

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Morgan Thornberry	School:	Berlin High School
Book Title:	They Called Us Enemy	Genre:	Graphic Novel
Author:	George Takei	Pages:	204
Publisher:	Top Shelf Productions	Copyright:	2020

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Summary From Rhoad Island Teen Book Award (Source: [https://riteenbookaward.org/ritba/they-called-us-enemy#:~:text=Summary%3A%20This%20is%20outstanding%20graphic,with%20is%20father's%20\(Japan\).](https://riteenbookaward.org/ritba/they-called-us-enemy#:~:text=Summary%3A%20This%20is%20outstanding%20graphic,with%20is%20father's%20(Japan).))

This is outstanding graphic memoir recounts with nostalgia and growing outrage (author, actor, activist) George Takei's childhood experiences in American internment camps during World War II. George woke up as a four-year-old boy to find that his own birth country, America, was at war with is father's (Japan). He and his family were forced out of their California home and sent to Camp Rohwer in Arkansas. Initially, George recalls this uncertain time with some affection, fondness and sense of adventure even as President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 ordered every person of Japanese descent to be rounded up and shipped to one of ten relocation centers many miles from their homes where they would be for years under armed guard.

As George grows older and his family is relocated to another camp with harsher conditions, it seems less of an adventure and more of the degrading, unjust, discriminatory treatment that it was.

Through it all, George and his family maintain their resiliency, dignity and humanity.

Takei's memoir blends his naive, childhood memories with the wisdom, knowledge, realizations and reflections of adulthood and demonstrates how these experiences profoundly shaped his future.

Common Sense Media Evaluation:

<https://www.common sense media.org/book-reviews/they-called-us-enemy>

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

CP 9 Curriculum Map w/ Highlighted Indicators:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/10RfR8D1mSdQfvkMgJgUV8WLOqXvQ1vp\\_b\\_ztVlbEDs/e dit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10RfR8D1mSdQfvkMgJgUV8WLOqXvQ1vp_b_ztVlbEDs/e dit?usp=sharing)

CP 10 Curriculum Map w/ Highlighted Indicators:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C2yuBKwBUdr9S2sBRiNbef70CFqoDgQv-rQInAsNgGk/edit?usp=sharing>

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

**KIRKUS REVIEWS:** A beautifully heart-wrenching graphic-novel adaptation of actor and activist Takei’s (Lions and Tigers and Bears, 2013, etc.) childhood experience of incarceration in a World War II camp for Japanese Americans.

Takei had not yet started school when he, his parents, and his younger siblings were forced to leave their home and report to the Santa Anita Racetrack for “processing and removal” due to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066. The creators smoothly and cleverly embed the historical context within which Takei’s family’s story takes place, allowing readers to simultaneously experience the daily humiliations that they suffered in the camps while providing readers with a broader understanding of the federal legislation, lawsuits, and actions which led to and maintained this injustice. The heroes who fought against this and provided support to and within the Japanese American community, such as Fred Korematsu, the 442nd Regiment, Herbert Nicholson, and the ACLU’s Wayne Collins, are also highlighted, but the focus always remains on the many sacrifices that Takei’s parents made to ensure the safety and survival of their family while shielding their children from knowing the depths of the hatred they faced and danger they were in. The creators also highlight the dangerous parallels between the hate speech, stereotyping, and legislation used against Japanese Americans and the trajectory of current events. Delicate grayscale illustrations effectively convey the intense emotions and the stark living conditions.

A powerful reminder of a history that is all too timely today. (Graphic memoir. 14-adult) SOURCE: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/george-takei/they-called-us-enemy/>

Review #2

**BOOKLIST: REVIEW.** First published July 2019 (Booklist).

Takei has spoken publicly about his childhood experiences in internment camps during WWII, and this graphic memoir tells that story again with a compelling blend of nostalgia and outrage. He was very young when he and his family were forced out of their California home and sent to Camp Rohwer in Arkansas, so some of his memories of that time are touched with gentle affection, though that fondness is short-lived. As he grows older and they’re relocated to a camp with harsher conditions, it seems less like an adventure and more like the atrocity it truly is. Takei, together with Justin Eisinger and Steven Scott, interweaves scenes of his adult realizations and reflections, as well as key speeches and historical events of the period, among the accounts of his childhood, which is very effective at providing context for those memories. Becker’s spare, fine-lined, manga-inspired artwork focuses intently on faces and body language, keeping the story centered in the realm of the personal. Ultimately, though Takei is grateful for the official apologies he and other Japanese Americans received, he’s careful to note how similar attitudes today mean that other immigrant communities in America are facing discrimination and internment. This approachable, well-wrought graphic memoir is important reading, particularly in today’s political climate. Pair with John Lewis’ acclaimed March series for a thought-provoking, critical look at the history of racism in American policies and culture.

— Sarah Hunter

This title has been recommended for young adult readers:

YA/Curriculum Support: Plenty of teens learn about internment camps in school; this inviting account will give a human face to the history. —Sarah Hunter

SOURCE: <https://www.booklistonline.com/They-Called-Us-Enemy-George-Takei/pid=9722448>

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: **Infamy: The Shocking Story of the Japanese American Internment in World War II** Author: **Richard Reeves**

Title: **Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese Internment Camps** Author: **Mary Matsuda Gruenewald**

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

-The subject of the Japanese internment camps in the United States is one that could be controversial to students as it may be their first time learning about such personal accounts of this time in our history.

-Some depictions of implicit bias on an interpersonal level between Japanese American and American citizens.

-Some minor depictions of violence and mentions of death and war.

-Some use of racial slurs toward Asian Americans.

-Depictions of a families in insecure housing situations.

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6  7  8  9  10  11  12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** GN680L

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:**

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated       Regular       At-Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): (indicate the grade band or the grade level): 9, 10, 11, 12

Reading Level of this Title (lexile level): GN680

**Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:**

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Literature for Today's Young Adults

**Signatures:**

Teacher: [Signature]

Date: 01/03/2022

Department Head: [Signature]

Date: 01/03/2022

Building Administrator: [Signature]

Date: 1/3/2022

Curriculum Supervisor: [Signature]

Date: 1/10/22