



JOURNEY OF HEROES CLASSROOM DISCUSSION GUIDE

Reference information and links to Reference material will be listed in **RED**. Discussion questions will be listed in **blue**.

FLASHBACK:

REFERENCE:

www.pbs.org/thewar/detail_5225.htm

This link to pbs.org website chronicles the battle in the Vosges Mountains by the 100th and 442nd in October of 1944. The rescue of the Lost Battalion is listed by the United States Army as one of the 10 most influential battles in Army history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why do you think the Japanese-American men of the 100th and 442nd were ordered to make an attempt to rescue the “Lost Battalion” even after so many other attempts had failed?

DECEMBER 7, 1941:

REFERENCE:

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5154>

This is a link to a brief explanation and the full text of Executive Order 9066 which called for the forced relocation of some 160,000 Japanese Americans from the western areas of the United States further inland into confinement sites like Manzanar, Tule Lake, Gila River, and Heart Mountain.

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/day-of-infamy/>

This is a link to the full text and explanation of President Roosevelt’s speech on December 8, 1941 to a joint session of Congress during which he asked Congress to declare war on Japan, thus bringing the United States into war with Japan, and by extension Germany and Italy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Explain the significance of “burning everything that was Japanese.” Do you believe it was necessary for Japanese-American families to do this after December 7, 1941? Why or why not?

Do you believe it was easier for the Nisei (2nd generation Japanese Americans) to “abandon the old ways”? Why or why not? What would YOU have done in the same situation?

Explain the concept of “cultural citizenship.” Do you believe that the Nisei had dual citizenship to Japan and the United States? Why or why not?

Why would the sentiment toward Japanese Americans change literally overnight as a result of December 7, 1941?

THE VVV AND HEADING OFF TO WAR:

REFERENCES:

http://www.javadc.org/hung_wai_ching.htm

This is a link to more information about Hung Wai Ching, of the Atherton YMCA, and one of the influential persons in the formation of the Varsity Victory Volunteers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Place yourself into the US government’s position, would you have placed Japanese Americans into confinement sites? Why or why not?

Why was Hung Wai Ching, and the formation of the VVV so vital to creating racial equality for Japanese Americans during and after World War II?

Explain the difference in sentiment between the Japanese Americans who volunteered for the 442nd from Hawaii and the mainland. Why do you think there was such a difference? Whom do you side with more? Hawaii AJAs or mainland AJAs? Why?

THE JOURNEY BEGINS:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Explain the quote “Try to live, but if you must die, so be it.” Why do you think the Issei made such a bold statement to their sons?

Examine the relationship between Hawaii AJAs and Mainland AJAs when they first met. What caused the change of heart? Do you think the “field trip” was necessary? Why or why not? Support your answer.

WARTIME ACCOLADES:

REFERENCES:

<http://www.defense.gov/specials/medalofhonor/>

This link provides information about the Medal of Honor recipients whose medals were upgraded in June 2000. 20 of them were from the 100th and 442nd during World War II, with full texts of their Medal of Honor citations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

During World War II, only ONE AJA soldier received (posthumously) the Medal of Honor. Almost 60 years later, another 20 were upgraded. Why do you think only one man received the medal during World War II? Why would so many receive the medal later?

During WWII, there were reports of “reverse AWOL” soldiers who left recovery hospitals to rejoin their units on the battlefield. Why do you think some soldiers did this? Why was this important to the men of the 100th and 442nd?

CLOSING SECTION:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Based on what you know now about the AJAs and the veterans, how do you think they embody the spirit of Americanism?

What does being an American mean to you?

What will you do to honor the legacy of our Japanese American veterans?

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