

Culture Module

Learning objectives: In this module, students will learn about the culture and social life of Japanese Americans. They will learn to recognize various forms of human expression and its influence on cultures. In addition, students will evaluate the spread and development of culture (SS2.2.2, SS5.2.2, SS8.2.2SS12.2.2). Students will have the opportunity to learn about art forms, such as visual arts, dance, and music, and how they impacted the lives and culture of Japanese Americans (FPA4.4A.3,FPA3.D.3, FPA4.3.M.2).

Introduction: Before their forced removal, Japanese Americans had a thriving culture. Once in camps, they continued their cultural practices. Festivals like Bon Odori were still celebrated and people continued to practice their artistic skills. Community organizations such as the Japanese American Citizens League, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts thrived at Heart Mountain. Several performing artists came from Heart Mountain including Michiko Iseri and the George Igawa Orchestra.

*Information on festivals Oban and Christmas (children caroling-<https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-152-12/>)

Activity

- What is culture?
 - Have students work with their classmates to answer the following questions
 - What is culture?
 - How is culture determined? Is it by region, class, religion, or something else?
 - Do you think there is a culture unique to America? Our state or city? If so, how would you define that culture?
 - Why do you think culture is important? Does it have an impact on the way we interact with people?
 - Do our cultural practices change based on our environment? (explain to students that people sometimes alter the way they express their culture based on their environment. Examples: code switching or working on religious holidays if someone is a religious minority)

Video

- Each of these videos explores music and its relationship to those who lived at Heart Mountain or how those experiences influence music today
 - [Songs on the Wind](#)
 - [No-No Boy](#)
 - [Violin Tsunami](#)
- Pre Recorded video discussing JAACL, Boy and Girl Scouts, and briefly some artists who lived at the camp (Bill Munbo, Estelle Ishigo, Michiko Iseri)

Activity

- A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words (SS8.4.5 and SS12.4.5)
 - In the introductory gallery, there are two photographs displaying life for Japanese Americans living in the camps. Show the photograph used by Hikaru Carl Iwasaki (WRA) and the photograph taken by Yoshio Okumoto while he lived at the camp.

Let students point out the differences and similarities between the photographs.

Ask the following questions:

- Why do you think the photographs are different?
- Who do you think took the different photographs?
- Why do you think the War Relocation Authority portrayed camps this way?
- Do you think these photographs are primary or secondary sources? (If students don't know the difference explain)
- How could you use these photographs to better understand the political and social climate at the time?

Reading Suggestions

- Lone Heart Mountain by Estelle Ishigo
- Colors of Confinement by Bill Manbo