

## Lesson 6: Human-Environment Interaction

### OVERVIEW

This lesson is designed to examine the experience of Japanese American inmates during World War II using the geographic theme of human-environment interaction.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify ways in which the Japanese American inmates interacted with and altered their environment.
- Students will demonstrate the application of the theme of human-environment interaction to the Japanese American experience in WWII in a short essay.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

How did Japanese Americans impact the landscape at Rohwer and Jerome?

### FRAMEWORKS

PPE 1.4, 2.5

SSPS 2.1

### MATERIALS

Map of Rohwer Camp (on overhead transparency or a class set of copies)

Exterior photographs of Jerome and Rohwer (on overhead transparency or a class set of copies)

“Information Concerning Rohwer Relocation Center, November 20, 1945” (class set)

“The Westerners Came Rumbling” by Richard Itanaga (class set)

Questions for reading (class set or on overhead transparency)

ACTAAP Writing Practice (one copy per student)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The inmates of Jerome and Rohwer arrived at the camps in 1942 not knowing what they would find, but hoping it would be better than the assembly centers in Santa Anita, Stockton, and Fresno. The landscape of the Mississippi Alluvial Plain was unlike anything in California. The families were escorted to barracks that had been hastily built, and the next few months presented many challenges as the inmates modified or adapted to the land to meet immediate and long-term needs. This lesson is designed to examine the experiences of Japanese Americans in the Arkansas camps using the geographic theme of human-environment interaction.

### OPENING

Ask the students to speculate what their city or town looked like 200 years ago and then one hundred years ago. Then ask the students to give examples to show how people changed the land over time. List on a board or overhead projector the changes being made to the landscape in their city or town today. Include in this list things such as roads, buildings, bridges, farmland, landscaping, irrigation and other such items.

Explain to the students that humans interact with or change the land they live on to meet their needs. The Japanese Americans who lived in Jerome and Rohwer made changes to the landscape to meet their needs because they had to adapt to life in the Arkansas Delta. Ask students to describe the land of the Arkansas Delta based on their readings in the previous lessons. Descriptions may include flat farmland, some wetlands, forests (many of which have been cleared for farmland), etc.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Responding to a map

Give each student a copy of the map of the Rohwer Camp or copy the map on to an overhead transparency. Ask the students to examine the map. Pose the following questions to students (these questions are also listed on the bottom of the map):

- A. How did the government change the land when they built the facilities of the camp to help Japanese Americans meet their daily needs?
- B. How was housing organized in the camp?
- C. How is this camp similar to the town in which you live? How is it different?

### 2. Responding to photographs

Pass out copies of the photographs taken at Rohwer (or copy on to overhead transparency, or use a computer, data projector, and the CD-ROM). Give the students a few minutes to examine the photographs, then have students answer the questions in pairs, individually, or discuss the questions as a class.

### 3. Responding to primary source documents

Read aloud or have students read individually the “Information Concerning Rohwer Relocation Center” (reproduced following this lesson or on the CD-ROM). Then have students answer the questions on the student activity sheet that follows. Then, read “The Westerners Came Rumbling” and respond to the questions. Alternately, this activity can be completed in pairs, with one student reading each document and explaining their document to their partner, then the students answering the questions together.

## CLOSING

Have the students write an ACTAAP practice paragraph explaining how the inmates living in Jerome and Rohwer changed the land to meet their needs. Allow the students to revisit the photographs and documents used in the lesson. Then, have them score their essay or trade essays with a partner and score each other’s essay based on the following simple rubric (or a standardized one used in your school):

Score	Characteristics
4 (excellent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully elaborated, correct, and organized content</li> <li>• Precise vocabulary, varied sentence style</li> <li>• Consistent use of grammar and spelling (including subject/verb agreement, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)</li> </ul>
3 (good)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central idea is clear but not fully elaborated, contains sense of closure</li> <li>• Vocabulary and sentence style are somewhat varied</li> <li>• Shows some weaknesses in grammar and spelling (including subject/verb agreement, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)</li> </ul>
2 (fair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear central idea or focus isn't clear; no elaboration and lacks organization</li> <li>• Short, simple sentences and limited vocabulary</li> <li>• Pattern of errors in all areas (including subject/verb agreement, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)</li> </ul>
1 (poor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No or unclear central idea, no elaboration, repetitive</li> <li>• Basic vocabulary and choppy sentences</li> <li>• Little knowledge of rules of grammar and spelling displayed</li> </ul>

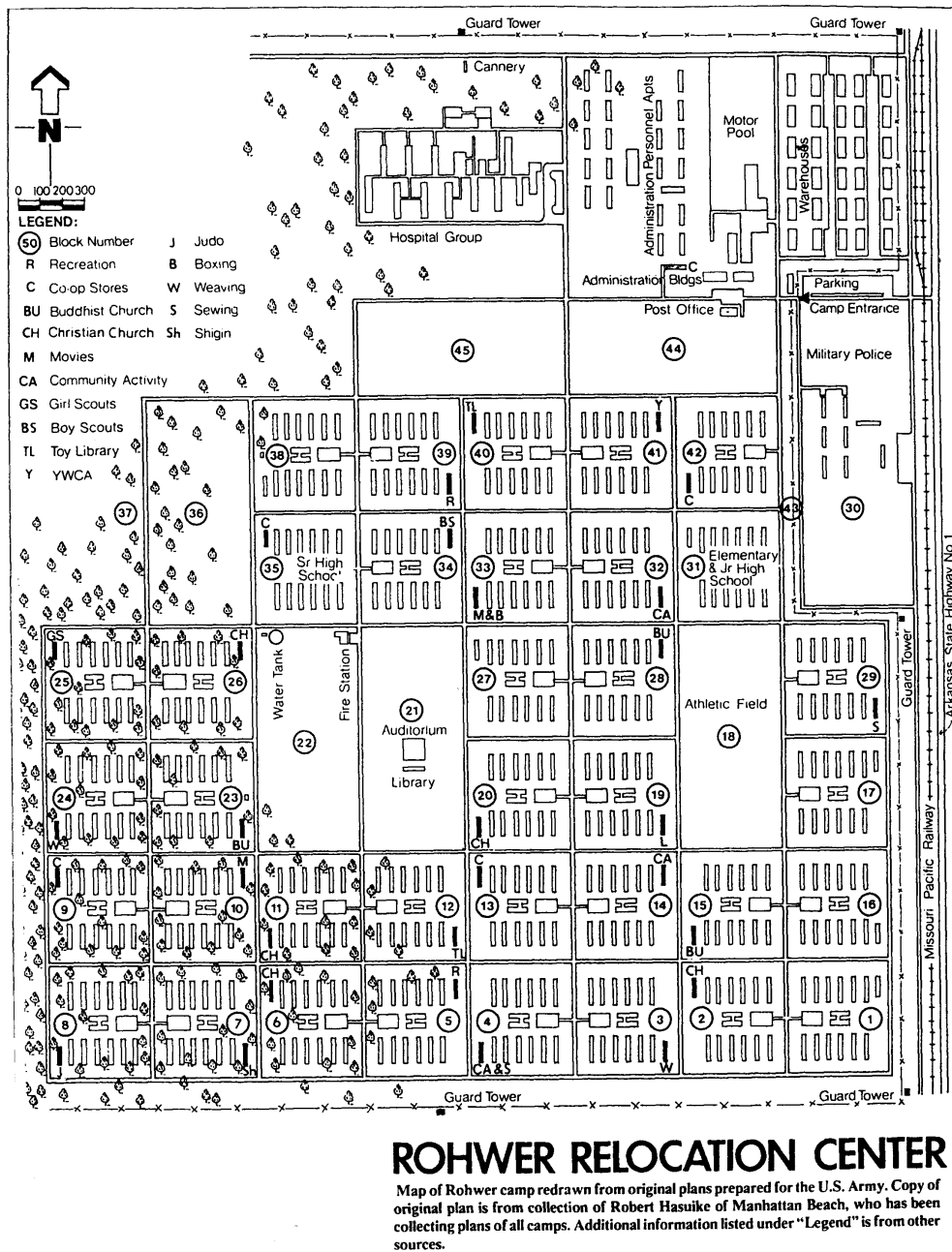
**EXTENSION**

Look at the photograph files entitled “Photo-Rohwer Barracks with Creek, Bridge and Clotheslines” and “Photo-School Children Leaving the Grade School” from the CD-ROM with students. (Either print them on to an overhead transparency or use a computer with a data projector).

The first photograph was taken at Rohwer. Pose the following questions to students:  
 How did the inmates at Rohwer change the camp landscape to prevent a big problem in this picture?  
 Does this look like a place you would want to live for any length of time? Why or why not?

The second photograph was taken at Jerome. Pose the following questions to students:  
 What change did the people make on the landscape to solve a problem created by the weather?  
 How did this change make life a bit more pleasant?  
 What other changes could be made to help the situation?

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 MAP OF ROHWER CAMP (ROBERT HASUIKE COLLECTION)



1. How did the government change the land when they built the facilities of the camp to help Japanese Americans meet their daily needs?
2. How was housing organized in the camp?
3. How is this camp similar to the town in which you live? How is it different?

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STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET: PHOTOGRAPHS



*Photograph NO. NWDNS-210G-E308. Rohwer Relocation Center, McGehee, Arkansas. Volunteer workers are here constructing apartments for the administrative staff. National Archives and Records Administration. Photographer: Tom Parker*



*Photograph NO. NWDNS-210-G-E251. Jerome. National Archives and Records Administration. Photographer: Tom Parker*