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THE WAY WE SAW IT

AMERICA'S WORLD WAR II: *THE HOME FRONT*

IN ILLUSTRATION AND ART

A Teacher's
Resource Booklet

with Lesson Plans and Reproducible
Student Activity Assignments



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CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232
United States of America

(310) 839-2436
(800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432
Fax: (310) 839-2249

<http://mindsparks.com>
access@mindsparks.com

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Introduction

Americans at Home in World War II

World War II left entire societies in ruins in many parts of Europe and Asia. Death, destruction, social and cultural upheaval were everywhere. Moral codes seemed to have collapsed. Spiritual grief and desolation left people bewildered and in despair.

American soldiers experienced a good deal of this also — and witnessed much of the rest. But at home, most Americans knew World War II in a very different way. They lived through the battles vicariously, from news reports, newsreels, and the letters and stories of GIs overseas.

Otherwise, they experienced the war mainly through its enormous impact on economic growth and through a variety of wartime economic controls. These controls were restrictive, but not unbearable. Fears and anxieties did intensify, adding to the tensions of daily life. But in spite of this, many Americans pulled together in order to maintain their normal way of life. Compared with the rest of the world, they succeeded. And yet the war changed life at home in many ways. A different America emerged from World War II.

It is impossible to tell the entire story of World War II with just twelve illustrations. But the twelve we have chosen focus on many of the key ways in which the war affected citizens here at home. The illustrations are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of the illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Industrial Powerhouse

In this lesson, the focus is on the U.S. as the great “arsenal of democracy” for the Allies. With millions of men off to war, it took the labor of millions of women in factories and on farms to put America’s mighty industrial machine to full use. This mobilization of all our resources proved decisive.

Pulling Together: Mobilizing the Population

In order to shift production to wartime needs, Americans at home had to give up all kinds of consumer goods. And they were called on in many other ways as well to pull together and contribute to the war effort. Their sacrifices meant that this was a total war, one requiring the efforts of the entire population. The illustrations in this lesson make this clear.

Wartime Jitters and Deep-Seated Fears

The war created tensions of all sorts. Fears of sabotage or subversion by enemy agents were one kind of tension. Older social fears, especially racial and ethnic hatreds, seemed to intensify during the war. This was especially so with respect to Japanese-American citizens living on the West Coast — as two of the three illustrations here make clear.

Holding Things Together at Home

In spite of tensions of the sort discussed in Lesson 3, most Americans tried hard to maintain a normal and civil way of life. The illustrations here suggest that, in many ways, they succeeded.

Using Photos, Cartoons and Other Visuals to Teach History

Most textbooks today are full of colorful visuals. But all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. But only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use this Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

CD-ROM WITH IMAGES The ImageXaminer allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions. The CD-ROM also includes a folder containing all of the discussion questions and follow-up questions in pdf format. All of the images are also in pdf format, should you wish to create overhead transparencies.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR EACH ILLUSTRATION

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the images in the ImageXaminer. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small group or all-class activities.

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better appreciate how important the enormous productive capacity of the U.S. was to the war effort.
 2. Students will discuss the impact of wartime production on U.S. society and culture.
-

The Industrial Powerhouse

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

Unlike most other industrial nations, the United States was never a battleground during World War II. Nevertheless, the war had a huge impact here at home. Perhaps its biggest impact was economic. Even before entering the war, the U.S. had become what President Roosevelt called a great “arsenal of democracy.” And when the U.S. did go to war, every area of the economy was “mobilized.” Converting from consumer to wartime production was overseen by the War Production Board, or WPB, which supervised industries as they changed over to producing the weapons and supplies of war. This photo shows a line of new tanks, of which more than 100,000 were built in America during the war.

Illustration 2

America’s technological genius was vital during the war. From penicillin to more effective radar systems, from aircraft carriers to the jeep, and from bigger and faster bombers to the atomic bomb, American know-how was put to the task of fighting the war. All of this prowess not only helped win the war, but it also had lasting significance for peacetime life after the war. The government’s Office of Scientific Research and Development coordinated scientific and technological research for military purposes. That research paid off in many new and improved systems and devices. Aircraft carriers and submarines — one of which is shown in this photo — were two key military weapons in World War II that had a major influence on its outcome.

Illustration 3

The war put an end to the Great Depression. High unemployment was replaced by huge labor shortages, as working men entered the armed forces. Their jobs were often taken by women who had never worked outside the home. More than six million women joined the workforce during the war. As this photo shows, these female workers did all kinds of industrial work in defense plants and elsewhere. They also volunteered in countless ways. This massive move into the workplace had a social and cultural as well as an economic impact. When the war ended, most women gave up their jobs to men returning from overseas. But attitudes and relationships had shifted, and working outside the home had become more acceptable for women as a result of the war.

Lesson 1 — The Industrial Powerhouse

Illustration 1



The National Archives

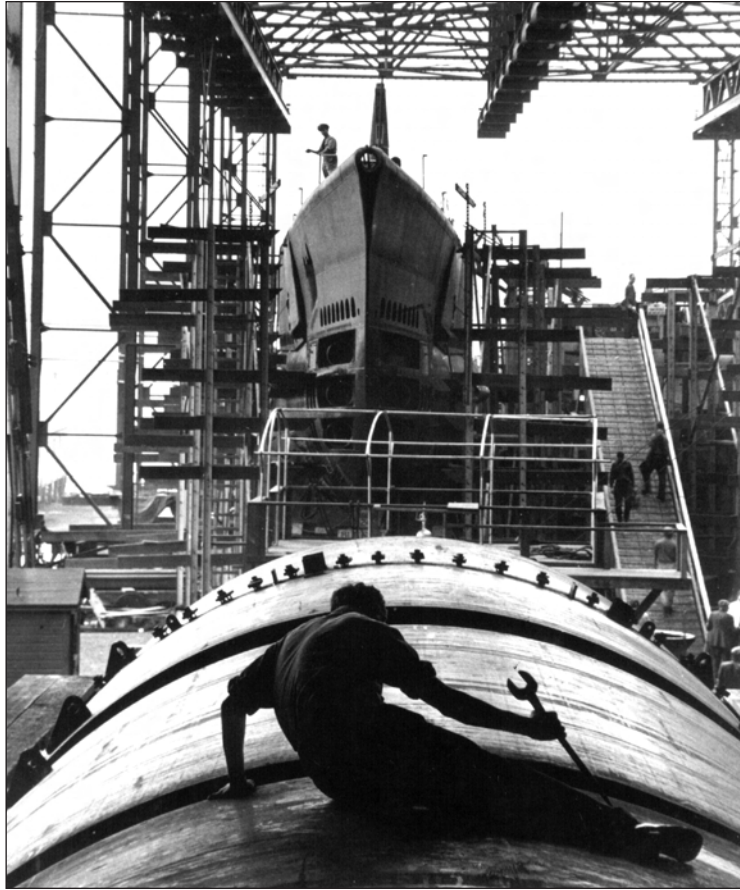
Discussing the Illustration

1. Even before the United States entered World War II, FDR wanted to help the “Allies,” the nations on whose side we fought in the war. Who was “FDR,” and who were our key allies in World War II?
2. FDR called on the U.S. to become a great “arsenal of democracy.” How does this photo help to explain what he meant by that phrase?
3. Becoming an “arsenal of democracy” would have meant a big change at any time in the nation’s history. This was especially true at the end of the 1930s. Can you explain why?
4. Despite the Depression, the U.S. was uniquely qualified to be the “arsenal of democracy” for the Allied nations fighting in the war. Can you explain why? Had the U.S. not existed, what other nation or nations might have played this role? Would the Allies have succeeded by relying on these other nations instead of the U.S.? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Converting industry from consumer to wartime production was directed by the War Production Board, or WPB. Read more about the WPB and the conversion of auto industries to war production. Pretend your group is the board of directors of a big car company. The WPB has just told your company to produce tanks instead of private cars and trucks. What changes do you and your fellow directors think will be needed? Come up with a plan describing the problems you think your company will face and how you hope to solve those problems. Report to the class (perhaps treating them as the shareholders of your company).
2. War production helped the nation get to know Harry Truman, the man who would eventually become President after FDR died in 1945. Why was this so? What did Truman have to do with war production? Research the answers to these questions and write an essay describing Harry Truman’s role in this area during the early years of World War II.

Illustration 2



The National Archives

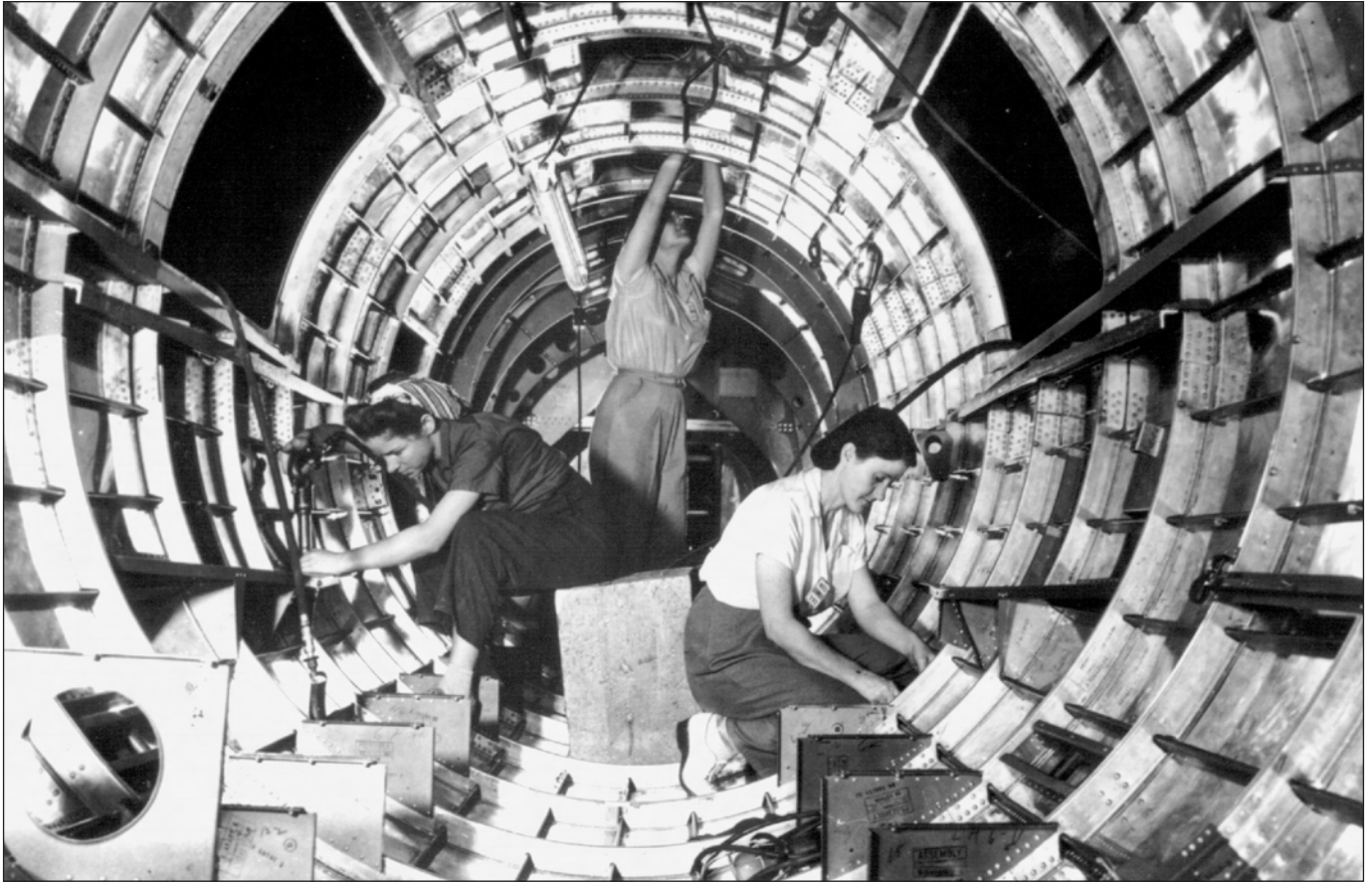
Discussing the Illustration

1. This man is working on the hull of a U.S. submarine. Submarines were important in the war. Germany placed a great deal of hope on its submarines early in the war. Can you explain what Germany hoped its submarines would help it to do early in the war?
2. Submarine warfare did not help Germany all that much after 1942. What did the Allies do to limit the impact of German submarine warfare?
3. Soon, America's enormous productive capacity was providing it with effective submarines, as this photo suggests, along with many other sea-going vessels. The aircraft carrier was a new vessel making its debut in World War II. Why was the aircraft carrier so important — especially in the Pacific?
4. U.S. scientists made many discoveries during the war. Not all were weapons — penicillin, for example. Why was penicillin so important to the war effort? What other important technical advances helped the Allies in the war?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Make a bulletin board display showing five key vehicles, ships, weapons or other items produced by the U.S. for the war. Also, create a map showing where these things were produced. Your teacher or librarian can help you with this research. Next to each item, attach information such as how much of the item was produced, how many workers it took to produce it, its role in the war, etc. Attach a string from the photo of the item to the place or places in the United States where it was produced.
2. In 1939, Albert Einstein sent a letter to President Roosevelt on the possibility of making an atomic bomb. The letter warned that Germany might be building one. This letter helped convince Roosevelt to launch an effort to develop nuclear weapons — an effort called the “Manhattan Project.” Read Einstein’s letter to President Roosevelt. If you could return to 1939, knowing what you know today, what would you advise FDR to do? Write a “letter from the future” to President Roosevelt giving him your advice.

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. These women are doing their part to help fight World War II. From the shape of the space they are in, what do you think they are working on?
2. This photo was taken in 1942. Photos like this would probably have surprised most Americans only a few years earlier. Can you explain why?
3. What benefits do you think women received by taking jobs like this during the war? What problems might such work have caused them?
4. Women also did a great deal of volunteer work during the war, and many served in the armed forces — but not in combat. In fact, most Americans at the time, including the vast majority of women, would have been shocked at that idea. Even the working women you see here would probably have been shocked. Why do you suppose that was so? Do you agree or disagree with the prevailing view in the 1940s that it would have been immoral to send women into combat? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Pretend it is 1942. The governor of your state has chosen you as a committee of artists to design a series of posters encouraging women to go to work to help fight the war. Design posters aimed at convincing women to apply for each of the following types of jobs: firefighters in a big-city fire department; welding jobs in an airplane assembly plant; truck drivers supplying nearby army bases; assembly-line workers making ammunition in a factory. Use your posters in a colorful bulletin board display called “Women Working to Win the War.”
2. Small Group Activity: Women who took jobs in factories during World War II earned the nickname “Rosie the Riveter.” What personal qualities were stressed in images of “Rosie the Riveter”? Base your answers on cartoons, photos, articles, and ads from wartime magazines or newspapers showing working women. Use copies of these images to organize a presentation to the class and guide a discussion on the theme: “Rosie: Myth and Reality.”

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will understand how the demands of wartime production affected daily life for millions of Americans at home.
 2. Students will better appreciate some of the strains wartime life placed on people and their interactions with one another
-

Pulling Together: Mobilizing the Population

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

In the Great Depression, Americans learned to suffer and do without many things. Then during World War II, entirely new kinds of sacrifices were demanded of them. These sacrifices asked Americans to do their part to aid the fighting men overseas. One way to do this was to save certain resources that would normally be thrown out — for example, the rubber in old tires and the scrap metal in all kinds of junk. The iron in one old shovel was said to be enough to make four hand grenades. Posters such as this one tried to motivate citizens to save such scarce resources. As with many government posters of the time, the scene in this one uses powerful emotional imagery to link sacrifice and effort at home directly to the dangers and heroism of the fighting men overseas.

Illustration 2

The government needed to limit consumer spending and redirect industry to produce goods for the military. Yet with so many Americans at work earning more money, demand for consumer goods went up. Therefore, rationing was used to limit what these consumers could buy. Automobile tires led the list of rationed items. By war's end, the list included, among other things, meat, sugar, gasoline, fuel oil for home heating and coal. Rationing took various forms. In the case of many goods, a point system assigned point values to rationed items and allowed each consumer only a certain number of points to "spend" in a given time period. Many people endured all this out of a sense of patriotism. But others grumbled — and "black markets" in many rationed goods were common.

Illustration 3

Posters of proud workers at home appealed to Americans in a positive way to work hard to win the war. But this poster appealed to a more basic emotion — fear. It also hints at a less pleasant side to the realities of life during the war, especially for women. With men away, many women were left alone, often with children to look after. For mothers working outside the home, finding child care or maintaining a normal home life could be hard. The war also often added to marital tensions. War separated many recently married couples, making it hard for them to keep their relationships strong and stable. Many newborns would not get to know their fathers for several years.

Illustration 1



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This World War II poster asks Americans to do their part to help the war effort. What exactly does the poster want citizens to do, and why might this help from citizens have been important to the war effort?
2. One major resource badly needed by the armed forces was rubber. Why would the armed forces have needed rubber so badly, and what factors in the early 1940s caused it to be in such short supply?
3. Can you name some other key resources people were asked to save or provide for on their own during World War II?
4. Much of the emotional force of this poster comes from the huge arm rising up behind a barn. Why do you think the artist chose these particular images to make this appeal for scrap? What emotions do the images call forth? Would these images work as well today in appealing to Americans to help save and collect some scarce resource? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: What efforts were undertaken in your community during World War II to save scarce resources and help the war effort in other ways? Use your local library to look for newspaper articles from the time. You may also want to seek out and interview older residents of your community who lived through those years. Present your group's findings in a report to the rest of the class. You may want to use some photos, posters, cartoons, advertisements or other visuals in your report.
2. Teenagers and younger children were among the most enthusiastic when it came to scrap metal drives, buying War Stamps, and other projects to aid the war effort. Read more about this aspect of the war on the home front. Report your findings in a brief talk to the class. You may want to do research to find out what efforts young people took part in during the war in your community, or even in your own school.

Lesson 2 — Pulling Together: Mobilizing the Population

Illustration 2



The National Archives



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. During World War II, shortages of many consumer products developed. One item in short supply was sugar. The top photo shows a line of people waiting to buy a small supply of sugar. Why would the war have caused shortages of certain consumer goods?
2. Often, when a product is suddenly in short supply, its price goes way up. Can you explain why?
3. If a product is in short supply, the government may try to ration it. Can you explain what rationing is? How would rationing help to limit purchases of a product in short supply? How might it help to keep the prices of such a product from rising?
4. Sugar was the first product the government rationed. Tires were another rationed product. Why do you suppose the government wanted to ration these two products? What other products and resources were rationed during the war, and why?

Follow-up Activities

1. Read about and discuss shortages of products during World War II and government efforts to ration some of those products. Next, think about the top photo here. Imagine what must have been going through the minds of some of the people in the photo. Then write a brief dialogue or one-act play involving some of these people. Let one of the characters in your play begin by complaining about how silly it is to have to wait in line to get something as basic as sugar. Find some students to work with you in acting out your play in front of the class. Use the overhead of the above photo as the backdrop for this play.
2. **Small Group Activity:** During the war, rationing often led to so-called “black markets” in rationed products. Learn more about these black markets and why they often arise when product supply is artificially limited. Discuss what you learn. Prepare a brief talk about wartime black markets. Then guide the class in a discussion about how fair and effective rationing is, and when it should or should not be used.

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This government poster shows a terrified woman and her child. A shadow has fallen across them. This shadow is a symbol of something. What is it a symbol of? And how does this symbol help to explain the fear these two people are showing?
2. The top of the poster says, "Save them this fate." Who exactly is the "them" referred to in this phrase? And what does the poster urge Americans to do to help save them?
3. How effective do you think this poster is at getting its message across? What features most help to make it an effective poster?
4. Imagine a male worker in a defense plant looking at this poster. Now imagine a female worker in the same plant looking at it. Might their reactions to the poster have differed in any way? Why or why not?
5. What else do you think this poster reveals about the fears and anxieties Americans were feeling during the war years?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small Group Activity:** As a group, spend some time talking about this poster and any other wartime posters you can find that were directed at Americans at home during World War II. Then have each group member take the part of one of the following:
 - A GI in Europe who left a wife and child behind
 - A married woman with two young children who works in a munitions factory
 - A high school student with a father off at war
 - A male worker classified 4F due to poor eyesight
 - An African American moving to the West Coast to work in a shipyard.

For a week, keep a diary of your thoughts on the war and your part in it. If you are the GI in Europe, focus on thoughts of home. If your role puts you in the U.S. during the war, focus on the war's effect on you and your concerns for family or friends here or overseas. At some point, comment on this poster. Share some of the best entries in a reading before the entire class.

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will understand how the war intensified fears and added to the tensions of daily life.
 2. Students will appreciate how such fears added to injustices suffered by certain minority groups, especially Japanese-American citizens.
-

Wartime Jitters and Deep-Seated Fears

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

An invasion of the U.S. by Germany or Japan was never likely. Yet fears about this were not entirely unfounded. After all, no one expected Japan to attack Pearl Harbor either. And enemy submarines often did torpedo ships just off the Atlantic coast, especially in 1942. In that year, two parties of German spies were dropped off by submarines, although each group quickly bungled its mission. In any case, a widespread sense of fear was inevitable — given that tyranny was on the march all over the globe. Spies were operating in the U.S., and the dangers warned of by these posters were not far-fetched. Another common slogan was, “Enemy agents are always near; if you don’t talk, they won’t hear.”

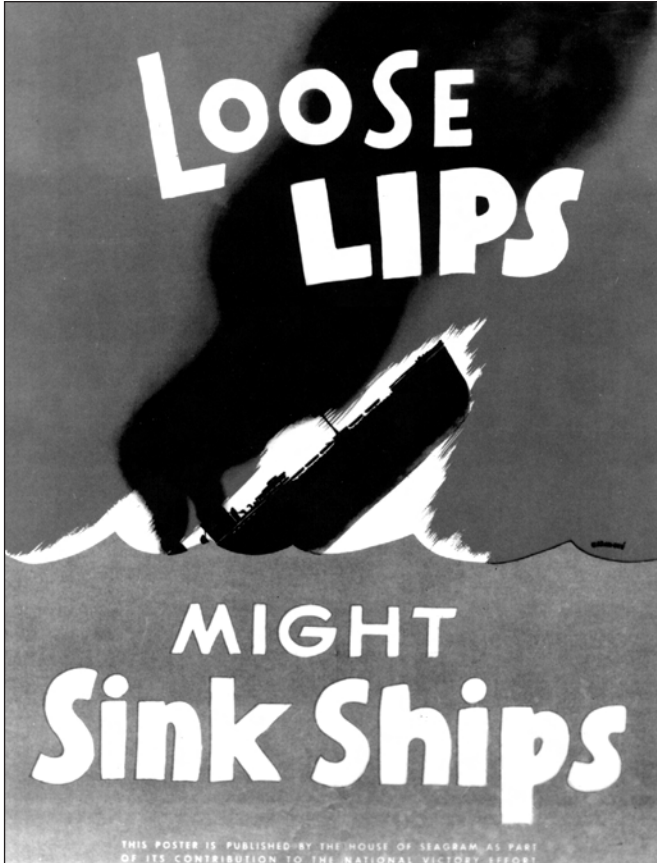
Illustration 2

Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor sparked sudden fears of an invasion among Californians and others on the West Coast. Adding to such fears was the presence in that region of a large population of Japanese-Americans. Most were American-born citizens of Japanese descent (Nisei), and nearly all of them were perfectly law abiding. Nevertheless, war fears and racial prejudice together generated powerful anti-Japanese feelings. The result was a disgraceful round-up and removal of over 112,000 of these citizens to internment camps deeper inside the U.S. for the duration of the war. The many Japanese-owned businesses in the region added to support for the round-up, since some non-Japanese business owners saw a chance to remove competitors. These photos capture the irony and shame in this injustice.

Illustration 3

Most Japanese-Americans were resettled in camps in desolate, wind-swept areas of the American West. In this photo, a dust storm swirls around the barracks at a camp in Manzanar, California. In most respects the camps were like prisons — barbed wire fences surrounded them; guards kept watch in towers; no one was allowed to leave. At least most families were allowed to stay together. Inhabitants of the camps worked hard to make the best of a degrading situation. At times, a small-town atmosphere even prevailed in some camps. Young people weathered the confinement better than older adults. After the war, many returned to homes that had been vandalized and businesses that were bankrupt.

Illustration 1



The National Archives



The National Archives

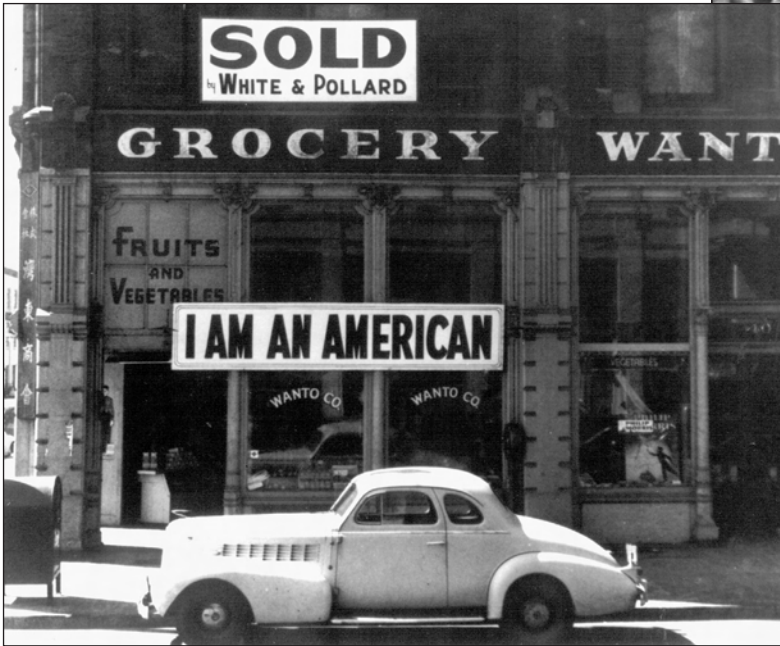
Discussing the Illustration

1. These two posters were among many warning Americans to be careful during World War II. What dangers are they warning people about?
2. Of the two, which poster do you think is the most effective in getting its message across? What features in the poster make it effective?
3. Why would people have worried about the dangers the posters warn against? How realistic do you think their fears were? In which parts of the nation would fears such as these have been strongest? Why?
4. Put yourself in the place of Americans at home during World War II. What other fears would have made you tense and “jittery” during the war years?
5. Do you think posters such as these could have had a harmful effect on the nation, leading Americans to become more suspicious and distrustful? Or do you think such posters might have helped the nation by uniting it more strongly against dangerous enemies? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Pretend it is early 1942. Your group is a committee just appointed by the mayor of a town on the Atlantic Coast in New Jersey or North Carolina. The mayor wants you to come up with a list of recommendations to the people of the town about possible dangers they may face because of the war. You are also to suggest actions people should take in certain situations that might arise in connection with the war. Present your report to the class.
2. While the American mainland remained largely unscathed by fighting in World War II, fierce battles between Allied ships and Axis submarines occurred off both coasts. German submarine warfare off the Atlantic coast provoked especially strong fears in the early years of the war. Read more about this warfare. Create a map of the Atlantic Coast showing where Allied ship sinkings occurred. Use this map as the basis for a brief talk to the class on this aspect of the war.

Illustration 2



The National Archives



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. These two photos have to do with one group of Americans who were not well treated by the U.S. government during World War II. Can you identify this group?
2. Right after the attack on Pearl Harbor, fears arose on the West Coast about these Japanese-Americans, most of whom were American-born citizens. What do you suppose others feared these citizens might do?
3. From these photos and what you know about America during World War II, explain briefly what happened to these Japanese-Americans during the war years.
4. Most historians say the fears that other citizens had about these Japanese-Americans were totally unjustified. Explain why they say this?
5. Do you think these fears about Japanese-Americans arose mainly because of the threat from Japan during the war? Or were they mainly due to racial prejudice? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: The Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) upheld the wartime internment of Japanese-Americans. Read the opinions and dissents in this case. Create a one-act play in which the Court members discuss the case. Present your play to the class.
2. Small Group Activity: Have each group member pretend to be one of the following:
 - Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt
 - President Franklin Roosevelt
 - Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black
 - Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson.

As this person, write two letters — one to the owner of the grocery store in the photo on the left, and one to the young boy in the other photo waiting to go to an internment camp. In order to write a believable letter, you need to learn more about your character and the role he actually played during the war as it relates to the relocation of Japanese Americans. Share some of the letters with the class.

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This is a photo of one of the internment camps to which Japanese-Americans were sent during World War II. Where were most of these internment camps located? What have you read or heard about conditions in these camps?
2. Suppose you were forced by your government to live in a camp like this for a few years. What would upset you most about this? What would be most difficult for you to deal with in such a situation?
3. How do you think this experience affected most of the older Japanese-American citizens in the camps? How about younger children? What long-term effects do you think the internment might have had on them?
4. How would you compare the treatment of Japanese-Americans in World War II to the experiences of African Americans during the war? Do you think prejudice at home made it harder for the U.S. to fight the war against Japan and Germany? Explain your answers.

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Read more about the causes of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and the conditions in the camps. Also read about Hitler's concentration camps in Europe. Discuss the two kinds of camps. Then divide your group into two sides to debate the following question in front of the class: "Is it fair to compare the Japanese internment camps in the U.S. with the concentration camps set up by Hitler for Jews and others?"
2. The war years were a tense time for race relations in the U.S. African American soldiers served in segregated units. So did Japanese-Americans. Many young Japanese-American men living in relocation camps were actually drafted into the U.S. Army. Do some research on African-American units or Japanese-American units that fought during World War II. Compare the experiences of these troops with the experiences of their friends or relatives at home in America. Present your report to the class.

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will understand that Americans did what they could to maintain as normal a way of life as possible during the war.
 2. Students will appreciate the fact that democracy remained fairly sound at home during the war.
-

Holding Things Together at Home

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

The war disturbed everyday life, but Americans tried hard to keep things as normal as possible. And they often succeeded. Take major league baseball, for example. In the top photo here, the great Joe DiMaggio kisses his bat after hitting safely in 56 straight games, a record that still stands today. But like many players, DiMaggio eventually served in the army (from 1943 to 1945). With so many stars in the armed services, the majors brought in inferior players to keep the leagues operating. The Midwest found another way to keep the game alive — a women's pro baseball league. The bottom photo shows one of the Kenosha (Wis.) Comets trying to beat the tag at third base.

Illustration 2

As with baseball, politics did not stop once the war began. While the nation did unite to back President Roosevelt and the war effort, it is easy to exaggerate this. Political debates and partisan conflict continued during the war. In fact, there were loud objections to President Roosevelt's decision to run for a fourth term in 1944. Even Roosevelt, weary from war and eleven years in office, wasn't sure he should run again. In the end, he did run, facing Republican Thomas E. Dewey. But each man held back on announcing his candidacy for his party's nomination. This led others to think they had a real chance to get it, which is the point of this cartoon. But the larger lesson may be that war, even world war, did not put democracy at home on hold.

Illustration 3

Relief and joy at having survived the war show on the face of Pfc. Lee Harper. Wounded in Normandy, he is pictured here greeting his two-year-old sister, whom he had never seen before, on his arrival in New York City in August 1945. His mother and wife look on. Celebrations broke out all across the nation both at the end of the war against Germany in May and against Japan in August. President Truman was under pressure to bring the boys home, and a rapid demobilization began. At the same time, bringing millions of men back into the workforce and returning to a civilian economy also brought new strains. The war had changed life forever in American in many ways, as would become clear in the years ahead.

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Minnesota Historical Society

Discussing the Illustration

1. Daily life went on in many ways during the war. For example, major league baseball kept going. The scene on top shows one of the greatest players in history kissing his bat after hitting safely in 56 straight games. Can you name him?
2. Joe DiMaggio was in the armed services from 1943 to 1945, as were many other top players. What did this force the major leagues to do?
3. In the Midwest, a different kind of pro baseball league was set up. From the photo on the bottom, can you explain? How does this seem to mirror the way the nation adjusted to the war in other areas of life? Why do you think this new league did not survive the end of the war?
4. Do you think it was right for professional sports to keep going during the war? Why or why not? What benefits might this have had for Americans? Can you think of any drawbacks?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Create a bulletin board display on key areas of life at home during the war — sports, movies, radio, neighborhoods, schools, shops, home life, music, advertising, and so on. Choose five such areas. Find photos, drawings, articles, comic strips, or recordings that help show what this aspect of life was like and the impact the war had on it. Use these in a bulletin board display called “Life Goes On — Living Through The War.”
2. What was it like to be on a women’s pro baseball team during the war years? To find out, rent and watch the movie *A League of Their Own*. This movie tells the story of a women’s professional baseball league in the Midwest during World War II. Now pretend you are the woman approaching third base in the above photo. It is 50 years later, and your grandchild has asked you about this photo. Write a letter to your grandchild, telling him or her what it was like to play baseball in those years during the war.

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. You might not recognize three of the men in this cartoon. One man should be easy to identify. He's the one on the top left with the long cigarette in his mouth. Can you identify him?
2. In this cartoon, President Roosevelt is talking with his Republican opponent in the 1944 election. Can you name that opponent?
3. Including 1944, how many times did Roosevelt run for President and win?
4. For a time, Roosevelt and Dewey refused to say that they were in the race for President. Two other men, Jim Farley and Wendell Willkie, hoped to be the main presidential candidates instead. And in fact, many people who liked Roosevelt did not want him to run for President again in 1944. Can you explain why?
5. This cartoon shows that even with a war on, political life in the U.S. kept going — campaigns, battles in Congress over many issues, and so on. Was this good or bad for the nation? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. While trying to decide whether or not to run again for President in 1944, Roosevelt wrote a letter to the chairman of the Democratic Party. In it he said, "All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River." Read more about Roosevelt's last years to find out why he chose to run again for a record fourth term in office. Then pretend you are President Roosevelt. Write a letter to this same Democratic Party chairman telling him why you decided to run again. Share your letter with the class.
2. President Roosevelt's opponent in the 1944 election was Thomas E. Dewey. Learn more about the 1944 election. Your teacher or librarian can help you find books on this subject. Write a brief report. In your report, summarize the "platform" Dewey ran on. Then answer these questions: Why did Dewey think he could win? What, if anything, did he want to do differently from Roosevelt? What main factors, in your view, led to Dewey's defeat and Roosevelt's victory?

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. For U.S. soldiers in Europe — such as Pfc. Lee Harper, shown here — the war ended in May 1945. But the war in the Pacific lasted several more months. Can you explain what dramatic event brought the war in the Pacific to a close?
2. Pfc. Harper was wounded in Normandy. In this photo, he has arrived in New York City where he greets his two-year-old sister, whom he had never seen before. His mother and wife look on. What do you think each of these people is feeling? What hopes do you think they have? What concerns, or fears, if any?
3. One way the U.S. government chose to “thank” returning servicemen was with an offer to pay for their college education. By what phrase is the law giving veterans this help commonly known?
4. The end of the war meant big changes for American society. What were some of those changes? What do you think the biggest long-term effects of World War II were on life in the United States?

Follow-up Activities

1. Imagine you are the soldier shown in the above photo. The war is over and you have just returned home, wounded in the fighting. Write diary entries for your first five days home — starting with the day this photo was taken. What did you notice first? What seemed most familiar? What seemed different? How has life in America changed since you left? How has your family changed? (Keep in mind as you write that this soldier was meeting his two-year-old sister for the first time.) Be as imaginative and detailed as you can.
2. **Small Group Activity:** Each group member should take the role of one of the adults in the above photo. Invent some other relatives or friends, depending on the size of your group. Using all these “characters,” create a one-act play in which you all talk about what has happened to you and to the country during the war, and what is likely to happen now that the war is over. Using the overhead of the above photo as a backdrop, present your play to the class.

Answers to Factual Questions

(Answers provided only to questions
requiring a single correct answer)

Lesson 1

Illustration 1 Question 1: FDR was U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Our two key allies in the war were Great Britain, the Soviet Union.

Question 3: The Great Depression was still affecting the economy by the end of the 1930s. Millions were still out of work, many businesses shut down, etc

Illustration 2 Question 1: Stop U.S. ships taking supplies to Europe.
Question 2: Developed the convoy system, better detection, etc.
Question 3: Many battles there were at sea, with air power playing a key role.
Question 4: It cured malaria and other diseases affecting soldiers in large numbers.

Illustration 3 (no fact questions)

Lesson 2

Illustration 1 Question 2: Rubber was used for tires, and in many other military uses. Much U.S. rubber had come from parts of Asia that Japan had conquered.

Question 3: Scrap metal, food from “victory gardens,” etc.

Illustration 2 Question 1: Either the armed services bought up certain goods, or businesses were ordered to switch to producing military instead of consumer goods.
Question 2: Buyers competing for the small supply bid up prices.
Question 3: Rationing limits how much of a good each person can buy — thereby limiting the overall level of demand that determines the price of any good.
Question 4: Other rationed products: meat, gasoline, etc.

Illustration 3 Question 1: The symbol is the Nazi Swastika

Lesson 3

Illustration 1 Question 1: Sabotage, spying, etc.

Illustration 2 Question 1: Japanese-Americans
Question 3: More than 100,000 were sent to internment camps during the war.

Illustration 3 Question 1: Most were located in the American West.

Lesson 4

Illustration 1 Question 1: Joe DiMaggio
Question 2: Hire many inferior players as substitutes
Question 3: A professional baseball league of female players

Illustration 2 Question 1: President Roosevelt
Question 2: Thomas E. Dewey
Question 3: Four times
Question 4: Some thought it was wrong for a president to serve so many terms. Others worried about FDR’s health.

Illustration 3 Question 1: The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Question 3: The “GI Bill of Rights”

