

R.C. HOILES

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Lesson Length: 45 Minutes

Grade Levels: Recommended for high school grades, though elementary and middle school teachers may be able to incorporate concepts from this lesson plan into their teaching



Overview

In this lesson, students examine newspaper publisher R.C. Hoiles and his decision to oppose Japanese American internment during World War II. Students analyze the risks he faced in publicly challenging a widely supported wartime policy and evaluate how integrity shaped his actions. Through his example, students consider how constitutional principles and personal conviction can guide decision-making during national crises.

Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze Hoiles' role in public debate about Japanese American internment during World War II.
- Evaluate how integrity shaped his decision-making and public stance.
- Explain how constitutional principles can conflict with public opinion in times of crisis.
- Assess a primary source within its historical context.
- Apply the concept of integrity to civic and personal choices.

Historical Background

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into World War II. In February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced relocation and incarceration of more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast, including Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans, about two-thirds of whom were American citizens.

Government officials argued that removal was necessary to prevent espionage and sabotage during wartime uncertainty, and many newspapers and civic leaders supported the policy as a temporary security measure.

R.C. Hoiles, publisher of the *Orange County Register* and head of Freedom Newspapers, took a different stance. Guided by a philosophy emphasizing individual rights and constitutional limits, Hoiles argued that removing people without specific evidence violated American principles of justice.

Primary Source

"It would seem that convicting people of disloyalty to our country without having specific evidence against them is too foreign to our way of life and too close akin to the kind of government we are fighting."

Teacher Note: Adapted from Hoiles's wartime editorials as reproduced in later collections and commentary on his opposition to internment.

Lesson Flow (45 Minutes)

Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Quick-write: “Is it harder to stand up to the government or to your neighbors? Why?”

Historical Context (10 minutes)

Brief presentation covering Pearl Harbor, Executive Order 9066, media climate, and Hoiles’ stance.

Primary Source Analysis (10 minutes)

Students annotate and analyze the quotation, identifying Hoiles’s central claim, his reasoning, and the constitutional principles underlying his argument.

Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Walk-in-the-shoes exercise using the Hoiles questions.

Whole-Class Discussion (10 minutes)

Integrity, press freedom, and constitutional principles during crisis. Students connect these virtues to their own experiences.

Guiding Questions

Walk-In-The-Shoes

As you read, imagine you are R.C. Hoiles in 1942:

- What professional risks would you face for opposing internment?
- What pressures might push you toward silence?
- What might you lose by speaking publicly (advertisers, subscribers, community support)?

Observation

- Who was R.C. Hoiles, and what position did he hold in his community?
- What was Executive Order 9066?
- What arguments did supporters of internment make to promote the policy?
- What constitutional principles (such as due process and equal protection) did Hoiles invoke in criticizing the policy?

Discussion

- How and why did Hoiles exhibit integrity in criticizing internment?
- What might his stance have cost him professionally or socially?
- When should the press challenge majority opinion during a national crisis?
- What are the limits, if any, of press freedom during wartime?
- Can integrity and popularity always coexist? Why or why not?
- How can students practice integrity in their own communities when they disagree with others?
- What obstacles might you face if you try to act with integrity when your peers disagree with you?

Research Base and Source Documentation

Background and Historical Context

- Library of Congress, “Japanese American Internment” - <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/japanese-american-internment/>
- Hoover Institution, “Japanese-American Internment” - <https://histories.hoover.org/Japanese-American-Internment/>

R.C. Hoiles Biographical and Editorial Context

- Independent Institute, “R.C. Hoiles: Civil Rights Pioneer” - <https://www.independent.org/article/2007/11/25/r-c-hoiles-civil-rights-pioneer/>
- OC Historyland, “R.C. Hoiles” - <https://www.ochistoryland.com/hoiles>

Primary Source Attribution

- Books & Culture article referencing Hoiles’s wartime editorials - <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2009/november/inventingatradition.html>