

# Japanese Internment Camps Worksheet



**Japanese internment camps worksheet** serves as an essential educational tool for teaching students about a significant and often painful chapter in American history. During World War II, approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, were forcibly relocated and incarcerated in internment camps across the United States. This worksheet aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the internment experience, the historical context, and the long-lasting implications of this wartime policy.

## Historical Context

### The Prelude to Internment

The roots of Japanese internment can be traced back to rising tensions between the United States and Japan during the early 20th century. Several factors contributed to this situation:

1. Racial Prejudice: Negative stereotypes and racial biases against Japanese immigrants were prevalent in American society, resulting in widespread discrimination.
2. Economic Competition: Japanese immigrants often worked in agriculture and fishing, leading to resentment from local white populations who felt economically threatened.
3. Pearl Harbor Attack: The immediate catalyst for the internment was the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which led to heightened fears of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans.

### Executive Order 9066

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the military to designate certain areas as exclusion zones. This order led to the forced removal of Japanese Americans from their homes, primarily along the West Coast. Key points

include:

- Mass Evacuations: Families were given only a few days' notice to vacate their homes and often had to leave behind belongings, businesses, and property.
- Internment Camps: The government established ten internment camps, known as War Relocation Centers, in remote areas across the United States.

## **Life in the Internment Camps**

### **Conditions in the Camps**

The internment camps were often hastily constructed and lacked basic amenities. Conditions varied, but common issues included:

- Overcrowding: Families were crammed into small barracks with minimal privacy.
- Inadequate Facilities: The camps lacked proper sanitation, and healthcare services were limited.
- Food Quality: Many internees complained about the quality of food, which was often poorly prepared and unappetizing.

### **Community and Resilience**

Despite the harsh conditions, Japanese Americans showed remarkable resilience. They sought to create a sense of community within the camps through:

- Education: Schooling was established for children, allowing them to continue their education amidst uncertainty.
- Cultural Activities: Many internees organized cultural events, such as traditional festivals and performances, to maintain their heritage.
- Sports and Recreation: Camps often had recreational activities, including sports teams and arts and crafts, fostering a sense of normalcy.

## **Impact and Aftermath**

### **End of Internment**

The internment officially ended in 1945, but the consequences of this policy lingered for decades. Factors leading to the closure of the camps included:

- Changing Perceptions: As the war progressed, public opinion began to shift, and many recognized the injustices faced by Japanese Americans.
- Legal Challenges: Organizations and individuals started to file lawsuits, challenging the legality of internment.

# Long-Term Effects on Japanese Americans

The aftermath of internment had profound effects on Japanese American communities:

- Loss of Property: Many internees lost homes, businesses, and savings, leading to long-lasting financial difficulties.
- Psychological Impact: The trauma of internment left emotional scars, resulting in issues like anxiety and depression among survivors.
- Cultural Displacement: The experience caused a rift between generations, as younger Japanese Americans struggled to connect with their cultural heritage.

## Redress and Apologies

### Government Acknowledgment

In the decades following the war, the United States government began to recognize the injustices of internment:

- Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians: Established in 1980, this commission conducted hearings and produced a report concluding that internment was "based on race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."
- Civil Liberties Act of 1988: This act provided reparations to surviving Japanese American internees, including a formal apology from President Ronald Reagan and compensation of \$20,000 for each internee.

### Contemporary Reflections

Today, the legacy of Japanese internment continues to resonate. Educational initiatives and memorials have been established to ensure that this chapter of history is not forgotten:

- Museums and Exhibits: Institutions like the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles provide resources and exhibits to educate the public about internment.
- Curriculum Development: Schools and organizations have developed curricula to teach students about civil rights, social justice, and the importance of standing against discrimination.

## Conclusion

The Japanese internment camps worksheet serves as a vital educational resource, shedding light on the injustices faced by Japanese Americans during World War II. By understanding the historical context, the experiences of internees, and the long-term consequences of this policy, students can better appreciate the importance of civil liberties and the need for vigilance against prejudice and discrimination. The lessons learned from this dark period in American history underscore the significance of promoting tolerance, understanding, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background. Through continued education and reflection, we can honor the resilience of those who endured internment and strive to prevent similar injustices from happening in the future.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What were the primary reasons for the establishment of Japanese internment camps during World War II?**

The primary reasons for the establishment of Japanese internment camps included wartime hysteria, racial prejudice, and the belief that Japanese Americans posed a security threat after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

## **What was the impact of the internment camps on Japanese American families?**

The impact on Japanese American families was profound, leading to the loss of homes, businesses, and personal belongings, as well as a deep emotional and psychological toll due to family separation and the stigma of internment.

## **How did the U.S. government justify the internment of Japanese Americans?**

The U.S. government justified the internment of Japanese Americans by claiming it was a necessary measure for national security, despite the lack of evidence of espionage or sabotage by Japanese Americans.

## **What legal actions were taken regarding the internment of Japanese Americans after World War II?**

After World War II, legal actions included court cases such as *Korematsu v. United States*, which challenged the constitutionality of internment. Eventually, the U.S. government formally acknowledged the injustice, leading to reparations and apologies in the 1980s.

## **What educational resources are available for teaching about Japanese internment camps?**

Educational resources for teaching about Japanese internment camps include worksheets, documentaries, survivor testimonies, history books, and lesson plans that explore the historical context, personal stories, and lessons learned from this experience.

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