

Primary Sources: Photos and Documents on Japanese American Exclusion

This lesson is designed to allow students to explore primary source photographs and documents related to the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Before we tell students about internment, students view several powerful Dorothea Lange photos of Japanese Americans, including the Mochida Family from Hayward awaiting Internment. Instead of telling students about Executive Order 9066, students must read the actual order and interpret a map of the exclusion zone. Once students have grappled with the documents, then teacher can use the [Japanese American Internment](#) slideshow to go over material contained in the document.

Lesson Steps:

1. Pass out [eight primary source documents and photos](#) related to the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast after the US entered World War II.
2. Pair students with the documents and have them work together, interpreting the documents and answering the questions on the [student worksheet](#).
3. Teacher goes over the documents by showing the several slides the [Japanese American Internment](#) PowerPoint slideshow. Where appropriate, students take notes on the slides.

Extension Activities:

You may want to ask students with Chromebooks or devices with Internet access to find documents of their own primary source documents using the [Densho.org](#) website. In this case you could have students write an analysis of a document that they found, which further illustrates aspects of Japanese American exclusion. Students could be share these primary sources and analysis with the class, as well.