

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Grade 6 and up

Subject: ELL/ENL, English Literature/English Language Arts, and Social Studies.

Objective: In this lesson, students read and study the graphic novel, George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*. Through the story itself, they will learn about how World War II and how the experiences did affect individuals and families and make connections to classroom learning, personal experience, or outside knowledge.

Subject Focus: Citizenship, Discrimination, Individual Rights, Incarceration, Internment Camp, Japanese Americans, National Security, Social Justice, Prejudice, World War II

Getting Started:

- Ask if your students are familiar with the graphic novel. Use "How to read a graphic novel" sheets to fill gaps.
- Before reading, explore the concept of citizenship as it relates to the rights people have in the United States, both as citizens and non-citizens such as what rights, protections, and guarantees do all persons in the United States have?

Suggested Discussion Topics (you can ask for a broader term or close reading):

- What did you know about Japanese American incarceration during World War II before reading the book? What new information or details did you learn?
- Takei has told the story of Japanese American internment camps in different forms during the years. What do you think about his decision to share this story in 2019 as an illustrated graphic memoir? Have you read other graphic novels?
- Readers see Takei deal with the trauma of the camps (pages 141-145). He argues with his father and questions the choices his father made during that time. What do you make of the argument? Is Takei's critique of his father fair?
- How do you think being incarcerated at a young age shapes identity or affects someone as an adult?
- What does it mean to be loyal to something? In what ways did Japanese Americans demonstrate their loyalty during WWII?
- Takei and his father argue about American democracy (page 195). What do you think about the following statement by Takei's father? "Despite all that we've experienced, our democracy is still the best in the world because it's a people's democracy."
- In 1988, President Reagan apologized on behalf of the United States and signed an act granting \$20,000 to each of the surviving 60,000 internees. What are your thoughts? Can we place a price on what was done?
- How does Takei's story connect with issues going on in the United States today?
- What will you take away from this story?

Words & Pictures:

- George Takei recounts his experience from the perspective of a small boy. How does that benefit or take away from the narrative?
- Construct factual information from words and picture presentations.
(Example) Lesson #3- Timeline Activity
https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9781603094504_6680.pdf
- What was the most powerful moment or scene from the book?
- Identify and analyze elements of graphic novel pages: panels, dialogue or thought balloons, captions, and sound effects.