



Unit Plan

Aleut Americans and World War II

GRADE LEVELS

8-12 and college introductory courses, may be adapted for younger students

SUBJECTS

History, Civics/Social Studies, American Ethnic Studies, Film Studies

GOALS

Introduce little known chapter of American history, enhance understanding of political and personal rights, promote civic literacy, and hone critical thinking skills

ESTIMATED TIME

One to two weeks, depending on selected lessons and assigned activities

MATERIALS

DVD *Aleut Story* (highly recommended but not required), primary documents, government reports, archival photos, pens/pencils, paper, computer access, optional art supplies

FROM RELOCATION CAMPS TO CONGRESS & THE WHITE HOUSE

OVERVIEW

This unit plan is designed to introduce the Aleut American experience during World War II, specifically Aleut relocation and internment in Southeast Alaska from 1942 to 1946. Lessons included in this unit also explore the subsequent effort by Aleut Americans to gain institutional recognition of their political and personal rights.

Students will be encouraged to engage in critical thinking and participate in group discussions and oral presentations. Each lesson plan offers a range of activities of varying degrees of difficulty.

Activities will require students to: ask appropriate questions; gather related information; determine the credibility of various sources; examine evidence to separate facts from assumptions and identify biases; reason logically from the information; identify conflicting interpretations of the information and/or offer possible alternative interpretations; arrive at well-supported conclusions; and present reliable written and oral arguments about the Aleut American experience. Students will also be asked to consider their own feelings when watching the film or completing various, other tasks.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

Lessons included in this unit correlate to the National Standards for History, National Center for History in the Schools, online at www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards, and National Standards for Civics and Government, Center for Civic Education, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and Pew Charitable Trust, online at www.civiced.org. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning Standards were also considered when developing these lessons, see McRel online at www.mcrel.org/.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Lessons in this unit relate to the **Declaration of Independence**, **U.S. Constitution** and the **Bill of Rights** including the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments. The Fourteenth Amendment may also be applied. The First Amendment as it relates to protection of free speech and right to petition the government for redress of grievances; the Fourth Amendment and the peoples' right to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures; the Fifth Amendment guarantee that no citizen will be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law or just compensation; the Ninth Amendment protection of rights not specifically enumerated in the Constitution. Although not part of the Bill of Rights, the Fourteenth Amendment is also used in these lessons as it relates to individual rights and due process for "all persons born or naturalized in the United States."

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Compared to other events in World War II history, little information has been produced either in print or on film about the Aleut American experience. The lesson plans offered in this unit are designed first and foremost to introduce students to this relatively unknown chapter of United States history. It is hoped that students will also be inspired to learn more about their civil rights history.

Objectives include:

- Expanding students knowledge of World War II and its affect on domestic policy and civic life
- Improved understanding of indigenous Americans' social and political experience
- Civic literacy

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Each lesson plan offers a variety of activities suitable for a range of abilities, among them:

- Critical viewing of *Aleut Story*, including written analysis and class discussion
- Reading
- Primary document analysis
- Research (including suggestions for online archival research)
- Small group discussion & presentation development
- Presentations (written and oral)
- Classroom discussion to evaluate/compare and contrast presentations
- Essay writing
- Optional home/community-based activities

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Viewing *Aleut Story* is highly recommended but not required for this unit. Teachers should allow one to two weeks for this unit, depending on selected lessons and classroom activities.

- **Viewing the film.** Three class periods (approximately 50 minutes each) for viewing and review of documentary film *Aleut Story*. It is recommended the film be shown in approximately 30 minutes segment. Remaining class time may be designated for discussion and/or completion of the Viewing Guide worksheets. The worksheets may be graded or otherwise evaluated, and referenced by students throughout the unit.
- **Lesson plans.** Depending upon whether some or all of the tasks outlined in the lesson plans are assigned, each course of study will may take one to four class periods. Additional study outside class may be required depending upon the chosen tasks.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

EQUIPMENT

You will need computer access to the Internet and a printer for documents and photographs to be handed out to students.

DVD/OFF-AIR RECORDING

A DVD of *Aleut Story* is highly recommended but not required. Where available, the program may be recorded off-air at no charge for use in the classroom. Check with your local public television station for broadcast times. Copies of the DVD may be purchased for educational use through VisionMaker Video's Educational Catalog at www.visionmaker.org.

UNIT RESOURCES—READING MATERIALS

Each lesson includes a list of relevant primary documents, archival images and worksheets available online at www.aleutstory.tv or other web addresses (URL) as provided within the body of the lesson plan. Materials may be downloaded and printed for students' use.

For a complete list of reading materials used in this teaching unit, see [Supplemental Material](#).

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL READING

Kohloff, Dean. *When the Wind Was a River, Aleut Evacuation in World War II*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, in association with Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Anchorage. 1995

Breu, Mary. *Last Letters from Attu: The True Story of Etta Jones, Alaska Pioneer and Japanese P.O.W.* Afterword by Ray Hudson. Alaska Northwest Books, Portland, 2010

ADDITIONAL/ONLINE RESOURCES

The *Aleut Story* website offers an extensive list of resources. Educators and students may wish to explore the website for other, related resources.

It is important to remember some materials referenced on the website are copyright protected, part of private collections, or may be otherwise restricted for use. You may need to obtain written permission or license the material for use prior to classroom use.