

# Lesson Plan

## Art and Expression

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### Overview and Purpose

This lesson plan contains several activities for use in an art class or as a supplement in a social studies or history class. The first two activities are generally adaptable for any grade level from K to 12. The final activity is applicable to grades 9 to 12. Teachers can pick one activity, or mix and match to create a longer lesson plan.

Through these activities, students will learn about art which was created by Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain, and have a chance to create an artwork or short poem about Japanese American Incarceration. The final activity focuses on art created in response to Japanese American Incarceration, including visual art, music, and performing art.

In the past, art created in Japanese American concentration camps has been used as evidence that conditions in these camps were not that bad. Others have assumed that Japanese Americans were able to create art because of ample leisure time in the camps. In fact, neither of these arguments are true. Teachers should be aware of these attitudes before teaching about art in the camps. For more information about art made in the camps and historical attitudes towards art made in the camps, we recommend reading the introduction to *Artifacts of Loss: Crafting Survival in Japanese American Concentration Camps* by Jane E. Dusselier.

### Education Standards

1. SS2.2.2 / SS5.2.2
2. SS8.2.2 / SS12.2.2
3. FPA4.1.A.1 / FPA8.1.A.1 / FPA11.1.A.1
4. FPA4.1.A.2 / FPA8.1.A.2 / FPA11.1.A.2
5. FPA4.3.A.3 / FPA8.3.A.3

### Objectives

1. Understand the various types of art created at Heart Mountain and other camps and for what purpose art was made
2. Understand how Japanese American incarceration inspired art in many different forms

3. Recognize the steps of the artistic process
4. Create original artwork or writing inspired in part by art created in the camps or in response to Japanese American incarceration

## Close at Hand Activity

1. Subject(s): social studies, visual arts
2. Grade/Level: K-12
3. Objective: Students will learn about art made at Heart Mountain and other camps and use similar materials to create art.
5. Time Allotment: Two 60-90 minute class periods

## Implementation


Explain to students that many people in the camps often created art to decorate their barrack rooms, give to friends, or record their experiences. While some ordered art supplies from catalogs, others made art with the natural materials they found around them.

Some of the camps were located on dry lake beds and incarcerated people collected tiny shells to create flower arrangements. At other camps, incarcerated people gathered wood to carve into pins, sculptures, and furniture.

As a class, take some time to explore photographs of the Eaton Collection of artifacts from the camps on Flickr. (link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jamuseum/sets/72157664893839083/>)

Discussion questions:

1. As you look at each object, think about why it may have been created. What materials can you see? What does this tell you about where it may have been created? How do you feel when you look at these objects?
2. When the camps closed, some people took their art with them and displayed it wherever they went next. Other pieces of art ended up in storage or were even left behind. Why do you think someone might choose to display or not display art made in the camps? What would you choose to do with art from the camps after the camps closed?
3. Many of these objects are very small. Why do you think this is the case?
4. Think about the geography where you live. What materials could you collect to create a memento of the place you live?



Now tell students that they are going to create a piece of art from materials gathered in their surroundings!

As a class, lead students on a walk in a natural area near the school and gather materials they could use to make a sculpture. Alternatively, students could gather materials as homework. Remind students to respect any growing plants as they gather sticks, rocks, or fallen leaves. If a natural area isn't available to them, students could look in their desks or around their homes for materials.

Direct students to use the materials they've gathered to create a sculpture or other artwork. To get started, students could think about whether they want to create something realistic, like the flowers, or an abstract piece that celebrates the materials they've collected, like some of the wooden pieces in the Eaton Collection. They could take inspiration from the landscape at Heart Mountain or even the landscape where they live!

When students are finished, they can share their artwork with the class!

## Assessment

Art project: Students will create an artwork inspired by the artwork from Heart Mountain and other camps using the materials they have gathered. Considering this assessment is based on artistic expression a credit/no credit system should be used for grading. Completion of the assignment, regardless of artistic ability, should warrant full credit.



## Leaving a Trace Activity

1. Subject(s): social studies, visual arts, creative writing
2. Grade/Level: K-12
3. Objective: Students will learn about the Heart Mountain Haiku Stone and discuss how art like the stone contributes to the telling of history.
4. Time Allotment: One 60-90 minute class period

## Implementation

Taketaro Azeka spent months at Heart Mountain carving a haiku about his experience in the camp into a slab of granite. He then buried it, hoping it would be found years later.

The poem reads:


Mountain peak at my shoulder  
Thousand barracks  
Under the autumn moon



Show students the picture of the Haiku Stone and explain the history behind the Stone. Next, use the discussion questions to facilitate a discussion.

Discussion questions:

1. What are haiku? Why do you think the creator chose to carve one on this stone?
2. Why do you think Azeka would spend so much time carving the rock, only to bury it?
3. Read the translation of the poem out loud. What do you think Azeka was trying to tell people in the future about his experience?



Explain that when the camp closed, the land was homesteaded and the barracks were sold and moved. The Haiku Rock was not discovered until the 1970s when a farmer ran into it with their plow.

4. Who writes our history? How do we decide what is included in textbooks, talked about in history classes, or on public monuments and what is not?
5. The haiku stone clearly tells us something about the period of history when it was made. How does the poem relate to how the US government talked about the camps in the 1940s?

Teachers can direct students to complete one or both of the following supplemental activities.

1. Write your own version of a haiku describing a place that's had an impact, good or bad, on your life.
2. Draw or paint a picture of a place that's had an impact on your life. Try to express how the place makes you feel through the use of line, color, and other formal elements.

## Assessment

Creative writing or visual art project: Students will either write their own haiku about a place that's significant to them or create a visual art piece about a significant place. Considering this assessment is based on artistic expression a credit/no credit system should be used for grading. Completion of the assignment, regardless of artistic ability, should warrant full credit.



## Express Yourself Activity

5. Subject(s): social studies, visual arts, performing arts
6. Grade/Level: 11-12
7. Objective: Students will make connections between the Japanese American Incarceration, culture, and artistic expression.
8. Time Allotment: One 60-90 minute class period, 1-2 weeks of homework

## Implementation

Anticipatory Set

Show students various forms of artistic expression (painting, sculpture, literature, attire, etc). As you show them the various types of artistic expression, ask the following questions: Is this art and what do you think influenced it? Based on their answers, create a list of things that qualify as art. After you have shown them all of the examples, explain that in this lesson they will be learning about various forms of artistic expression and how they relate to the Japanese American incarceration during World War II.

#### Direct Instruction

Have students reference information they learned about the Japanese American incarceration at Heart Mountain. Have them write 1-2 paragraphs about what they remember. **OR** Read the following [article](#) from Densho. After they have finished, review with the class. Then share several aspects of art that were influenced by the Japanese American incarceration.

At least one of the following poems

- [Classified Ads](#)
- [When People Were Caged and Birds Were Free](#)
- [14 Seasons](#)

One of the following sets of photographs

- [Barrack Photographs](#)

At least one of the following pieces of music

- [Violin Tsunami](#)
- [No-No Boy: Heart Mountain Songs](#)
- [For Joy Documentary](#)

The following video of a clip from *The King and I* choreographed by Michiko Iseri

- <https://youtu.be/Vlx6gQWfjp0>

#### Guided Practice

Walk students through the steps of the artistic process and ensure they know what each step entails. A list of the process is listed below.

- a. Inspiration- the assignment, experience, moment, idea, conversation, etc. that encourages an individual to create an artistic work
- b. Organization and development - the process of selecting medium and materials. Creating a plan to construct the work.

- c. Creation and revision-the process of making art and adjusting the plan as one continues.
- d. Presentation - sharing one's work with others, whether that be through turning in the assignment or deciding on a frame or platform to publish the work.

### Check for Understanding

As you work through the direct instruction and guided practice check that students are retaining information whether it be through note taking or answering questions. The following is a list of questions to reinforce information before independent practice.

- a. What artistic mediums have we reviewed in the lesson so far? (poetry, photography, music or visual and performing arts)
- b. What other artistic mediums are there? (painting, sculpture, dance, etc.)
- c. What step of the artistic process do you think is most difficult?

### Independent Practice

Have students construct their own short poems about their life experiences. Have them work through the artistic process in class and then share it with the class.


### Closing

Provide students with instructions to complete independent artistic projects. Inform them that they will have 1-2 weeks to create a small project inspired by what they have learned about the Japanese American incarceration experience. Have an open dialogue about the artistic process and have them suggest ideas for their project. Also, assert the importance of the lesson by asking the following questions:

- How does art impact different cultures?
- How do artists use their craft to convey experiences?
- Do you think art is important to the human experience? Why or why not?

## Materials

- a. Poetry Links
  - a. [Classified Ads](#)
  - b. [When People Were Caged and Birds Were Free](#)
  - c. [14 Seasons](#)
- b. Barrack Photographs document
  - a. [Barrack Photographs](#)



c. Musical Performances Link

- a. [Violin Tsunami](#)
- b. [No-No Boy: Heart Mountain Songs](#)

## Assessment

Artistic Project: Have students select an artistic medium and create an artwork inspired by what they learned during their Skype in the Classroom session. They can select any medium that would be appropriate for sharing with their class. Considering this assessment is based on artistic expression a credit/no credit system should be used for grading. Completion of the assignment, regardless of artistic ability, should warrant full credit.

