

Why it's never too late to apologize: Japanese internment
An article by Caroline Ishii

Causes and Effects Graphic Organizer Workbook

Student Activity: Completing a Causes and Effects graphic organizer to summarize what they learned from the reading.

How to share with students: These pages are sized for printing or can be assigned digitally using an LMS (like Google Classroom), where students can work on their own slide decks via “Make a Copy for Each Student.” Each slide is set up with text boxes for students to type in.

Suggested Lesson Flow:

1. Students complete a Notice/Wonder Image Analysis
2. [Preview Vocabulary](#) with students prior to reading.
3. Have students [read and take notes](#).
4. Students will complete a [causes and effects graphic organizer](#).
5. Have students go through the [Multiple Choice Questions](#). Students will answer each question and explain their thinking.
6. Have students complete the [Short Answer Questions](#).
7. Have students complete the Open Ended Questions and discuss with partners or groups their responses [using the last few pages](#).

Feel free to edit, remix, and use this resource however works best for you and your students!

Image Analysis: Notice & Wonder

Instructions: Look at the image and write down 2-3 things you notice (key details, main ideas, themes) and then write down 2-3 things you wonder (questions you have because of the image, things you are curious about when you look at the image.)

**What
do you
notice?**



**What
do you
wonder?**

Key Vocabulary

Instructions: For each term, use the word in a sentence that shows you understand it's definition. Then create an image to represent the term. Be ready to explain the image.

Vocabulary Term

internment

noun

the act of confining or imprisoning a group of people, especially during times of war or political unrest.

Use It In A Sentence:

Answers may vary...

EX: "During WW II, the Canadian government implemented internment camps to detain thousands of Japanese Canadians."

An Image to Represent It:

Various simple illustrations presented here

Vocabulary Term

redress

noun

compensation or reparation for a wrong or injury.

Use It In A Sentence:

Answers may vary...

EX: "Japanese Canadians finally received redress from the Canadian government in 1988 to acknowledge the injustices they suffered during WWII internment."

An Image to Represent It:

Various simple illustrations presented here

Vocabulary Term

apology

noun

a statement expressing regret or remorse for a wrongdoing.

Use It In A Sentence:

Answers may vary...

EX: "The Canadian government issues a formal apology in 1988 to Japanese Canadians for the unjust internment and seizure of their property during WWII."

An Image to Represent It:

Various simple illustrations presented here

Vocabulary Term

shikata ga nai

phrase

a Japanese expression meaning 'it can't be helped' or 'nothing can be done about it'.

Use It In A Sentence:

Answers may vary...

EX: "When asking Japanese Canadians about their displacement to internment camps, community members often said, 'shikata ga nai.'"

An Image to Represent It:

Various simple illustrations presented here

Vocabulary Term

collective guilt

noun

a feeling of responsibility or remorse experienced by a group of people for the actions or wrongdoings committed by individuals within that group.

Use It In A Sentence:

Answers may vary...

EX: "The internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII was an example of how collective guilt led to the unjust treatment of an entire community based on suspicions and prejudices."

An Image to Represent It:

Various simple illustrations presented here

Causes and Effects

Complete the Cause and Effects graphic organizer based on what we've learned.

In 1942, the Canadian government forced 21,000 Canadians of Japanese background on the West Coast of Canada to leave their homes, businesses, and property for internment camps.

Causes

Military Concerns: The attack on Pearl Harbour by Japan in 1941 heightened fears of Japanese infiltration in North America

Racism and Prejudice: Widespread racial prejudice and fear among the white, Canadian population was amplified by wartime tension and propaganda.

Political and Economic Pressure: Politicians in BC, where the majority of Japanese Canadians lived, faces pressure from businesses to remove Japanese Canadians who were seen as economic competitors. The fishing industry is an example.

Led to concerns about the loyalty of Japanese Canadians even though there was no evidence of widespread disloyalty.

Effects

Text

Japanese Canadians alienated and excluded from their employer and coworkers

Japanese Canadians who owned businesses started to see a decrease in customers

Posters about the risk of Japanese Canadians integrated into communities posted around town

Read & Take Notes

Instructions: Read the passage below. Take notes in the space provided.

Why it's never too late to apologize: Japanese internment by Caroline Ishii

September 22, 2018, marks the 30th anniversary of the historic Redress Settlement from the Government of Canada to all Japanese-Canadians who were taken from their homes and forced into internment camps in Canada during World War II. In the United States, more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent were sent to internment camps during the war. I wish my "ojiichan" (grandfather) Ishii was still alive to see the agreement signed in Ottawa thirty years ago. I wonder what he would have felt? It was a deeply buried secret, the internment camps, that I didn't know about until I was 17. My history teacher Mr. Hillary talked about it in class one day. He liked to share things you didn't find in the history books, and that's one of the reasons his classes were popular. I went home from school that day surprised and confused.

Mr. Hillary had said that the Japanese-Canadians were taken away from their homes and interned during World War II using the War Measures Act, stripping them of their civil liberties, personal freedoms, and possessions, and was a grave error. I perked up when I heard Japanese-Canadians. Heh, that's me! I wondered if my parents would know anything about this as they spoke little about their past and certainly not this. During family dinner that night, I asked my father about it, and he said: "yes, we lost everything, and were put in camps." What surprised me more than anything else was that he had never mentioned this to me before.

A typical 17-year-old, I didn't think much about my parents' backgrounds before this incident, absorbed in my own world of fitting in and being accepted in high school, only standing out enough so I would get special attention or praise. This was when the song "Turning Japanese" was released by the band the Vapors, and all things Japanese were "in", including Hello Kitty, PAC-MAN, Astro Boy, Sailor Moon, and me. I was "in" by the very fact of my looks.

Take Notes Here

Notes commenting on various language, story-telling and context will be listed here

Read & Take Notes

Instructions: Read the passage below. Take notes in the space provided.

I never thought then how different it was for my grandparents and parents.

With World War II and Canada at war with Japan, the Japanese in Canada were categorized as “enemy aliens”, even though the majority were Canadian by birth and naturalized citizens. They were definitely not “in” but kept on the outside fringes of “normal” society, with not even the right to vote until 1949. After the end of the war, the internees in the camps were given two options. Go east of the Rockies or to Japan. They couldn’t go back to where they came from and their homes. My Ojiichan Ishii chose to return to Kobe, Japan, some forty years later, taking his family with him. Once in Japan, he realized there was nothing left after the war. He told his children to go back to Canada.

My Aunt Helen, who had married in the internment camp and had stayed in Canada with her husband, worked hard at Nikko Gardens restaurant in Toronto to pay for her siblings and parents to return to Canada. Ojiichan Ishii never made it back. He died there on July 15, 1949.

I believe he always loved Canada, with many dreams realized: a beautiful island with a cherished homestead and dream life he had created from the ground up through a successful fishing business, his picture bride, and six children. But his love, Canada, called him names, took what he built up and owned, put him and his family into a camp, and didn’t allow him to leave until the war ended. This must have been hard on him.

Maybe Ojiichan realized at some point, as I did from my long-term relationship that ended, that someone may turn their back on you, but it’s not easy to erase the memories from your heart. The love and excitement that took you there in first place and kept you there for what you thought would be forever, still remain, even though you are not together anymore.

Take Notes Here

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Read & Take Notes

Instructions: Read the passage below. Take notes in the space provided.

My father and mother, as “nisei” or second generation of Japanese-born immigrants (issei), were happy enough with the formal apology in 1988, and more so with the compensation. Who doesn't like extra money? But I wouldn't say there were ecstatic. Looking back, I think it was surreal and bittersweet for them.

Over forty years later there is an apology for a wrong that was done to you and others. They were children then, memories distant, and the redress agreement brought back memories of what their parents had to endure, and sadness that they were no longer around to hear the apology.

More than this, I believe they heard the whispers of their parents, often saying “shikata ga nai”, meaning “it can't be helped” or “nothing can be done about it” so we need to accept our fate and let the past go. Shikata ga nai is an important part of Japanese culture and helped my grandparents endure what happened to them, from being taken away from their island and home, to being put into internment camps in ghost towns, and then released, realizing that they could not go back to their homes as was originally promised to them and all they owned had been sold or destroyed.

Generations that came afterward were shocked and outraged by what happened to the Japanese-Canadians during World War II. They felt that the time for “shikata ga nai” was over and believed that something needed to be done to acknowledge this black mark in Canadian history for Japanese-Canadians and all Canadians.

I'm extremely grateful for the hard work of Art Miki and the National Association of Japanese Canadians, and countless others, who worked tirelessly to seek a formal apology and compensation for Japanese-Canadians who were interned by the Government of Canada during War War II, leading to the historic Redress agreement signed in Ottawa on September 22, 1988.

Take Notes Here

Notes commenting on various language, story-telling and context will be listed here

Read & Take Notes

Instructions: Read the passage below. Take notes in the space provided.

After a decade-long campaign by the Japanese-American community, United States President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, apologizing for Japanese-American internment and providing compensation to surviving victims. Being of Japanese descent, I feel that the collective shame and pain of being Japanese in Canada during World War II was in my DNA. If we can pass on hereditary characteristics and diseases from one generation to another, why not traumatic experiences too?

A Science Daily article of April 13, 2014, says that it has long been known in psychology that traumatic experiences can induce behavioural disorders that are passed down from one generation to the next. "The environment leaves traces on the brain, on organs and also on gametes. Through gametes, these traces can be passed to the next generation," explains Isabelle Mansuy, a professor at the Brain Research Institute of the University of Zurich. The formal apology to the wider community of Canada and the world, and not only to Japanese-Canadians, saying we made a mistake, we think it was wrong, and we want to correct it, made me feel that our family finally belonged in Canada and stopped the collective shame we felt for being who we are. We were Canadians before because we born and lived here, but I am not sure we belonged before.

Brené Brown, internationally-renowned researcher and speaker on shame, says "shame is the most powerful, master emotion" and makes people do things that are destructive to themselves and others. Shame says, "I'm a bad person and not good enough." I believe this is the same for countries with shame.

Take Notes Here

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Read & Take Notes

Instructions: Read the passage below. Take notes in the space provided.

Without recognition of our wrongs and apologies, we could repeat the same mistakes over and over again, we have a collective guilt and discomfort over the words unsaid, and there is always a ball and chain around our ankles, holding us back from moving forward together.

This is why the apology was necessary. And why an apology made late still matters. I'd like to think that my grandparents, while long gone when the redress agreement was signed, knew it happened and cried with tears of relief and joy. There are so many things that happen in our lifetimes that could harden us.

People and organizations, and even the government, in this case, wrong us. Loved ones turn their backs on us when we need them most. And people we love die before we can apologize to them and express what they meant to us. We may not see an apology in this lifetime for the wrongdoings of others against us and the people we love. But this may not be the end of the story.

Ojiichan Ishii must have thought that he saw the end of the story when he died in 1949. However, with all stories, we never know where we are in the story. We may think it's the end, but it may be only the beginning. One of my favourite proverbs, says, Just when the caterpillar thought the world was ending, it turned into a butterfly.

Ishii, Caroline Ruriko. "Why It's Never Too Late to Apologize: Japanese Internment." Caroline Ishii, 31 Aug. 2018, carolineishii.com/

Take Notes Here

Notes commenting on various language, story-telling and context will be listed here

Answer and Explain

Instructions: For each question, answer the question and then explain why you picked the answer you did using specific evidence from the text.

Question:

1. According to the text, what was the purpose of the War Measures Act during World War II?

Pick the Answer

- A) To provide compensation to Japanese-Canadians who were interned during the war.
- B) To strip Japanese-Canadians of their civil liberties and personal freedoms.
- C) To apologize for the wrongs done to Japanese-Canadians during the war.
- D) To allow Japanese-Canadians to return to their homes after the war.

Explain: Why did you pick that answer?

Mr. Hillary, the history teacher, mentioned the stripping of civil liberties to class

Question:

2. What did the internees in the camps have to choose between after the end of the war?

Pick the Answer

- A) Returning to their homes in Canada or going to Japan.
- B) Going east of the Rockies or staying in the internment camps.
- C) Accepting compensation or seeking a formal apology.
- D) Leaving Canada or staying in the internment camps.

Explain: Why did you pick that answer?

Go east of the Rockies or go back to Japan. They couldn't return back to their original homes. Therefore, stayed in internment camps.

Question:

3. Why was the formal apology and redress agreement important for the author's family?

Pick the Answer

- A) It provided extra money and compensation to the Japanese-Canadians.
- B) It brought back memories of what their parents had to endure during the internment.
- C) It acknowledged the wrongs done to Japanese-Canadians and made them feel they belonged in Canada.
- D) It allowed them to let go of the past and accept their fate.

Explain: Why did you pick that answer?

Formal acknowledgment from the Canadian Government confirmed all the wrongdoings done by both them and the communities that Japanese Canadians lived in.

Short Answer Questions

Question

1. What is the significance of September 22, 1988, mentioned in the text?

Canadian Redress - official apology and compensation.

Question

2. How did the Japanese-Canadians in Canada during World War II experience discrimination?

Displacement and dispossession - answers may vary, but must connect back to these key words.

Question

3. What was the impact of the formal apology and redress agreement on the author's family?

Family felt heard, seen and validated.

Reflect and Discuss

Instructions: Respond to the following question using the reading and your own knowledge and experiences. Be as thorough as possible.

1. Reflect on a time when you discovered something about your family's history or background that surprised you. How did this new information impact your understanding of yourself and your identity?

Write Your Response Here. Be sure to use what you learned in the reading and your own knowledge and experiences to answer the question thoroughly.

Answers will vary

Instructions: When instructed, you will share your responses with your group. Take notes on their responses in the boxes below. Be sure to write their names at the top of each box.

Student #1: _____

Student #2: _____

Student #3: _____

Student #4: _____

Reflect and Discuss

Instructions: Respond to the following question using the reading and your own knowledge and experiences. Be as thorough as possible.

2. Think about a time when you learned about a historical event or injustice that you were previously unaware of. How did this new knowledge affect your perspective on the world? Did it change the way you think about your own country or society?

Write Your Response Here. Be sure to use what you learned in the reading and your own knowledge and experiences to answer the question thoroughly.

Answers will vary

Instructions: When instructed, you will share your responses with your group. Take notes on their responses in the boxes below. Be sure to write their names at the top of each box.

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Student #3: _____

Student #4: _____

Reflect and Discuss

Instructions: Respond to the following question using the reading and your own knowledge and experiences. Be as thorough as possible.

3. Consider a situation where you or someone you know experienced shame or guilt due to a mistake or wrongdoing. Reflect on how an apology or acknowledgement of the mistake could have made a difference in that situation. How does the concept of apologies relate to personal growth and healing?

Write Your Response Here. Be sure to use what you learned in the reading and your own knowledge and experiences to answer the question thoroughly.

Answers will vary

Instructions: When instructed, you will share your responses with your group. Take notes on their responses in the boxes below. Be sure to write their names at the top of each box.

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