



# UNCOVERING AMERICA

with the National Gallery of Art

Dorothea Lange  
*One Nation Indivisible, San Francisco, California*  
1942, gelatin silver print, printed c. 1965  
National Gallery of Art, Washington  
Gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

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## What does it mean to be American?

After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States government imprisoned over 100,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast in internment camps. More than half these people were US citizens, and many of them were children.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, over 82,000 Japanese Americans were awarded reparations after a federally appointed commission determined that racism and “wartime hysteria” drove the decision to incarcerate people.

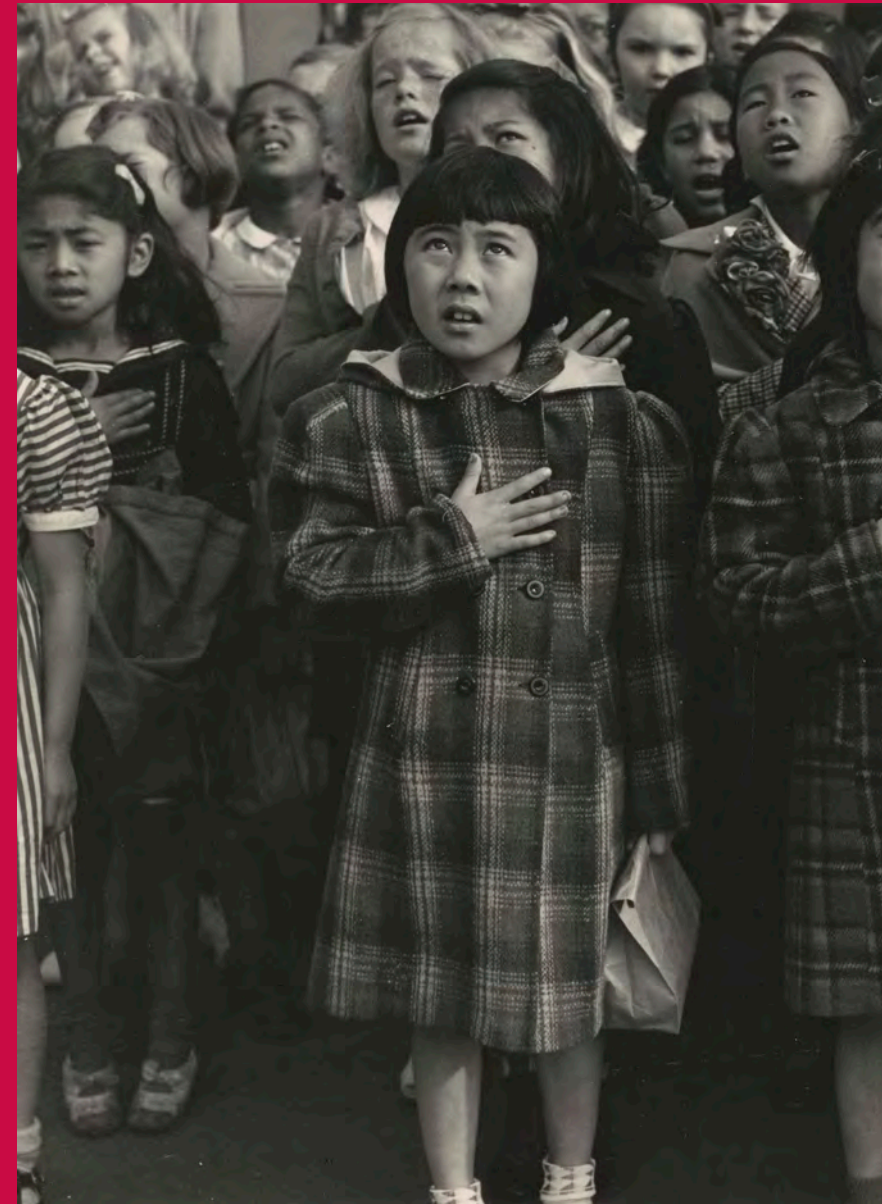
This photograph shows a group of public school children reciting the US Pledge of Allegiance in San Francisco as the round-up efforts began. The US government hired photographer Dorothea Lange — widely known for her depictions of Depression-era migrants — to document the incarceration process. It hoped to use Lange’s images to promote the internment program, but her photographs were instead impounded until the end of the war and then placed in the National Archives.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS

What choices did Lange make as photographer to make this a compelling image?

Why do you think this photograph might have been seen as subversive or critical of the government?

What do you think this image and its title symbolize or represent?



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