

HEART MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER EDUCATION – MIDDLE

Recommended reading, viewing and activities for students in grades 6 - 8 about Heart Mountain Relocation Center and the Japanese American Internment of WWII

Books

All of the books and movies below are available through the Heart Mountain Book Store

A Boy of Heart Mountain by Barbara Bazadua - At the onset of WWII, nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in concentration camps. Inspired by Shigeru Yabu's youthful camp experiences, A Boy of Heart Mountain is a poignant coming-of-age story and a celebration of the human spirit under duress.

The Journal of Ben Uchida - In diary form, the author tells 12-year-old Ben's story of being interned, living in a camp, and what his family goes through. This book ends with some insights into the historical events of that time and what happened to the characters after the war.

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, James D. Houston - The true story of one spirited Japanese American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention and of a native-born American child who discovered what it was like to grow up behind barbed wire in the United States.

DVDs

All We Could Carry - Students gain insight from the internees' hardships. They will experience what it was like to leave their homes, possessions, and normal daily life behind to be interned at Heart Mountain. They will explore camp life, pass-time activities, and social structure and be able to compare and contrast these experiences to their own life experiences.

Days of Waiting - Students will explore what life was like in an internment camp and all the social issues involved in a community governing itself. They will study how the internees lived and communicated under strict conditions.

Suggested Activities

1) Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Tour

Objective: Students visit the Interpretive Center at Heart Mountain to see the memorabilia of the internees, learning the scope of the camp, and follow the internees' footsteps through history. They should have a more personal understanding of the emotional injustices that the internees faced upon leaving.

Activity 1: Pre-tour lesson in class before coming to the Center.

a. Have students read brief history leading up to the internment camps, life there, and life after camp. See **History** section on our website

b. Students can read any of the above books or view either of the DVDs prior to their visit to the Center.

Activity 2: Center Tour

- a. Students will be given a tag similar to the tags given to the Internees before they left home. The tag will have one of two family numbers on it. Students will be asked to find the family number in the exhibit and write down the family name that corresponds with the number. They will need to take these tags back to school with them.
- b. Students will watch the video *All We Could Carry*. This film features twelve men and women who were at Heart Mountain, children and young adults at the time, confined behind barbed wire and surrounded by armed guards in watchtowers. They share a moving account of their daily life in the camp and their resilience.
- c. While touring the Center, students will be asked to either complete a scavenger hunt or Center Worksheet. These worksheets can be used as part of the post-tour class discussion.

Activity 3: Setsuko Saito Higuchi Memorial Walking Tour and Honor Roll

This 1000 feet walking tour guides students through key moments in the Heart Mountain history and references historic objects that are still present on the surrounding landscape. The Honor Roll honors the over 800 men and women who served in the U.S. military from Heart Mountain during WWII, including two Medal of Honor recipients. Students will be asked to write down one name from the honor roll.

Activity 4: Post-tour lesson in class after visiting the Center.

Students will reference the tags they were given and find the family name and number on the census sheets. Students will discuss in class where their family came from, how many people were in their family, what their address was, and where they went when the camp was closed.

2) Journaling Lesson

Objective: Students should gain knowledge of communicating through letter writing and expressing feelings through poetry and haiku. Stamps were the one thing everyone bought at 2 cents each for regular mail to communicate with relatives and friends. The internees sent hand drawn pictures, haiku, poetry, announcements, and general information to keep in touch with the outside world.

Activity 1: Students watch the video *All We Could Carry* or *Days of Waiting* by Steve Okazaki.

- a. They will journal about what they think it would be like to be displaced and interned to an unknown place, or a place of the teacher's choosing, for an indefinite period of time.
- b. The students will journal about what they would miss taking with them and why.
- c. Students can journal about what they would do to pass the time if interned.

Activity 2: In small groups or individually, write letters to internees, asking questions about life in camp, how they passed the time, or any relevant question. Teachers will need to contact the Center staff by phone or email for an updated list of pen pals.

Activity 3: The students will write their own haiku after listening to or reading Haiku by C.F. Kelly or researching other haikus on-line exploring the history and origin of haiku.

3) Literature Lesson

Objective: Introduce students to various books about the internment of the Japanese Americans and their use of personal stories to express thoughts and feelings about how internment effected their whole life.

Activity 1: The students read one of the above books and report on the theme, learning about prejudice and unjust treatment from the government and society.

4) Social Studies / Government Lesson

Objective: Students will study the social and government issues at the Heart Mountain camp, both within the camp and with the draft for WWII. The internees held their own courts in self-governed camps and had to decide on joining WWII or resisting. The students will also look at how the interns communicated, prejudice in the surrounding communities, and how they lived as a self-contained community.

Activity 1: Students will research an internee from camp using the census, email, mail, the internet, oral histories, or written histories. Please contact the Center staff by phone or email for a list of internees available to correspond with.

Activity 2: Students can create their own newspaper, based on The Heart Mountain Sentinel.

Activity 3: Build a diorama of a barrack having a group take each room and researching the furnishings.

Activity 4: The students will research what type of government was in the camp, what offices were held, and what role the military had in that government.

Activity 5: Students can research the three different “thoughts” about the draft for WWII; the resisters, the voluntary draftees, and the individuals left in camp who couldn’t be drafted.

Activity 6: Students research the social and recreation activities, job positions, and how the government was involved in this self-contained camp.

Activity 7: Have students compare The Heart Mountain Sentinel to their local newspaper’s coverage of the Japanese Internment with particular attention to their communities’ attitudes toward the Japanese.
(All these can be found on line.)

5) Biology/Science Lesson

Objective: Students learn about the vegetables and crops raised at Heart Mountain for camp consumption and commercial distribution. They will grow plants to learn the growth cycles, plant parts, and soil types. They can share this with others through mentoring, as gifts, or for personal use like the interns, the students will learn this. Gardens are not only practical, but serve as a mental and creative way to give a sense of personal space, survival, and connection between friends and families.

Activity 1: Students will research and grow Heart Mountain vegetable crops with the help of mentors.

- a. Plants can be transplanted to the historic Center container garden to represent the crops and techniques used by the internees.
- b. Plants could also be used by students for fund raising purposes.
- c. Plants or flowers can be used for arrangements for a holiday gift or another occasion.

Activity 2: Students will research which crops were grown at Heart Mountain, why, and for what economical or personal purpose.

Activity 3: The Center historic garden will have a combination of 12 raised beds and planters. Classes can choose to adopt a container for a month or for an entire school year. Students will have to maintain the bed in accordance to Center staff instruction. In the Fall students will put the garden to bed for the winter, which includes clean-up and seed collection. In the spring students will prepare the beds for plants and transplanting the plants researched and grown in Activity 1 and 2. Class photos can be posted in the adopted beds.

6) Health Lesson

Objective: The students study the recreational activities at the internment camp and learn how they helped internees not only pass the time but stay positive and social. The internees used their activities, art, and gardens as a form of physical and mental stimulus as individual space and group interaction. The students will be able to explore these as more than just past time activities.

Activity 1: Students make a traditional Japanese meal

Activity 2: Have the students look at the types of activities in camp and form a schedule for a week of the activities available noting the current weather conditions and ages in camp. Explore indoor activities as well as the night classes provided.

Activity 3: Students work with the school and the Center to grow plants for the container gardens while mentoring younger school students.

7) Art Lesson

Objective: The students will gain comprehension of Japanese art work that was created in camp for home decoration, pass time activities, and school work.

Activity 1: Students will make dioramas using resources from the Heart Mountain website and other sources.

Activity 2: The students make kites using their own design or using outside sources for examples

Activity 3: Students can study the different types of Japanese music, plays and traditional instruments using the internet and books like Kids Explore America's Japanese American Heritage or other sources.

Need help? Contact us ([link to email](#)) for other curriculum suggestions.