

Beginning-Level Activity

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- identify shapes and patterns in a photograph by Dorothea Lange;
- comprehend stories about families who were moved to **internment camps** because of their ethnicity;
- create original illustrations about a young girl's life during the evacuation of Japanese Americans in California during World War II.

Materials

- Reproduction of *Pledge of Allegiance, Rafael Weill Elementary School, San Francisco* by Dorothea Lange
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about the photograph
- Internet access
- Reproduction of Dorothea Lange's photograph *Tagged Girl* from the Freedom Voices Web site (www.freedomvoices.org/1langepx/wra580.htm) (optional)
- Student Handout: *Helene's Journey*
- Pencils
- *The Children of Topaz: The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary* by Michael O. Tunnell and George W. Chilcoat (New York: Holiday House, 1996)
- *Flowers from Mariko* by Rick Noguchi, Deneen Jenks, and Michelle Reiko Kumata (New York: Lee and Low Books, 2001)

Lesson Steps

1. Display a reproduction of *Pledge of Allegiance, Rafael Weill Elementary School, San Francisco*. Have students take time to look closely at the work, then ask them to describe what they see. Prompt students with the following questions:
 - Where are the children looking?
 - Mimic the pose of the girl in the middle. When someone is posed in this way, how do you think the person feels?
 - What are the children doing?
 - What shapes can you find on the children's clothes?
 - Repeated shapes can be called patterns. Where do you see patterns in this work of art?
 - What else do you notice?
2. Provide students with information about the photograph and explain how Japanese Americans were treated unfairly during the time when the picture was made. Point out that the name of the girl in Lange's photograph is Helene, and explain that she and her family were forced to leave their home and live in an internment camp because they were of Japanese descent. Read selections from *The Children of Topaz: The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary*. Ask students to discuss the following question with a partner: If you had to leave home for a very long time and could only take one backpack apiece with you, what would you put in it? Have students imagine what Helene would take with her to the internment camp.

HISTORICAL WITNESS

★ SOCIAL MESSAGING ★

3. Distribute pencils and the handout *Helene's Journey*, which is divided into three columns: before the camp, during the camp, and after the camp. Based on class discussions, students will imagine what life was like for Helene before she was sent to the camp and will complete the first column of the handout. Instruct students to draw things that Helene would pack inside her backpack. Remind students to include the patterns they observed on Helene's coat if they choose to include her coat.
4. You may wish to display a reproduction of a second photograph by Dorothea Lange titled *Tagged Girl* from the Freedom Voices Web site (www.freedomvoices.org/1langepx/wra580.htm). Ask students how this image is different from what they imagined about packing to live in a camp. How is it the same?
5. Provide students with additional selections from the book *The Children of Topaz: The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary*. You may also wish to read age-appropriate selections from the suggested reading list on the National Park Service **Manzanar** Web site (www.nps.gov/manz/forteachers/suggestedreading.htm). Instruct students to complete the second column of the *Helene's Journey* handout by drawing what they imagine life was like at an internment camp based on their readings.
6. Discuss what happened after Japanese Americans were released from internment camps. Read selections from *Flowers from Mariko* for lower elementary students. Have students complete the third column of the *Helene's Journey* handout by creating a drawing that reveals what life was like after the internment camp.

Assessment

Assess students on their ability to identify shapes and patterns observed in a photograph. Also assess whether students' drawings depict the beginning, middle, and end of Helene's story.

Extension

Upper elementary students could learn about the Declaration of Independence on the National Archives Web site *The Charters of Freedom* (www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the United Nations Web site (www.un.org/Overview/rights.html). Discuss with students how individual rights have not been secured in other periods of U.S. history. For example, see the photographs by Bob Adelman listed in Related Works of Art.

