

# Japanese Americans in Utah

## Summary

This lesson plan examines Japanese culture and the life of Japanese-Americans both past and present, with an emphasis on those who lived in Utah.

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 4th Grade

[Standard 2](#)

## Time Frame

5 class periods of 70 minutes each

## Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Character, Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

### Lesson One

- [Continents and Oceans Handout](#)
  - [Worksheet on Japan Handout](#)
  - [4 Season in Japan Pictures](#)
  - [Landmarks of Japan Pictures](#)
  - [Family Traditions Handout](#)
  - [Outline of Japan Handout](#)
- Japan's different seasons

### Lesson Two

Bingham Canyon Mine video

### Lesson Three

Yellow and White strips of paper  
Faces of Utah video  
Poster paper/markers

### Lesson Four

Something Strong Within video  
Moving Memories video  
Journey to Topaz  
Baseball Saved Us

### Lesson Five

Japanese Music  
Japanese Candy  
Origami Paper

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should have an understanding of the experience of Japanese-Americans during the time of internment (WWII) and also of the specific experience of those living in Utah. Teachers should be familiar with various aspects of Japanese culture. (See attached "web resources").

## Student Prior Knowledge

none

## Intended Learning Outcomes

This lesson is designed to teach students about the culture and history of Japan. This lesson also introduces students to the ways Japanese-Americans have experienced life in the United States (discrimination, internment) and the contributions they have made (economic--railroad, farming, etc., and cultural). Specifically how all of these factors have had an effect on Utah and the history of the state.

## Instructional Procedures

### Lesson One: Japan

*Objective 1:* To teach students the location of Japan and Utah on a world map and to show students the similarities and differences of major land formations and the climates of both locations.

*Objective 2:* To teach students about traditional Japanese culture and its customs.

*Activity 1:* Divide the class into small groups. Have each group locate [Utah and Japan on a world map](#). Discuss how climate is related to these locations.

*Activity 2:* Students color the islands of [Japan to look like a dragon](#).

*Activity 3:* Display photos of Japan showing the [four seasons](#). Compare the images of seasons in Japan to the seasons students experience in Utah. Show pictures of Japan's most famous [landmarks](#) and formations (for example, the Great Buddha, Tottori Sand Dunes, etc).

*Activity 4:* Students are shown traditional Japanese clothing (kimonos), chopsticks, rice bowls, and other Japanese items that can be found. Ask students if they have seen these items before and what they think of them? Ask students what the traditional items of their culture is. Make a list of these items on the board and the countries they come from.

Discuss with students their own [cultural traditions](#) or practices at home that might be similar to the Japanese practices.

Ask students if they have ever seen pictures of Japan before, and where they have seen them.

*Activity 5:* Students complete [worksheet on Japan](#) and [Mapping Japan](#). Discuss responses to worksheet with students.

### Lesson Two -- Japanese Immigration to Utah

*Objective:* To teach students the reasons why the Japanese immigrated to Utah and what the experiences they had in Utah.

*Activity 1:* Discuss the economic opportunities that encouraged Japanese to come to Utah. Included in the discussion would be the importance of mining, railroad work, and farming in Utah and how it influenced the diverse population of Utah.

*Activity 2:* In class, watch the video [The Bingham Canyon Mine](#). After viewing the video discuss it as a class. What was learned about the Japanese and Utah through this film?

*Activity 3:* Discuss Japan Town with the class. (the book, [Japantown: Japanese Americans in Utah](#) will be helpful). Tell them that there was once a part of Salt Lake City that was primarily inhabited by Japanese. Discuss what types of services it provided to the Japanese community (culture, community, food, religion, etc).

*Activity 4:* Discuss Utah's Japanese-American experiences from the book [Missing Stories](#) compiled by Leslie G. Kelen and Eileen Hallet Stone. Various stories found on pg. 309-366.

### Lesson Three-- Prejudice and Discrimination

*Objective:* To help students understand the discrimination felt by many minority groups by experiencing it themselves.

*Activity 1:* As students enter the room, alternately hand out white and yellow strips of paper. People who receive the yellow strips of paper will be the group discriminated against.

Discriminatory Acts: Privileges given to one group and not another.

Extra Recess Time

Drinking fountain privileges during class time.

Sitting privileges-one group could sit anywhere they want and others have assigned seating.

Discriminated group is at back of the line

(Teachers can add any other "privileges" that are specific to their classroom)

*Activity 2:* Follow Up Discussion of Activity 1 - How did it make students feel? Was it fair? What is discrimination and prejudice?

*Activity 3:* Make a poster with the students listing off all the ethnic groups they can think of that live in Salt Lake City (help them if they are having difficulty). Ask them to draw upon their own experiences and ethnicity/culture to create the list. This will help them understand that Utah is made up of different people of color; which is what makes its history rich and interesting. Title the poster "Difference is Beautiful."

*Activity 4:* Watch the video The Faces of Utah. After viewing the video discuss it with the class.

Lesson 4 -- Japanese-American Internment Camp Experience

*Objective:* To help students understand, become aware of, and sensitive to the Japanese-American internment camp experience. They will develop a sense of empathy by learning about and simulating the situations that Japanese-Americans faced.

*Activity 1:* Watch and discuss video, Moving Memories. Ask the students the following questions:

What were the people in the film wearing during this time period?

How did they appear to feel?

List the different jobs they had.

Share any other observations they may have made about the Japanese from the video.

*Activity 2:* Read to the class Journey to Topaz or The Bracelet by Yoshiko Uchida, and Baseball Saved Us by Ken Mochizuki.

*Activity 3:* Discuss the Utah internment camp located in Topaz, Utah. Discuss with the students what they have learned about internment camps from the books and videos.

*Activity 4:* Have the students make a list of what they would pack if they could only take what they could carry. Have each student share with the class one item on their list. Make a list on the board of each of these items.

*Activity 5:* Watch and discuss the video Something Strong Within. Have a class discussion using the following questions:

Why do you think these people are in the camps?

Were the children in the video American citizens?

Did they (the Japanese-Americans) do something wrong?

What were the camps like?

Lesson 5 -- Celebration of the Japanese Culture

*Objective:* To expose the students to the richness of the Japanese culture.

In Salt Lake City many of these items can be found at the Japanese Food Market: 1515 S Main Street or Oriental Food Market: 667 South 700 East.

*Activity 1:* Listen to Japanese music.

*Activity 2:* Japanese Food Experience--Onigiri, Teriyaki Hot Dogs, Japanese rice crackers, and candy.

*Activity 3:* Japanese Art form--Origami.

*Activity 4:* Read popular Japanese children's stories (see bibliography).

Extensions

For an older classroom (High School) the film American Pastime could be used. (Warner Brothers. 2007. The film is not rated. 106 minutes).

Many parts of this lesson plan can be adjusted based upon the resources available to the individual teacher. For example, if it is not possible to have actual Japanese items (chopsticks, clothing, etc) to show to the class pictures can be used.

### Bibliography

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### Authors

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