



# LESSON 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

## Activity I: **Setting the Scene: America in the 1940s** How do we connect with the past?

### Objective:

Students understand and relate to life in the 1940s.

### Procedure:

- ✓ Play music from the 1940s such as Big Band, Jazz, Blues or pick a particular artist such as Louis Armstrong, Nat “King” Cole, Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Glenn Miller, Woody Guthrie, Tommy Dorsey, Judy Garland, Duke Ellington or any others from that time period. If possible, play radio programs such as *The Green Hornet* or watch newsreels. Online resources include Universal Newsreels located on Internet Archive:

[http://www.archive.org/details/universal\\_newsreels](http://www.archive.org/details/universal_newsreels)

- ✓ Tell the students the time period of the music and ask them if they have ever heard any of the music before. Show recent TV shows, advertisements or movies that use music from this time period. Print out the music and sing the songs together.

- ✓ Ask the students if they are aware of games that were popular in the 1940s. Bring in a couple examples of the following games:

*Marbles*

*Jacks*

*Hop Scotch*

*Checkers*

*Jump Rope*

- ✓ Play 1940s’ games with the students in class. Break into groups and have each group play a different game. Directions to any of these games should be available online. Ask the students if they are aware of toys or books from the 1940s. Share examples that continue to be played (Lincoln Logs, tops, tea sets, etc.) or read (Black Beauty, Nancy Drew, etc.).

- ✓ Ask the students if they have ever played any of the games before. Have students compare games from the 1940s with what they do for fun today.

**Grade Level:** 4th

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Materials:**

Internet access and/or taped recordings of WWII era music & radio, Newsreel DVDs & Selected 1940s’ games & directions

**Concepts Covered:**

**Class discussion** of how the present is connected to the past.

**CDE Standards:**

**4th Grade  
Visual and Performing  
Arts:**

**Music and Content**

3.1 3.2 3.3

**History/Social Science**

4.4.4 4.4.5 4.4.6

4.4.9



Activity 1: **Setting The Scene, America in the 1940s**

How do we connect with the past?



*Momo Nagano (right) and her friends at Dorsey High, Los Angeles, 1940. Momo Nagano Collection, Manzanar NHS*

**Procedure (continued):**

- ✓ Additional resources focusing on music, radio and movies during World War II can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.teacheroz.com/WWIIpropaganda.html>

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/archives/chrono\\_1926\\_04.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/archives/chrono_1926_04.html)

**Assessment:**

1. Participation in classroom activities and discussion.

**Extension:**

1. Introduce students to Japanese games and music from the 1940s. Examples are available online.