



## LESSON PLAN

# CIVILIAN INTERNMENT IN CRYSTAL CITY, TEXAS

Social Studies, Grades 9–12

## OBJECTIVE

Through the use of primary sources, students will analyze the use of propaganda and bias to shape the way the American public viewed the interment of German and Japanese citizens in the Crystal City Detention Facility. Students will also evaluate the removed rights of these citizens and determine if the government was justified in its actions.

## PROCESS

### **Prior Knowledge**

The following activity assumes that students are aware of the causes of WWII, and the alignment of countries between the Allied and Axis powers.

Students should also be aware of the conflict between preserving the rights of the individual versus maintaining the safety of the public good.

Students should have a working knowledge of human rights and the privileges of citizenship.

Students should also have some background knowledge of bias and propaganda.

### **Hook A - Examining Propaganda**

Show students early examples of propaganda posters from World War I

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/first-world-war-recruitment-posters>

<http://www.classroomtools.com/army1917.jpg>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/uknews/3400728/The-power-of-propaganda-wartime-posters.html?image=1>

Ask several students to volunteer their interpretations of the meanings of each poster or to explain what the government is trying to accomplish with each.

Show students this Nazi-era anti-Semitic propaganda poster:

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/interactive/html/items/wc0213.jpg>

Ask a student volunteer to explain why the poster is offensive and degrading for Jews, or explain the meaning of the cartoon if the student's knowledge of Jewish stereotypes is limited.

Ask students why the Nazis wanted to portray Jews in this way. What was the Nazis' motivation behind the propaganda? (Students may write their responses or share via discussion).



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Have students share their answers and explain that the Nazi regime used images like this to elicit a negative reaction towards Jews.

If students are still having trouble understanding this concept, explain that propaganda is biased information an individual or group presents to influence its audience.

Explain that today they will be watching a film made by the United States government during WWII that also uses propaganda to influence the public's opinion. In this case, the government is trying to convince the public that a discriminatory public policy is a fair treatment of US citizens.

### Hook B - What is an American?

Ask students: "What makes someone an American?" Have them write down words or phrases that define an American on their paper. Remind them there is no right or wrong answer. They don't have to use complete sentences.

As students formulate their responses, have them write their responses on the board.

Take a minute of silence, and let students examine the board and absorb their classmates' opinions.

If people are comfortable sharing their responses, ask why students responded the way they did.

Explain that students responded differently because of personal experiences, which shape their bias about what it means to be American. A student who is a fourth or fifth generation immigrant may have a much different response than a first or second generation immigrant.

Remind students that there are many different ways a person can be considered "American," but there have been times in our country when those definitions have been restrained by the government under the guise of helping the "greater good."

Today they will examine the internment of American citizens in a time of war, and identify how the government used its bias in trying to help the "greater good" by intruding on the rights of certain individuals.

Explain that though the government believed they were doing what was "right" in their eyes (which presents a bias), they tried to impose their bias on others using the following film as a source of propaganda.

### Lesson

Have students look up and define the following words (or do so as a class):

- Repatriation



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- Internment
- Detainee
- Rationed
- Morale
- Monotony

Students will watch the video Alien Enemy Detention Facility, Crystal City, Texas, [https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00010](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00010), in five sections, which can be accessed using the Educator Links listed under the video player.

### Sections in Educator Links (under video player)

1. Introduction to the film, start-2:26
2. Americans arriving at the camp and overview of camp facilities, 2:26-6:50
3. Resources and jobs on the camp, 6:51-10:10
4. Food preparation and other jobs, 10:10-15:33

*There is a two-minute break between Parts 4 and 5 due to semi-violent content. Please resume the film at 17:46 to complete Section 5.*

5. Children on the camp and recreation, 17:46-20:40

Have students use a T-chart with one side labeled “Propaganda” and one side labeled “Reality.” After each segment, stop the video and have students list the aspects of the segment that made life in Crystal City seem positive, but how in reality the camp deprived American citizens of their human and civil rights.

On the back of the T-Chart, have students briefly list the rights of the interned citizens that were violated.

Once students have been given time to think about responses, discuss possible answers as a class. If students could not think of an answer on their own, have them write down one of the responses shared in class, or add new responses to their own.

Divide the students into groups of four. Have each group answer one of the following questions. When groups have answered the question, designate a presenter from each group to share their group’s response.

- Was the United State government successful in making Crystal City look like a positive experience? Why or why not?
- Why did the United States government portray life in Crystal City in this way?



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- In the eyes of the creators of this film, how do they define “American” and how do they define “Alien.” Are these definitions fair? Why or why not?
- Who do you think was the intended audience of this film, and why?
- Do you think the citizens in the internment camp were enemies of the United States?
- Are the government’s actions justified? (What were their reasons for interning the prisoners?) Why or why not?
- How are the United States government’s actions similar to those of Nazi Germany’s actions?

### Closing

Ask students if they think the United States government was justified in interning citizens in order to protect the nation against its enemies. Did their actions against a small group of citizens benefit the “greater good” of the nation? Does their use of propaganda indicate that they knew they were doing something wrong?

### Independent Practice

Propaganda is still widely used today to influence public opinion. Sometimes propaganda is used to incite hate (as with the Nazi posters), and sometimes it is used to make a policy or organization seem more positive than it is (as with the Crystal City film). Pick a social issue from the list below, and find a piece of propaganda related to the conflict. You may find an image, video clip, or sound clip. Once you have found an example of propaganda, answer the following questions in a written paragraph:

- What group created the propaganda?
- What is the motivation of the creator? (Supply background information about the conflict.)
- Who/What is the target of the propaganda?
- Who is the intended audience for the poster, video, or sound clip?
- What stereotypes are used to influence the audience?

### Possible Social Conflicts

Israel and Palestine

September 11, 2001

Slavery in the United States

Jim Crow Laws



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United States foreign policy with Israel

The “red scare” in the United States

Immigration of Central and South Americans to the United States

Voting Rights

The War on Terror

The United States Civil Rights Movement

Women’s Suffrage Movement

Relocation of Indigenous American Peoples

The Vietnam War

## Extended Learning

Have students read the following articles:

### “Walkout in Crystal City”

Portrayal of Crystal City as an area with a reputation for social injustice (with both the internment camp and the Latino civil rights movement)

<https://labloga.blogspot.com/2009/01/walkout-in-crystal-city.html>

### “Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz: Testimony at Nuremburg, 1946”

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1946hoess.asp>

### “Never Shall I Forget”, Elie Wiesel

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Never-Shell-I-Forget.pdf>

Students will then compare the three different experiences of the following: German and Japanese interned citizens during WWII, Jews interned in NAZI concentration camps, and Latino students at Crystal City in the 1960s-70s.

## Questions

How are their experiences similar or different?

What rights were denied to all three groups?

Who was the governing body that denied those rights?

Why were the students able to take a stand, but the prisoners were not?

How did the circumstances (time period, social issues, etc.) affect each group differently?

How does each situation portray the role of the government? (state, federal, and NAZI)

How is Crystal City a symbol of social inequality?



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How is Crystal City a symbol of social progress?

### Activity

With students divided into groups of 4-5, use butcher paper and markers to trace the outline of one group member's body.

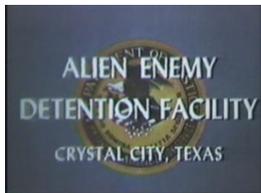
Draw a line vertically down the center of the outline.

Label one side "Alien Internment" and the other side "Latino Civil Rights;" label the outside space around the body "Holocaust"

Have group members draw characteristics and backgrounds or write words that show similarities/differences between life in the Holocaust concentration camps, Crystal City during WWII, and Crystal City during the 1960s-1970s.

Students should show the physical, environmental, and political differences (and similarities) between the three groups.

### Video



**Alien Enemy Detention Facility, Crystal City, Texas**

[https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00010](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00010)

## RESOURCES

Suggestions for teaching propaganda in the classroom

<http://www.classroomtools.com/prop.htm>

TSHA page on German-American Internees

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qug01>

A list of links pertaining to Japanese-American and German-American internment during World War II. Provides over 30 resources

[http://www.teacheroz.com/Japanese\\_Internment.htm](http://www.teacheroz.com/Japanese_Internment.htm)

A lesson plan with activities introducing students to Japanese-American internment

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/fear/>

## TEKS

### US History Studies Since 1877

2D - Explain the significance of the following years as turning points: 1898 (Spanish-American War), 1914-1918 (World War I), 1929 (the Great Depression begins), 1939-1945 (World War II), 1957 (Sputnik launch ignites U.S.-Soviet space race), 1968-1969 (Martin Luther King Jr.



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assassination and U.S. lands on the moon), 1991 (Cold War ends), 2001 (terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and the Pentagon), and 2008 (election of first black president, Barack Obama)

3C - Analyze social issues affecting women, minorities, children, immigrants, urbanization, the Social Gospel, and philanthropy of industrialists

7D - Analyze major issues of World War II, including the Holocaust; the internment of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans and Executive Order 9066; and the development of conventional and atomic weapons

19B - Explain constitutional issues raised by federal government policy changes during times of significant events, including World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the 1960s, and 9/11

29E - Evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author, including points of view, frames of reference, and historical context

29F - Identify bias in written, oral, and visual material

## World History Studies

21A - describe how people have participated in supporting or changing their governments

29D - Evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author

29G - Construct a thesis on a social studies issue or event supported by evidence

## World Geography Studies

15A - Identify and give examples of different points of view that influence the development of public policies and decision-making processes on local, state, national, and international levels

15B - Explain how citizenship practices, public policies, and decision making may be influenced by cultural beliefs, including nationalism and patriotism

## United States Government

4B - Analyze how U.S. foreign policy affects selected places and regions

13A - Understand the roles of limited government and the rule of law in the protection of individual rights

13E - Explain the importance of due process rights to the protection of individual rights and in limiting the powers of government



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14B - Evaluate whether and/or when the obligation of citizenship requires that personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good

17A - Evaluate a U.S. government policy or court decision that has affected a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S. Supreme Court cases of *Hernandez v. Texas* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*

## Psychology

13C - Describe circumstances in which conformity and obedience are likely to occur

## STAAR

### U.S. History

7A - identify reasons for U.S. involvement in World War II, including Italian, German, and Japanese dictatorships and their aggression, especially the attack on Pearl Harbor

7D - Analyze major issues of World War II, including the Holocaust; the internment of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans and Executive Order 9066; and the development of conventional and atomic weapons

7E - Analyze major military events of World War II, including the Battle of Midway, the U.S. military advancement through the Pacific Islands, the Bataan Death March, the invasion of Normandy, fighting the war on multiple fronts, and the liberation of concentration camps

29A - Use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions

29D - Use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence