



Recommended for Grades 7-12

“Yuri’s Story” Worksheet and Discussion Guide Life for an incarcerated and a soldier during and after the war

BACKGROUND

During World War II, Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes and live in incarceration camps. Yuri Nakahara was in her early 20s when she was incarcerated, and she met her future husband, Bill Kochiyama. Bill had enlisted in the Army to fight for the United States, and the two began a long distance relationship that lasted until after the war. Bill and Yuri married and eventually moved to New York, where they started a family and became important political activists. Some of their work led to reparations for the Japanese Americans who had been incarcerated, but they also joined the Civil Rights and anti-war movements.

WATCH

Visit <https://www.buildinghistoryproject.com/video-yuri1> and watch the video called “Yuri’s Story.”

RECALL

1. Yuri met her husband Bill during World War II, after Yuri was forced to move to an incarceration camp. What was Bill doing during this time?
2. During their trip to Arkansas, Yuri and Bill meet a truck driver who remembers the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated there. What does he say about how Japanese Americans and white people were similar during the war?

INTERPRET

3. Visit the [Building History Timeline](#). After World War II, Yuri and Bill were activists who argued that the United States should issue an apology to Japanese Americans who were incarcerated. Eventually, they were successful, and the Civil Liberties Act (H.R.442) became law. In what year was this Act passed? What U.S. President issued the apology?
4. Visit the [Building History Map](#). During World War II, Yuri was incarcerated at the Jerome Incarceration Camp. What state was Jerome in?

APPLY

5. During World War II, Yuri sent many letters to Bill while he fought overseas. She realized that other soldiers might not have anyone to write back home to, and so she started a letter writing campaign to the Japanese American soldiers who were fighting in Europe and Asia. Many other incarcerated participants participated in the campaign, and together they sent cards and letters to 3,000 soldiers. How do you think it felt for the soldiers like Bill, who fought for the United States, while their families were living in incarceration camps? Do you think they appreciated Yuri’s letters? Do you have a pen pal, or a friend or family member you email or message with regularly?



ANALYZE

6. Yuri and Bill's son Billy was a Freedom Rider during the 1960s. What was the goal of the Freedom Riders, and what was their strategy for reaching this goal? (Do some Internet research, if you're not sure!) Do you think that being the son of Yuri Kochiyama, who had been incarcerated during World War II because she was Japanese American, influenced Billy's decision to become a Freedom Rider? Why or why not?

EXTENSION

Minecraft activity: Visit [Building History's Minecraft activities](#) and install the Manzanar virtual camp. (You can play alone or with a friend on a separate device!) Yuri's family was forced to move to an incarceration camp in Jerome. What are the first things that you see when you land outside the camp? How do you think it felt for Yuri when she arrived at Jerome and first saw the camp?

Oral histories: Visit [Densho's webpage about Yuri Kochiyama](#) and watch the first video, "Yuri Kochiyama recalls a visit..." Yuri was in her early 20s during World War II. What happened that made her feel funny around the children in her Sunday school class for the first time? What happened to Yuri's family on the day that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor? Why do you think that Yuri's father was targeted by the FBI?

GAME LINK

https://puzzel.org/nl/jigsaw/play?p=-MI_UwiEzzPi8ELDSKY-