

www. Americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion

A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution
Smithsonian National Museum of American history
Exploring the Exhibit Through Writing

Museum exhibits have many texts, including the various placards that guide the viewer and historical documents depicted. However, the objects, photographs, paintings and other visual images on display may also be "read" and enrich the viewers understanding of a given time period.

- **What are some of the texts in this exhibit?**

Example

Content

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- **As you walk around, what voices do you hear? Who do they represent?**

- **Are there voices that are absent?**

For this next set of questions, choose a case or small section of the exhibit that calls your attention.

- What drew you to this section?

1. Written Texts

- What types of written texts do you see?
- Who are the authors?
- Who are the audiences?
- What point of view are they written from?

- What information do they give you?
- Why do you think these texts were selected for this exhibit? What issues do they represent?

2. Artifacts and Visual Images

- Choose one artifact or visual image and describe it briefly.
- What was the purpose of the artifact/image?
- Who was the audience for this artifact/image?
- How was it significant to this period of history?
- Why do you think it was selected for this exhibit? What issues does it represent?

3. Written Texts and artifacts/visual images

- Choose a word or phrase that comes to mind as you think about the artifacts, visual images and written texts.
- Take a few minutes and freewrite about how this word/phrase applies to your life.

Fusa Tsumagari

September 14, 1942

Dear Miss Breed,

We are all getting used to the weather and dust and beginning to think that it isn't such a bad place after all. Partitions have been put up in the lavatory and the wash room here is much nicer and much closer [than in Santa Anita].

We have each been given a cot bed and a blanket. Now that we have caught up on our sleep, the cots feel rather uncomfortable. We will be issued either hay or steel army cots and mattresses, but as yet no one seems to know when! Something should be done, though, because we need something as a mattress because it is colder at night.

It seems as though my life is going through a thorough transformation! Here I go to Sewing School, Sunday School, Church, Singers, and Girls' Club Meetings. No more of those swell Saturday night dances! Gee, how I miss them! . . . The young girls from Reedley, Visalia, and Fresno and thereabouts no longer go to dances cause they are afraid of the "Santa Anita yogores" (a colloquialism meaning "not the best of boys"). Due to this, the young fellows act twice as rowdy and really make us disgusted!

We, [Santa Anita] girls no longer go out to dances either! Most of us stay at home and are truly good girls. Sometimes we go to each others house and took up into the dark blue star-filled sky. I regret that I did not take astronomy in school -- the sky is truly beautiful at night!

I know I'm asking a great deal of you -- but I wonder if you would be so kind as to send me a dictionary. If you have one that you don't need, would you please send it to us. If you don't have an extra one I will send you the money for one in my next letter.

Gee, Christmas must fall on Friday! It certainly would be elegant if you could come to Arizona. Visitors here are allowed to enter the barracks and visit people. It doesn't feel like a prison here. Gee, but this is such a desolate place I wonder if your tires will hold out -- also your gas will be rationed won't it?

Please give your mother our best regards. My mother sends you her love.
Sincerely,

Fusa



GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

	WHAT DID PEOPLE IN THE CAMP DO TO FILL THE TIME?	WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DID THEY MISS?	WHAT DID THEY COMPLAIN ABOUT?	WHAT DID THEY DO TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES?
FUSAS LETTER				
LOUISES LETTER				
TETSUZOS LETTER				