

Write a Letter

Overview and Purpose

In this activity, students will use their knowledge about draft resistance and military service during WWII to write a letter to a former draft resister or WWII veteran about their experience.

Curriculum Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Directions

Ask students to imagine that they have the opportunity to write a letter to either a former draft resister or military service member who was incarcerated at Heart Mountain. Students should use what they have learned about the Fair Play Committee, the draft in the camps, and the 442nd Regimental Combat team to write their letters. Each letter should include a summary of what the student has learned in class and at least three questions the student would like to ask. Teachers may choose to use the Letter Writing Worksheet (at the end of this document) to structure students' letters.

Once students have written their letters either in class or as homework, lead a discussion about students' questions. Ask students to share what questions they asked in their letters, recording them on the board. Take note of when students had the same or similar questions. Next, screen interviews with former draft resisters and military service members from the list below. Can the class answer any of the questions on the board after watching these interviews? What questions are still unanswered? How might the class answer some of these remaining questions?

Japanese Americans who volunteered or were drafted into the military:

- [George T. "Joe" Sakato, transcript](#)
- [Rudy Tokiwa, transcript](#)

Japanese Americans who resisted the draft:

- [Gene Akutsu, transcript](#)
- [Takashi Hoshizaki, transcript](#)

- [Mits Koshiyama, transcript](#)

Time permitting, teachers may assign homework to complete small research projects to answer one or more of the students' remaining unanswered questions. See the list below for useful online resources to further research draft resistance and military service.

Useful resources:

- [Densho Encyclopedia](#) - searchable encyclopedia of terms and names related to Japanese American incarceration
- [Densho Digital Repository](#) - online searchable archive of materials related to Japanese American incarceration, including hundreds of oral histories
- [Go For Broke National Education Center](#) - online archive, oral histories, and primary sources about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team

