

BECOMING US

THE JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION:

How Should a Wrong be Righted?

Educator Guide

George, Risa, and Yasubei Hirano pose in front of an American flag at the US government War Relocation Authority incarceration camp for Japanese Americans in Poston, Arizona. Risa is holding a photograph of her son Shigera, a US World War II serviceman, in uniform.

National Archives and Records Administration, War Relocation Authority Records.

https://www.docstoc.com/documents/document/hirano_family



These deliberation guides by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History examine the complexities, choices, and tensions of a moment in history to understand how real people and communities were impacted by watershed events, often outside their control. Studying history in this way, as a topic that is dynamic and discoverable, provides a powerful venue to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are key to understanding the past, making sense of the present, and shaping a more just and inclusive future.

This resource connects to the student deliberation guide on Japanese American efforts to seek justice for the nearly 75,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry and 45,000 Japanese nationals whom the US government imprisoned during World War II. Fueled by wartime paranoia that exacerbated anti-Asian sentiments, the US government forced people of Japanese ancestry who lived on the West Coast of the United States into incarceration camps after the United States entered the war. The suffering that camp prisoners endured during the war years marked generations of Japanese Americans, but decades would pass before activists began to revisit those dark years, raise consciousness within the Japanese American community, and eventually press the US government to both publicly acknowledge the wrongs it had committed and atone for its actions. This deliberation guide encourages students to become “visitors to the past” in witnessing efforts to advocate for those who had been imprisoned and in wrestling with the question of how such a grievous wrong should be righted.

Through this learning experience, students will develop and practice their ability to participate in a deliberation. Deliberations provide students with a structured forum for learning to identify multiple (and often underrepresented) perspectives on an issue, empathize with human experiences different from their own, recognize possible solutions and deal with inherent tradeoffs, and collaborate with others to listen, build ideas, and look for shared understandings.

This educator guide contains information and suggested strategies for facilitating the deliberation:

- **Historical Context:** Brief information about the incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II and succeeding efforts to seek justice for them and their families
- **Student Learning Objectives:** Expectations of what students should accomplish by participating in the deliberation
- **Recommended Procedures and Pacing:** Suggested learning tasks to prepare for, participate in, and reflect on the outcomes of the historic decisions deliberation
- **What Happened Next?:** Information about historic events that took place after this deliberation
- **Standards:** Alignment with national and state standards for historical knowledge and critical thinking
- **Appendix:** Facilitation strategies and recommendations

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During World War II, the United States government imprisoned approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast—two-thirds of whom were American citizens—in isolated camps across the country. Between March 1942 and March 1946, when the last camp was closed, incarcerated people lived, worked, played, and attended school in these camps, which were ringed by barbed-wire fences and guarded by armed sentries with orders to shoot anyone who tried to escape. Conditions were harsh: extreme weather fluctuations were common, and the barracks that accommodated entire families were primitive. Over the course of the war, thousands of those incarcerated successfully petitioned to leave the camps to pursue jobs, university educations, and careers in the US military. Thousands more remained. The US government ordered the camps to close in December 1944, several months before the war's end.



Line for lunch at Manzanar incarceration camp, 1943.
Ansel Adams, Library of Congress.
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppprs.00368/>

In the decades following World War II, former incarcerated people and their families rebuilt their lives, reconstituted their communities, and attempted to put the trauma of the camps behind them. But the social movements of the 1960s sparked interest in equal rights for marginalized communities, inspiring Japanese Americans to revisit the injustices suffered by past generations and call for the US government to be held accountable. This guide examines the many voices and perspectives behind Japanese American efforts to advocate for restitution and redress during the 1970s.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Analyze multiple perspectives of members of the Japanese American community during the 1970s, using primary and secondary resources to evaluate options that could be employed to petition the US government for justice.**
- **Evaluate the benefits and tradeoffs of a particular decision or action through a facilitated deliberation with classmates.**
- **Practice participating in respectful and productive discussions of complex issues with peers.**

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES AND PACING

The following lesson plan is divided into three sections with suggested times for each. However, each section should be taught according to your students' abilities and needs.

Lesson 1: Preparing for Deliberation (45 minutes)

Student Tasks:

1. **Define deliberation, including what it is and is not.**
2. **Collaboratively determine class norms for discussions.**
3. **Develop knowledge and understanding of the topic by analyzing primary and secondary sources.**

THINK

1. How do we make decisions?

- a. Ask students to think of the decisions they made before coming to this class today. Have them list these on a piece of paper. These can be decisions of any size and significance. Explain that we make decisions all the time, some without even thinking about it, that affect the outcome of our day and possibly even more than that.
- b. From their list, have students select one decision that required the most time, thought, or energy. Have them turn to a partner and discuss the decision they have chosen to focus on. What was their process for making their choice? Did they weigh pros and cons? Did they ask for advice from others? How long did it take to make their choice?
- c. As a group, discuss what decision-making looks like. Using examples from the students' discussions, create a shared definition of decision-making and record their ideas on the board. Then, highlight or circle elements that reflect *effective* decision-making. Reflect on what good decision-making feels like and the type of time, effort, and consideration required to make thoughtful choices.

2. What is a deliberation?

- a. Explain that in this lesson, they will participate in an important kind of decision-making process called a deliberation. In a deliberation, a group of people come together around one question or topic to examine different courses of action.
- b. Describe the key elements of a deliberation. In a deliberation there are many voices around the table, which helps the group identify and think about different perspectives on the issue. Participants are guided to look at different possible solutions and the trade-offs that come with those decisions.
- c. Note that a deliberation is different from a debate or discussion.
 - i. A debate is competitive, generally set up with opposing sides, and ends with one winner and one or more losers. Deliberations are collaborative.
 - ii. Discussions are more free-flowing and do not necessarily have an end goal of making a decision. They are opportunities to share ideas and learn from others. Deliberations do that, too, but they also intentionally look at the topic from multiple perspectives and examine the trade-offs of various possible actions.

COLLABORATE

1. Have students create a set of shared norms that will guide their conversation. Students should think about what actions and attitudes they think will help the class have an effective deliberation.
2. Record norms on an anchor chart somewhere visible in the room and read them out loud. Suggested norms include:
 - **Be respectful and open to new ideas.**
 - **Share the floor.**
 - **Stay on topic.**
 - **Everyone participates.**
 - **Seek first to understand, then to speak.**
3. When the students feel that their list is complete, remind them that they are responsible for both adhering to and helping others follow these norms.

ACT

1. Explain that they will be looking at a discussion about possible options for demanding accountability for past injustices suffered by people of Japanese ancestry during World War II.
2. Explain that when this discussion took place, Japanese Americans were faced with a significant decision that we will examine in our deliberation. They had to answer the question: How should a wrong be righted?
3. Note that in order to understand this experience and evaluate the options, the students must prepare by learning about the incarceration of people of Japanese descent and efforts to seek justice for their wrongful imprisonment. Distribute student deliberation guides and instruct students to read the first portion, which is a short essay. They will examine the options in the next section. Afterwards, debrief with students to ensure they understand information included in the narrative. Encourage students to annotate the text as they read.

Lesson 2: The Deliberation [45 minutes]

Classroom arrangement: As feasible, arrange students' desks and/or chairs in a circle.

Student Tasks:

- 1. Individually set expectations and goals for participating in the deliberation.**
- 2. Critically examine the question, each option, and the associated trade-offs through discussion with classmates.**

THINK

1. Explain that students will be participating in their deliberation during this class. Refer to the norms set by the students during the previous lesson and remind them of their responsibility to both follow and help others adhere to these guidelines.
2. Review the roles of both the students and the teacher. Explain that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the conversation. This means the teacher's role is to ensure the deliberation runs well, but the teacher is a neutral participant and will not add opinions to the conversation. Students will be active participants.
3. Ask each student to think individually about how they want to participate in the conversation. This is an opportunity for them to work on their own discussion skills. For example, those who often dominate discussions may consider how they can do more active listening. And those who may choose to listen should think about how they can share their voices more frequently. Have each student write down their answer to the question: How will I participate?

PLEASE NOTE:

Students are expected to become “visitors to the past” and should not attempt to role-play as someone in the Japanese American community. Role-playing can lead to harmful stereotypes being perpetuated and limit students’ opportunity to learn about history in an inclusive and respectful way.

COLLABORATE

1. Review the main deliberative question: How should a wrong be righted? Ask students to think about what connections they have to the topic and question at hand. Ask for volunteers to describe their connection in the topic. Doing this helps set the tone for the deliberation as one that involves real people and experiences.
2. Remind students that their goal is to work collaboratively to evaluate a set of options. They may or may not agree on the best option to select. Before they do this, however, they must think carefully about each proposed option and solutions. Have students read the three options, keeping the following questions in mind:
 - a. What does this option propose or recommend?
 - b. What steps would have to be taken to make this option work?
 - c. What would be positive outcomes of moving forward with this option? Why would people want to choose this approach?
 - d. What are trade-offs or downsides that would have to be accepted if this option is chosen? Are these trade-offs worth it?
3. Open up a conversation by examining the options as a class. Have students carefully think through and discuss each option, its associated actions, and its trade-offs. Encourage students to listen closely, to respectfully respond to their classmates, to bring up insights they feel must be considered, and to share their response to each option.

FACILITATION NOTE:

Pay attention to how students are engaging throughout the deliberation. This information will be useful in the next lesson to help students reflect not only on the decisions they make but also how they contributed to the discussion. One way to keep track of their participation is to use a Harkness diagram, which captures the flow of conversation.

ACT

1. Conclude the deliberation by asking students if they can come to a common-ground decision on their recommended path forward for Japanese Americans. They may be creative in their solution building by combining preferred elements of different options, as long as they stay within the bounds of reality and incorporate the many perspectives and people affected by the issue. They may also decide that no one option can be agreed upon.
2. If the group comes to a shared conclusion, post the decision somewhere visible and review it as a class. Ask:
 - a. What actions are they proposing? Why are these important or necessary?
 - b. What trade-offs would have to be made with this approach? Are those acceptable trade-offs?
 - c. Who would be impacted, positively or negatively, by this solution?
3. If the class is unable to come to a shared decision, post the approaches with the most support somewhere visible. Help students think through each option, identifying what they like, what they could do without, and how it would affect different groups of people.

Lesson 3: Reflecting on the Deliberation [45 minutes]

Student Tasks:

1. **Assess their own participation in the deliberation.**
2. **Reflect as a class on the actions they preferred and compare this with actual historical outcomes.**
3. **Identify connections between this historical topic and current issues.**

THINK

1. Instruct students to individually reflect on their experiences during the deliberation. Ask them to write or draw their responses to the prompts below:
 - a. Think critically about your own participation in the deliberation. Did you reach your participation goals?
 - b. What actions did you take that you are proud of? What would you like to improve for future discussions?
 - c. How has your thinking about listening to the ideas of others changed?
2. Have students share feedback about their decision-making process. They should identify areas where they felt the group excelled and where there are opportunities for growth. Help students maintain a supportive atmosphere by reminding them of their class norms before going into this discussion.
3. Encourage students to share and discuss their responses with others. This can be done by talking with a partner, contributing to a larger class conversation, or posting their responses on the board using sticky notes.

COLLABORATE

4. Distribute information from the “What Happened Next?” section of the teacher guide. Remind students that the goal of this deliberation was not to “get it right,” but rather to experience how groups come together to determine what they will do in the face of complex and challenging questions.
5. Have students work in small groups to assess the information using the prompts below:
 - a. What decision or decisions were made?
 - b. What external factors affected the decision-making process?
 - c. Who may have agreed or disagreed with these decisions?

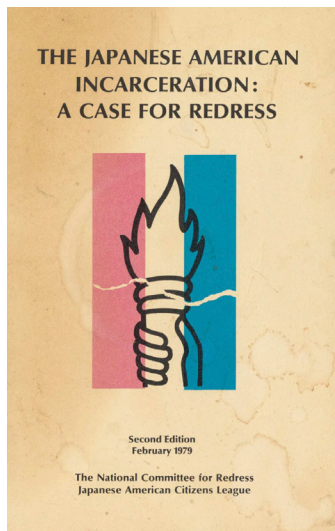
ACT

1. Ask students to reflect on and share their responses to the questions:
 - a. How has your thinking about this topic changed?
 - b. Does this topic connect to any modern issues or events? Which ones?
 - c. Can this history help us better understand those events and issues? How?
2. Have students reflect on and share their ideas about how deliberation could be used to better understand multiple perspectives on these modern-day issues.
3. Individually or in pairs, have students set at least one goal for how they will continue to use what they have learned from this deliberation as they examine other historic topics and current events.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Following the convention of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in 1976, the organization threw its significant political and financial weight behind the movement for reparations. It successfully sought the support of US politicians and built alliances with progressive organizations outside the Japanese American community. In 1977 the JACL published *The Japanese American Incarceration: A Case for Redress*, which became a powerful tool in persuading both its members and the broader Japanese American community not only that the US government owed them monetary compensation but also that they deserved to be vindicated of the implied charge that they had been traitors during World War II. The record had to be set straight so that the experiences of the camps would never be repeated. “This was a fight to restore our place in America, as well as to preserve the foundations of democracy,” recalled activist John Tateishi.¹

To convince the Japanese American community—and the US public—of the need for redress, the JACL lobbied for the establishment of a congressional commission, angering many activists who supported immediate reparation payments and leading to a very public schism in the groups organizing for redress. In 1981 the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) held hearings across the United States, interviewing over 750 witnesses and collecting thousands of pages of documentary evidence related to the World War II incarceration camps. The experience profoundly impacted the Japanese American community in the United States: often for the first time, former incarcerated revisited the bitter hardships of camp life, the isolation and social exile, and their feelings of rejection and ostracization upon returning to their former homes. What followed was an outpouring of pent-up emotions in which older generations of Japanese Americans “broke the silence” they had imposed upon themselves for decades about their camp experiences. Because it played out in the public sphere, the commission’s hearings raised consciousness about the World War II camps among the broader US populace, stimulated lively conversations and a great deal of soul-searching among Japanese Americans, and lent an essential layer of legitimacy to demands for redress.



Second edition of pamphlet published by the JACL in 1977 articulating the argument for redress, 1979.

University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Rosalie H. Wax Papers.

<https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/k6d50nhf/?brand=oac4>

1 John Tateishi, *Redress: The Inside Story of the Successful Campaign for Japanese American Reparations* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2020), 84.

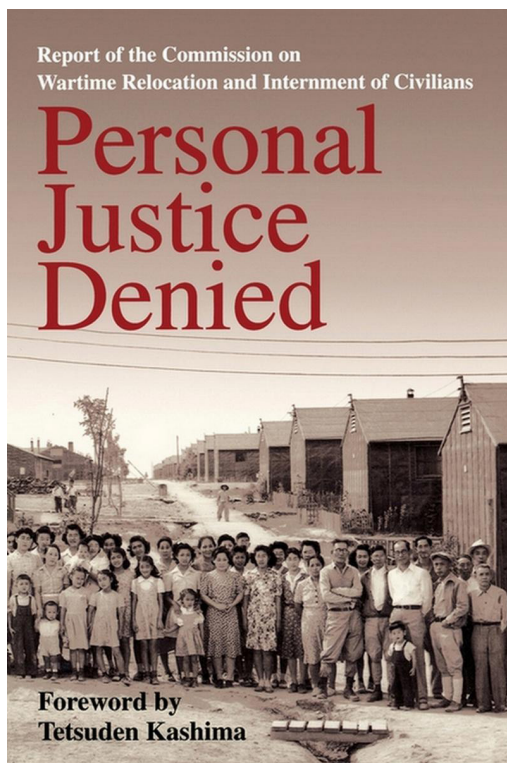


CWRIC hearings in Seattle, Washington, 1981.
National Archives and Records Administration.
Densho Encyclopedia

<https://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-denshopd-i37-00370-1/>

In 1983 the CWRIC released its final report, *Personal Justice Denied*, which concluded that the incarceration of individuals of Japanese descent during World War II was never predicated upon a military threat; it instead was fueled by “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.”² A few months later, the commission released its recommendations, which proposed a formal apology by the US Congress and the president; presidential pardons for Japanese Americans convicted of violating laws associated with incarceration; a recognition of Japanese American claims for “restitution of positions, status, or entitlements lost” during World War II; a Japanese American foundation for educational and humanitarian purposes; and \$1.5 billion in appropriations (about \$20,000 for each surviving victim).

2 John Tateishi, “The Japanese American Citizens League and the Struggle for Redress,” in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, eds. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H.L. Kitano (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), 194.



Cover of *Personal Justice Denied*, 1997.
University of Washington Press.

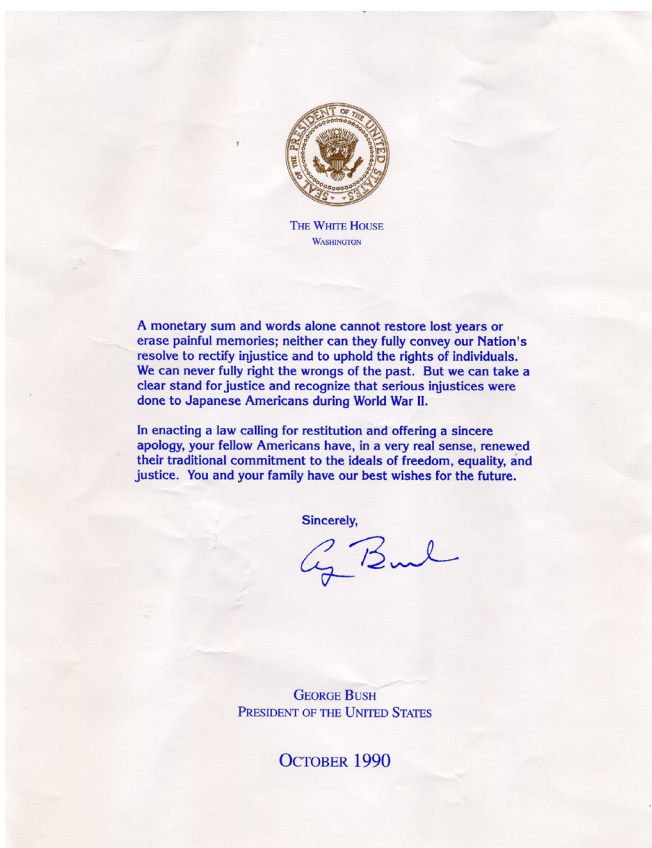
<https://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-personaljusticedenied-1/>

Five more years would pass, however, before the commission's recommendations were codified. A ballooning federal deficit, a sluggish economy, a rise in anti-Japanese sentiment due to trade imbalances, and fears that reparations for Japanese Americans would spark similar conversations among African Americans and Native Americans combined with anti-affirmative action policies instituted by the administration of President Ronald Reagan to stymie legislative momentum. Instead, hearings on Capitol Hill in the early and mid-1980s featured prominent opponents of reparations, many of them former US military officials who attempted to justify the incarceration camps. The tide finally began to shift when a wave of new Democratic lawmakers sympathetic to the Japanese American cause took over key committees. This, combined with the successful targeting of conservative lawmakers' votes by the JACL, paved the way for the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which granted \$20,000 and a formal presidential apology to surviving US citizens or legal residents of Japanese ancestry who had been incarcerated between 1942 and 1946. Nearly two decades after activists had begun to press for a revisiting of the injustices of World War II and over four decades after the war itself, Japanese Americans won their vindication.



President Ronald Reagan signs Redress H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act, 1988.
California State University, Sacramento, University Library.

Link 1: <https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/29406>
Link 2: <https://ddr.densho.org/ddr-csujad-55-2619/?format=img>



A written apology from President George H. W. Bush accompanied reparations checks to survivors of the incarceration camps, 1990.
Densho Encyclopedia, Courtesy of Marjorie Matsushita.

<https://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-ddr-densho-153-20-1/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional information and learning materials about Japanese Americans, World War II incarceration camps, and redress efforts can be found here:

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/righting-wrong-japanese-americans-and-world-war-ii>

This educator's guide and the companion student deliberation guide are part of the National Museum of American History's *Becoming Us* curricula, a comprehensive teaching toolkit on immigration and migration history in the United States.

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/>

STANDARDS

National Council for the Social Studies: College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

GRADES 6–8

- D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- D4.6.6-8. Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

GRADES 9–12

- D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Anchor Standards (K–12) for Literacy

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[Grades K–12] Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[Grades 6–12] Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9–10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11–12.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

APPENDIX

FACILITATION STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS

This deliberative issue guide gives students the chance to lead and engage in their own conversation in which they can examine concepts and issues, learn through discussion, encounter new perspectives, and find common ground with others. As the facilitator, your role is to guide, rather than lead, this discussion.

What does it mean to be a facilitator?

Your job is to support the students as they think critically and engage in thoughtful discussions about complex concepts of democracy. Being a facilitator can be challenging during a lively and engaging discussion because it requires you to be a neutral guide rather than a participant with an opinion.

However, this does not mean that the facilitator is passive! You are impartial about the topic, but not about the process. The facilitator must pay close attention to both the spoken and unspoken dynamics of the conversation to ensure that students feel welcomed and engaged, that the discussion remains civil and thoughtful, and that the activity achieves its intended goals.

This to-do list can help you get started:

Be Prepared!

- Understand the activity thoroughly. Brainstorm what ideas and views might be brought up and what might not be said. Be prepared to carefully present unvoiced perspectives to help the class dig deeper into a question or prompt.
- Prepare prompting questions in advance, like “What do you think?” “Can you explain your thoughts?” “What example or evidence could you share to help us better understand what you are describing?”

Set the Scene

- Go over the objectives so students understand their expectations and the goals of the activity.
- Review any procedures or rules.

Manage the Discussion

- Keep track of who is talking.
- Take notes to capture points, thoughts, and tensions. Use your notes to develop questions and illuminate connections.
- Interject only as needed to clarify statements, move the conversation forward or deeper, diffuse tension, and ensure all voices are heard.
- Keep an eye on time and know when to start winding down the conversation so there is sufficient time to reflect individually and as a group.

Coach Your Students

- This can require the most energy during the discussion. The next page has tips on managing a few specific instances that might come up in your classroom.

TIPS YOU CAN USE WHEN STUDENTS:

Don't stick to the class norms

- Keep the class norms posted where all participants can see them and read them out loud. Students will often moderate each other by reminding everyone of the rules.
- Take a five-minute break. During this time, invite a rule-breaking student to be a co-facilitator and talk with them about what it means to moderate the conversation. Putting a student in a new role may help them see the conversation differently.

Dominate the conversation

- Ask the student to pause and invite others to react to what has been said.
- Give a general reminder that the goal is to hear all voices and a range of discussion, meaning the floor must be shared.

Choose to not participate

- Be proactive! Start by going around the room or table and having each student say something. Simply saying a few words out loud in front of a group can release a bit of the pressure a student might be feeling and make it easier for them to speak later on.
- During the discussion, let the student know that you are going to ask for their thoughts after the next few people talk. This lets them know that they will have to speak and gives them time to either check back into the conversation or prepare what they want to say.
- Explain that part of the learning experience of this activity is to understand that even if someone opts out, they are still making a conscious choice to participate or not—which is a key concept of democracy.
- If a student chooses to not participate, ask them to explain their choice to “sit this one out.” Or, invite a student to join the teacher as a co-facilitator.

Struggle to explain their thoughts

- Encourage students to think of an example that could illustrate what they are thinking.
- Pause the activity for a ten-minute research break. During this time, students can grab a textbook or access the internet to pull together evidence that might help them make their case.

Are ready to find common ground or reflect

- As the conversation or available time begins to wind down, encourage your students to reflect on what they learned about themselves as members of their community and democracy, and the role discussion plays in making wise decisions about public issues.
- Ask students to share their thoughts on why discussion is an important part of a thriving democracy. Identify where students’ ideas overlap. In other words, where do they share common ground?