



Lesson 6: Identity Shapes Perspectives

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 1: Apology

How can we stand for freedom?

Objective:

After learning about the U.S. government's formal apology to former Japanese American internees, students evaluate their role in maintaining liberty and equality for everyone.



Temporary housing for Japanese Americans returning from camps, 1945. Photo by Tom Parker. Bancroft Library/University of California, Berkeley

Procedure:

- ✓ Place the 1990 Letter of Apology written by President George H.W. Bush (located in the Lesson 6 Activity 1 Resources section) on an overhead screen and read the letter out loud to the class.
- ✓ As a class activity, break down the phrases, words, and the meaning of this letter. Talk about such phrases as:

"We can never fully right the wrongs of the past..."
"Rectify injustice and uphold the rights of individuals..."
"Recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II..."
"Offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have in a very real sense renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality and justice."

- ✓ Define the terms *reparations* and *redress*. Ask your students if America should provide reparations and/or redress for other ethnic groups impacted by racism and violence. Debate the pros and cons and discuss how a country can "right a wrong."
- ✓ As a class discuss:
 - What is freedom? How much freedom do you have as a student?*
 - What does this letter promise? How is the promise being kept?*
 - How can you play a role in providing freedom, equality and justice in your school, community and/or country?*
 - How does freedom, equality and justice affect your identity in America?*
 - Are freedom, equality and justice offered only to people of certain cultures and/or backgrounds? Why or why not?*

Grade Level: 10 & 11

Time: 1-2 hours

Materials:

George H. W. Bush's Letter of Apology
Student journals

Concepts Covered:
Read and analyze historic documents.
Use vocabulary in political documents.
Discuss political and civil rights.

CDE Standards

10th Grade English/Language Reading

1.1 1.2 1.3 3.3

Writing

2.3

Listening & Speaking

1.1

History/Social Science

10.8.6 10.10.3

11th Grade English/Language Arts Reading

1.1 2.1 2.6 3.3 3.8

Writing

2.3 2.4

Listening & Speaking

2.3

History/Social Science

11.7.5 11.10.1



Activity I: **Apology** How can we stand for freedom?



*An Issei Man Receives Redress Check, Seattle, Washington, 1990.
Courtesy of Densho/Yanagihara Family Collection*

Procedure (continued):

- ✓ Have the students answer three essential questions in their journals.

Essential Questions:

*What does freedom mean to you?
How do you support freedom for others?
How does your identity affect your freedom in America?*

- ✓ Discuss journal comments and state the Essential Question:

How does my identity shape my experience in America?

- ✓ Have students review their journal entries and answer the essential question. Write answers on the board.

Assessment:

1. Level of student participation in group discussions.
2. Journal entries.

Extension:

1. Refer to the lesson, "A Day in Their Shoes", located on the education DVD, **MANZANAR: Desert Diamonds Behind Barbed Wire**.

Lesson 6: Wrap Up

1. Review the What Do You Know handout and find the correct answers, if you haven't already.
2. Discuss the following questions with the class:
*How does identity and/or culture shape experience(s) in America?
How can we learn from the mistakes of the past and uphold the Constitution?
How can your identity play a positive role in the experiences of others?*



1990 Letter of Apology



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Bush".

GEORGE BUSH
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1990