

TEACHING JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION THROUGH COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS

Objective:

Students will learn about the personal experiences of Japanese American incarcerated during World War II and will practice communicating information concisely by developing an original comic.

Common Core State Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Description:

According to the School Library Journal's article [Teaching with Graphic Novels](#), the advantages* of teaching with comics and graphic novels as supplemental texts includes:

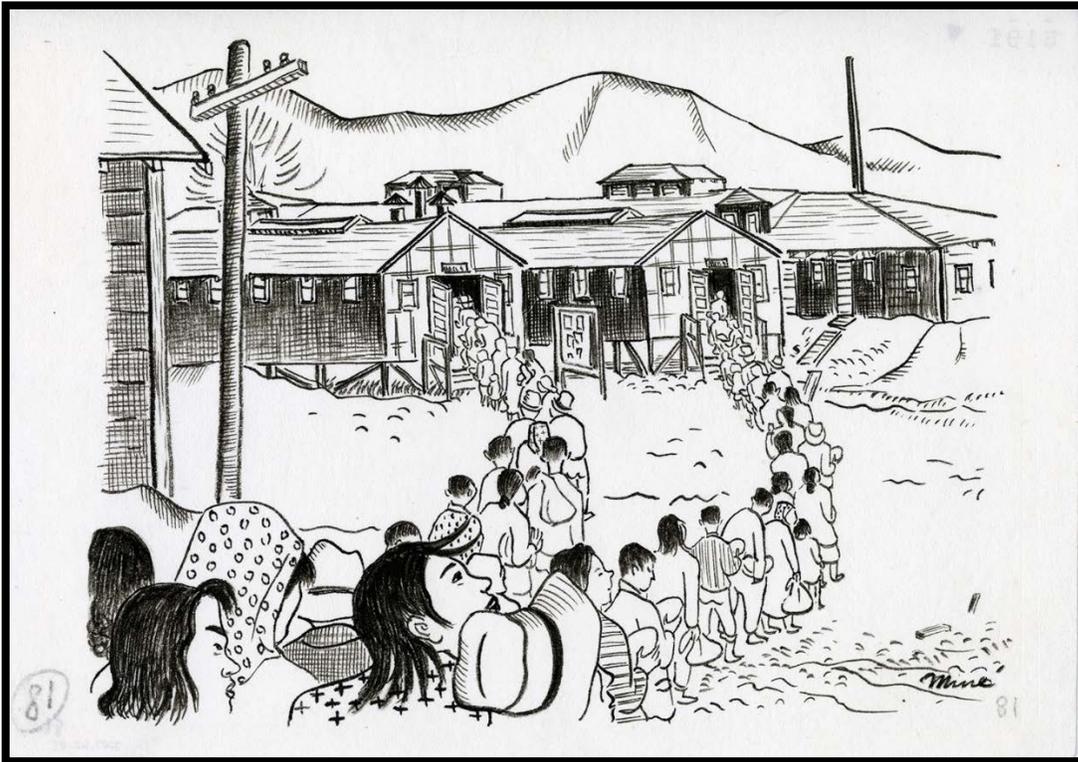
- supporting low readers and promoting memory through pairing of image and text
- modeling concise verbiage for skilled readers
- reinforcing left-to-right sequence
- communicating ideas efficiently

Martin Luther King, Jr. contributed to a comic book titled *The Montgomery Story*, a copy of which can be found in the museum's archive (a related teacher guide can be found [here](http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_MLK.pdf) http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_MLK.pdf). That work inspired Congressman John Lewis to tell his own story of the civil rights movement through comics in the *New York Times* bestseller [March](#). Some famous examples of graphic novels on civil-rights topics are [Maus](#), Art Spiegelman's series about his family's experiences during the Holocaust, and [Persepolis](#), Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical series about her childhood in Iran.

In addition, graphics and illustrations have a long tradition in Japanese art, including scroll paintings, anime, and manga (literally "random sketches" or doodles, but now used to refer to comic books or illustrated entertainment). See [this video](http://pulverer.si.edu/node/184) [<http://pulverer.si.edu/node/184>] from the Smithsonian's museums of Asian art on the evolution of Japanese graphic art. Comics were also a method for Japanese American incarcerated in World War II to express their experiences. Most famous among these artists was Miné Okubo, who was incarcerated in the Topaz War Relocation Center in Utah during World War II. Okubo's drawings take the reader through her time at the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno, California, and eventually the Topaz camp. Her artwork inspired her book [Citizen 13660](#), which was published in 1946.



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Drawing, Mine Okubo [Waiting in Lines at Tanforan Assembly Center, San Bruno, California, 1942].
Courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum (Gift of Mine Okubo Estate, 2007.62).

Teen participants in the National Museum of American History's Youth Civic Engagement Program collaborated with Evan Keeling, an artist and exhibits fabricator from the Smithsonian Exhibits, and teens at the Hirshhorn Museum's ARTLAB+, to create this series of original comics on the Japanese American experience during World War II. The comics represent oral histories from survivors of Japanese American incarceration camps.

Use these comics to introduce this period in history to students or to prepare students to view and participate in the [National Youth Summit on Japanese American Incarceration](http://americanhistory.si.edu/nys/national-youth-summit-japanese-american-incarceration-world-war-ii) [<http://americanhistory.si.edu/nys/national-youth-summit-japanese-american-incarceration-world-war-ii>]. As an assessment for this or other topics, use the comic template included here to allow students to create their own comics based on their studies, including examining primary sources such as oral histories. Find oral histories and other primary sources on Japanese American incarceration at the [Densho Digital Archive](#).

*The vivid imagery in comics and graphic novels may cause concern among some parents, so graphic novels should be carefully chosen and discussed with parents and administrators.



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Resources

Norman Mineta: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/26/us/washington-talk-friendshipsheat-war-welds-bond-that-endures-across-aisles-years.html>

Yuri Kochiyama: http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Yuri_Kochiyama/
http://www.democracynow.org/2006/2/21/civil_rights_activist_yuri_kochiyama_remembers

Fred Korematsu: <http://www.korematsuinstitute.org/fred-t-korematsu-1/>

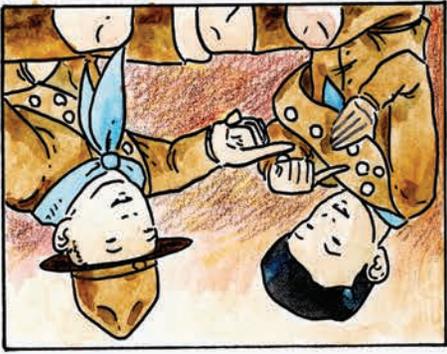
Chizu Iiyama: <http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/ciiyama/index.html>

Masaru Kawaguchi:

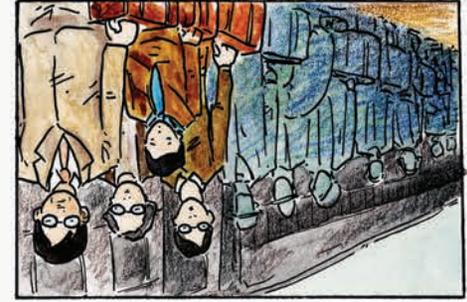
<http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/mkawaguchi/index.html>

Paul Ohtaki: <http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/pohtaki/index.html>





"I'VE ONLY SEEN MY DAD CRY THREE TIMES... THE SECOND TIME WAS WHEN WE WERE LEAVING SAN JOSE, NOT KNOWING IF WE WOULD EVER SEE IT AGAIN."
- NORM MINETA



DUST STORMS AND -30 DEGREE TEMPERATURES PLAGUED THE HEART MOUNTAIN WAR RELOCATION CENTER.



THEY REMAINED FRIENDS AND BOTH WENT INTO POLITICS. WHILE NORM WAS A CONGRESSMAN AND ALAN WAS A SENATOR, THEY SPONSORED H.R. 442, WHICH BECAME THE CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT OF 1988.

ON **SEPTEMBER 21, 2001**, MINETA SENT A LETTER TO ALL U.S. AIRLINES FORBIDDING THEM FROM PRACTICING **RACIAL PROFILING**, OR SUBJECTING MIDDLE EASTERN OR MUSLIM PASSENGERS TO A HEIGHTENED DEGREE OF PRE-FLIGHT SCRUTINY. HE STATED THAT IT WAS ILLEGAL FOR THE AIRLINES TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST PASSENGERS BASED ON THEIR RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN OR RELIGION.



THIS LAW INCLUDED AN APOLOGY AND PROVIDED REPARATIONS TO THOUSANDS OF SURVIVING JAPANESE AMERICANS INCARCERATED DURING WORLD WAR II.

NORM WAS APPOINTED **UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION** BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH IN 2001.



YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
HTTP://AMERICANSTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM

Smithsonian Institution

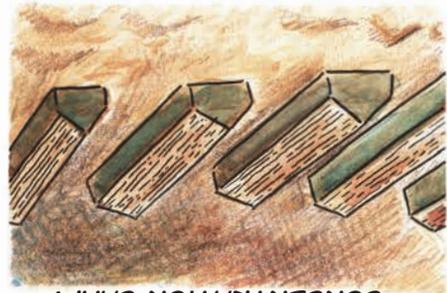
NORMAN MINETA



WE FIND THE INTERMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS TO HAVE BEEN A MILITARY NECESSITY



FRED TOOK HIS CASE ALL THE WAY TO THE SUPREME COURT.



...ORDERED TO SPEND SEVERAL MONTHS AT TANFORAN ASSEMBLY CENTER BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE TOPAZ CONCENTRATION CAMP.



DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS, ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1942 FRED WAS CONVICTED OF DEFEYING EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 AND SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS PROBATION AND...



..WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU WOULD GO TO COURT FOR US TO CONTEST WHETHER EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.



FRED, I'M ERNEST BESIG, THE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION...



...AND TAKEN TO A SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY JAIL.



ON MAY 30, 1942, FRED WAS ARRESTED IN SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA...

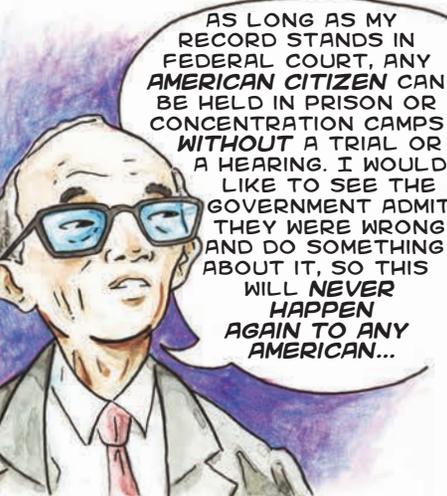
IN 1980, A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION FOUND THE INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THIS ALLOWED FOR FRED'S CASE TO BE RE-OPENED.



ON NOVEMBER 10, 1983 JUDGE MARILYN HALL PATEL OVERTURNED FRED'S CONVICTION IN CALIFORNIA.



THIS HOWEVER DID NOT OVERTURN HIS CONVICTION IN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT.



AS LONG AS MY RECORD STANDS IN FEDERAL COURT, ANY AMERICAN CITIZEN CAN BE HELD IN PRISON OR CONCENTRATION CAMPS WITHOUT A TRIAL OR A HEARING. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT ADMIT THEY WERE WRONG AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SO THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN TO ANY AMERICAN...

FRED STARTED LOBBYING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR A BILL THAT WOULD GRANT A FORMAL APOLOGY AND COMPENSATION FOR THE SURVIVING JAPANESE AMERICANS WHO WERE INCARCERATED.

HIS GOAL WAS REALIZED IN 1988 WHEN PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN SIGNED THE CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT. IN 1998 FRED WAS AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM. HE PASSED AWAY IN 2005.



HIS WORK IS CARRIED ON BY HIS DAUGHTER KAREN KOREMATSU, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FRED T. KOREMATSU INSTITUTE

Smithsonian Institution
[HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM](http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program)

FRED KOREMATSU

I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM PUT ME INTO A PRISON! I'LL CHANGE MY NAME!

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

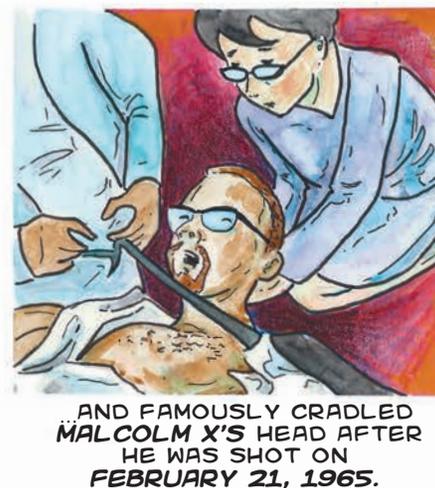
FRED DEFIED THE POLICE AND REFUSED TO GO TO THE INCARCERATION CAMPS



YURI'S EXPERIENCES LED HER TO BECOME A LIFELONG CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST. SHE FOUGHT FOR ASIAN AMERICAN RIGHTS, PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE, AFRICAN AMERICAN RIGHTS AND THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS...



WHILE INCARCERATED YURI ORGANIZED WELCOMING PARTIES FOR NEW ARRIVALS AND A GROUP CALLED **THE CRUSADERS** THAT WROTE LETTERS TO NISEI* SOLDIERS. THE **JEROME CAMP** NEWSPAPER SHARED SAMPLES OF THE LETTERS WITH YURI'S COLUMN, **NISEI IN KHAKI**.





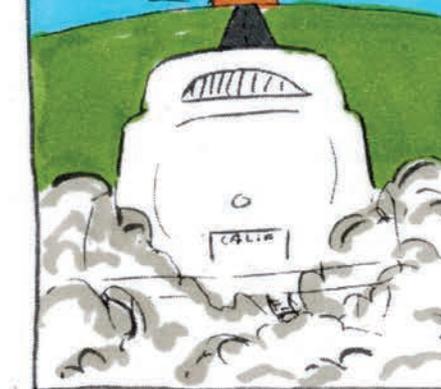
HE WAS ARRESTED, AND WE WERE MOVED TO MANZANAR.



ONE DAY A RIOT BROKE OUT AT MINIDOKA.



A SUGAR FARM RECRUITED SOME OF US, AND...
...I NEVER LOOKED BACK



LAND OF THE FREE? I DON'T THINK SO.



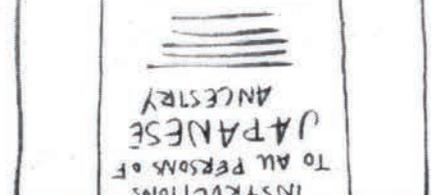
DAYS WERE LONG AND BORING. WE PASSED THE TIME WITH BOARD GAMES AND SPORTS.



THEY HAD UNFINISHED BARRACKS WAITING FOR US. WE HAD TO FINISH BUILDING THEM.



THEY PUT UP POSTERS. WE TOOK ALL WE COULD FIT IN TWO SUITCASES.



...THEY SEARCHED OUR HOMES. BUT THEN THE FBI CAME...



WE THOUGHT NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN TO US.

Land of the Free

THE STORY OF PAUL OHTAKI

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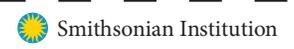


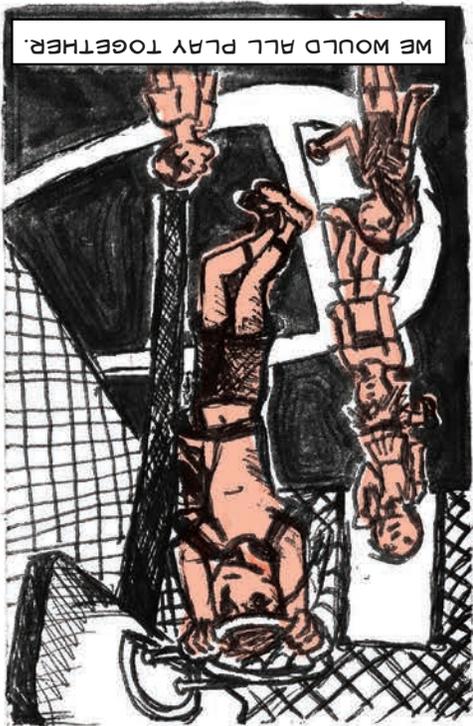
EVERYTHING WAS FINE WHEN WE WERE YOUNG...



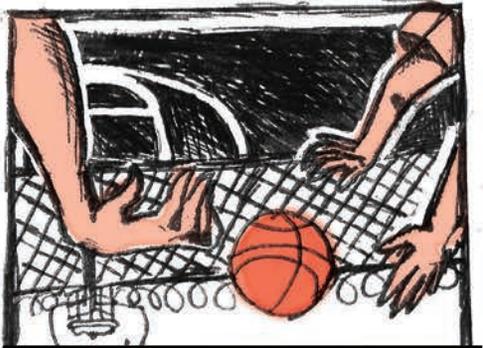
I FELT ILL BEFORE THE BOMBS DROPPED.
JAPS*BOMB PEARL HARBOR.

*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.

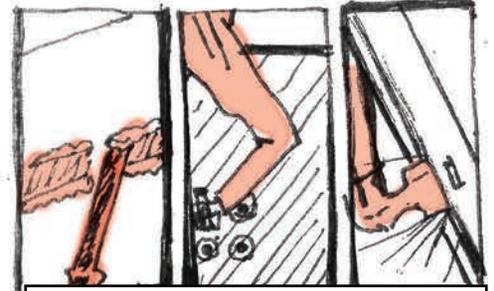
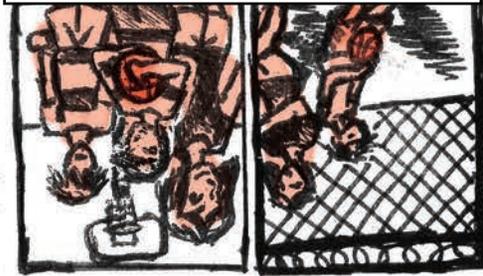




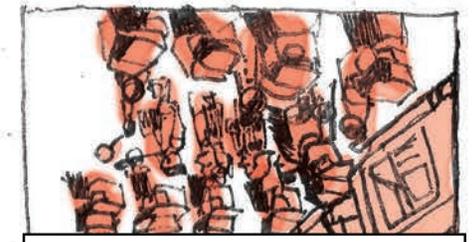
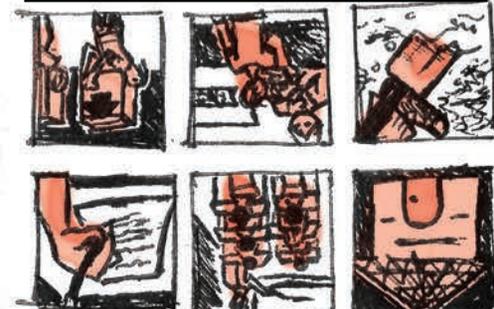
WE WOULD ALL PLAY TOGETHER.



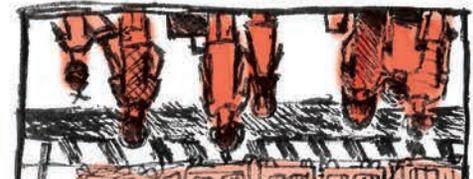
...I WOULD PLAY BASKETBALL WITH THE OTHER CHILDREN ON THE COURT WE MADE OURSELVES.



THERE WAS A NEW SCHOOL. THE GUARDS GAVE US NEW CHORES, BUT THEN EVERY DAY WHEN I'VE FINISHED MY WORK...



IT LOOKED MORE LIKE A PRISON.



I HEARD FROM THE OTHERS THAT WE WERE BEING TAKEN TO A CAMP.

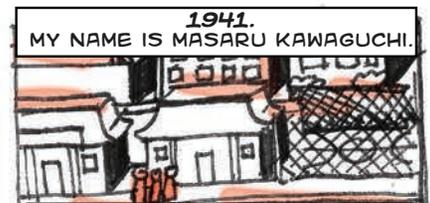
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THE STORY OF



MASARU KAWAGUCHI

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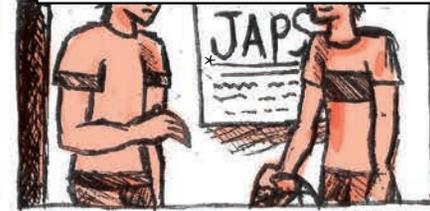


1941.
 MY NAME IS MASARU KAWAGUCHI.

EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL, MY FRIENDS AND I WOULD GO TO THE BASKETBALL COURT.



BUT ONE DAY, I NOTICED A SIGN



*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.



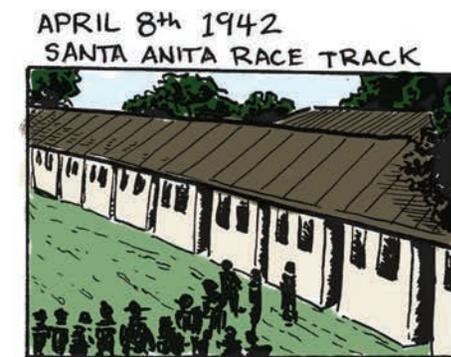
I SAW THE POSTER. WHAT'S GOING ON?



PACK YOUR THINGS WE HAVE TO LEAVE TOMORROW MORNING



WHY? WE'RE NOT SURE. IT HAS TO DO WITH THE WAR.



Smithsonian Institution
 DECEMBER 7th 1941
Chizu Iiyama

EXTRA! EXTRA! THE JAP'S BOMB PEARL HARBOR!

LOOK WHERE THEY ARE PUTTING US.

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*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.



I FEAR THAT MUSLIMS
IN THIS COUNTRY,
ARE TIED TO TERRORISM.

IT'S EASY TO DISMISS THIS AS AN
ISOLATED MISTAKE IN HISTORY,
BUT THE ECHOES OF THE PAST
STILL HAUNT US

IF YOU HAVE THE FEELING
THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG,
DON'T BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP.

-FRED T. KOREMATSU



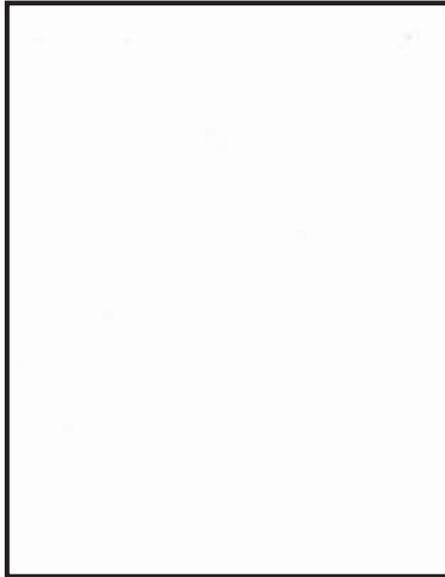
TOGETHER WE NEED TO PROTECT
CIVIL LIBERTIES FOR EVERYONE.

* LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN L. DEWITT
APRIL 13, 1943



"... IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE
WHETHER HE IS AN AMERICAN
CITIZEN, HE IS STILL A JAPANESE.
AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP DOES
NOT NECESSARILY DETERMINE
LOYALTY...
BUT WE MUST WORRY ABOUT
THE JAPANESE ALL THE TIME
UNTIL HE IS WIPED
OFF THE MAP." *

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE
ACTING OUT OF FEAR THAT
YOU SEE TODAY?

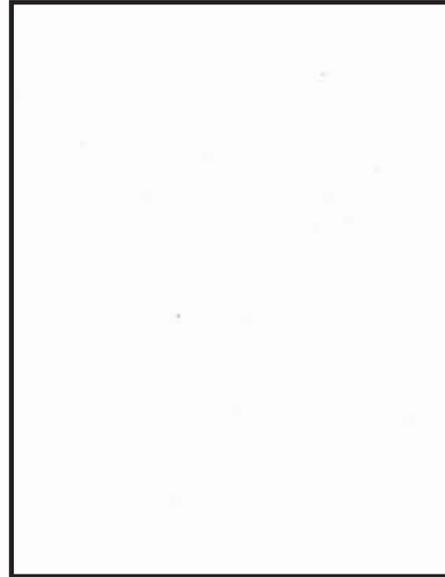


... WHICH GREATLY EXPANDED THE
GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO
MONITOR THE DAILY ACTIVITY OF
ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS



ON OCTOBER 26, 2001,
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH SIGNED
INTO LAW THE PATRIOT ACT...

WHAT SHOULD WE DO
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



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YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM](http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program)



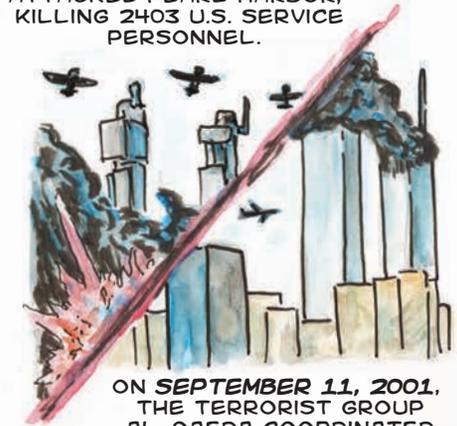
... THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE
IMPRISONMENT OF APPROXIMATELY
120,000 MEN, WOMEN,
AND CHILDREN
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY.



ON FEBRUARY 19, 1942,
PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT
SIGNED INTO LAW EXECUTIVE
ORDER 9066, WHICH
ULTIMATELY LAID...

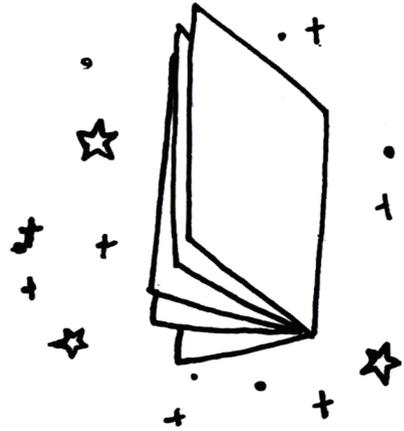
Smithsonian Institution
**HOW DOES
FEAR AFFECT
NATIONAL &
INTERNATIONAL
POLICY?**

ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, THE
IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY
ATTACKED PEARL HARBOR,
KILLING 2403 U.S. SERVICE
PERSONNEL.



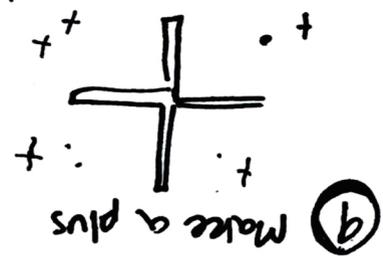
ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001,
THE TERRORIST GROUP
AL-QAEDA COORDINATED
ATTACKS ON THE U.S.,
KILLING 2977 PEOPLE.

Now Draw!

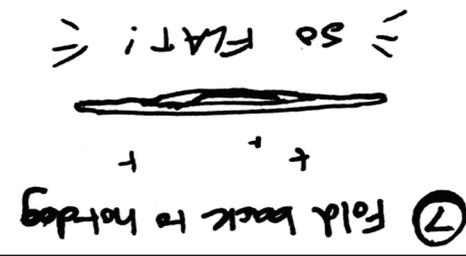
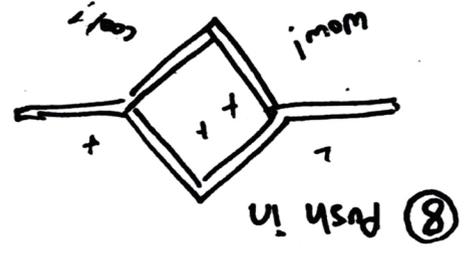


Now you've got a zine!

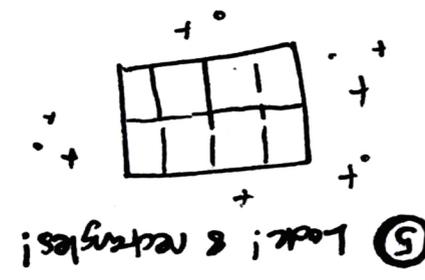
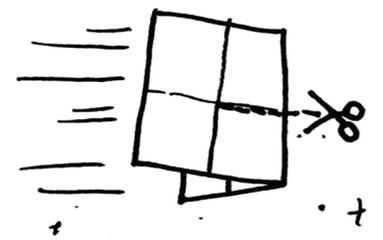
Drumroll



(make a diamond)



Fold again (hamburger) and cut along middle



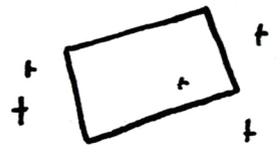
You're welcome.

INSTAGRAM: @bellicose beauty
TUMBLR: bellicose beauty
TWITTER: @bellicose beau
YOUTUBE: /bellicose beauty

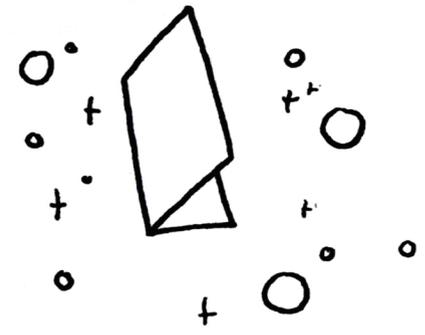
CREATED AT THE HIRSHHORN'S ARTLAB+ PROGRAM. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [HTTP://ARTLABPLUS.SI.EDU/](http://artlabplus.si.edu/)



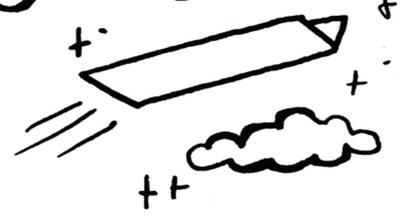
1 Get some paper 8.5 x 11



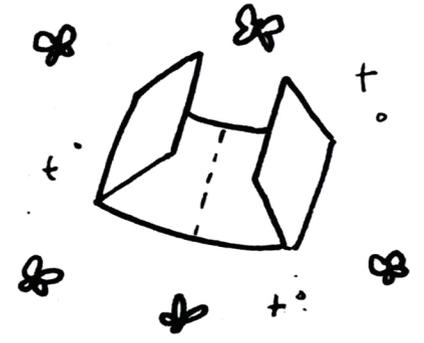
2 Hamburger it



3 Hotdog it.



4 Butterfly it



1)

2)

3)

4)



7)

6)

5)

