

RACE AND WAR IN THE PACIFIC

A Propaganda Gallery Walk

(Manga, February 1943, Kondō Hidezō.)

INTRODUCTION

Race played a poignant role in the war in the Pacific. To a greater degree than the war in western Europe, the Pacific war was characterized by racial stereotyping and demonization of the enemy. The war exposed racial pride, prejudices, and anger. Propaganda on both sides also reflected a strong strain of racial hatred as well as fervent patriotism, fear of the enemy, and the desire for revenge. In this lesson, students will analyze Japanese and American wartime propaganda in order to compare the combatants' ideas about each other. They will also assess the strengths and weaknesses of propaganda as a source for historical inquiry.

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to describe and compare Japanese attitudes about Americans and American attitudes about the Japanese based upon evidence gathered from wartime propaganda images.

SKILL OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of propaganda as a source for historical inquiry.

GRADE LEVEL

7–12

TIME REQUIREMENT

1–2 class periods

ONLINE RESOURCES

ww2classroom.org



Images included in this lesson

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1

Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

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.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

HISTORICAL CONTENT ERA 8, STANDARD 3A

The student understands the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the US role in world affairs.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 2

The student is able to draw upon the visual, literary, and musical sources to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 3

The student is able to compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 4

The student is able to interrogate historical data and obtain historical data from a variety of sources.

The student is able to support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

PROCEDURES

1. Post the **images** and accompanying text around the room before students enter class.
2. Introduce the lesson by explaining that the class will explore the role of race in the war in the Pacific through a gallery exhibit on Japanese and American propaganda. Inform the class that while the exhibit includes images with explanatory text, it lacks an introductory panel that summarizes the role that race played in the war and the strengths and weaknesses of examining racial attitudes through propaganda. After touring the exhibit, their job will be to write an introduction for the exhibit.

While you may want to draw upon the first four paragraphs of the **Overview Essay** to provide background information on race in the war in the Pacific, avoid sharing too much since students will be developing their own interpretations based upon the propaganda images. If necessary, refer to the **Glossary** to define propaganda, asking students to brainstorm historical or contemporary examples.

3. Distribute two full-page copies of the **Guided Note-Taking Sheet** (or five one-third-of-a-page forms cut from the sheet) to each student, explaining that they will use the left-hand column to record key information and details about each image and accompanying text panel and the right-hand column to explain what those details reveal.
4. After dividing the class into groups, assign each group to an image, and have the group examine that image and caption, taking notes on a Guided Note-Taking Sheet. After students discuss their notes with their group members, have them rotate to the next image and repeat the process until everyone has examined all of the images.

Note: Before students examine the images, explain that some of the propaganda contains language and/or imagery that is not acceptable by contemporary standards. While students may find this content offensive, remind them that understanding the past often requires confronting and contextualizing the less pleasant aspects of history.

5. After students have examined all of the images, lead a discussion about the similarities and differences between the Japanese and American propaganda and the strengths and weaknesses of propaganda as a source for historical inquiry. Refer to the **Discussion Guide** for recommended questions, and draw upon the **Overview Essay** and **Wartime Propaganda: Teacher Key** for additional information.

ASSESSMENT

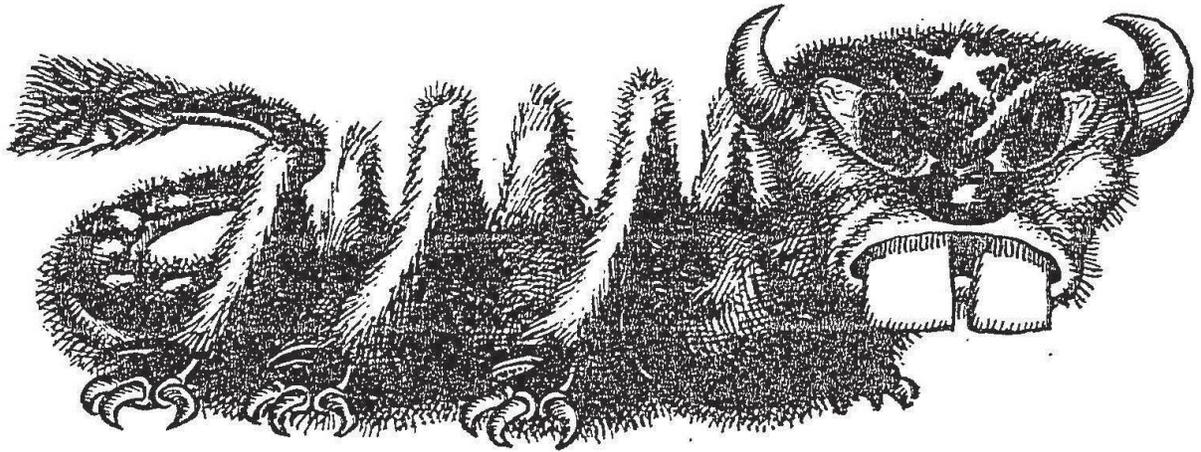
You will be able to assess students' understanding of the relevant standards through the notes they take on each image, their contributions to class discussion, and the homework assignment.

EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT

- For homework, have students write a 250-word introductory panel for the propaganda exhibit that summarizes Japanese and American wartime attitudes about each other and the strengths and weaknesses of examining racial attitudes through propaganda.
- Have students research and compare servicemember attitudes toward the Japanese and Germans through the Museum's Digital Collections at <http://www.ww2online.org/advanced>.
- Have students research Japanese American experiences with discrimination on the Home Front through the Museum's Digital Collections at <http://www.ww2online.org/advanced>.

Louseous Japanicas

The first serious outbreak of this lice epidemic was officially noted on December 7, 1941, at Honolulu, T. H. To the Marine Corps, especially trained in combating this type of pestilence, was assigned the gigantic task of extermination. Extensive experiments on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan have shown that this louse inhabits coral atolls in the South Pacific, particularly pill boxes, palm trees, caves, swamps and jungles.



Flame throwers, mortars, grenades and bayonets have proven to be an effective remedy. But before a complete cure may be effected the origin of the plague, the breeding grounds around the Tokyo area, must be completely annihilated.

END 37

Marine Sergeant Fred Lasswell created this cartoon for the March 1945 issue of *Leatherneck*, the official magazine of the US Marine Corps.

(Image: Archives and Special Collections Branch Library of the Marine Corps.)



The artist G.V. Lewis submitted this design to the National War Poster Competition, which New York's Museum of Modern Art sponsored in 1942 in conjunction with the Council for Democracy and a group of arts organizations known as Artists for Victory. The federal Office of Civilian Defense, the War Production Board, and the Office of War Information supported the competition, and the government facilitated the mass distribution of several posters following the contest.

(Image: Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images.)



A wide variety of imitation hunting licenses such as this one issued to James Houba circulated throughout the United States during World War II.

(Image: From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2009.236.033.)



Kondō Hidezō drew this caricature of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for the February 1943 cover of *Manga*, which was one of the few magazines that Japan's government permitted to be published during World War II. During the war, *Manga's* circulation peaked at 200,000.

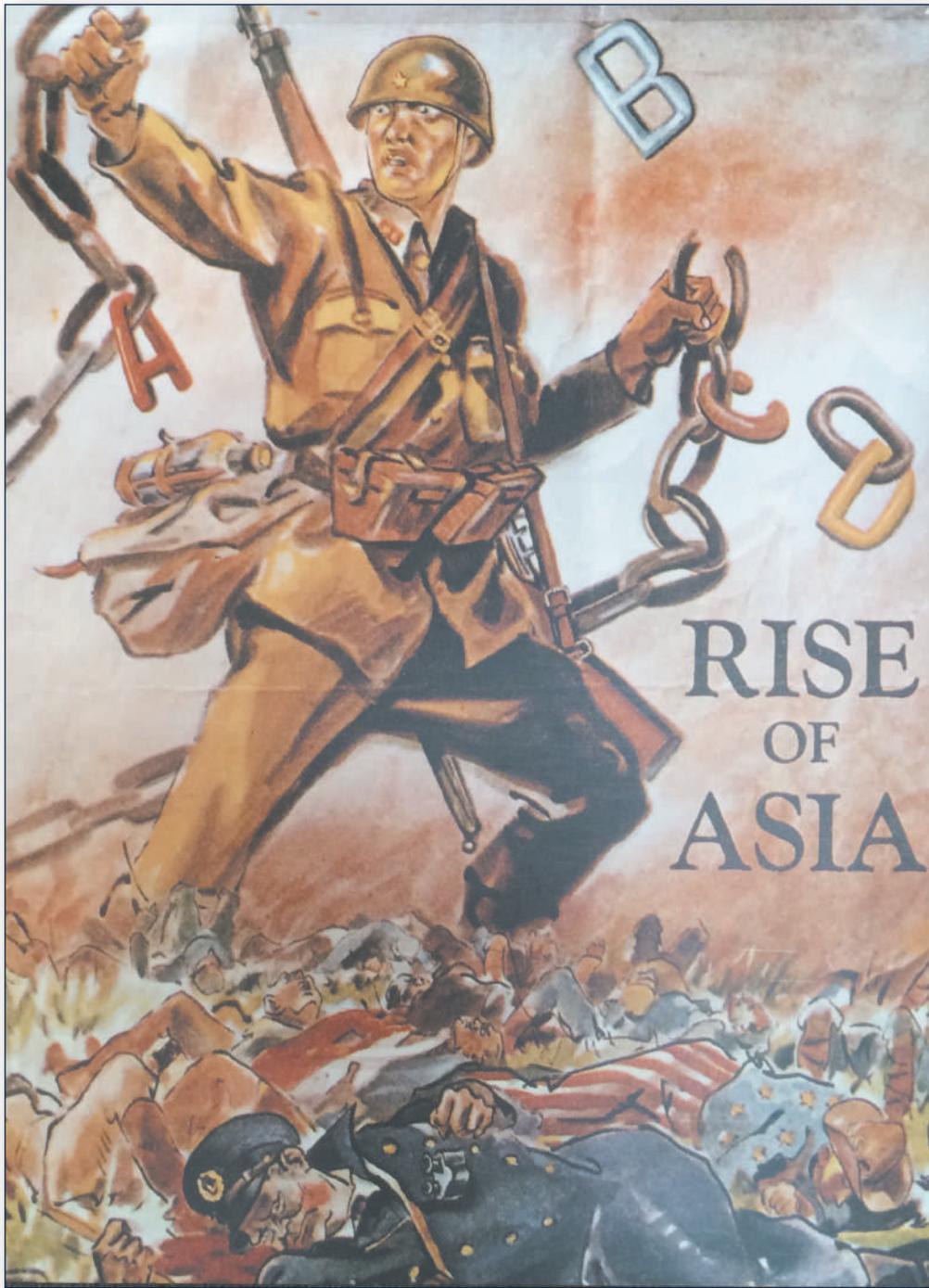
(Image: *Manga*, February 1943, Kondō Hidezō.)



Japanese artist Sugiura Yukio drew this cartoon for the May 1942 issue of *Manga*, which was one of the few magazines that Japan's government permitted to be published during World War II. During the war, *Manga's* circulation peaked at 200,000.

Titled *Purging One's Head of Anglo-Americanism*, the image's subtitle reads, "Get rid of the dandruff encrusting your head." In addition to "Anglo-American ideas," the woman is combing the following words from her scalp: extravagance, selfishness, hedonism, liberalism, materialism, money worship, and individualism.

(Image: *Manga*, May 1942, Sugiura Yukio.)



In this poster produced by the Japanese government around 1943, the A, B, C, and D stand for the Americans, British, Chinese, and Dutch, who were often referred to as the ABCD Powers.

(Image: Japanese leaflet, 1943.)

OBSERVATIONS	ANALYSIS
<p>Your Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Where did the image appear?/How was it distributed?</p>	<p>What conclusions or inferences can you draw based upon the source, origin, and distribution of the image?</p>
<p>What details stand out to you?</p>	<p>What do these details reveal/suggest?</p>

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DISCUSSION GUIDE: JAPANESE AND AMERICAN PROPAGANDA

1. Based on your observation and analysis of the images, what message(s) are the American images sending about the Japanese? What message(s) are the Japanese images sending about Americans?
2. What are the similarities between the American- and Japanese-made images? What are their differences?
3. What are the strengths of propaganda as a source for understanding past attitudes? What are the limitations of propaganda as a source for understanding past attitudes?
4. Do you think the views expressed in the images were widely held at the time? Why/why not? Provide details from the images and/or accompanying text to support your answer.
5. What other sources could you consult to investigate whether these views were widely held at the time?
6. To what extent do you think the ideas and attitudes expressed through propaganda influenced either American or Japanese actions during the war? Provide examples to support your answer.
7. To what extent do you think Japanese or American actions during the war influenced the type of propaganda that each side produced? Provide examples to support your answer.

WARTIME PROPAGANDA: TEACHER KEY

Louseous Japonicas

The first serious outbreak of this lice epidemic was officially noted on December 7, 1941, at Honolulu, T. H. To the Marine Corps, especially trained in combating this type of pestilence, was assigned the gigantic task of extermination. Extensive experiments on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan have shown that this louse inhabits coral atolls in the South Pacific, particularly pill boxes, palm trees, caves, swamps and jungles.



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FRED LASSWELL AND *LOUSEOUS JAPONICAS*

Prior to World War II, Fred Lasswell worked as an assistant to cartoonist Billy DeBeck, the creator of the nationally syndicated *Barney Google and Snuffy Smith* comic strip. Lasswell began as DeBeck's "lettering man" in 1934, when he was a 17-year-old high school dropout working as both a cartoonist for the *Tampa Daily Times* and as a part-time employee at an advertising agency.

After the US Navy and Merchant Marine rejected him, Lasswell managed to enlist in the Marines. He became a staff sergeant with the Marine Corps Special Services in Washington, DC, where he created the *Sgt. Hashmark* comic strip and other cartoons for *Leatherneck*.

While references to the Japanese as "pests" were common in the wartime United States, Germans often received different treatment. War correspondent Ernie Pyle noted this when he transferred to the Pacific after covering the war in Europe. "In Europe we felt our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people," Pyle wrote. "But out here I gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman and repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice."

Calls of annihilating or exterminating the Japanese, while often made in jest, became realistic by the end of the war. The month after *Leatherneck* ran Lasswell's cartoon, the United States began setting Japanese cities ablaze with firebombs, destroying more than 60. In August 1945, the United States leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs.

Lasswell took over the *Barney Google and Snuffy Smith* comic strip after Billy DeBeck died in 1942, and he continued to draw it until his death in 2001, making it the second-longest-running comic strip in history.

(Image: Archives and Special Collections Branch Library of the Marine Corps.)



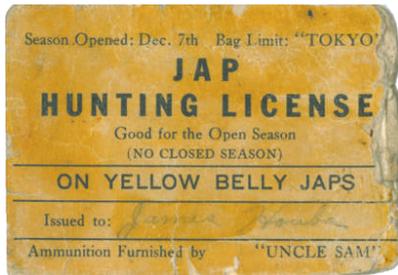
G.V. LEWIS'S *THIS IS THE ENEMY*

The National War Poster Competition received more than 2,000 submissions, and the poster above was one of the 200 that the Museum of Modern Art included in an exhibition that was open to the public from November 25, 1942, through January 3, 1943. *LIFE* magazine also reprinted the poster in a feature it ran on the exhibit in its December 21, 1942, issue.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt praised the poster competition as "proof of what can be done by groups whose ordinary occupations might seem far removed from war." In a letter to the head of Artists for Victory, the president also stated that "the very name of your organization is symbolic of the determination of every man and woman in every activity of life throughout the nation to enlist in the cause to which our country is dedicated."

The government did not select Lewis's "This is the Enemy" poster for mass distribution.

(Image: Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images.)



JAMES HOUBA'S JAP HUNTING LICENSE

Hunting metaphors were common in American references to the war in the Pacific.

An ad for the brewing industry that ran in *LIFE* magazine, for instance, noted that US Marines looked forward to returning home to the “little things” such as beer and hunting. Beneath an image of a group of hunters with a slain deer, the text read, “He’s been doing a different kind of hunting overseas.” Another ad for the Western Cartridge Company showed an image of a hunter tracking a mountain sheep alongside an image of ammunition boxes on Guadalcanal. Noting that hunters had given up ammunition to make it available for the military, the ad proclaimed, “Now Your Ammunition is Getting *Bigger* Game.”

Hunting analogies were popular in Hollywood as well, especially in the 1944 film *Destination Tokyo*. Troops wished each other “good luck and good hunting” before heading into combat, and the film referred to Marines coming down ridges in order “to hunt out their prey.”

The news media also described the war in the Pacific as a hunt. When describing its September 6, 1943, cover photo of two troops on patrol in New Georgia, for instance, *LIFE* informed readers that “like many of their comrades they were hunting for Japs, just as they used to go after small game in the woods back home.” Both on the cover and in the accompanying article, the magazine referred to American troops as “Jap hunters.”

(Image: From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2009.236.033.)



KONDŌ HIDEZŌ AND MANGA

While Kondō Hidezō occasionally created cheerful caricatures of Axis leaders, his more frequent drawings of Allied leaders mirrored the style of the FDR image included in this lesson plan. Like other Japanese propagandists, he often drew Western leaders as demonic enemies who threatened the Japanese homeland and therefore needed to be destroyed. Kondō was also one of several *Manga* artists who produced anti-Semitic cartoons for the magazine.

Kondō was heavily influenced by American cartoons, and he founded *Manga* in 1940 as the official publication of a government-aligned cartoonists’ organization. At the time, Japan’s militarist regime exerted strict control over the press and sharply rationed paper.

While *Manga*, which means “cartoon” or “caricature” in Japanese, first advertised itself as “a new citizens’ magazine,” it carried the tagline “recommended by the Propaganda Division of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association” from July 1941 until April 1943. In addition to drawing many of its covers, Kondō also served as editor of *Manga*.

After the war, Kondō claimed that “all of us people were deceived and used by [the Japanese military government], and cooperated in the war without knowing the true facts. Looking back now, this was because of ignorance and being deceived.”

(Image: Manga, February 1943, Kondō Hidezō.)



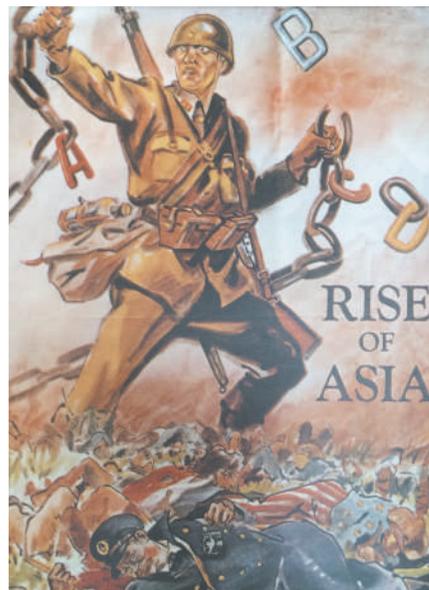
SUGIURA YUKIO AND *PURGING ONE'S HEAD OF ANGLO-AMERICANISM*

Like many *Manga* artists, Sugiura was heavily influenced early in his career by Western cartoons, particularly those from the United States, and his prewar cartoons often addressed purely humorous or nonsense subjects. During the war, however, the focus of his artwork shifted dramatically as the Japanese government closely monitored and censored the press.

Sugiura was noted for his drawings of women, and many of his other wartime cartoons in *Manga* portrayed life on the home front and emphasized ways that ordinary Japanese could contribute to the war effort. He pursued similar themes in another wartime cartoon, a serialized comic strip called *Miss Hanako in the Home Front* (*Jûgo no Hanako-san*), which told the story of Miss Hanako's happy life in wartime Japan. He was also one of several *Manga* contributors who produced anti-Semitic cartoons for the magazine.

His image included in this lesson plan reflected Japan's wartime obsession with its people's racial purity and superiority as well as its abhorrence of perceived Western values regarding materialism, liberalism, and individual rights. Japanese leaders frequently drew upon ideas of purification and collective national identity to celebrate both the annihilation of the enemy and the virtue of choosing death over surrender.

(Image: Manga, May 1942, Sugiura Yukio.)



RISE OF ASIA POSTER (PRODUCED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT)

The Japanese government produced this poster during the war, and often claimed that Japan was the protector of other Asian peoples against the European colonial powers (here symbolized by the A, B, C, and D letters embedded in the chains—American, British, Chinese, and Dutch), implying that Japan was fighting for the freedom of all Asians.

The poster is an interesting example of propaganda because while it appeals to Asian peoples who desire freedom, China is included amongst the enemy ABCD powers. In 1937 Japan had invaded China, their fellow Asian nationals, and during the war was fighting to conquer and rule the Chinese—the exact opposite of giving the Chinese their freedom.

Students who know this background can therefore understand how the poster reveals the true nature of the Japanese government during the war, and see this as an example of how any government may use propaganda to manipulate people through strong images that do not reflect the truth of a situation.

(Image: Japanese leaflet, 1943.)