #5

REWRITING THE SCRIPT (20 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to analyze the text from “Japanese Relocation,” a newsreel produced by the Office of War Information (OWI), and summarize its intended meaning. Students will then rewrite the script by eliminating the euphemisms and replacing them with more accurate terminology.

MATERIALS: Rewriting the Script Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Rewriting the Script Worksheet.
2. Instruct the students to refer to the Vocabulary Building: Terminology Worksheet as they closely read the two paragraphs of original text from the OWI film footage.
3. Choose one of the sentences in the OWI film original text and go over how to rewrite the sentence by replacing euphemisms with more accurate terms.
4. Individually or in groups, have the students use rewrite the paragraphs using accurate terms.
5. Have the students share their rewritten scripts to the class.
6. Discuss why it is important to write about history using accurate language.
Use the following discussion questions to lead the conversation:
 - A. Why did the Office of War Information use euphemisms like “pioneer communities” and “land that was... full of opportunity”?
 - B. Why is it important to write about history using accurate language instead of euphemisms?

POST-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #6

MEDIA LITERACY (20 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to examine the choices of the filmmakers to determine how an expert or lived testimony drives the argument in the short film.

MATERIALS: Media Literacy Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Media Literacy Worksheet.
2. Instruct the students to refer to the Vocabulary Building: Terminology Worksheet as they closely read the “Power of Words” short film script.
3. Explain to the students how filmmakers make specific editing choices to build a story and an argument.
4. Answer the discussion questions as a class. Ask the students to identify the various groups of people the filmmakers chose to interview. Then have the class determine what the filmmaker’s main argument was in the short film.
5. Have the students closely read the two film script segments on “Evacuation” and “Camp Harmony” and answer the worksheet questions.

POST-SHORT FILM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #7

ANTICIPATION GUIDE (10 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to express their opinions about ideas before they encounter them in a text or unit of study. Completing anticipation guides helps students recognize and connect to themes that surface in their learning.

MATERIALS: “Power of Words” Anticipation Guide Worksheet

ANTICIPATION GUIDE STATEMENTS:

1. History should reflect the good and bad parts of our past.
2. In a time of war, a country should be transparent about its actions.
3. Bad news should be delivered as is, without any sugarcoating.

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the “Power of Words” Anticipation Guide Worksheet.
2. Instruct the students to fill out the second column to see if their anticipation guide responses have changed after watching the short film.
3. Have the students pair/share or whole class share their responses.

ASSESSMENTS

WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

(30 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to write a letter to the editor explaining why it is important to use accurate terms to describe the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans.

MATERIALS: Written Assessment Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Written Assessment Worksheet.
2. Instruct the students to closely read the sample news report on the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans.
3. Instruct students to read the essay prompt and write a letter to the editor essay.

ESSAY PROMPT: Write a letter to the editor informing them about the euphemisms used to describe the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Your letter must provide suggestions for how the newspaper could make their report more accurate.

ASSESSMENTS

DISCUSSION ASSESSMENT

(30 MINUTES)

DESCRIPTION: Students will be able to closely read the *Civilian Exclusion Order* issued in April 1942 and discuss as a class the role that euphemisms played in the forced removal of Japanese Americans off the West Coast.

MATERIALS: Discussion Assessment Worksheet

PROCEDURES:

1. Pass out the Discussion Assessment Worksheet.
2. Instruct the students to closely read the *Civilian Exclusion Order* document issued in April 1942.
3. Teacher will lead a discussion using provided discussion questions:
 - A. Imagine being a Japanese American and seeing these *Civilian Exclusion Order* signs in your neighborhood. How would it feel to read these signs?
 - B. Which euphemisms stand out to you from this primary source document? Why?
 - C. Which instructions stand out to you from section titled, “The following instructions must be observed”?
 - D. How does the language on the *Civilian Exclusion Order* reflect or not reflect the realities of the forced removal?

IMAGE 1: ANTICIPATION GUIDE

US Government Office of War Information film, two men looking at *Civilian Exclusion Order*.



IMAGE 2: CAMP HARMONY, ACTIVITY: CROP-IT

The Puyallup Assembly Center, also called “Camp Harmony,” was hastily constructed at the Washington State fairgrounds, and temporarily incarcerated over 7,000 Japanese Americans mostly from Washington and Alaska.

MATERIALS

IMAGE 3:

EVACUATION SALE, ACTIVITY: CROP-IT

This photo taken on April 1, 1942 shows customers entering the Okano Brothers Cut Rate Store in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles. A sign that reads “Closing Out Evacuation Sale” hangs on the front window.



IMAGE 4:

VOCABULARY BUILDING

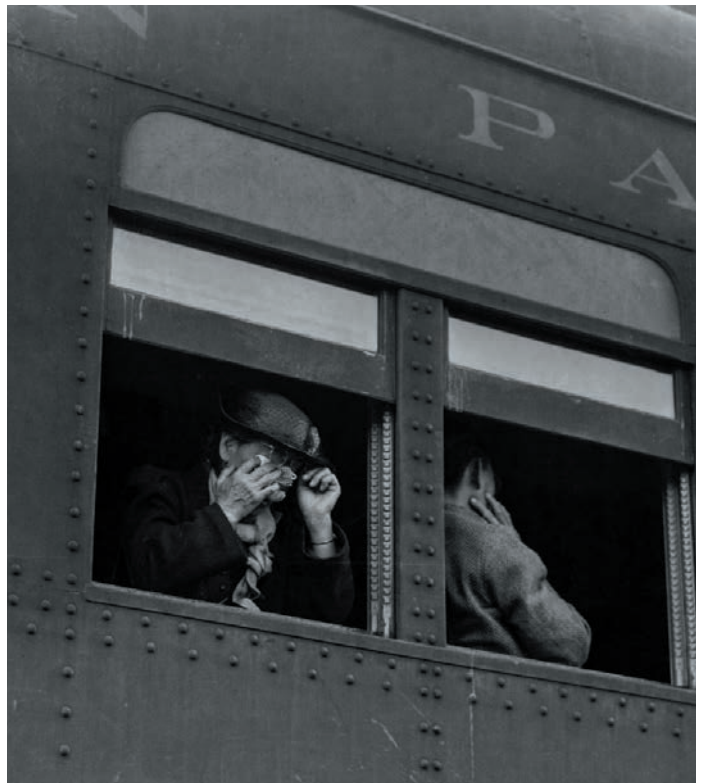
Rural mailboxes with signs selling furniture during the forced removal.



IMAGE 5:

COMPREHENSION WORKSHEET

Japanese American woman wiping her eyes on a train during the forced removal.



MATERIALS

IMAGE 6: FORCED REMOVAL, TERMINOLOGY

Family saying goodbye to a dog during the forced removal.



IMAGE 7: DETENTION CENTER, TERMINOLOGY

Puyallup Assembly Center



IMAGE 8: JAPANESE AMERICAN, TERMINOLOGY

Two Japanese American children in Minidoka, ID.



IMAGE 9: INCARCERATION, TERMINOLOGY

Friends greeting Japanese Americans with barbed wire between them.



IMAGE 10: CONCENTRATION CAMP

Dust storm at Manzanar
Relocation Center, CA.





IMAGE 11:
REWRITING THE SCRIPT ACTIVITY

US Government Office of War
Information film title card.

IMAGE 12:
EVACUATION, MEDIA LITERACY

Family loading a truck during the forced removal.



MATERIALS

IMAGE 13:

CAMP HARMONY, MEDIA LITERACY

Two military police with bayonet guns on a watchtower.



IMAGE 14:

CAMP SURVIVORS, MEDIA LITERACY

Kay Sakai Nakao and her child.



IMAGE 15: WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

Historic photo of Minidoka Relocation Center



IMAGE 16: CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER, DISCUSSION

Civilian Exclusion Order for Seattle, WA.

