Japanese Internment

Summary
Students will learn how various environmental and cultural changes impacted the treatment of Japanese Americans in Utah.

Main Core Tie
Social Studies - 4th Grade
Standard 2 Objective 1

Additional Core Ties
Social Studies - 4th Grade
Standard 3 Objective 1

Time Frame
2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials
*Baseball Saved Us*
by Ken Mochizuki

Intended Learning Outcomes
Students will understand why the US government forced people to leave their homes and live in internment camps during WWII.

Instructional Procedures
Introduction Activity - The characters in BASEBALL SAVED US were taken from their home and sent to live in an internment camp. They had not done anything wrong. They were Japanese Americans who lived on the West Coast at a time when the United States was fighting a war with Japan. Do you think it was fair for the government to take them from their home and make them move far away? How would you feel if this happened to your family?

Before students read the story, have pairs of students search through the text for interesting or unfamiliar words. Have student volunteers write the words on the whiteboard. Discuss with students the possible meaning of each unfamiliar word.

Word web for baseball terms, since many students may be unfamiliar with the terminology. Write the word BASEBALL on the whiteboard and draw a circle around it. Then have students generate all the baseball-related terms they can think of. Be sure to elicit terms that appear in the text: bleachers, baseball field, bats, balls, gloves, team, infield, catcher, base, inning, strike, hit, no hitter, pitcher, home plate.

To promote active reading, you might wish to have students keep a reader's response journal as they read the story. The journal will help students personalize what they are reading. Ask students to write their reactions to the people and events in the story. What kind of person is Shorty? Why does Teddy refuse to get his father a cup of water? What does this incident tell about life in the Camp? What effect does life in the Camp have on Shorty? Do you identify with Shorty's struggles? Why or why not?

Read the story
Pretend that you are Shorty. Write a diary entry telling how you felt when you hit your first home run. Discuss your feelings about the guard who wore sunglasses.
Write a newspaper article about Shorty's home run in the Camp. Include a description of the baseball field, and explain why the teams are playing baseball in the desert. Imagine that you are living in a camp like the one Shorty lived in. Write a letter to a friend, telling about life in the Camp and how you feel about being sent to live there. Write a brief book review about BASEBALL SAVED US. Explain what the story is about and how you felt about the characters and events in the book. Be sure to include the title and the author in your review. If you would recommend the book to your classmates, give reasons for your recommendation.

Assessment Plan
Students will write a letter as a Japanese American in an internment camp to a friend back home describing why they are there; how they feel about it; and what they want to do when they come home.

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