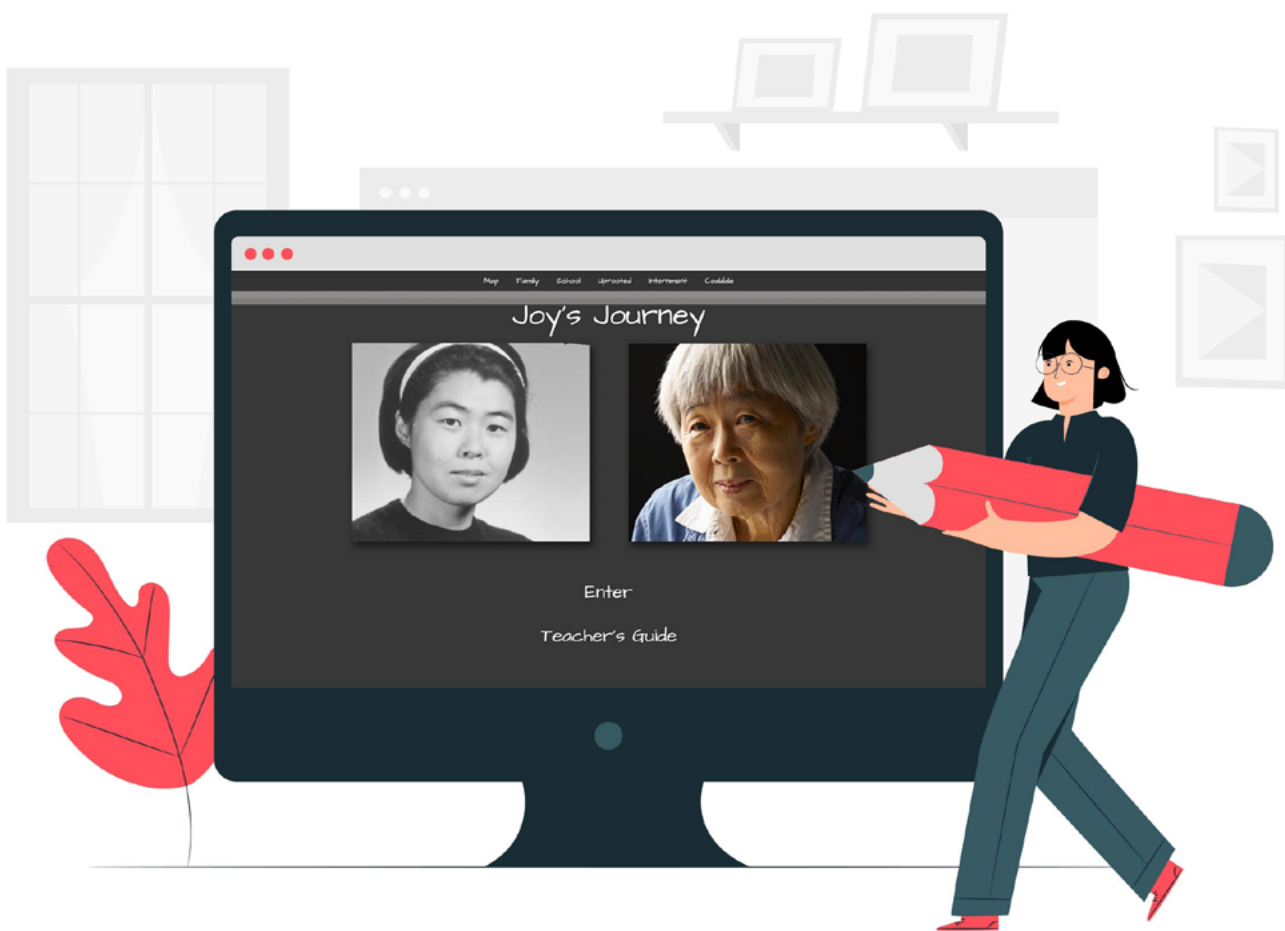


# Teacher's Guide for *Joy's Journey*



by *Joan Young*



## About Joan Young

*Joan Young* taught elementary grades in the Richmond School District for 24 years. Since her retirement she has been a member of the Historic Joy Kogawa House Society where she is the education coordinator and secretary of the Board. Joan's involvement with Kogawa House and the teaching of Japanese Canadian history is motivated by the fact that her mother was one of thousands of Japanese Canadians who were forcibly moved from their homes and sent to internment camps during the Second World War.

## About Joy Kogawa

*Joy Kogawa* is best known as the author of *Obasan* (1981), a novel about the internment and persecution of Canadian citizens of Japanese descent during the Second World War. *Obasan*, as well as Kogawa's children's books *Naomi's Road* and *Naomi's Tree* are based on the author's life: her childhood growing up in the Marpole area of Vancouver, being displaced to an internment camp in Slocan during the war, and her post-war years living in the sugar beet farming region of southern Alberta. It is a story of prejudice, injustice, resilience, and courage.



## About Joy's Journey

*Joy's Journey* recreates Joy Kogawa's story through an interactive map and a series of videos, photos, personal stories, and activities. The aim of the journey is to raise awareness of one of the dark periods in Canadian history and to connect with Joy Kogawa's life and literary works. As a young child, Joy Kogawa was one of nearly 22,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly moved from their homes in the restricted zone along the west coast of British Columbia to internment camps in the interior of the province.

Many of the *Joy's Journey* videos were filmed on location in the Kootenay Valley where many of the internment camps were located. Others were filmed at Historic Joy Kogawa House, Joy's childhood home in Vancouver. Accompanying activities have been field-tested in elementary and secondary school settings.

*Joy's Journey* allows opportunities for students to use key disciplinary thinking skills, focus on inquiry, and develop understanding of the "big ideas" that comprise the curriculum in a variety of subject areas, including Social Studies; History; Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice; Challenge and Change; Language; and Canada: History, Identity, and Culture.



## The Structure of *Joy's Journey*

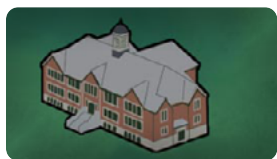
The activities in this guide are geared toward secondary programs but all ideas, concepts, and activities can be adapted to suit any grade level. This teacher's guide is designed to help educators and students analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources and to use them to uncover and understand historical events.

Through their study of historical events, students will gain an understanding of the people, places, issues, and events that have shaped the world they live in. The program enables students to develop historical understandings, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning by integrating the study of history, literature, and human behaviour with ethical decision-making and innovative teaching strategies.

*Joy's Journey* is divided into five main sections:



1. Family (Pages 5-6 of the Teacher's Guide).  
Joy's home (on the left) tells about her family.

[Click to Enter](#)

2. School (Pages 7-8 of the Teacher's Guide).  
Joy's school describes the early years of the war.

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3. Uprooted (Pages 9-10 of the Teacher's Guide).  
The baggage cart explores the forced move to the BC Interior.

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4. Internment (Pages 11-12 of the Teacher's Guide).  
The camp describes life during the internment.

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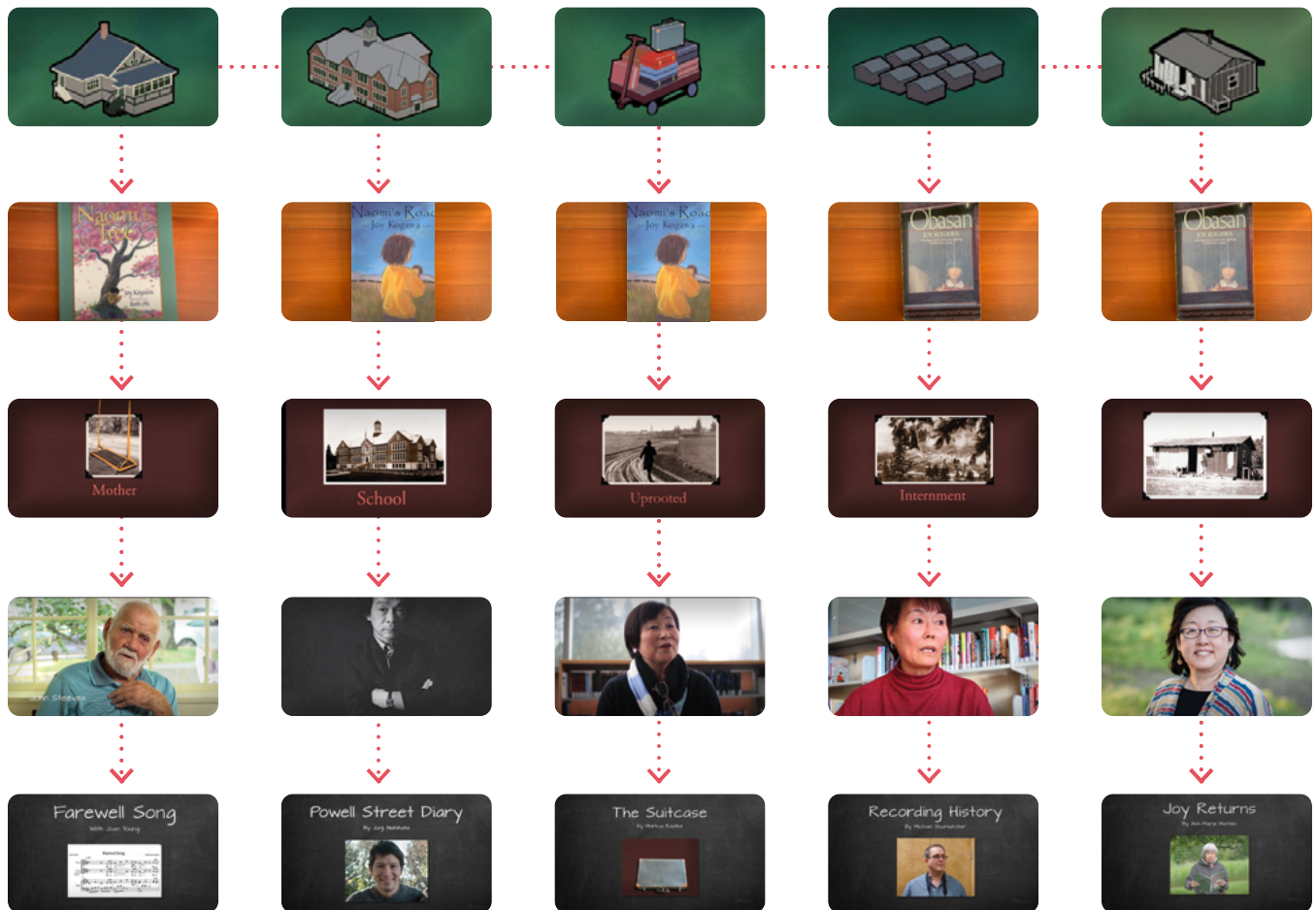
5. Coaldale (Pages 13-14) of the Teacher's Guide).  
The shack (on the right) explains life after the war.

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*Joy's Journey* follows Joy Kogawa through five critical years of her early life, from her happy home in Vancouver, to the internment camp in Slocan and finally, in the post-war years, to the sugar beet farming region of southern Alberta.

Each step of the journey is composed of four experiences:

1. a reading from one of Joy's books;
2. an animated photo album in which Joy tells her story;
3. a video story of a Canadian family with parallel experiences;
4. a workshop developed at a school in British Columbia.



This teacher's guide includes a synopsis of each section and its historical relevance. The guide also includes suggestions for introducing the topic, connections to Joy Kogawa's works, classroom activities, questions for inquiry, and extension activities.

The British Columbia Ministry of Education new curriculum guidelines (2019) state that the primary goal of Social Studies education is to give students the knowledge, skills, and competencies to be active, informed citizens who are able to think critically, understand and explain the perspectives of others, make judgments, and communicate ideas effectively. We hope that *Joy's Journey* will help to guide your students toward this goal.

There are, of course, many other lessons and activities that teachers can create with these resources. We look forward to hearing about the unique approaches that you devise!

Joan Young  
Education Coordinator  
Historic Joy Kogawa House

Ann-Marie Metten  
Executive Director  
Historic Joy Kogawa House





## Family

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The opening area of the website gives students a glimpse into the leafy Vancouver suburb where Joy Kogawa lived until the age of six. It should strike today's young people as both strange and familiar. It is strange because in the 1930s the areas surrounding Canadian cities were pastoral, with farms and orchards lying between suburban streets. At the same time, the life that Joy describes is not dissimilar to that of a child growing up in a happy home today. She was cherished by both her family and her young friends.

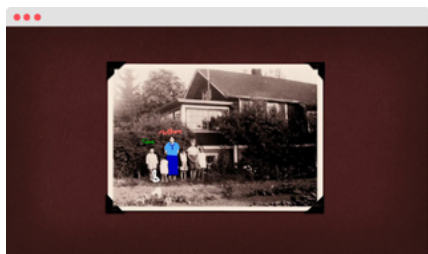
### 1. Reading

Begin by reading Joy Kogawa's book, *Naomi's Tree*, aloud in class. The story opens with the seed of a cherry tree making the journey from Japan to Vancouver, where it is planted next to the home of young Naomi. When Naomi's family is forced to leave their home during the war, the tree becomes a symbol of peace and happiness.

#### QUESTION:

Re-read the messages sent by the cherry tree (set in italics throughout the book). Ask students:

- *Why does the cherry tree come to have such importance?*

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### 2. "Family"

Show students the video "Family". It begins with Joy's memories of her childhood home, enhanced by photographs from the family album. Then Joy reads the final pages of *Naomi's Tree*.

#### QUESTIONS:

- *How is Joy's own story similar to the book?*
- *How is it different?*
- *Explore how Joy used her own life as inspiration for her writing.*

**Activity:** Invite students to find an object in their lives that is as important as the cherry tree is to Joy Kogawa. Ask them to write a paragraph to show others how they feel.



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### 3. "Neighbours"

Teachers who want to give their students a deeper understanding of the events that took place just before the internment of Japanese Canadians can click on the interview with the Steeves brothers, who lived next door to Joy Kogawa when she was a child.

In this video, the three Steeves brothers describe life in the Marpole area of Vancouver in 1940. The neighbourhood was a happy one until the outbreak of the war with Japan.

#### QUESTIONS:

- *How would you describe the friendship between the Steeves family and their neighbours, Joy and Timothy?*
- *Would the outbreak of war between Canada and Japan change life in Marpole?*



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### 4. "Farewell Song"

In this workshop, teacher Joan Young describes what happened to the Marpole house after war was declared. Joy Kogawa's family was forced to go to an internment camp in the interior of British Columbia. The Canadian government confiscated their home and sold it.

Joan describes the role her students played in the 1990s, persuading the City of Vancouver to purchase the house so it can be used for literary and educational events.

#### QUESTIONS:

- *Why was Joan Young willing to help preserve Historic Joy Kogawa House?*
- *What role did her students play?*

**Activity:** Joan Young's story incorporates two activities into her workshop. She includes the music and Japanese words to "The Farewell Song".

## School

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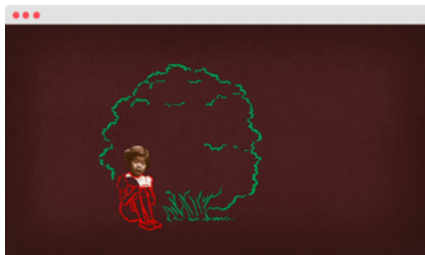
This area of the website takes us back to December of 1941, when Canada and Japan went to war. The lives of Japanese Canadian citizens were transformed as their homes, businesses, and fishing boats were seized and sold. Joy Kogawa describes this period through the eyes of a six-year-old who must suddenly give up her home and her friends for an uncertain future.

### 1. Reading

We suggest you begin with a reading from one of Joy Kogawa's books. Younger children could read Chapter 4 of Joy Kogawa's *Naomi's Road*. Older students might enjoy Chapter 12 of *Obasan*.

#### QUESTION:

- What were the signs that the attitude toward Japanese Canadians was changing after war was declared?

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### 2. "School"

Show students the photo-animation "School", where Joy describes how her school days changed with the coming of war. The video ends with the newspaper photos from the first weeks after war was declared.

#### QUESTION:

- What does Joy mean when she says: "I was afraid of the enemy?"

**Activity:** Show students the photographs that appear at the end of the video and ask them to comment on what was happening across the Lower Mainland of British Columbia during the early weeks of the war, as the government forced Japanese Canadian citizens to surrender their fishing boats, their automobiles, and their homes.



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### 3. "Powell Street Diary"

In this video, actor Jason Sakaki reads from *Powell Street Diary*, which describes Jesse Nishihata's experiences as a twelve-year-old at the outbreak of war.

#### QUESTIONS:

- When the war with Japan is declared, Jesse's father is sent to a work camp. How does he describe the camp to Jesse?
- Why does he use that description?

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### 4. "Diary"

In this workshop, Junji Nishihata describes how his father, documentary filmmaker Jesse Nishihata, came to write *Powell Street Diary*.

#### QUESTIONS:

- Read the excerpts from Jesse's diary with your students. Why did Jesse feel it was important to shoot films about the wartime experiences of Japanese Canadians?
- What impact do you think it had when the Canadian government apologized?

**Activity:** Ask your students to imagine that they are young Jesse on the day his father went to the work camp. What would they write in a diary on that day?

## Uprooted

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This area of the website examines the impact of the forced removal of Japanese Canadians from the coast to the interior of British Columbia. It describes the situation of families who were first sent to live in the horse stables at Hastings Park and then transported by train to abandoned mining towns in the BC Interior.

These are stories of families who responded to a sudden change in their circumstances with courage and resilience.

### 1. Reading

For younger students, you can begin your class by reading Chapter 6 of Joy Kogawa's *Naomi's Road*. For high school classes, you can begin the lesson by asking the students to read Chapters 14 and 15 of *Obasan*.

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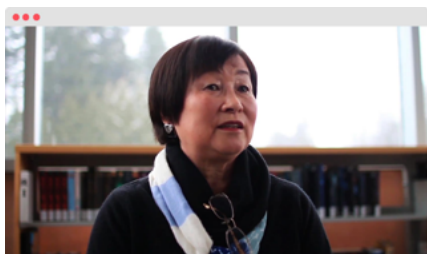
### 2. "Uprooted"

In this video, Joy describes the worry that pervaded the Japanese Canadian community as families were sent first to live in the animal barns at Hastings Park, and then transported by rail to towns in the BC Interior. Joy reads a description of her family's arrival in Slocan and their first glimpse of their new home.

#### QUESTION:

- What do you think Joy's family talked about on the train from Vancouver to the Slocan?

**Activity:** Click through the photos of the livestock building at Hastings Park seen in Joy's video, "Uprooted". Ask students to discuss the impact of moving from a family home in Vancouver to the horse stables.


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### 3. "The Nikkei Fleet"

In this video, Masako Fukawa, author of *Spirit of the Nikkei Fleet*, describes how she learned about her family's wartime experiences. The government seized her father's fishing boat and then sent him to a work camp. Her mother was sent to an internment camp.

#### QUESTION:

- Why did Masako's parents not tell her about their experience of the war?


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### 4. "Suitcase"

For her interview with students at Burnaby Central Secondary School, Masako Fukawa provided numerous objects that helped to tell her story. These included family photos and historical records detailing the seizure of her father's fishing boat.


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**Activity:** Later, the Burnaby students were asked to draw pictures of the objects they would take with them if they were forced from their homes. Some students chose practical items that would ease life in an internment camp, while others chose family treasures.

Their drawings and the class discussion were combined into an animation that can be used to initiate a discussion in other classrooms. You can use the student animation in your class, either to encourage discussion or to encourage your students to engage in a drawing or animation project of their own.

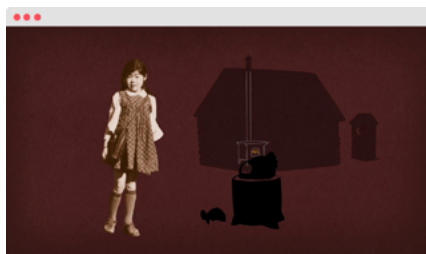
## Internment

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This section of the website describes life in the internment camps of the BC Interior. Trainloads of Japanese Canadian families were transported to farms and abandoned mining camps, where they were housed in tents and shacks. Although accommodations were crowded and food was scarce, the internees proved to be resilient.

### 1. Reading

Teachers with younger students may read Chapter 7 of *Naomi's Road*. High school students may prefer Chapter 23 of *Obasan*.

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### 2. "Slocan"

In this video, Joy Kogawa talks about the cabin where her family lived in the Slocan Valley, with a ceiling of dried cow dung and beds squeezed into closets. Then, she reads from *Naomi's Road*, describing the arrival of her family in Slocan, and her first glimpse of the rundown cabin that will be her new home.

Finally, she describes how the children helped put food on the table by trekking through the woods and harvesting plants such as fiddleheads.

#### QUESTION:

- Compare Joy Kogawa's home in Vancouver to the cabin in Slocan. Why would it be hard to adjust to the new circumstances?

**Activity:** Cabins in the Slocan internment camps measured 7 metres by 4 metres. Measure the space of a Slocan cabin in your classroom. Then ask students to imagine how the cabin might be laid out so two families could live there.

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### 3. "Hastings Park"

Joan Young describes the rapid changes that took place in Vancouver in the weeks after the war with Japan began. Japanese Canadian families from along the West Coast gave up their homes, businesses, and fishing boats. They were sent to the animal barns at Hastings Park, which were hastily converted, with bunk beds placed end to end. There, families waited for the trains that would take them to internment camps in the BC Interior.

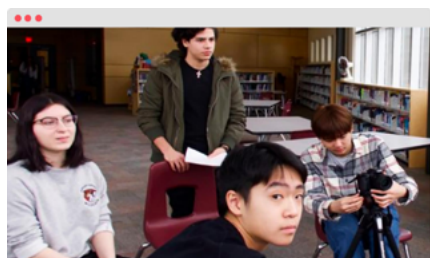
#### QUESTIONS:

- *What would it be like to live in the horse stables at Hastings Park?*
- *What would be the most upsetting feature of life there?*
- *What could the interned families do to improve life in the internment camps?*

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### 4. "Recording History"

Media teacher Michael Shumiatcher developed the "Recording History" workshop. He brought Joan Young and Ann-Marie Metten of Historic Joy Kogawa House to Burnaby Central Secondary School so students could interview them.

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**Activity:** The students prepared their interviews by conducting research in books and online. Then, they conducted the interviews in small groups that included a host, a sound recordist, and a camera operator.

## Coaldale

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At the close of the Second World War, interned Japanese Canadians were given a choice: they could move east of the Rocky Mountains untainted or they could move to Japan. They were not given the option of returning to the homes they had owned on the West Coast before the war began. This area of the website describes how Japanese Canadians struggled to make the best decision for their families.

### 1. Reading

Teachers with younger students may read Chapter 17 of *Naomi's Road*. High school students may prefer Chapters 28 to 30 of *Obasan*.

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### 2. "Coaldale"

After the war, Joy Kogawa's family moved to Coaldale, a small town serving a region of southern Alberta dominated by sugar beet farms. The circumstances for the Japanese Canadian community in Alberta were, in some ways, more dire than they had been in the internment camp. They lived in ramshackle dwellings and chicken coops, and they no longer dreamed of returning to their homes on the Coast.

Joy reads from *Obasan* and then asks viewers to consider the unfair treatment of the Japanese Canadians in the post-war years.

#### QUESTIONS:

- Why does Joy Kogawa seem more angry about the post-war years in Alberta than she was about the internment during the war?
- What decision should the Canadian government have made when the war ended?

**Activity:** Ask students to imagine that they are one of the Steeves brothers, Joy's neighbours before the war. What letter would they write to their Member of Parliament at the end of the war?



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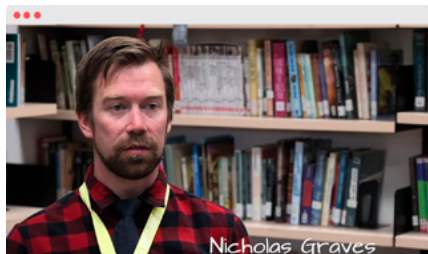
### 3. "The Family Farms"

In this section of the website, writer Sally Ito begins her family story with her great-grandfather's arrival in Canada and his decision to buy land in Surrey, British Columbia, for a family farm. But the farm was seized during the war, and the Itos were sent to an internment camp at Lemon Creek.

At the end of the war, family members faced a difficult decision: to move to the sugar beet region of southern Alberta or to move to Japan. Two branches of the family made different decisions. One group settled on a farm in Alberta while the other struggled to wrest a farm from an abandoned air strip in Japan.

#### QUESTIONS:

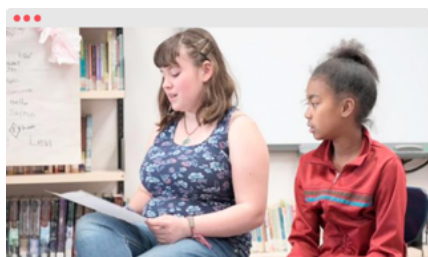
- Which decision was better: the sugar beet farm or the return to Japan?

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### 4. "Joy Returns"

In the summer of 2019, Joy Kogawa returned to the communities of the BC Interior where she had been interned during the Second World War. She spent her birthday with students at Lucerne Elementary and Secondary School.

This workshop includes an interview with Nicholas Graves, who describes the school's commitment to making students aware of the history of the internment.

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**Activity:** Grade 7 students conducted an interview with Joy, asking her for her views on forgiveness. You can click on the students' questions to see video of Joy Kogawa's answers.



Thank you for your interest  
in *Joy's Journey*!

As we mentioned before, there are many other lessons and activities that teachers can create with these resources. We look forward to hearing about the unique approaches that you devise!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [info@kogawahouse.com](mailto:info@kogawahouse.com).