



KOKORO: THE STORY OF SACRAMENTO'S LOST JAPANTOWN

Based on a 2017 exhibition at the California Museum, this collection of photos explores a now-vanished and mostly forgotten neighborhood. Once the fourth-largest Japantown in the nation, the once-vibrant community was born out of racism and ultimately was destroyed by it.

“KOKORO” DISTANCE LEARNING ACTIVITY

A free [Distance Learning](#) activity aligned with
Common Core & State Content Standards for grades 6-12

OVERVIEW:

The [“Kokoro: The Story of Sacramento’s Lost Japantown” Online Exhibit](#) tells the story of the Japanese American community in Sacramento from 1900-1959, as they established a vibrant center of community, experienced forced removal during World War II, rebuilt after the war, and were impacted by the City of Sacramento’s redevelopment of their community, replacing homes and businesses with office buildings. In this activity, students will compare source material with present-day images of Sacramento, and use historic photographs to ask and answer questions about the past.

APPROPRIATE FOR:

6th-12th grades

OBJECTIVES:

In this activity, learners will:

- Learn about the history of Sacramento’s Japantown over the course of the 20th century
- Use primary sources to make historical claims
- Develop questions to reflect on first hand experiences in history

DIRECTIONS:

View [“Kokoro: The Story of Sacramento’s Lost Japantown” online exhibit](#) in full screen mode and use the photographs and documents in the exhibit to respond to the questions included.

TIME:

2 hours

MATERIALS:

- [“Kokoro: The Story of Sacramento’s Lost Japantown” online exhibit](#)

STANDARDS:**Common Core***ELA Literacy Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- | | |
|------------|--|
| RH.6-8.7 | Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. |
| RH.9-10.9 | Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources. |
| RH.11-12.9 | Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources. |

History-Social Science California State Content Standards*Chronological and Spatial Thinking*

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 6-8 | Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical |
|-----|---|

- migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.
- 9-12 Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.
- 9-12 Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

- 6-8 Students frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.
- 9-12 Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations

Grade Level Content Standards

- 8.12.5 Examine the location and effects of urbanization, renewed immigration, and industrialization (e.g., the effects on social fabric of cities, wealth and economic opportunity, the conservation movement).
- 8.12.7 Identify the new sources of large-scale immigration and the contributions of immigrants to the building of cities and the economy; explain the ways in which new social and economic patterns encouraged assimilation of newcomers into the mainstream amidst growing cultural diversity; and discuss the new wave of nativism.
- 11.7.5 Discuss the constitutional issues and impact of events [during World War II] on the U.S. home front, including the internment of Japanese Americans
- 11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

Thank you for downloading the “Kokoro” Distance Learning Activity! We hope you and your students enjoy using it. For additional downloadable resources in our free program, visit the [Distance Learning](#) page on our website. For help or questions, contact the education department at reservations@californiamuseum.org.

Early Japantown

1900-1942

The first section of the *Kokoro* exhibit explores early Japanese immigration to the United States, beginning in the 1880s, and the Japanese community that formed in Sacramento that came to be called, “Ofu” or Sakura City, a city within the larger city of Sacramento. Explore this section, and use the images and text to address the following questions.

1. Why do many immigrant communities form neighborhoods like Japantown within larger cities? What factors might **push** them out of other neighborhoods? What benefits might **pull** them to live in Japantown? Use the template below to organize your thoughts and give **three** specific examples from the photos and text in *Kokoro*.

Describe evidence (from photos or text)	How does this answer the question?

2. Find the photo of teenagers taken outside the Ouye Pharmacy in the 1930s. If you could interview one of the people in this photo, what questions would you ask them about what was happening at the time? What kind of things do you think they could tell you about?

Removal**1942-1945**

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, including those who were American citizens, were unconstitutionally incarcerated as the United States entered World War II against Japan.

3. How were the residents of Sacramento's Japantown impacted by Executive Order 9066?
Find three photographs from *Kokoro* to answer the question.

Describe evidence (from photos or text)	How does this answer the question?

4. Find the photo labeled "Proclaiming loyalty (1942-01-18)." Why was this advertising space purchased? What were the creators of this advertisement trying to communicate? Who do you think their intended audience was? What outcome do you think they were hoping for?

Postwar Japantown

1945-1959

In December 1944, nearly three years after people of Japanese ancestry were forced to leave their homes, the U.S. government announced the closing of the incarceration centers. Explore this section to see how residents of Sacramento's Japantown rebuilt their community after the war.

5. How did people in Japantown rebuild their community after the war? Choose three photos that demonstrate different approaches.

Describe evidence (from photos or text)	How does this answer the question?

6. Choose one person in a photograph in this section that you would like to interview. What questions would you ask them? What do you think they could tell you about the postwar period?

Redevelopment

1955-1965

7. How did members of the Japanese American community respond to the city of Sacramento's plans to "redevelop," or tear down, Japantown? Find two different photos that show different responses within the community.

Describe evidence (from photos or text)	How does this answer the question?

8. The title of this exhibit is "Kokoro" which means heart, or the connection between the heart, mind and spirit. Why do you think this exhibit was given this title? How do the items in the exhibit reflect that title?

Extension Activity

Find a historic photo from your neighborhood or community. A city or county museum, public library, or local newspaper could be a good place to look. Then, compare it to what that same location looks like today, using Google Street View, or going to the location yourself. What similarities do you notice? What has changed? What are your theories behind why those things have changed?

If there is a person in the photo you find, what do you notice about them? What questions would you ask if you were able to interview them?