

LESSON PLANS FOR NYC DOE'S HIDDEN VOICES CURRICULUM: CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

Each lesson can be taught on its own or as part of the unit.

[Fighting for Belonging](#)
[Fighting for Labor Rights](#)
[Fighting for Lands Rights](#)
[Fighting for Peace](#)
[Fighting for Education](#)
[Fighting for Racial Justice](#)

1.8 - Fighting for Peace

The Asian American Education Project

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Grade Levels	7-10
Lesson Overview	Throughout the history of the United States, war and conflict have divided people by deeming groups thought of as the enemy as “other.” Despite this, communities who have faced racism, xenophobia, and white supremacy have worked in solidarity with other oppressed groups, including Asian Americans. In this two-day lesson, students will learn about moments of solidarity during times of war and the pursuit of peace. On Day 1, students will look at examples of solidarity including the Buffalo Soldiers and Filipino soldiers during the Philippine-American War; Black and Jewish Americans standing up for Japanese Americans during World War II; and Japanese Americans in solidarity with South Asian, Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern Americans after the rise in Islamophobia post-9/11. On Day 2, students will conduct a comparative historical analysis of two such events.
Focus Question	In what ways and for what reasons did Asian American communities and communities of color support each other in times of war and violence?
Lesson Objectives	Students will compare events and make historical connections in order to determine the motivations and actions of Asian American communities and communities of color working in solidarity for peace, especially in times of war.

Solidarity in Peace and War Essay

Background:

Moments of war and conflict inherently create an “us versus them” mentality, where someone or something is considered the enemy threat that must be overcome. As different groups have been targeted during times of war throughout U.S. history, different historically marginalized and oppressed communities have stood up for one another, challenging the assumption and creation of an enemy in those considered “other.”

Essay:

Often, war and conflict require picking one side over another. This results in heightened paranoia and patriotism which can give way to the targeting of those who are considered “other.” Under the guise of national security, a primary concern, times of national crises can result in increased racist and **xenophobic** sentiments and violence, government **surveillance** of its citizens and residents, and worse. In these instances, those being targeted do not have much power to prevent the **infringement** of their rights.

For many communities of color in the United States, being in solidarity with oppressed groups is complicated given the history of racism, xenophobia, and white supremacy. Solidarity could put them at risk for increased racism, xenophobia, and surveillance. Yet, communities have risen to the challenge. Throughout U.S. history, there have been many instances in which U.S. **militarism** and policies have been challenged through displays of solidarity with the oppressed group.

In 1898, the United States took control of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines as a result of the Spanish-American War. The Philippines had been seeking independence from Spain, its previous colonial authority, and revolted against American authority, leading to the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). As U.S. troops were sent to the Philippines, the Black community was divided in its feelings about the war. On one hand, some members of the Black community believed Black people fighting for the United States abroad would further their own fight for racial justice at home. Yet, others supported Filipino independence and didn't think people of color should support U.S. colonial expansion.

Four Black army units known as the Buffalo Soldiers, served during the war and some of these Black Americans began feeling sympathetic to the Filipino cause. Additionally, Filipinos created **propaganda** specifically targeting Black soldiers and encouraging them to **desert** by citing the racist treatment enacted against them and their communities in the United States. As a result, an estimated fifteen to thirty Black soldiers deserted the U.S. army to join Filipino **insurgents** in their fight for independence. One of these deserters, Private David Fagen (1875-?), became known as “Insurrecto Captain.” He became a **guerrilla** leader and was so successful that the United States placed a bounty on his head. The Philippines ultimately lost the war, but the refusal of Black soldiers to support the United States in a racial, colonial war was a significant act of solidarity between two communities oppressed by the United States.

In 1941, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawai‘i, the United States officially entered World War II (1939-1945). In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) signed Executive Order 9066 to **incarcerate** over 120,000 Japanese Americans – about two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. The attack by Japan led the United States to view nearly all Japanese Americans, especially those on the West Coast, as possibly disloyal and untrustworthy due to their perceived **allegiance** to Japan over the United States.

Japanese Americans were forcefully removed from their homes with very little notice and no idea where they would be sent or for how long they would be detained. They were spread across ten different incarceration camps and lived in poor and harsh conditions. No official charges were brought against

them and they did not receive hearings before being incarcerated – this was a violation of their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection.

Most mainstream media leading up to the war was heavily anti-Asian in sentiment, creating the “**yellow peril**” narrative that further **vilified** Chinese and Japanese people in the United States. Such messages were used to justify the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Yet, there were still those who publicly challenged and opposed this treatment of Japanese Americans. Some Black and Jewish Americans described the incarceration as a violation of Japanese Americans’ rights and as highly undemocratic.

Black communities viewed the treatment of Japanese Americans within the larger context of a society that historically oppressed people of color. For example, *The Chicago Defender*, a Black newspaper, related their own mistreatment in the country to the targeting of Japanese Americans and recognized that the color of their skin – more than actual concerns of national security – had driven their incarceration.

Some Jewish Americans, especially those on the West Coast, similarly recognized how the panic caused by the attack on Pearl Harbor and the war created a target out of Japanese Americans. On the day following the attack on Pearl Harbor, two **rabbis**, Samuel Koch (1874-1944) and Irving Reichert (1895-1968), expressed concerns about the anger and resentment targeted against Japanese Americans and urged the public not to panic.

The Jewish American community could also relate to Japanese Americans as they became increasingly targeted by rising **antisemitism** in the 1930s. However, as the war progressed and the Jewish population of Europe faced **genocide**, many Jewish Americans began to focus more on the war effort than the incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Still, both the Black and Jewish communities played a significant role in publicly challenging the national security narrative employed to incarcerate Japanese Americans.

As a result of the wartime incarceration, many members of, and organizations within, the Japanese American community became strong, vocal **allies** for other groups facing similar moments of injustice. On September 11, 2001 (referred to as 9/11), the United States was attacked with airplanes hijacked by Al-Qaeda, an Islamic **terrorist** group. Shortly after 9/11, many South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern Americans faced **racial profiling**, hate crimes, and other discriminatory acts. They were targeted as **scapegoats** for the attack, and many people in the United States began to question the “American-ness” and loyalty of these individuals and communities.

The attacks and resulting fear led to heightened security and anti-immigrant policies. For example, the USA PATRIOT Act, passed in October 2001, was designed to stop and punish terrorist acts in the United States. It allowed for the legal surveillance of certain communities, including immigrants. In practice, this act weakened and, in some cases, violated privacy rights by allowing government access and interference without probable cause.

Post-9/11 programs and surveillance were dedicated to collecting information about people in the United States that would illuminate suspicious activity or reveal domestic terrorist plots. This included planting FBI informants who were Muslim - or pretending to be Muslim - and allowing local police departments to spy on **mosques**, community organizations, and other spaces. It also created stricter rules for screening foreign visitors from twenty-five countries - all but one of which was a Muslim-majority country. Individuals were detained and even deported through these programs despite the lack of actual terrorism charges being brought against them.

In this moment of intense **Islamophobia**, Japanese Americans took a stand for the rights of South Asian, Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern Americans. Prominent Japanese American leaders such as Fred Korematsu (1919-2005) and Yuri Kochiyama (1921-2014), both of whom had been impacted by wartime incarceration, spoke in support of Muslim American rights. They urged the U.S. government and the public to not allow the fundamental liberties of these communities to be targeted like Japanese Americans had suffered during World War II.

In Los Angeles, the Japanese American community joined the Muslim American community in protesting the forced registration of Muslim men under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, and the surveillance of communities by the Los Angeles Police Department.

These instances highlight how easily a minority group's civil liberties and rights can be violated in moments of conflict and amidst concerns of national security. In these moments, the vocal and vigilant support of other communities is of utmost importance as the basis of safeguarding the civil liberties of all people.

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Vocabulary¹:

- **Allegiance:** loyalty
- **Allies:** people who are not members of a marginalized group but who support that group
- **Antisemitism:** hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group
- **Desert:** to abandon
- **Genocide:** the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or racial group
- **Guerilla:** a small army
- **Incarcerate:** to subject to confinement
- **Infringement:** an encroachment or trespass on a right or privilege
- **Insurgent:** person who revolts against civil authority or the established government

- **Islamophobia:** dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims
- **Militarism:** the belief that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively
- **Mosque:** a building used for public worship by Muslims
- **Propaganda:** ideas, facts, or allegations spread to further one's cause or to damage opposition
- **Rabbi:** Jewish scholar, teacher, religious leader
- **Racial Profiling:** using race as reason for suspecting someone of committing an offense
- **Scapegoat:** one that bears the blame for others
- **Surveillance:** monitoring of behavior, activities, or information for intelligence gathering, influencing, managing
- **Terrorist:** someone who unlawfully uses violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, to pursue a political aim
- **Vilified:** to defame or speak or write about in a disparaging way
- **Xenophobia:** fear of foreigners
- **Yellow Peril:** fears that Asians from the East would invade the West and disrupt Western values, like democracy, Christianity, etc.

¹ Definition adapted from Merriam-Webster

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the effects of war on communities of color?
2. What are some of the risks communities take when choosing to stand in solidarity with oppressed groups?
3. How and why did Black U.S. soldiers support Filipinos during the Philippine-American War?
4. What happened to Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor? How was this action justified?
5. How and why did the Black American community support Japanese Americans during World War II?
6. How and why did the Jewish American community support Japanese Americans during World War II?
7. How did the Japanese American community support South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern Americans after the 9/11 attacks?

DAY ONE

Activity 1: Introduction to the Lesson

- A. Have students make a list of wars they have studied.
- B. Ask students: What were the reasons for these wars?
- C. Record student responses and display for all to see.
- D. Ask students: What are reasons to resist wars and protest for peace instead? How have people resisted? What tactics were used?
- E. Record student responses and display for all to see.
- F. **NOTE TO TEACHER: If time permits, have students consider a “Big Question” by asking:**

Do the ends justify the means when it comes to war? Big Questions do not necessarily have answers. They serve as a springboard for ideas and opinions. They spark further learning and research. As a classroom tool, they are useful for building anticipation about what will be taught in a lesson.

Activity 2: Solidarity in Peace and War

- A. Distribute the text entitled, “[Solidarity in Peace and War](#)” and worksheet entitled, “[Guided Notes](#).”
- B. Have students read the text and complete the worksheet independently. Encourage them to annotate directly on the text by underlining important information, circling confusing concepts, and writing comments in the margins.
- C. Review students’ responses and facilitate a discussion using the Discussion Questions.
- D. **NOTE TO TEACHER: If time is limited, have students read the text and complete the worksheet for homework the night before.**

Strategy: Guided Notes

Note-taking improves student learning. It helps with comprehension and retention. Guided notes provide scaffolds for students to ensure they take better notes. It also helps them learn how to take notes by focusing on the important content. Guided notes are also called skeletal notes. They are similar to outlines in that they provide cues for the main topics being covered with space available for students to fill in.

For more on the Guided Notes, see: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/note-taking/>

- E. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions. Encourage students to refer to the text and their notes. (See [Answer Key: Guided Notes](#))
 - 1. Which points of the text did you agree with?
 - 2. Which points of the text did you disagree with or challenged you?
 - 3. Why is cross-cultural solidarity important?
 - 4. What are the challenges of cross-cultural solidarity?
- F. **NOTE TO TEACHER: The “Solidarity in Peace and War” text addresses the Japanese American Incarceration experience. If students need more background context, consider teaching the following lessons from The Asian American Education Project or showing the videos from the lessons: (1) “Japanese Americans and Aleuts Incarceration Constitutional Violations”:** <https://asianamericanedu.org/japanese-americans-aleuts-incarceration-constitutional-violations.html>; and (2) “Who Defines Loyalty? Japanese Americans During World War II”: <https://asianamericanedu.org/2.3-define-loyal-american-lesson-plan.html>
- G. **NOTE TO TEACHER: The “Solidarity in Peace and War” text addresses Islamophobia. If students need more background context, consider teaching the following lesson from**

The Asian American Education Project or showing the video from the lesson:
“Victimized Twice: 9/11/2001, South Asian Americans & Islamophobia”:
<https://asianamericanedu.org/victimized-twice-9-11-2001-south-asian-islamophobia.html>

Activity 3: Analyzing a Primary Source: Norman Mineta Interview

- A. Tell students the following: “Norman Mineta (1931-2022) was incarcerated at Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming. He was the mayor of San Jose, a U.S. Representative, U.S. Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton, and U.S. Secretary of Transportation under President Bush. He spoke out against Japanese Incarceration and Islamophobia.”
- B. Show students the video entitled, “A Cabinet Meeting the Day after 9/11 - Norman Mineta”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH7rGPXGicM&t=9s>
- C. Tell students that this interview is a primary source.
- D. **NOTE TO TEACHER: As a reminder, primary sources are firsthand accounts and secondary sources are secondhand accounts or information created from primary sources. Primary sources are credible as evidence but they can be unreliable as people have different experiences, opinions, and memories. They can also be hard to comprehend as they are subject to people’s literacy skills and the resources available to them at the time. Secondary sources show how primary sources relate to existing knowledge and offer explanations or interpretations that can help foster further understanding. They also take a broader view and may look at patterns and consistencies across various primary sources. However, they can be unreliable as well because they are subject to the creator’s perspectives, interpretations, and biases.**
- E. Distribute the worksheet entitled, “[Video Transcript: Norman Mineta Interview](#).” Tell students to read the transcript of the interview as their second exposure to the content. Direct them to take complete the worksheet:
1. Note the title, author, date, and source of the text.
 2. Record observations in the left column.
 3. Record questions in the right column.
 4. Annotate as you read by highlighting or underlining important ideas and circling confusing vocabulary and concepts.
 5. Complete the reflection questions at the end of the worksheet.

**Strategy: Analyzing Sources
(Observe, Reflect, Question Strategy)**

Primary and secondary sources can be complex texts. But, they are necessary for historical thinking. Both sources complement each other in order to help learners build convincing arguments. Teachers can help students by providing prompting questions as they read.

For more on analyzing sources, see:

- <https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/>

- [Analyzing Primary Sources.pdf](#)
• <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/grade-10-historical-thinking-tools-and-analysis-strategies/> (p. 55)

F. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions - Encourage students to use their notes:

1. How did this interview confirm what you already know?
2. What new information did you learn?
3. How are the Japanese American incarceration experience and Islamophobia connected? In what ways are the events similar? In what ways are they different?
4. Why did Norman Mineta speak out against Islamophobia?

G. **NOTE TO TEACHER: If students need additional context about Norman Mineta, show the video entitled, “Norman Mineta and His Legacy: An American Story” (PBS):**
<https://vimeo.com/424965737>.

DAY TWO

Activity 1: The Importance of Solidarity

- A. Have students refer to the text entitled, “[Solidarity in Peace and War](#).”
- B. Ask students: What is the significance of the last paragraph? Do you agree or disagree?
1. Quote: “These instances highlight how easily a minority group’s civil liberties and rights can be violated in moments of conflict and amidst concerns of national security. In these moments, the vocal and vigilant support of other communities is of utmost importance as the basis of safeguarding the civil liberties of all people.

Activity 2: Analyzing Cross-Cultural Solidarity Moments During War

- A. Distribute the worksheet entitled, “[Comparative Historical Analysis Tool](#).”
- B. Have students review the examples of cross-cultural solidarity mentioned in the text entitled, “[Solidarity in Peace and War](#).”
- C. **NOTE TO TEACHER: Students should mention the following: Buffalo Soldiers x Filipino soldiers (Philippine-American War); Black community x Japanese Americans (WWII - Japanese American Incarceration); Jewish community x Japanese Americans (WWII - Japanese American Incarceration); and Japanese Americans x South Asian and Middle Eastern Americans (9/11 Attacks - Islamophobia).**
- D. Tell students they will be comparing two examples of cross-cultural solidarity during times of war or violence.
- E. Have them pick two events they would like to research more about.

F. **NOTE TO TEACHER: There are other examples of cross-cultural solidarity during war time. If students would like to study another example, allow them to do so. Have them use at least one of the examples from this lesson.**

G. Explain to students how to complete this worksheet - Clarify any misunderstandings:

1. Step 1: Students will record the two events they selected.
2. Step 2: Students will list the major facts or points about each event. Have them focus on the facts that are most important to understanding the event.
3. Step 3: Students will group the major facts or points about each event into categories and record all ideas into the third row. Have them look for patterns among the facts provided in Step 2.
4. Step 4: Students will look at their list of categories in Step 3 and select two categories for further examination. Students are prompted to think about these questions: Which categories make the most sense for analysis of the two events? What things can we compare to make an interesting argument or explanation? Which categories have sufficient evidence with which to build a comparison?
5. Step 5: Students will make comparisons. Have them list the categories selected in Step 4 in the first column. Have them list similarities between Event #1 and #2 in the third column. Have them list the differences for Event #1 in the second column and the differences for Event #2 in the fourth column.
6. Step 6: Students will answer the following questions: What inferences can you make about the significance of the similarities and differences? How do these similarities and differences relate to historical change? What do the similarities and differences say about the larger time period or societal issue?

Strategy: Comparative Historical Analysis Tool

Comparison is a way of understanding something. Students can gain a deep understanding of concepts and events by comparing, contrasting, and connecting. For deep analysis, make direct comparisons and avoid value judgments. It's important to remain objective.

For more on the Comparative Historical Analysis Tool, see:

<https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/grade-10-historical-thinking-tools-and-analysis-strategies/> (pp. 10-11)

Activity 3: Research Activity

A. Direct students to do further research into their assigned events. Encourage them to read at least 2-3 primary or secondary sources about their topic.

B. Distribute several copies of the worksheet entitled, "[Research Guide](#)."

1. Review the worksheet with them and clarify any confusions.

C. Direct students to find sources about their topic and complete the worksheet entitled "[Research Guide](#)" for each source by answering the following questions:

1. Who wrote this?
2. When was it written?
3. Where was it written?
4. Is it reliable? Why or why not?
5. What was happening at the time? Explain the historical context.

6. How did the historical context affect the content of the source?
7. What claims does the author make?
8. What evidence does the author use?
9. What language does the author use to persuade the audience?
10. How does the language indicate the author's perspective?
11. What does the language tell us about the author?

Strategy: Historical Thinking Skills Chart

Historical Thinking Skills Chart is a way to help students contextualize primary and secondary sources. This strategy supports students' historical reading skills such as sourcing, contextualization, close reading, and corroboration.

For more on Historical Thinking Skills Chart, see:

- <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/historical-thinking-skills-chart-stanford/>
- <https://sheg.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/download-pdf/Historical%20Thinking%20Chart.pdf>

D. Give students time to complete the “[Research Guide](#)” for each source.

E. Have students use all their notes to complete the worksheet entitled, “[Comparative Historical Analysis Tool](#).”

F. NOTE TO TEACHER: If time is limited, have students complete the research for homework.

G. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. How are the events similar?
2. How are the events different?
3. What are the connecting or enduring issues between the events?
4. What do the connections suggest about cross-cultural solidarity among communities of color?
5. What do the connections suggest about the systems that oppress communities of color?
6. What historical problems are revealed by examining the connections?
7. What historical solutions are revealed by examining the connections?

Activity 4: Solidarity between Asian Americans and other Communities of Color

A. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. How did Asian American communities and communities of color support each other in times of war and violence?
2. Why did Asian American communities and communities of color support each other in times of war and violence?

B. If you are teaching this lesson as part of the [Cross-Cultural Solidarity unit](#): Summarize this set of lessons by sharing this statement: “Communities of color share many connections. Historically, they have been oppressed and denied rights. Discrimination against them is heightened during times of national crisis, like war. We learned in this lesson that there have been instances in which communities of color support each other. In the next lesson, we will learn how Asian American and Pacific Islander communities joined forces with other

communities of color to fight for education.”

Further Information

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Japanese Americans and Aleuts Incarceration Constitutional Violations”:

<https://asianamericanedu.org/japanese-americans-aleuts-incarceration-constitutional-violations.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Who Defines Loyalty? Japanese Americans During World War II”: <https://asianamericanedu.org/2.3-define-loyal-american-lesson-plan.html>

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Victimized Twice: 9/11/2001, South Asian Americans & Islamophobia”:

<https://asianamericanedu.org/victimized-twice-9-11-2001-south-asian-islamophobia.html>

Video: “Norman Mineta and His Legacy: An American Story” (PBS, 2019):

<https://vimeo.com/424965737>