

TEACHING JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION THROUGH COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS

Objective:

Students will learn about the personal experiences of Japanese American incarcerated during World War II and will practice communicating information concisely by developing an original comic.

Common Core State Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Description:

According to the School Library Journal's article [Teaching with Graphic Novels](#), the advantages* of teaching with comics and graphic novels as supplemental texts includes:

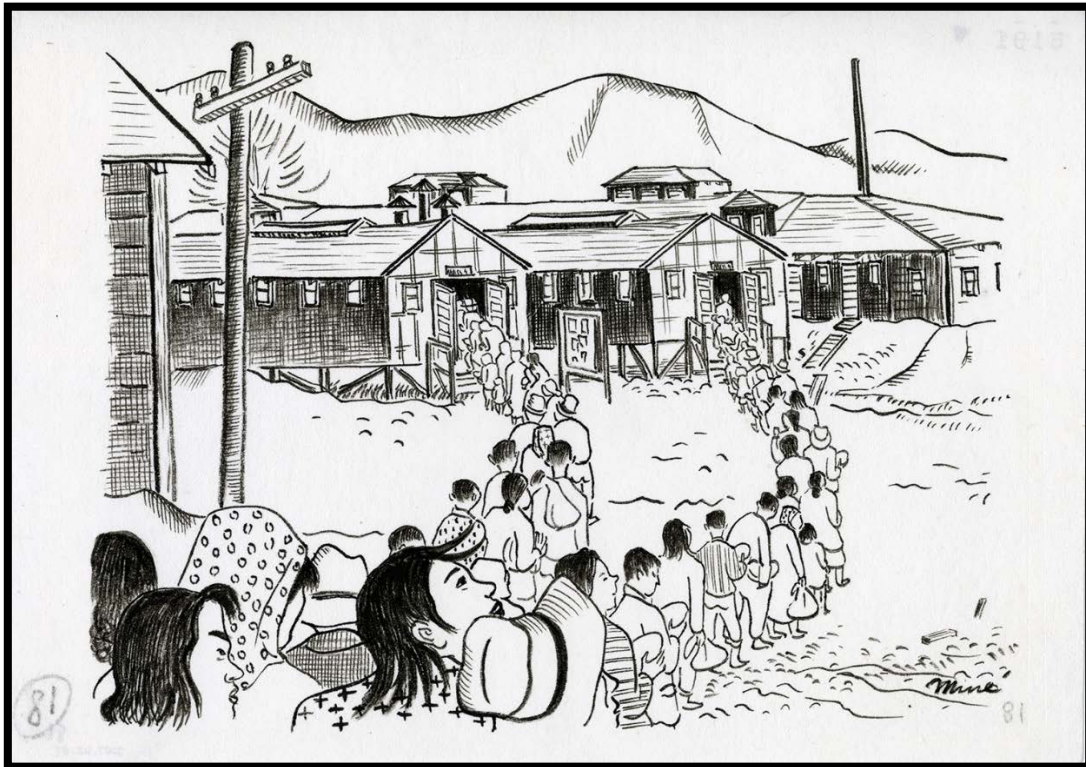
- supporting low readers and promoting memory through pairing of image and text
- modeling concise verbiage for skilled readers
- reinforcing left-to-right sequence
- communicating ideas efficiently

Martin Luther King, Jr. contributed to a comic book titled *The Montgomery Story*, a copy of which can be found in the museum's archive (a related teacher guide can be found [here](http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_MLK.pdf) http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_MLK.pdf). That work inspired Congressman John Lewis to tell his own story of the civil rights movement through comics in the *New York Times* bestseller [March](#). Some famous examples of graphic novels on civil-rights topics are [Maus](#), Art Spiegelman's series about his family's experiences during the Holocaust, and [Persepolis](#), Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical series about her childhood in Iran.

In addition, graphics and illustrations have a long tradition in Japanese art, including scroll paintings, anime, and manga (literally "random sketches" or doodles, but now used to refer to comic books or illustrated entertainment). See [this video](http://pulverer.si.edu/node/184) [<http://pulverer.si.edu/node/184>] from the Smithsonian's museums of Asian art on the evolution of Japanese graphic art. Comics were also a method for Japanese American incarcerated in World War II to express their experiences. Most famous among these artists was Miné Okubo, who was incarcerated in the Topaz War Relocation Center in Utah during World War II. Okubo's drawings take the reader through her time at the Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno, California, and eventually the Topaz camp. Her artwork inspired her book [Citizen 13660](#), which was published in 1946.



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Drawing, Mine Okubo [Waiting in Lines at Tanforan Assembly Center, San Bruno, California, 1942].
Courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum (Gift of Mine Okubo Estate, 2007.62).

Teen participants in the National Museum of American History's Youth Civic Engagement Program collaborated with Evan Keeling, an artist and exhibits fabricator from the Smithsonian Exhibits, and teens at the Hirshhorn Museum's ARTLAB+, to create this series of original comics on the Japanese American experience during World War II. The comics represent oral histories from survivors of Japanese American incarceration camps.

Use these comics to introduce this period in history to students or to prepare students to view and participate in the [National Youth Summit on Japanese American Incarceration](http://americanhistory.si.edu/nys/national-youth-summit-japanese-american-incarceration-world-war-ii) [<http://americanhistory.si.edu/nys/national-youth-summit-japanese-american-incarceration-world-war-ii>]. As an assessment for this or other topics, use the comic template included here to allow students to create their own comics based on their studies, including examining primary sources such as oral histories. Find oral histories and other primary sources on Japanese American incarceration at the [Densho Digital Archive](#).

*The vivid imagery in comics and graphic novels may cause concern among some parents, so graphic novels should be carefully chosen and discussed with parents and administrators.



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

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Resources

Norman Mineta: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/26/us/washington-talk-friendshipsheat-war-welds-bond-that-endures-across-aisles-years.html>

Yuri Kochiyama: http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Yuri_Kochiyama/
http://www.democracynow.org/2006/2/21/civil_rights_activist_yuri_kochiyama_remembers

Fred Korematsu: <http://www.korematsuinstitute.org/fred-t-korematsu-1/>

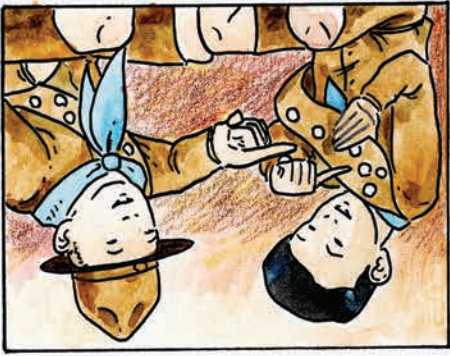
Chizu Iiyama: <http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/ciiyama/index.html>

Masaru Kawaguchi:

<http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/mkawaguchi/index.html>

Paul Ohtaki: <http://www.tellingstories.org/internment/pohtaki/index.html>





"I'VE ONLY SEEN MY DAD CRY THREE TIMES... THE SECOND TIME WAS WHEN WE WERE LEAVING SAN JOSE, NOT KNOWING IF WE WOULD EVER SEE IT AGAIN."
- NORM MINETA



DUST STORMS AND -30 DEGREE TEMPERATURES PLAGUED THE HEART MOUNTAIN WAR RELOCATION CENTER.



THEY REMAINED FRIENDS AND BOTH WENT INTO POLITICS. WHILE NORM WAS A CONGRESSMAN AND ALAN WAS A SENATOR, THEY SPONSORED H.R. 442, WHICH BECAME THE CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT OF 1988.

ON **SEPTEMBER 21, 2001**, MINETA SENT A LETTER TO ALL U.S. AIRLINES FORBIDDING THEM FROM PRACTICING **RACIAL PROFILING**, OR SUBJECTING MIDDLE EASTERN OR MUSLIM PASSENGERS TO A HEIGHTENED DEGREE OF PRE-FLIGHT SCRUTINY. HE STATED THAT IT WAS ILLEGAL FOR THE AIRLINES TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST PASSENGERS BASED ON THEIR RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN OR RELIGION.



THIS LAW INCLUDED AN APOLOGY AND PROVIDED REPARATIONS TO THOUSANDS OF SURVIVING JAPANESE AMERICANS INCARCERATED DURING WORLD WAR II.

NORM WAS APPOINTED **UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION** BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH IN 2001.



Smithsonian Institution
NORMAN MINETA



HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM

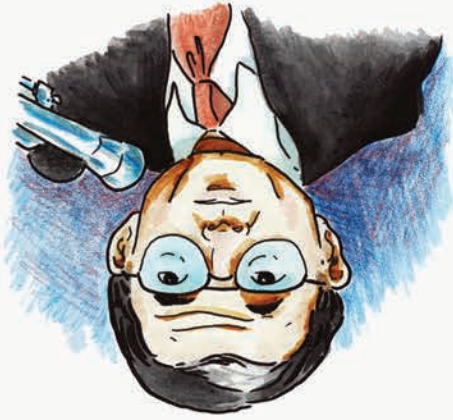


DAD! THEY TOOK AWAY MY BASEBALL BATT!

NORMAN MINETA

Smithsonian Institution

HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM



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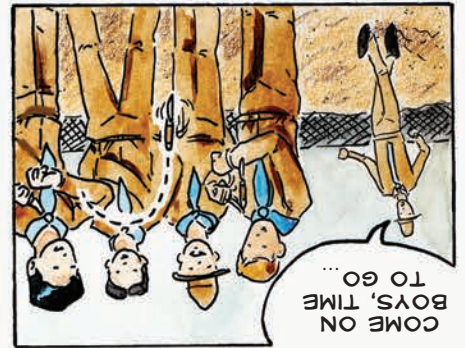


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I HOPE WE SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN SOON. WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER MEETING HERE.



COME ON BOYS, TIME TO GO ...



"I'VE ONLY SEEN MY DAD CRY THREE TIMES... THE SECOND TIME WAS WHEN WE WERE LEAVING SAN JOSE, NOT KNOWING IF WE WOULD EVER SEE IT AGAIN."
- NORM MINETA

DUST STORMS AND -30 DEGREE TEMPERATURES PLAGUED THE HEART MOUNTAIN WAR RELOCATION CENTER.



SOME SCOUTS FROM THE TOWN OF CODY ARE GOING TO JOIN OUR SCOUT MEETING.

WE ARE GOING OUT TO THE JAP* CAMP FOR A SCOUT MEETING.



ARE THERE ANY SCOUTS OUT THERE?

ALAN K. SIMPSON

*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.

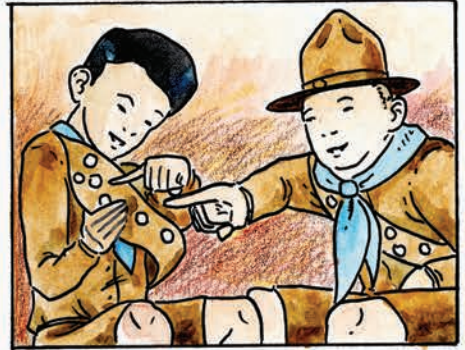


YES, THESE ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS.

I THOUGHT THEY WERE SPIES.



NORM, WHY DON'T YOU WORK WITH ALAN?





WE FIND THE INTERMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS TO HAVE BEEN A MILITARY NECESSITY



FRED TOOK HIS CASE ALL THE WAY TO THE SUPREME COURT.



...ORDERED TO SPEND SEVERAL MONTHS AT TANFORAN ASSEMBLY CENTER BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE TOPAZ CONCENTRATION CAMP.



DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS, ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1942 FRED WAS CONVICTED OF DEFEYING EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 AND SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS PROBATION AND ...



.. WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU WOULD GO TO COURT FOR US TO CONTEST WHETHER EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.



FRED, I'M ERNEST BESIG, THE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION ...



...AND TAKEN TO A SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY JAIL.



ON MAY 30, 1942, FRED WAS ARRESTED IN SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA ...

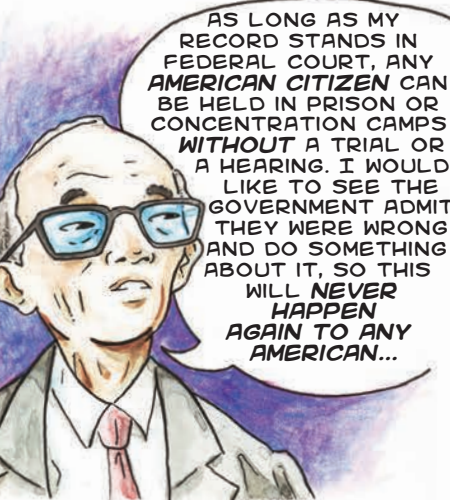
IN 1980, A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION FOUND THE INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THIS ALLOWED FOR FRED'S CASE TO BE RE-OPENED.



ON NOVEMBER 10, 1983 JUDGE MARILYN HALL PATEL OVERTURNED FRED'S CONVICTION IN CALIFORNIA.



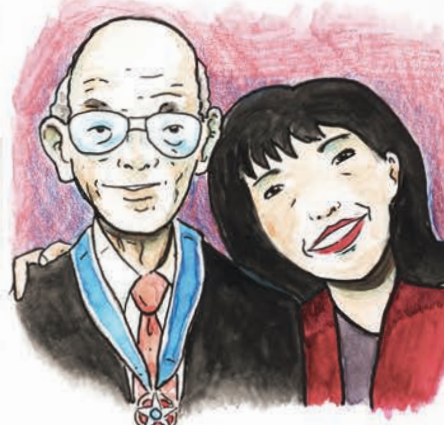
THIS HOWEVER DID NOT OVERTURN HIS CONVICTION IN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT.



AS LONG AS MY RECORD STANDS IN FEDERAL COURT, ANY AMERICAN CITIZEN CAN BE HELD IN PRISON OR CONCENTRATION CAMPS WITHOUT A TRIAL OR A HEARING. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT ADMIT THEY WERE WRONG AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SO THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN TO ANY AMERICAN...

FRED STARTED LOBBYING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR A BILL THAT WOULD GRANT A FORMAL APOLOGY AND COMPENSATION FOR THE SURVIVING JAPANESE AMERICANS WHO WERE INCARCERATED.

HIS GOAL WAS REALIZED IN 1988 WHEN PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN SIGNED THE CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT. IN 1998 FRED WAS AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM. HE PASSED AWAY IN 2005.



HIS WORK IS CARRIED ON BY HIS DAUGHTER KAREN KOREMATSU, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FRED T. KOREMATSU INSTITUTE

Smithsonian Institution

FRED KOREMATSU

I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM PUT ME INTO A PRISON! I'LL CHANGE MY NAME!

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

FRED DEFIED THE POLICE AND REFUSED TO GO TO THE INCARCERATION CAMPS

YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
[HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM](http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program)

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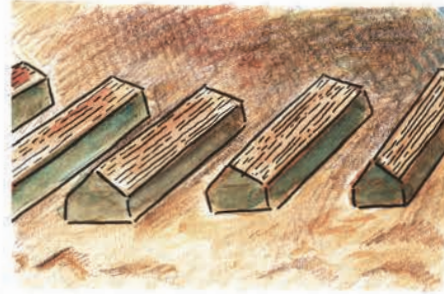
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BUT THE SUPREME COURT RULED AGAINST HIM IN A 6 TO 3 VOTE.

WE FIND THE INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS TO HAVE BEEN A MILITARY NECESSITY.





THEY ARE LETTING POP COME HOME, BUT THEY ARE SENDING A NURSE WITH HIM.

JAN. 20, 1942



I KEEP BEGGING FOR THEM TO SEND HIM TO A HOSPITAL. HE NEEDS CARE!



MOM, COME HOME! THE FBI JUST TOOK POP!



THAT'S MY FATHER. HE'S JUST GOTTEN BACK FROM SURGERY. ULCER.



SEICHI WAS RELEASED TO A HOSPITAL WHERE HE WAS SURROUNDED BY SERVICEMEN OF WAKE ISLAND.



THEY ARE HOLDING YOUR FATHER BECAUSE HE IS A FISHERMAN AND MIGHT BE HELPING THE JAPANESE.



WHAT'S GOING ON?



WE ARE FROM THE FBI. IS THERE A NAKAHARA LIVING HERE?



I'M SORRY, BUT MR. NAKAHARA HAS DIED.



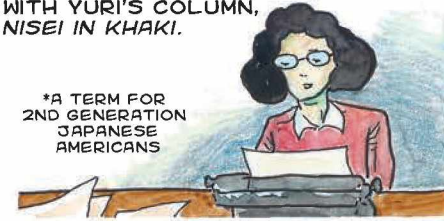
APRIL 2, 1942



NOW THEY ARE PUTTING US ALL IN PRISON!

WHILE INCARCERATED YURI ORGANIZED WELCOMING PARTIES FOR NEW ARRIVALS AND A GROUP CALLED THE CRUSADERS THAT WROTE LETTERS TO NISEI* SOLDIERS. THE JEROME CAMP NEWSPAPER SHARED SAMPLES OF THE LETTERS WITH YURI'S COLUMN, NISEI IN KHAKI.

*A TERM FOR 2ND GENERATION JAPANESE AMERICANS



YURI'S EXPERIENCES LED HER TO BECOME A LIFELONG CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST. SHE FOUGHT FOR ASIAN AMERICAN RIGHTS, PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE, AFRICAN AMERICAN RIGHTS AND THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS...



AND FAMOUSLY CRADLED MALCOLM X'S HEAD AFTER HE WAS SHOT ON FEBRUARY 21, 1965.



CAN I HELP YOU?

Smithsonian Institution
YURI KOCHIYAMA
 YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
[HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM](http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program)



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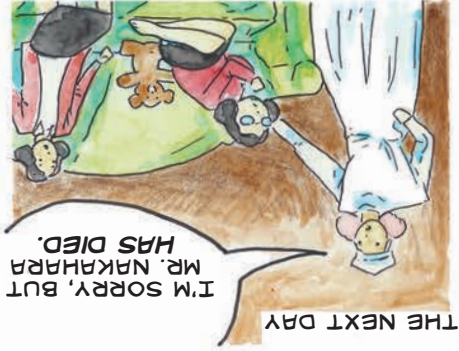
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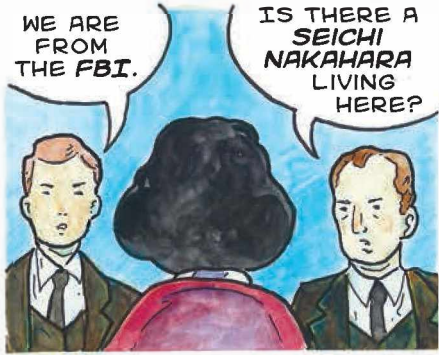


APRIL 2, 1942



I'M SORRY, BUT
MR. NAKAHARA
HAS DIED.

THE NEXT DAY

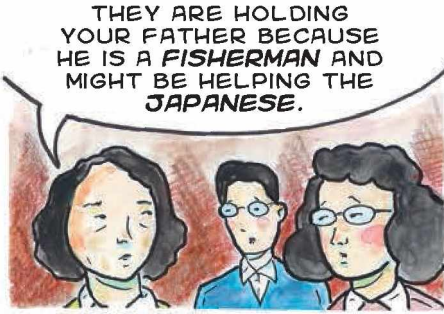


WE ARE
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IS THERE A
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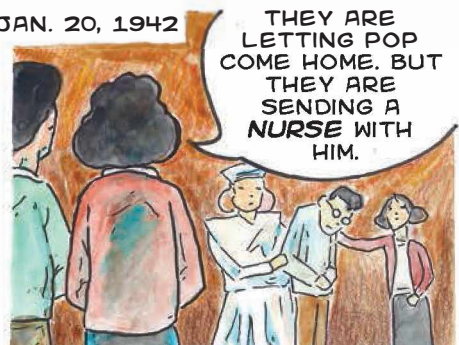
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HE NEEDS CARE!



JAN. 20, 1942

THEY ARE
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A MAN DISCOVERED THAT OUR RATIONS WERE BEING SOLD OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

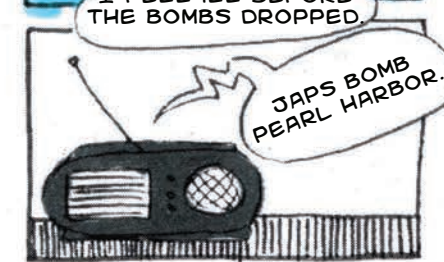


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Land of the Free

THE STORY OF PAUL OHTAKI

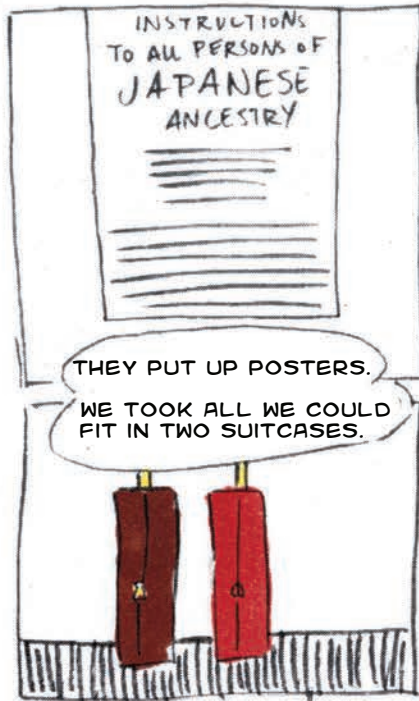
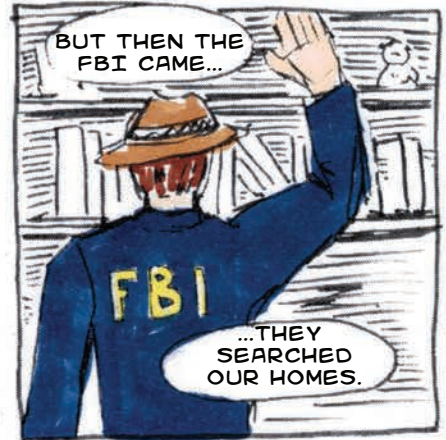
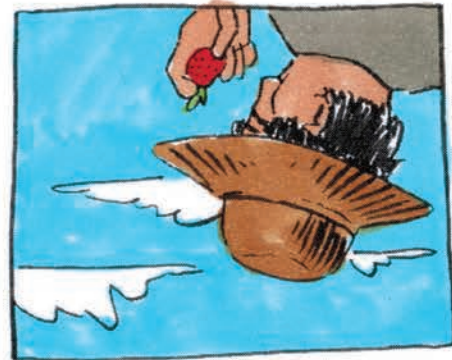
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*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.



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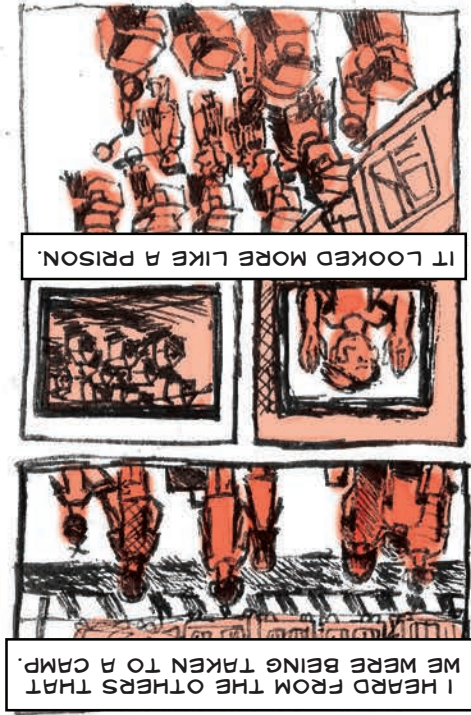
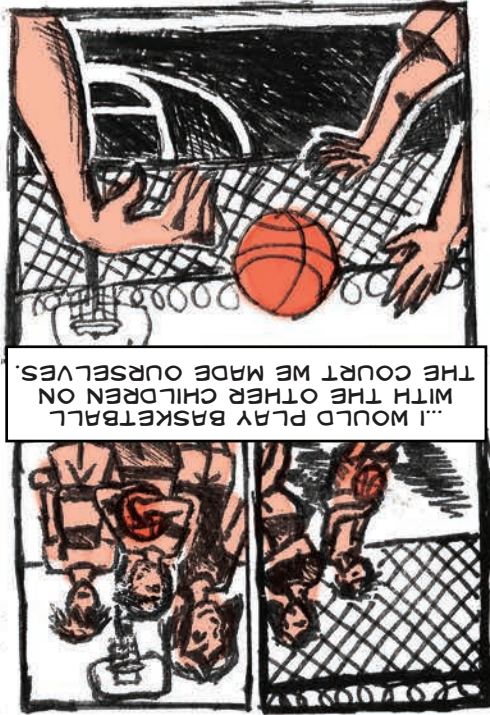
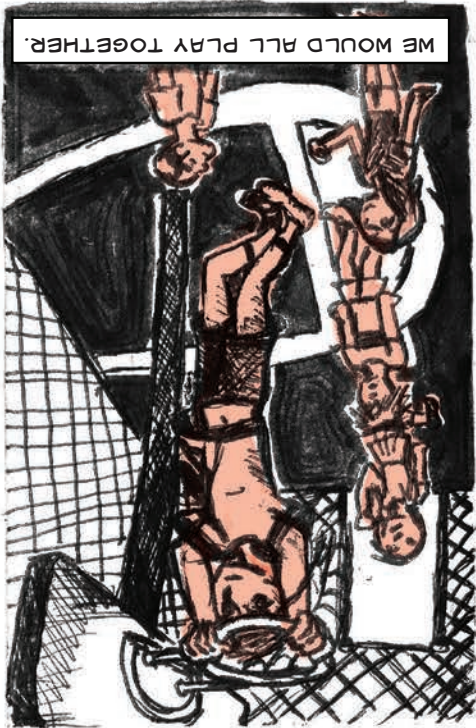


YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
 AMERICAN HISTORY SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES
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THE STORY OF PAUL
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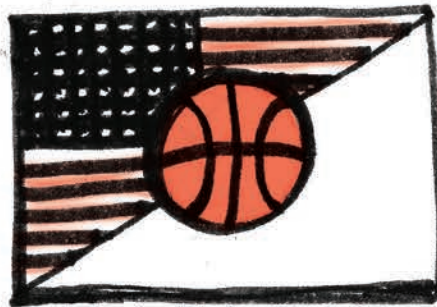
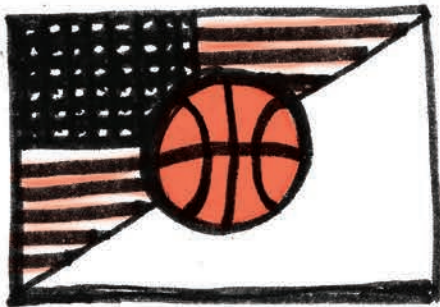
*Land of
 the Free*

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THE STORY OF



MASARU KAWAGUCHI

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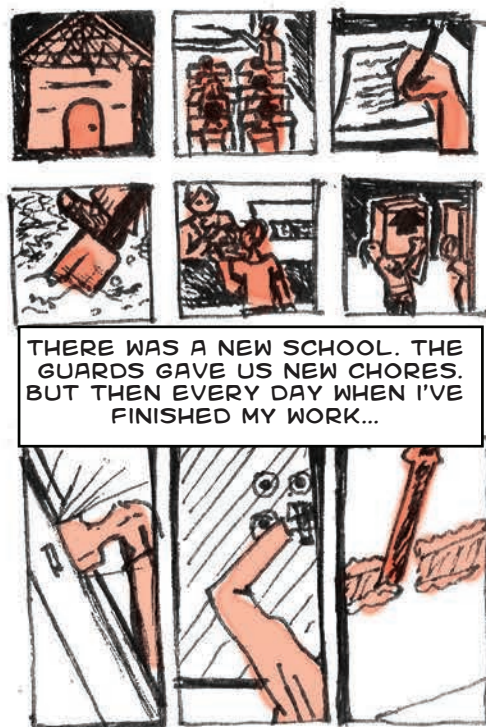
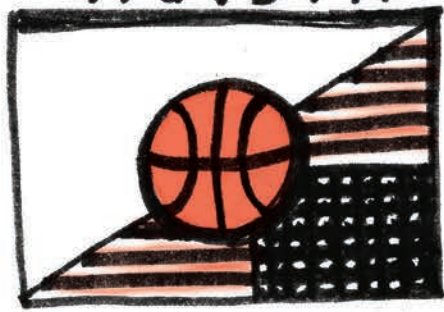


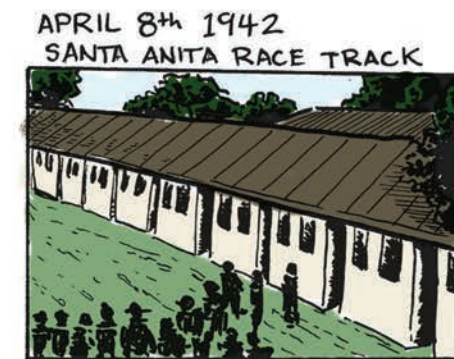
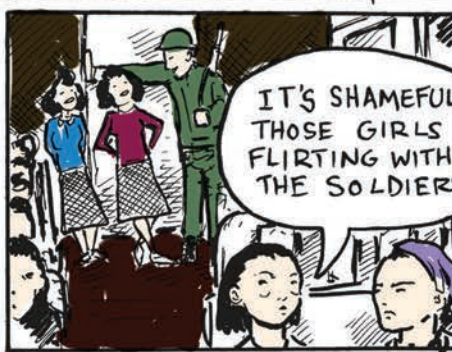
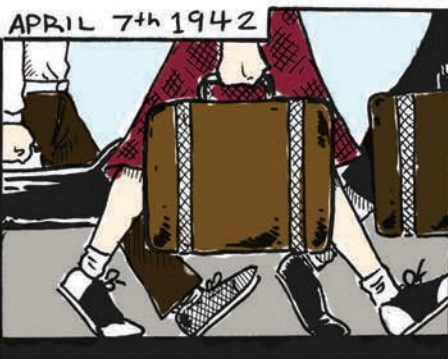
MASARU KAWAGUCHI

THE STORY OF

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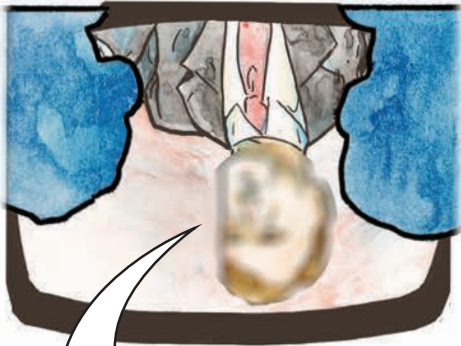
Smithsonian Institution
 DECEMBER 7th 1941
Chizu Iiyama

EXTRA! EXTRA! THE JAPS* BOMB PEARL HARBOR!

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*A NEGATIVE RACIAL EPITHET.





I FEAR THAT MUSLIMS
IN THIS COUNTRY,
ARE TIED TO TERRORISM.

IT'S EASY TO DISMISS THIS AS AN
ISOLATED MISTAKE IN HISTORY,
BUT THE ECHOES OF THE PAST
STILL HAUNT US

IF YOU HAVE THE FEELING
THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG,
DON'T BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP.

-FRED T. KOREMATSU



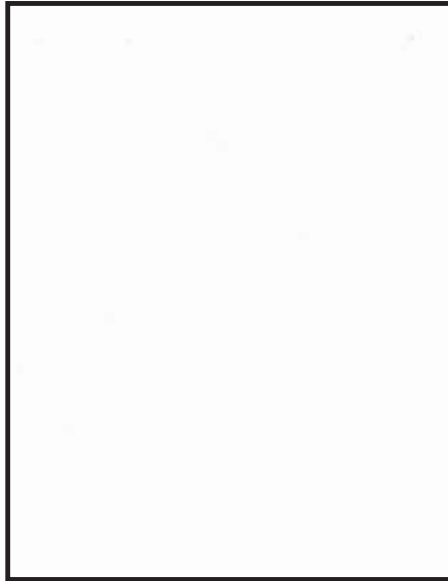
TOGETHER WE NEED TO PROTECT
CIVIL LIBERTIES FOR EVERYONE.

* LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN L. DEWITT
APRIL 13, 1943



"... IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE
WHETHER HE IS AN AMERICAN
CITIZEN, HE IS STILL A JAPANESE.
AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP DOES
NOT NECESSARILY DETERMINE
LOYALTY...
BUT WE MUST WORRY ABOUT
THE JAPANESE ALL THE TIME
UNTIL HE IS WIPED
OFF THE MAP." *

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE
ACTING OUT OF FEAR THAT
YOU SEE TODAY?

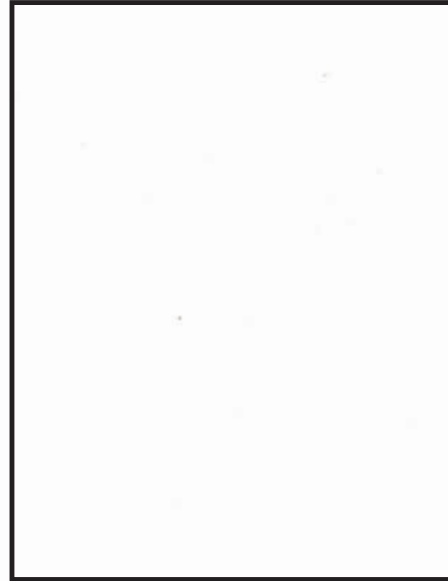


... WHICH GREATLY EXPANDED THE
GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO
MONITOR THE DAILY ACTIVITY OF
ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS



ON OCTOBER 26, 2001,
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH SIGNED
INTO LAW THE PATRIOT ACT...

WHAT SHOULD WE DO
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
[HTTP://AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/GETINVOLVED/
YOUTH-CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT-PROGRAM](http://americanhistory.si.edu/getinvolved/youth-civic-engagement-program)



... THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE
IMPRISONMENT OF APPROXIMATELY
120,000 MEN, WOMEN,
AND CHILDREN
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY.



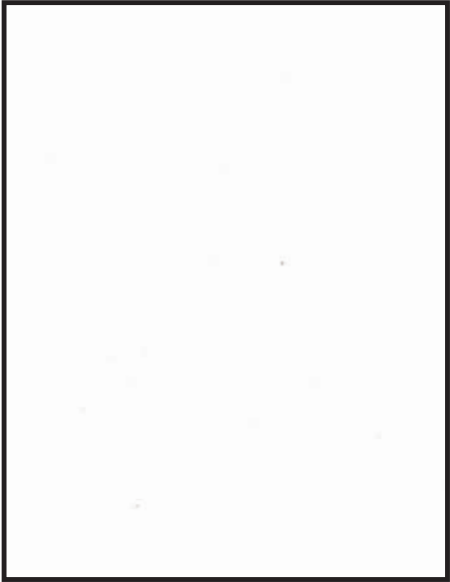
ON FEBRUARY 19, 1942,
PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT
SIGNED INTO LAW EXECUTIVE
ORDER 9066, WHICH
ULTIMATELY LAID...

Smithsonian Institution
**HOW DOES
FEAR AFFECT
NATIONAL &
INTERNATIONAL
POLICY?**

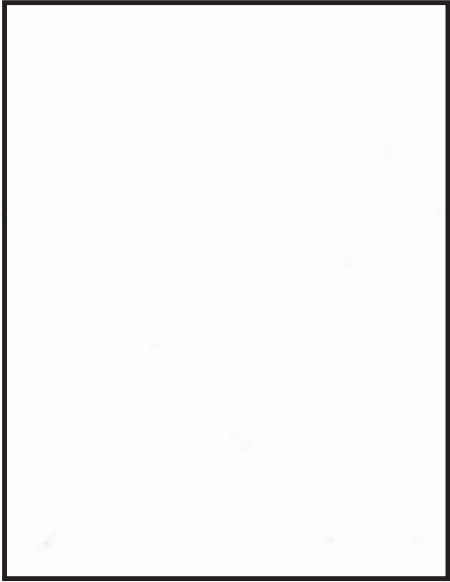
ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, THE
IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY
ATTACKED PEARL HARBOR,
KILLING 2403 U.S. SERVICE
PERSONNEL.



ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001,
THE TERRORIST GROUP
AL-QAEDA COORDINATED
ATTACKS ON THE U.S.,
KILLING 2977 PEOPLE.



WHAT SHOULD WE DO
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE
ACTING OUT OF FEAR THAT
YOU SEE TODAY?



IF YOU HAVE THE FEELING
THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG,
DON'T BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP.
-FRED T. KOREMATSU



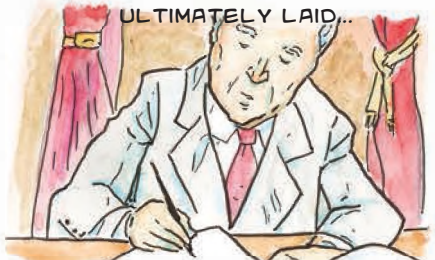
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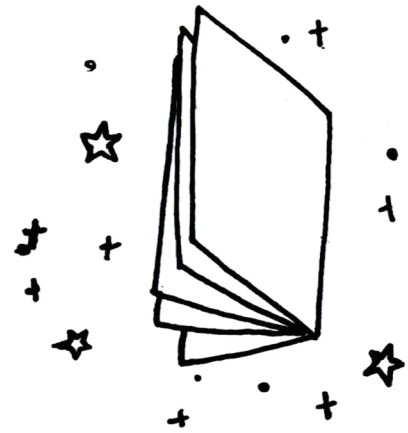
* LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN L. DEWITT
APRIL 13, 1943

IT'S EASY TO DISMISS THIS AS AN
ISOLATED MISTAKE IN HISTORY...
BUT THE ECHOES OF THE PAST
STILL HAUNT US

I FEAR THAT MUSLIMS
IN THIS COUNTRY,
ARE TIED TO TERRORISM.

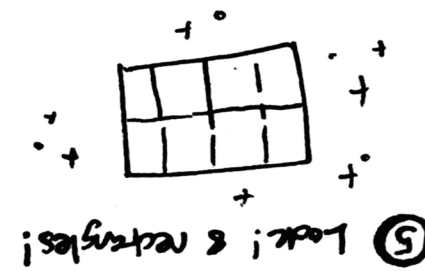
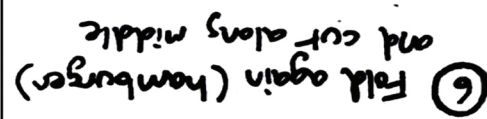
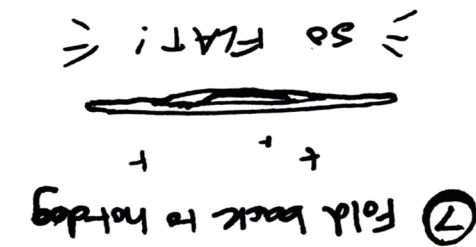
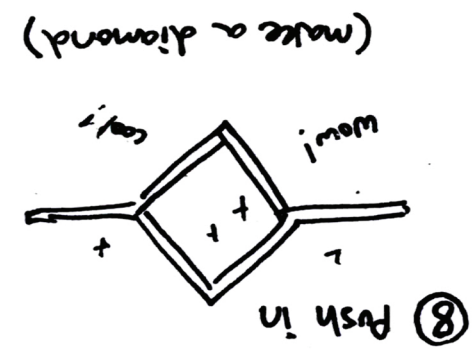
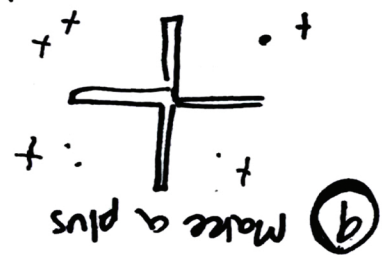
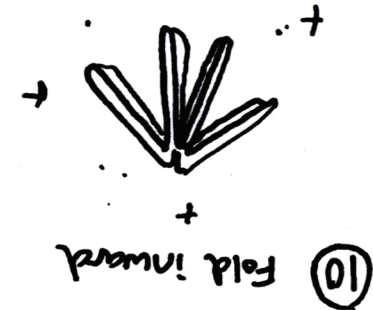


NOW DRAW!



NOW YOU'VE GOT A ZINE!

DRUMROLL



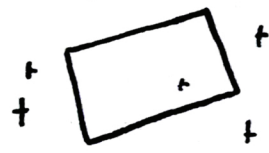
YOU'RE WELCOME.

INSTAGRAM: @bellicose beauty
TUMBLR: bellicose beauty
TWITTER: @bellicose beau
YOUTUBE: /bellicose beauty

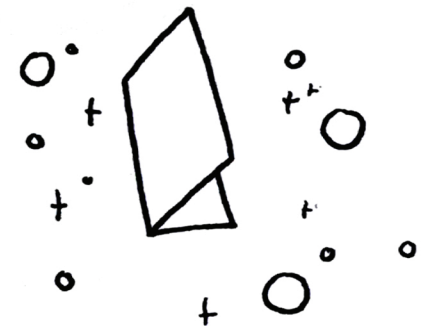
CREATED AT THE HIRSHHORN'S ARTLAB+ PROGRAM. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [HTTP://ARTLABPLUS.SI.EDU/](http://artlabplus.si.edu/)



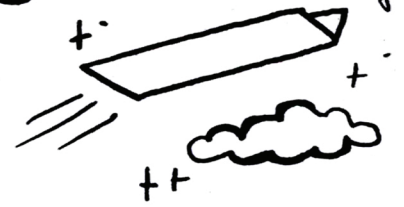
1 Get some paper 8.5 x 11



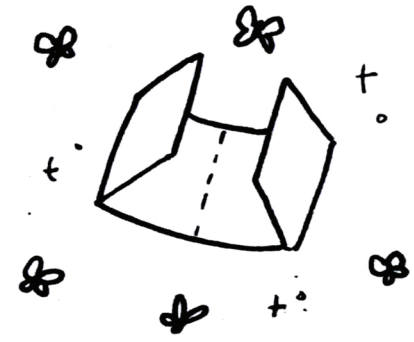
2 Hamburger it



3 Hotdog it.

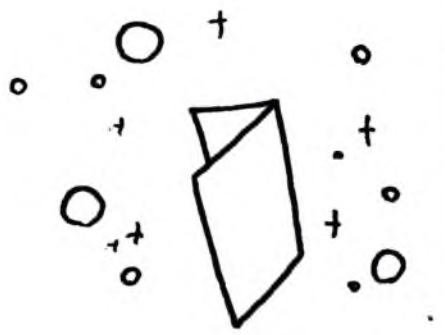


4 Butterfly it

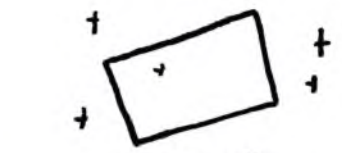


INSTAGRAM: @belliscobea
 TUMBLR: belliscobea
 TWITTER: @belliscobea
 YOUTUBE: /belliscobea

YOU'RE
 WELCOME.



② Hamburger it



① Get some paper 8.5 x 11



④ Butterfly it

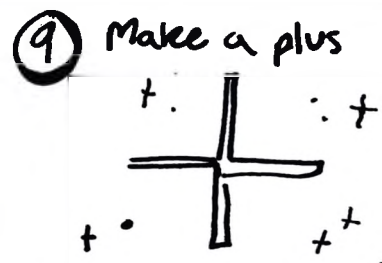


③ Hotdog it

Now You've
 GOT A ZINE!



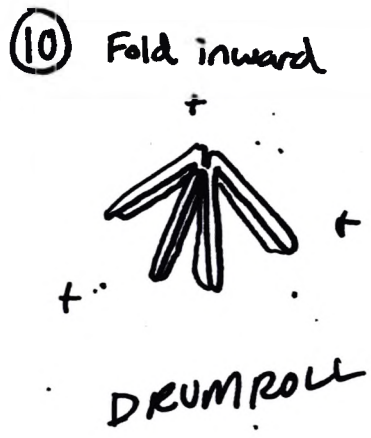
NOW DRAW!



⑨ Make a plus

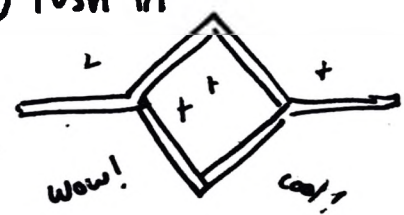


⑦ Fold back to hotdog



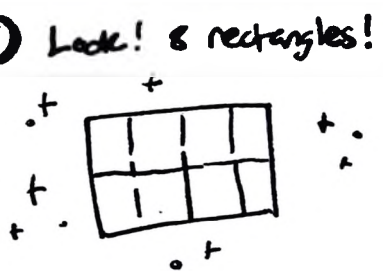
⑩ Fold inward

DRUMROLL



⑧ Push in

(make a diamond)



⑤ Look! 8 rectangles!



⑥ Fold again (hamburger) and cut along middle

1)

2)

3)

4)



7)

6)

5)

