



Lesson 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 1: Setting the Scene: America in the 1940s

How do we connect with the past?

Objective:

Students evaluate similarities and differences between life in the 1940s and today.

Procedure:

- Play big band or jazz music from the 1940s, or pick a particular artist such as Louis Armstrong, Nat “King” Cole, Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Judy Garland, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Woody Guthrie, Tommy Dorsey or any others from that time period. Play radio programs such as *The Green Hornet* and/or watch newsreels. Online resources include:

Universal Newsreels- www.archive.org/details/universal_newsreels

Old-Time Radio Shows- www.archive.org/details/oldtimeradio

- Ask students if they have ever heard the music or radio show before, and if so, ask them what time period they think it is from. Show current TV shows, advertisements or movies that use music from the late 1930s to early 1940s. If possible, print out the music and sing the songs together.
- Have students research what life was like in the early 1940s. Give them class time and ask them to continue the assignment as homework. Ask the class to journal their findings with a paragraph answering the following questions. Students should use the library, internet and/or family/friends who lived during that time as part of their research.

What were popular leisure activities?

What foods were popular?

What were popular professions?

Who was the target of prejudice and racism, in your area? Who wasn't?

What were some big news stories?



Fruits and Vegetables Market in Los Angeles, Dorothea Lange, 1942 (I AM AN AMERICAN sign was posted December 8, 1941)

Grade Level: 10 & 11
Time: 75 minutes (class)
30 minutes (home)

Materials:
1940s music and radio recordings and/or newsreels
DVD films (optional)
Song lyrics (optional)
Library & internet access

Concepts Covered:

Listen for detail.

Determine the purpose and standpoint of media communication from the past.

Learn different points of view.

CDE Standards:

10th Grade
English/Language Arts
Listening and Speaking
1.10 1.11

History-Social Science
10.8.6

11th Grade
English/Language Arts
Listening and Speaking
1.2 1.3

History-Social Science
11.8.7



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

How do we connect with the past?



*Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, New York City, 1937
Library of Congress photograph*

Procedure (continued):

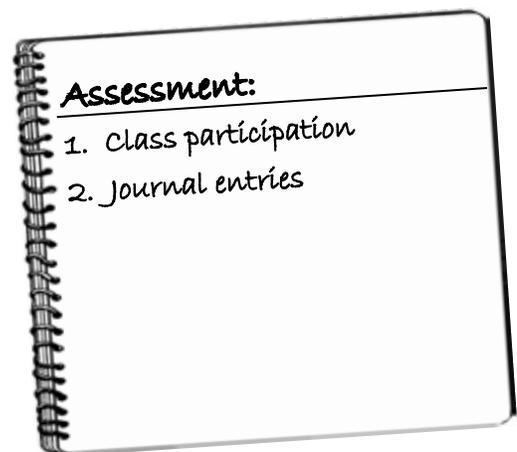
- ✓ As a class discuss the following questions:

How did the African American musicians of swing and jazz music emerge during a time when segregation and discrimination were still accepted and legal across America?

What was America like in the early 1940s? How is life different today? Compare and contrast the differences.

How do you feel connected to or alienated by the cultures and traditions of America?

How does the past define us today? What impact does history have on your life?





Lesson 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 2: Learning from Each Other

How do we we connect with the past?

Objective:

Students learn about the past through the experiences of an older person they know.

Procedure:

- ✓ Review oral history interviews with your class online through the Densho website, www.densho.org (obtain a free login one week prior to the lesson). Interviews are found on the website under the Archive section Visual History Collections. Choose one option such as the Manzanar Collection.
- ✓ Ask students to conduct an interview with a parent, grandparent or elderly friend and document answers in their journal. Encourage students to record the interview if their interviewee provides consent. Also, remind your students to respect the privacy of their interviewee as he/she may not want to answer some questions. The class assignment is to have the students encourage the interviewees to respond with descriptions of what life was like when they were teenagers. The Leading Questions below are also located in the Lesson 2 Activity 2 Resources section.



Young people dancing at Manzanar. Francis Stewart, 1942

Young women in a barracks apartment. Francis Stewart, 1942



How did you wear your hair?

What was your favorite movie and why?

How much did it cost for snacks or a soda at a movie?

What sports were popular? What movie stars or music groups were popular?

Did you go to dances? What types of dances did you do?

What were the common modes of transportation?

How has technology changed?

What sights, sounds or smells remind you of your childhood?

How did you rebel or get into trouble?

Did you serve in the military?

Do you remember positive stories and/or stories of struggle?

How have you changed since then?

What wisdom can you pass on to young people?

Grade Level: 10 & 11

Time: 3 hours (class)
90 minutes (home)

Materials: Student journals, Internet access, Leading Questions List, Video or Audio recorder (optional), Densho member login

Concepts Covered:

Learn about different points of view.

Listen for detail.

Present an oral report.

CDE Standards:

10th Grade English/Language Arts
Listening and Speaking

1.1 1.13

History-Social Science
10.8.6

11th Grade English/Language Arts
Listening and Speaking

1.1 1.2 1.3

History-Social Science
11.7.6 11.8.1 11.8.7



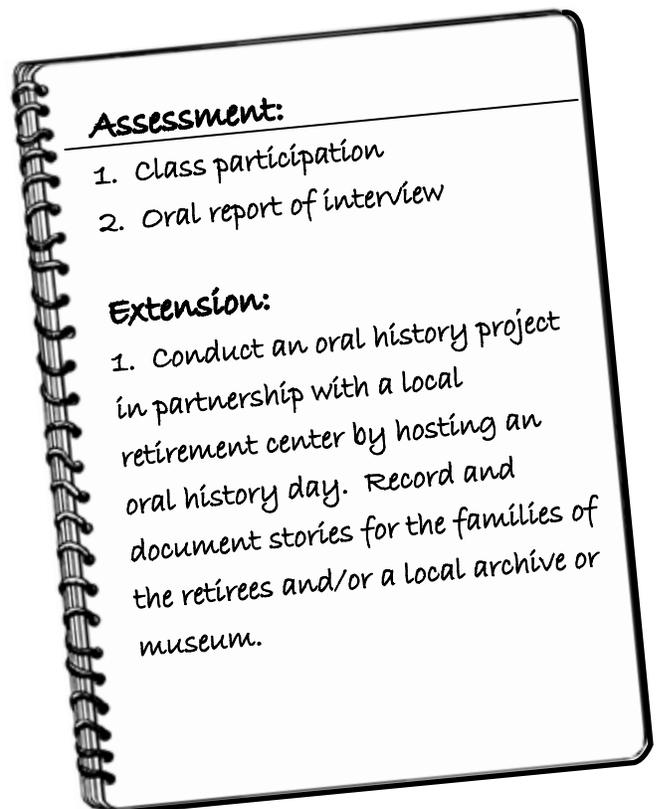
Activity 2: **Learning from Each Other**
How do we connect with the past?



Boys basketball game at Manzanar. Francis Stewart, 1942

Procedure (continued):

- ✓ Have students develop and present 5-10 minute oral reports to the class, based on their interviews.
- ✓ Ask students if (or how) their experiences define who they are. How do they feel the interviewee's stories define his/her identity or life story?
- ✓ Ask your students: "How do you connect with stories from the past?"





Activity 2: **Learning from Each Other**

Leading Questions for an Interview

How did you wear your hair?

What was your favorite movie and why? How much did it cost for snacks or a soda at a movie?

What sports were popular? What movie stars or music groups were popular?

Did you go to dances? What types of dances did you do?

How has technology changed?

What were the common modes of transportation?

What sights, sounds or smells remind you of your childhood?

How did you rebel or get into trouble?

Did you serve in the military?

Do you remember positive stories and/or stories of struggle?

How have you changed since then? What wisdom can you pass on to young people?



Lesson 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 3: Tracing the Past

How do we connect with the past?

Objective:

Students relate to past and present forms of communication.

Procedure:

✓ Ask students the following question: Why do we write, build monuments or leave our mark? Ask them to think of all the written communication they see in the world around them. Give them five minutes to consider and journal various reasons for graphic communication. Discuss the evolution of the English alphabet.

✓ Have students share their answers and make a list of responses on the board. Sample answers may include:

- to communicate feelings, ideas and thoughts*
- to remind us to do things*
- to prove we know something*
- to prove we were at a place*
- to leave a memory*
- to help us learn*
- to deface*
- to make a statement*
- to rebel or protest*
- to beautify....*

✓ Ask students to think of various forms of communication. Are there other ways to create a lasting memory, thought, design, religious belief, etc? Sample answers may include: roadside memorials for accident victims, Egyptian hieroglyphics, graffiti*, written literature, American Indian petroglyphs, Stonehenge, Taj Mahal, Easter Island statues, objects left at historical places such as paper cranes at Manzanar National Historic Site.

✓ Discuss the handout Rock Art of the Owens Valley (located in the Lesson 2 Activity 3 Resources section). Have your students research the topic of Japanese Kanji (or search the internet together). Compare American Indians' petroglyphs and Japanese Kanji. Stress that both use symbols that may represent entire words or ideas rather than individual letters.



Kanji inscriptions on reservoir walls at Manzanar. Manzanar NHS

Grade Level: 10 & 11
Time: 2 hours (class)
 2 hours (home)
Materials: Chalk or dry erase board, Rock Art of the Owens Valley handout, Related Resources (images & poem), Internet or literary resources, **Kanji Pict-o-Graphix** - Michael Rowley (optional)

Concepts Covered:
Determine the purpose of various forms of communication from different eras.
Compare & contrast visual forms of communication.
Understand vocabulary for visual writing and experiment with new forms of communication.
Utilize the internet to research petroglyphs, pictographs and other forms of written communication.
Create a story using historical forms of communication.
Present an oral report.
Organize & communicate ideas clearly in written and in verbal form.

CDE Standards:
10th Grade History-Social Science 10.8.6
11th Grade History-Social Science 11.7.5
9-12th Grade Visual Performing Arts 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4



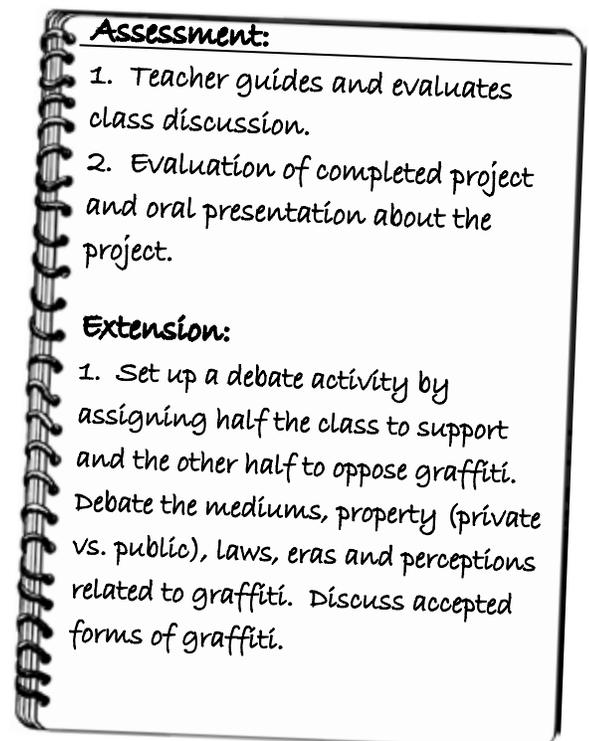
Activity 3: Tracing the Past

How do we connect with the past?

Procedure (continued):

- ✓ Show pictures: Bighorn Sheep petroglyph, artifacts left at Manzanar cemetery, Kanji and English graffiti inside Manzanar sentry posts, objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and a poem left at Ground Zero in New York City (located in the Lesson 2 Activity 3 Resources section). Stress that each form of communication is unique to itself. Compare and contrast appropriate time periods for communication, for instance graffiti created years after internment (sentry posts at Manzanar NHS), the time lapse between World War II and the creation of the World War II Memorial (Washington, D.C) versus the Vietnam War and the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Washington, D.C.).
- ✓ Ask students the following questions:
 - In what ways might you leave your mark for future generations?*
 - Will it be written or in another form?*
 - Will it be similar to the American Indian petroglyphs?*
 - Is it necessary to leave a literal or figurative mark?*
- ✓ Have students create their own mark in the medium of their choice. Students will have this as a homework assignment. Students will present their projects to the class.
- ✓ Written ideas include:
 - Rock art created by American Indians
 - Japanese Kanji
 - Basque shepherders' tree carvings
 - Aztec calendar
 - Music
 - Manuscript for a film, book, play, etc.
 - Painting or drawing
- ✓ Discuss the topic of graffiti, the positive and negative reactions, placement (public or private property) and the era it is made. *
- ✓ Conclude the lesson by reviewing how important identities and cultures are to our past. By learning about the past, we learn more about our country, our people, ourselves and our future. Discuss the places that preserve and protect stories and sites, such as museums, parks, historic sites, libraries, etc. Visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov to explore some of the special places preserved by and for the American people.

**Discuss the implications and legal ramifications associated with defacing property and the environment. The point of the lesson is to explore various forms of communication, not to encourage graffiti.*





Activity 3: Tracing the Past

Rock Art of the Owens Valley

Vocabulary:

petroglyph: a carving or line drawing on rock, especially one made by prehistoric people. Petroglyphs are engravings, made by pecking, carving or scratching a design into a rock surface. Early explorers and pioneers also made petroglyphs.

pictograph: a picture representing a word or idea, a hieroglyph. Pictographs are rock paintings, made from plants and minerals like red ochre mixed with oil and applied to rock surfaces with sticks, fingers, hands and brushes (made of animal fur or tail).

tableland: a flat elevated region; a plateau or mesa. Petroglyphs can be found in the tableland areas of the Owens Valley, CA.

For at least 12,000 years, American Indian cultures have called the Owens Valley home (Manzanar War Relocation Center was located in the Owens Valley). American Indians were attracted to the area because of its abundant resources, especially in the volcanic tablelands (near Bishop, California). Almost every plant and animal was used by the American Indians for food, fiber or medicine. Evidence of American Indians can be seen in the petroglyphs in the mountains, valleys and eastern deserts of California. The Owens Valley Paiute continue to live in the region.

In California, American Indians made two types of rock art: petroglyphs and pictographs. Petroglyphs are typically found in the desert regions (sometimes on tablelands or canyon walls) like Little Petroglyph Canyon on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center known as one of the greatest concentrations of rock art in the world. This Mojave desert site has 20 known pictographs compared to nearly 5,000 petroglyphs.

Some American Indians share stories about shamans or medicine men creating rock art to preserve a record of their visionary trances. Many pictographs and petroglyphs appear to be geometric designs. Symbols may represent an idea or an object rather than a specific letter of an alphabet. American Indians told stories through symbols.





Activity 3: **Tracing the Past**



*Petroglyph of a Big Horn Sheep made by American Indians. Petroglyph located in the Mojave Desert, California
Carrie Andresen-Strawn, 2006*



Activity 3: Tracing the Past



*Cemetery Monument at Manzanar National Historic Site. Kanji characters represent the phrase “soul consoling tower.”
National Park Service photo*

Offerings and objects found at Manzanar, a former World War II War Relocation Center for Japanese Americans, have diverse meanings. Among the objects are photographs, letters, glass pieces, ceramics, barbed wire, metal objects, tin cans, flowers, coins, origami cranes, flags and banners. Many objects are from Manzanar, left over from the camp era. Former internees, their children and others leave offerings on the monument. Some offerings represent spiritual connections, others symbolize relatives, and peace is represented through origami cranes. The objects tell stories about Manzanar and about a specific time period.



Activity 3: **Tracing the Past**



*Kanji and English writing on the walls of the Manzanar sentry post written decades after World War II
National Park Service photo*



Objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Washington, D.C.



*Personal artifacts left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2005
National Park Service photo*

This collection is unlike any museum collection. Among the artifacts are photographs, letters, MIA/POW bracelets, medals, helmets, dog tags, boots, canned food, unopened beer cans, cigarettes, birthday cards, toys, bullets and casings. Soldiers who returned home leave objects for those who did not. Many objects are from parents, spouses, siblings, and children. Some offerings are direct communications between the living and the dead, connections between those who were killed and those who remember. They tell us not only something about the people on the Wall, they tell us about an era.

Learn more about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at www.nps.gov/vive.



Poetry left at Ground Zero,
New York City, NY

Activity 3: **Tracing the Past**

The Towers

You rushed up the stairs of the towers
As we rushed down...
You looked for those who needed you...
They were all around

Your job is to save...that is what you
are taught to do...
no matter each horror or incident
it is expected...of you..

We see you today...going up each stair...
We are helpless and cry out
In despair
The building collapsed
Our hearts did too...
America lost its heroes
With you

Those of us living who don't even
Know your name
Yet your brothers
And America will never be the same

Again and again firefighters
will all come along
the same oaths and traditions
will always carry on

And you... who follow the footsteps
Of those who went up those stairs
We give you our love and hope
And our prayers

And that this horror in America
Can never again be
We wish God speed to you
And hold your brothers
Eternally.

Author's Name unreadable

Poem found on <http://memory.loc.gov/service/afc/afc2001015/ph/ph037v.jpg>



Lesson 2: Connections to the Past

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 4: **KWL**

How do we connect with the past?

Objective:

Students reflect on what they have learned.

Procedure:

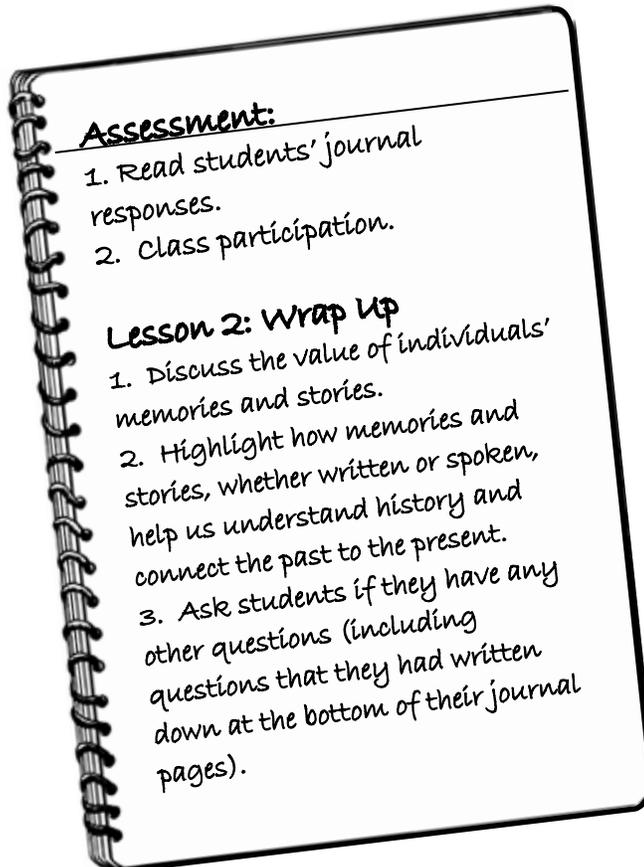
- Have students answer the questions listed below. Use the KWL chart (located in the Additional Resources section) as an example or have your students create their own KWL charts in their journals.

What did you **know** about the stories of the past?
 What did you **know** about the person you interviewed?

What do you **want** to know about your connection to the 1940s?
 What do you **want** to know about the person you interviewed?

What did you **learn** about the past and its influence on you and America?
 What did you **learn** about the person you interviewed?

- This information is shared with the entire class.



Grade Level: 10 & 11

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

Student journals

KWL chart (optional)

Concepts Covered:

Assess students' background knowledge.

Anticipate what students expect to learn.

Evaluate what they have learned.

Fill out charts.

CDE Standards:

10th Grade English/Language Arts Writing

2.3
History-Social Science
10.8.6

11th Grade English/Language Arts Writing

2.3
History-Social Science
11.7.5