

## Lesson 4: Location and Region: Where in the World are Rohwer and Jerome?

### OVERVIEW

At first, Japanese American families were taken to assembly centers closer to their homes in the western United States. From there they were assigned to 10 concentration camps, most of which were in the western United States. The eastern-most camps, Jerome and Rohwer, were in Southeast Arkansas. This lesson is designed to examine the Arkansas camps using the two geographic themes of location and region.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to locate Jerome and Rohwer on U.S. and Arkansas maps by using absolute and relative location descriptions.
- Students will be able to identify the impact of location on the lifestyle of Japanese Americans by comparing and contrasting photographs of California and Arkansas landscapes.

### GUIDING QUESTION

How did the geography of the Arkansas Delta differ from that of the West Coast?

### FRAMEWORKS

TCC 1.2, 1.2, 1.4

PPE 1.4, 2.5, 2.6

PAG 1.5

SSPS 2.2, 2.3

### MATERIALS

Map of the United States showing latitude and longitude (locate the approximate latitude and longitude of your city or town)

Map of the United States showing the 10 concentration camps (Activity Sheet #1)

Map of Arkansas showing geographic regions and counties (Activity Sheet #2)

Photo Sheet (activity Sheet #3)

Official Arkansas Highway Map (See References)

Paper and pencil

### BACKGROUND

The two war relocation centers located in Arkansas were the eastern-most camps for Japanese Americans during WWII. The geography of the Arkansas Delta differed greatly from that of the West Coast and Hawai'i.

## OPENING

Ask the students to write down their present location in as many different ways as they can think of. Collect responses from the class, which may include things like “next to Taylor and John” or “at school” or “at 200 Oak Street.” Differentiate between absolute location (i.e. a street address or latitude and longitude) and relative location (i.e. next to Taylor, near the door, around the corner, etc...)

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Absolute Location

Ask students how to find the exact location of our entire city or town. Begin this with a brief discussion of the grid system on a map of the United States using latitude and longitude. Hand out (or copy onto an overhead transparency, or have students use their textbooks or a desk atlas) a U.S. map with latitude and longitude. Write the city or town’s latitude and longitude on the board. Explain that the latitude and longitude of the city or town is like the street address of your home because it exactly or absolutely locates the city or town where you live.

### 2. Locating and Mapping Jerome and Rohwer

Distribute Activity Sheet #1, the map of the United States with the 10 concentration camps. Explain that the map shows the locations of the 10 concentration camps where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II. Give the students a few minutes to read and respond to the questions on the activity sheet, or answer the questions as a large class.

Now, looking at the geographic regions of Arkansas, ask the students what they notice about the location of both camps. Ask the students what, if anything, they know about the region of Southeast Arkansas where the concentration camps were located?

Looking at the geographic regions map, have students write a relative location for Jerome and Rohwer. Include direction, county name, and geographic region. One possibility is to use a famous river that is near the camps as a landmark.

### 3. Region: Camps in the Delta

Point out that Arkansas is divided into six geographic regions and describe how each region is different from the others. Ask the students to name all six regions, and then name the geographic region where the two camps were located. It is the Mississippi Alluvial Plain, which is nicknamed the Arkansas Delta because it is the area closest to the Mississippi River. All the water in this region drains or flows into the Mississippi River. Also, tell the students that the region we call the Delta is flat, fertile farmland. Many of the people of this region make their living by farming. Have the students write these descriptors on their map by the Mississippi Alluvial Plain region. Show the students pictures of the Jerome and Rohwer camps that encompass the Arkansas Delta qualities. (from the CD-ROM or the photographs in activity sheet #3)

#### 4. Comparing Landscapes

Distribute Activity Sheet #3 or copy it to an overhead transparency. The pictures are also included on the CD-ROM. [File names are as follows: 1) photo – Little Tokyo, 2) Photo – Near Mission San Jose, California, 3) Photo- Jerome looking Northwest, 4) Photo – Rohwer barracks with creek, bridge, and clotheslines. Allow the students a few minutes to examine and respond to the pictures.

1. Are the camp landscapes similar or very different from where Japanese Americans lived on the West Coast?
2. How are the landscapes different? Describe some unique physical features from each of the pictures.

#### CLOSING

View a short clip from the documentary *Time of Fear* from 25:00 to 26:30. Ask students to describe and infer how the location of the camps in the Arkansas Delta region impacted the lifestyle of Japanese Americans.

#### EXTENSIONS

Web research: Visit the Delta Cultural Museum website and click on Arkansas Geography to learn all about the Arkansas Delta region and its history. The web address is:  
<http://www.deltaculturalcenter.com>.

Find out what makes each geographic region in Arkansas special. Share some of your new-found knowledge with the class by creating a poster to display in the room.

#### REFERENCES

Foti, Thomas and Gerald Hanson. *Arkansas and the Land*, Fayetteville: U Arkansas Press, 1992.

Smith, Calvin C. *War and Wartime Changes, The Transformation of Arkansas 1940-1945*, Fayetteville: University Arkansas Press, 1986.

Arkansas State Highway maps for use in the classroom are available through visitor's centers around the state, or by writing the state highway department.

LESSON 4: LOCATION AND REGION  
STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #1

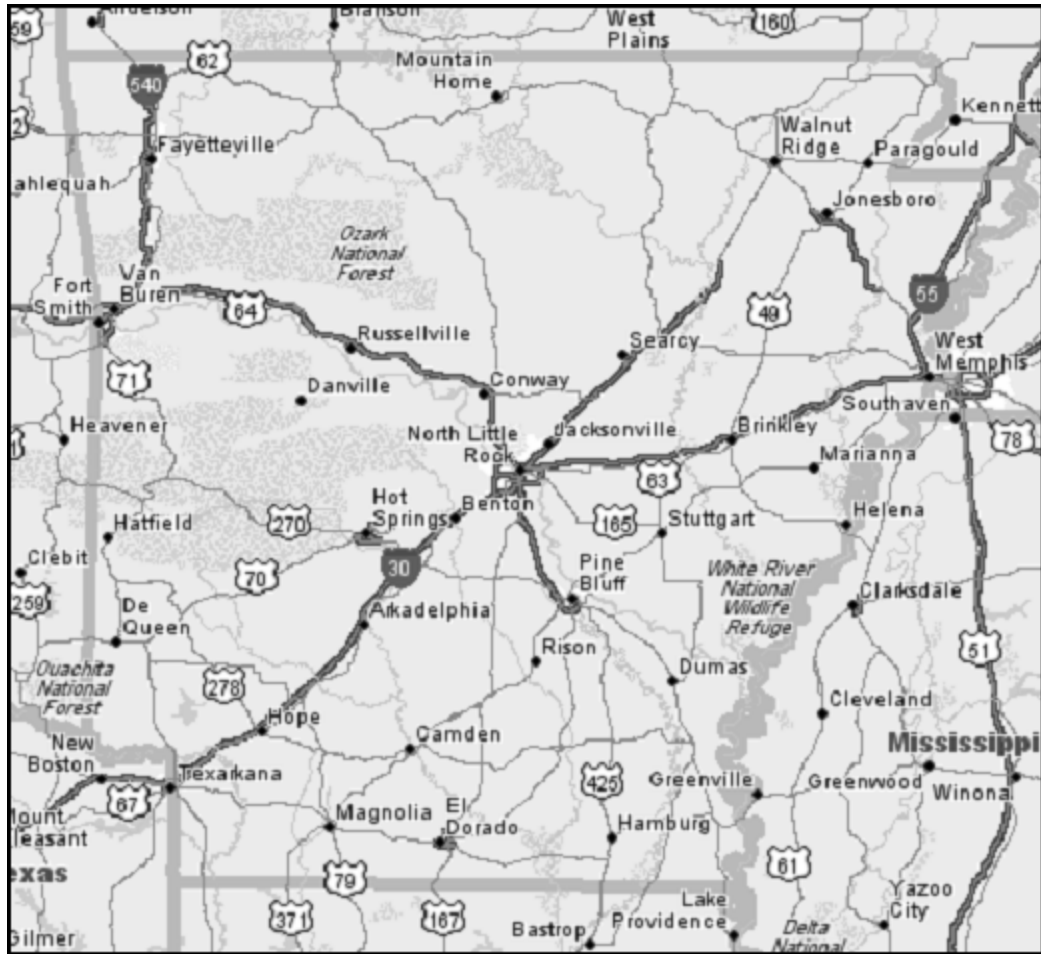
**United States Map Indicating Japanese American Concentration Camps**



1. List the states that had concentration camps.
2. Which states had more than one camp?
3. Which camp was farthest North? South? East? West?
4. Look at the coastal region of California, Washington, and Oregon. Were any of the camps located directly on the West Coast? Why or why not?
5. Which camps were located in Arkansas?
6. Were any camps located east of the Mississippi River? Why do you think that was the case?

# LESSON 4: LOCATION AND REGION

## STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #2: ARKANSAS MAPS



*Major Arkansas Highways*

1. Locate Rohwer and Jerome on the Arkansas state highway map that your teacher has, or on the additional maps provided, and draw them on the “Major Highways” map above.
2. Write a description of the relative location of Jerome. (Hint: you might use rivers, towns or other landmarks in your description).
3. Write a description of the relative location of Rohwer.
4. Using the state highway map, describe how you might drive from your town or city to the Rohwer cemetery.