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When Military Necessity Overrides Constitutional Guarantees: The Treatment of Japanese Americans During World War II

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While the United States engaged in a global struggle, during World War II, to safeguard democracy and the Four Freedoms, a critical test of constitutional democracy was being conducted on the home front. Over one hundred thousand men, women and children were imprisoned by our government in concentration camps without indictment or the proffer of charges simply because they were of Japanese descent and ancestry. This unit is an attempt to give teachers an insight into the overall treatment of the Japanese Americans and to what led our government into placing them into prison or concentration camps as well as the legal ramifications. The unit traces the history of the Japanese in America from the Nineteenth Century to the late 1940's and attempts to show that racial prejudice as well as social and economic issues entered into our government's decision to remove the Japanese from their legal residences on the West Coast.

(Recommended for 8th grade Social Studies, 9-12 grades American History and 9-12 grades Law Course)

Key Words

Pearl Harbor World War II History American Anti-Japanese Prejudice Wars Treatment

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