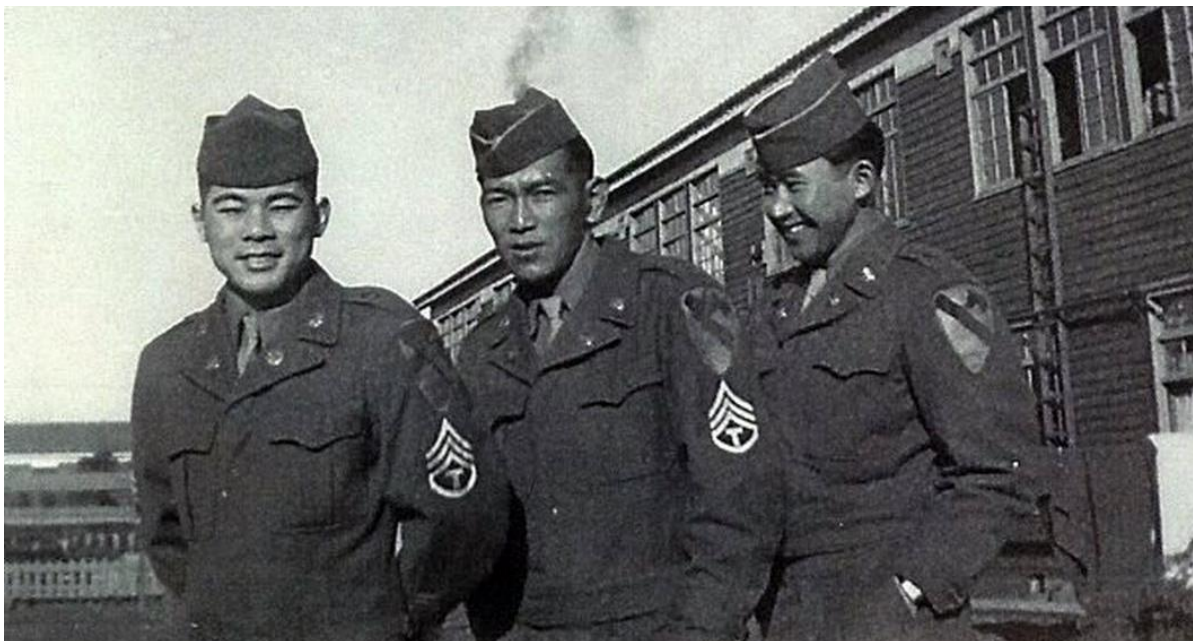


The Unknown Heroes of WWII



At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Define the meaning of new academic vocabulary words related to the unit
2. Illustrate understanding of reading and listening comprehension about a historic subject
3. Identify passive sentence structure and change passive sentences to active sentences
4. Analyze the cultural complexities of the school's soldiers through discussion and a writing and speaking project
5. Create a visual presentation about the history of the MISLS and its students' contributions to WWII

The Unknown Heroes of WWII is intended to be used as a U.S. history unit in an ESL context for high school and college students. It is designed for EL learners at a CEFR B2—C1 Level. Written By: Melissa Okumura (2020)

The Unknown Heroes of WWII

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Section 1

Getting Ready to Read

Pre-reading Discussion:

1. Close your eyes and think of World War II. Write down the first five things you think of.

Now compare your list with other students and come up with a list of ideas as a class.

2. After watching the video about Pearl Harbor, circle the words that you think describe how Americans were feeling after the attacks on Pearl Harbor from the choices below. ([Pearl Harbor Video](#))

Angry Relaxed Scared Excited Nervous Surprised

Now talk with a partner and describe why you chose these answers.

3. Would you feel the same or different feelings from above if you were an American whose family was originally from Japan? Why or why not? Discuss your answer with a partner.

4. After watching the video and looking at the unit title and picture above, what do you think this unit will be about? Discuss your ideas as a class.

Vocabulary Preview:

1. Listen to the following words and make notes on their pronunciation.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. intelligence | 7. internment camp | 13. abroad |
| 2. descent | 8. citizenship | 14. defeat |
| 3. military | 9. graduate | 15. blow |
| 4. translate | 10. physical | 16. dialect |
| 5. interpret | 11. recruit | 17. classified |
| 6. discriminate against | 12. heritage | 18. democracy |

2. Using a dictionary, write the number of each word above with its correct definition.

- ___ To win a victory in a battle
- ___ Ability for learning and understanding
- ___ To come from, ancestry
- ___ To treat a group of people worse than other groups
- ___ To turn from one language into another
- ___ A government by the people, where citizens have political power and vote
- ___ In or to a foreign country or countries
- ___ The army, the armed forces
- ___ Belonging to someone because of their birth, cultural identity
- ___ A place where Americans of Japanese descent were forced to stay during WWII
- ___ A sudden attack
- ___ To explain the meaning of what was said in a different language
- ___ Having legal membership in a country
- ___ A variety of a language that is different from the standard language
- ___ To complete a course of study, a person who completes a course of study
- ___ Something that is a real, material thing

___ To find and attract new members to a group

___ A document or information that is secret

___ Go to or be in a foreign country

Section 2

Pearl Harbor and the Beginning of the Military Intelligence Service

Language School

Vocabulary Review and Pre-Reading Discussion:

1. Pronounce the list of vocabulary from Section 1, then review the vocabulary with a partner. One person says a definition, and the other person says the vocabulary word that goes with the definition. After one person says all the definitions, switch roles.
2. Look at the title of Section 2. Think about the vocabulary words we have studied for the reading. What do you think the Military Intelligence Service Language School is? What kind of students do you think studied there? Discuss your ideas as a class.

Reading Comprehension:

1. Read the two passages below. First, listen along while your teacher reads, then read again by yourself. Note the highlighted words and double check their definitions above.

A) On November 1, 1941 the first students began to study Japanese at the Fourth Army **Intelligence** School in San Francisco, California. At first the school had only 50 students. Almost all of them were of Japanese **descent**. The **military** school was made to train soldiers to **translate** and **interpret** the Japanese language in order to prepare the U.S. for a possible war with Japan. Four short weeks later, on December 7th, 1941, the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor. Soon after the U.S. began fighting in World War II. After the U.S.

went to war, many non-Japanese American people began to fear and strongly **discriminate against** Americans of Japanese descent. In February of 1942, President Roosevelt wrote the Executive Order 9066. Executive Order 9066 said that people of Japanese descent must be sent to **internment camps** during the war. The U.S. government forced over 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent and all people with Japanese **citizenship** living in the U.S. to move from their homes to internment camps. With just one suitcase allowed per person, all people of Japanese descent in California, Oregon, and Washington were given only few days to prepare to leave. They were sent to internment camps and forced to live there during the years of war. Many of the intelligence school's students' families were sent away while they studied.

B) As many Fourth Army Intelligence School students watched their families being sent away to internment camps, they were preparing to help the U.S. military win the war. The first class of students **graduated** from the language school in May of 1941. They were U.S. soldiers, but many people discriminated against the students in the neighborhoods near the school. Because of this, the school's military leaders decided to move the school to a different state. In June of 1941, the school was moved to Camp Savage. Camp Savage was a military training center south of Minneapolis, Minnesota. After moving, the school was renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS). The school's military leader, Kai Rasmussen chose to move the school to Minnesota because it "had room **physically**, but also had room in the people's hearts." In August of 1944, the school needed more space and was moved again, this time to Fort Snelling, MN. Over the next two years the school began language classes in Chinese and Korean, too. In total, over 6,000 students graduated from the school by June of 1946. Then it was moved back to California. The school still trains students in many languages. Now it is called the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. It is one of the best language schools in the world.

2. After reading the text, do you think the statements below are true or false? Write a check for true and an X for false. As a class, explain why the false answers are false.

___ The Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941.

___ Americans of Japanese descent wanted to live in internment camps.

___ The Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) was moved three times.

___ The MISLS was closed in June of 1946.

3. Read the text one more time, discuss any parts you don't understand with a classmate, then write a 3-4 sentences summarizing the most important things you read:

Grammar Discovery:

1. Look at the phrases underlined in blue from the reading above. They are passive verb forms. Writers use passive verb forms when they are more interested in the object of the sentence than the subject.

Ex. The government made the school to train soldiers to translate and interpret the Japanese language in order to prepare the U.S. for a possible war with Japan.

...is changed to...

The military school was made to train soldiers to translate and interpret the Japanese language in order to prepare the U.S. for a possible war with Japan.

In the second sentence, the object becomes more important than the subject. When writing about history, writers often use passive tense. Please look again at the phrases above underlined in blue and circle the object that connects with the passive verb forms. (Hint: In the above sentence, "military school" should be circled.)

2. Next, using "the government" as your subject, choose three passive sentences from paragraphs A and B above and turn them into active sentences:

✧ _____

✧ _____

✧ _____

Section 3

The MISLS Soldiers and their work in WWII

Vocabulary Review and Pre-Reading Discussion:

1. Pronounce the list of vocabulary words from Section 1, then review with a partner. One person says a vocabulary word and the other person says the definition. After one person says all the vocabulary words, switch roles. Try to say the definition without reading it.

2. Watch the video of young people asking an internment camp survivor about what it was like to live at an internment camp: [Internment Camp Video](#). What were conditions like at the internment camp? Watch the video one more time and write down as many details as you can.

3. Using the details that you've written down, discuss what conditions were like at the internment camp with a partner and share your observations with the class.

Reading Comprehension:

1. Read the two passages below. Read the first time for speed, and then read again for understanding. Note the highlighted words and double check their definitions above.

C) During the war, MISLS students studied seven hours a day and two or more hours at night. Because the school tried to **recruit** students who already had some Japanese language skills, about 85% of the students were people of Japanese **heritage**. The school often recruited young people from the internment camps where they were forced to live. After finishing their Japanese language studies, most soldiers were sent **abroad** to help the U.S. military fight against the Japanese military. Working as interpreters and intelligence experts, the soldiers' main jobs were to translate and interpret Japanese military communication. They also communicated with Japanese soldiers and civilians during the war. Their work was an important part of many American military successes. Besides helping to win the war, the language school students helped to save the lives of many Americans. They saved the lives of many Japanese soldiers and civilians, too.

D) The single most important intelligence work done by U.S. intelligence officers who graduated from the school was translating the "Z Plan". The "Z Plan" was a Japanese war plan that Americans found during the Battle of the Philippine Sea in May of 1944. On June

19-20th, the U.S. Army used the intelligence information in the war plan to **defeat** the Japanese military in that sea battle. Historian James C. McNaughten wrote, "The defeat was a **blow** from which Japan never recovered." Another interesting episode was after a battle on Okinawa Island in June of 1945. After American troops had won the battle and the Japanese military left, language school soldiers whose parents and grandparents were from Okinawa spoke on the radio to thousands of Okinawan civilians in their home **dialect**. The American soldiers used their shared language to convince those people not to kill themselves. The Okinawan people had been told by the Japanese government that U.S. soldiers would hurt and kill them, but the MISLS student soldiers convinced them they would be safe. They saved thousands of Japanese people's lives. Because of the soldiers' own Japanese heritage, they were able to see the Japanese people as human beings, rather than simply the enemy.

2. Answer the questions with a partner, then check your answers with another pair.

- ✧ What percentage of language students were people of Japanese heritage?
- ✧ What were the language school soldiers' main jobs in the military?
- ✧ Was the soldier's work an important part of military successes? Why or why not?
- ✧ What was the "Z Plan" and how did it help the U.S. defeat the Japanese?
- ✧ How did language school soldiers save Japanese peoples lives?

3. Look at the underlined passages in the text. Do you think it was difficult for soldiers of Japanese heritage to join the military and fight against Japan while their parents were in concentration camps? Why or why not? Write your answer below:

-
-
-
-
4. Think of three reasons that the U.S. soldiers of Japanese heritage were able to see the Japanese people as human beings. Discuss your ideas with a partner.

Write a Letter Project:

1. Read this fictional letter below. If you were the language school graduate of Japanese descent who received this letter, what would you write back to your father? Using the template provided, pretend you are the soldier who received this letter and write a letter back.

June 22nd, 1944

My dear son,

I'm happy to hear that you graduated from the language school. Your mother is amazed that you have learned to read and write Japanese so well. As a kid, you never liked to study Japanese much, so we are proud of you for all of your hard work. We are all doing fine here. We are still at the internment camp, but we heard that maybe we will be able to return home again soon. I also heard that most graduates are being sent overseas to fight against Japan. Are you?

Do your best and make your country proud. We Japanese are brave and smart fighters, so please take care.

All my love,

Dad

Writing an Informal Letter

(the date)

(Begin with a greeting.)

(The main body goes here. Indent the paragraphs.)

2. After writing your letter on the template, get it proof-read first by a classmate, then by your teacher. Then write it out on the lined paper above, your own notebook paper, or stationary. Remember, use your imagination and be creative.
3. Once you have finished your letter, practice reading it out loud. Focus on your pronunciation, intonation, expression, and using a clear voice. When you are ready, upload a video of yourself reading the letter to your teacher's [Flipgrid](#) discussion. Be sure to read with your

face looking at or near the camera, so other students can clearly see you. Watch your classmates' videos and comment on them.

Section 4

The End of the War and a Rainbow of Peace

Vocabulary quiz and Pre-Reading Discussion:

1. With a partner, review the vocabulary words for this unit. Then go [here](#) to complete a crossword quiz or take the paper crossword quiz from your teacher.
2. What do you know about the end of WWII? What do you know about the relationship between the U.S. and Japan today? Look at the pictures below and brainstorm your ideas as a class.



Reading Comprehension:

1. Read the three passages below with a partner. First one partner reads outloud, and one listens. Then switch roles. Note the highlighted words and double check their definitions above.
-
- E) World War II officially ended on September 2, 1945. In total, linguists from the MISLS translated over 2,000,000 pages of documents during the war. Because of their efforts, the war with Japan ended many years before experts expected. Their hard work saved millions of lives. When the war ended on September 2nd, 1945, military linguists from the school had worked in all American military organizations. They helped to win the war years earlier than expected.
- F) Although the contributions of the MISLS students were huge, few regular Americans knew anything about the students. They didn't know about what the students had done to help win the war. Even now, most people do not know about the important contributions made by the school's students during the war. This might be because until the 1970s the U.S. government had made the school **classified** information. The reason that the school was classified might also have been because of discrimination towards American people of Japanese descent by the U.S. government. Even after the war was over, many Americans of Japanese descent, both civilians and soldiers, were discriminated against.
- G) These soldiers studied and worked hard for their country. The United States government forced them and their families to move from their homes and communities into internment camps during the war. They were discriminated against, but they still believed in American **democracy**. Even after the war ended, they helped to build democracy in Japan and peace between American and Japanese people. Edwin Nakasone, a soldier who graduated from the school and helped to rebuild Japan after the war, said, "They were amazed that there were people like us, of Japanese descent, who were part of the American army. We gave them our

thoughts about America and democracy. We were the rainbow that connected one country to another country." With more than 75 years of peace between Japan and the U.S. since the end of WW2, we owe many thanks to these unknown heroes.

2. After reading the text, complete these short answer questions:

- ✧ Who does the author think are the unknown heroes of WWII? Do you think they are heroes? Why or why not?

- ✧ Edwin Nakasone says, "We were the rainbow that connected one country to another country." How did the MISLS student soldiers connect one country to another?

Timeline Project:

1. Using the graphic organizer below, fill in a timeline with the main events from the readings A-G above.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>EVENT</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
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2. Working together as a class, use [Padlet](#) to create a timeline of major events in the reading. Use the references section at the end of the unit to research events and add pictures.

A Song:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Japanese | English |
|-----------------|----------------|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Ue o muite arukou, namida ga koborenai you ni Omoidasu haru no hi, hitoribotchi no yoru</p> | <p>I look up as I walk so the tears won't fall I remember those spring days, but I am all alone tonight</p> |
| <p>Ue o muite arukou, nijinda hoshi o kazoete Omoidasu natsu no hi, hitoribotchi no yoru</p> | <p>I look up as I walk, counting the stars I remember those summer days, but I am all alone tonight</p> |
| <p>Shiawase wa kumo no ue ni Shiawase wa sora no ue ni</p> | <p>Happiness lies up above the clouds Happiness lies up in the sky</p> |
| <p>Ue o muite arukou, namida ga koborenai you ni Nakinagara aruku, hitoribotchi no yoru</p> | <p>I look up as I walk, so that the tears won't fall But the tears come as I walk, for I am all alone tonight</p> |
| <p>Omoidasu aki no hi, hitoribotchi no yoru</p> | <p>I remember those fall days, but I am all alone tonight</p> |
| <p>Kanashimi wa hoshi no kage ni Kanashimi wa tsuki no kage ni</p> | <p>Sadness lies in the shadow of the stars Sadness lurks in the shadow of the moon</p> |
| <p>Ue o muite arukou, namida ga koborenai you ni Nakinagara aruku Hitoribochi no yoru, hitoribochi no yoru</p> | <p>I look up as I walk, so that the tears won't fall But the tears come as I walk I am all alone tonight, I am all alone tonight.</p> |

1. The song "Sukiyaki" by Kyu Sakamoto was written in Japanese in 1961 and became Number 1 on the American Billboard Music Charts in 1963. It is one of the only non-English language songs to become Number 1. Kyu Sakamoto wrote the song to express his feelings about life after the end of WWII. As you listen to the music and read the English translation, think about reasons why this song became so popular in the U.S. [Sukiyaki Song](#)

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Teaching Resources

Flipgrid: www.flipgrid.com

Padlet: www.padlet.com

Vocabulary Crossword: https://crosswordlabs.com/print/vocabulary-quiz-469?show_answers=0