



VIRGINIA  
STAGE  
COMPANY  
AT THE  
Wells Theatre

VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY IN COLLABORATION WITH **ODURep** PRESENTS



# I SING THE RISING SEA

## STUDY GUIDE

book, music & lyrics by **ERIC SCHORR**

directed by **CHRIS HANNA**

study guide by **KAT MARTIN**

SEPTEMBER 13 - OCTOBER 9  
ODU's GOODE THEATRE

#risingsea

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM VSC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Our Teaching Philosophy

We've witnessed firsthand what the creative process nurtures in children, teens and all lifelong learners:

- excitement, enthusiasm, and openness to explore their own creativity
- critical-thinking and problem solving skills
- enthusiasm for teamwork
- empathy and support toward peers
- strength in their ability to listen and express themselves effectively
- healthy self-image and awareness

Because it has such positive and far-reaching outcomes for our students, VSC's education model emphasizes process over product. We believe that students will emerge from their time with VSC's educational programs with skills that will serve them well in all areas of life.

## Benefits for Students

Students enrolled in VSC's education programs will:

- develop leadership qualities
- enhance communication skills
- develop an appreciation for the creative process
- learn to take ownership of their own ideas and concepts
- increase their knowledge of theatre terms
- develop greater confidence through the creative play experience
- develop a spirit of curiosity
- learn to develop and appreciate the value of kindness
- develop or expand spatial awareness
- use dramatic prompts to create imaginative movement
- cooperate with others in group sessions
- learn how to use their voice safely and effectively
- learn how to use their bodies effectively with character development
- work with peers to write scripts
- explore characters and settings
- rehearse in a positive, supportive environment
- practice respectful critique of others' work
- put it all together to create original theatre for others.

Virginia Stage Company's production of **I Sing the Rising Sea** adheres to the following Virginia's English Standards of Learning requirements for grades K-3:

**Earth Science** – ES.1, 2,8, 9

**Science** – 5.1, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9

**English** – 9.4, 10.4, 11.4, 12.4

**US History** – US.9, US.II.2, USII.6, USII.7, USII.8, USII.9

**Virginia History** – VUS.10, 11, 12, 13


**World Geography** – WG. 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 16, 17


**Theatre** – 6.18, 6.20, 6.22, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 7.13, 7.17,7.18, 7.19, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18, 8.19, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22,8.23, 8.24, 8.25, TI.11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS STUDY GUIDE

## In This Guide...

You will find activities that are appropriate for grades 5-12.

Activities that are appropriate for middle school students will be marked with 

Activities that are better suited for high school students will be marked with 

Tie-In references to the production *I Sing the Rising Sea* will be marked with




Vocabulary Building Block terms and definitions will be marked with



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 **Be sure to download the Supplemental Ice Core Lab from [vastage.org/studyguides](http://vastage.org/studyguides)**

## ABOUT *I SING THE RISING SEA*:

This musical by the coauthor of *Frog Kiss* tells a sweeping story that flows through generations and across continents—from the shores of Virginia to Japan and Antarctica. Scientists, soldiers, poets, and lovers strive to understand and master the power of the oceans that connect us all. In collaboration with ODURep, this newest installment of the *American Soil Series* is an original and timely work for musical theater that captures the urgency of one of humanity's most overwhelming challenges—to survive the rising sea.



# DIGGING YOUR HISTORY

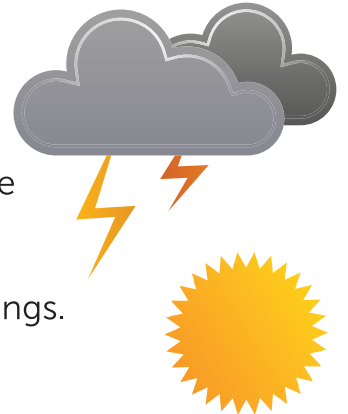
In *I Sing the Rising Sea*, Granby Jr. and Misaki are working in Antarctica as **climatologists**. Misaki is working on drilling an **ice core** that could reveal the key to reversing the damage of **climate** change.



**CLIMATE** describes the weather conditions prevailing in an area in general or over a long period.



A **CLIMATOLOGIST** analyzes climate patterns to provide an understanding of the conditions of a particular area, and help the citizens of that area adapt to their surroundings.



An **ICE CORE** is a cylinder-shaped sample of ice drilled from a glacier. Ice core records provide the most direct and detailed way to investigate past climate and atmospheric conditions. Snowfall that collects on glaciers each year captures atmospheric concentrations of dust, sea-salts, ash, gas bubbles and human pollutants. Ice core records have allowed well dated reconstructions of past temperatures over hundreds of thousands of years. Ice cores can be read like a history book that can reveal the secrets of time long gone.

On the left there is a picture of an ice core drilled in Antarctica. Notice the layers each layer represents 10 years. Can you see the little particles in the layers? Notice the different sizes of the layers. What do you think could be the cause of the different sizes of layers?

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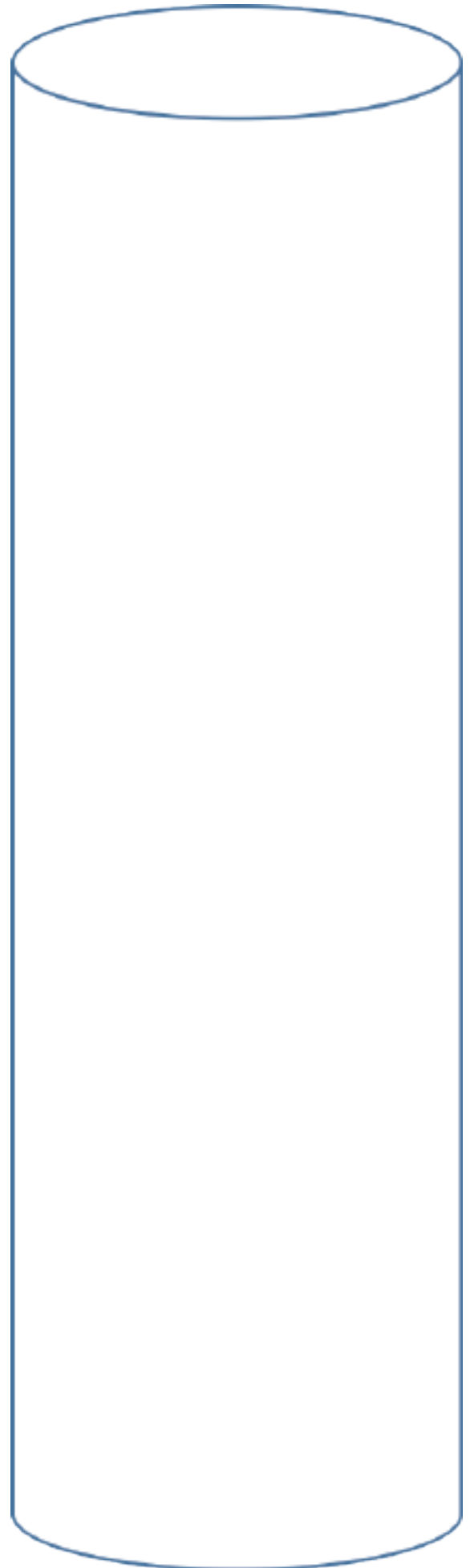
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DIGGING YOUR HISTORY  
**ACTIVITY**

Think about your life's milestones like; starting at a new school, taking a family vacation, or moving to a new city and draw an ice core of your life. How can you represent a moment in your life in a small layer of your core?





# CLOSE READING

In *I Sing the Rising Sea*, Granby Sr. is friends with **Langston Hughes**. In fact, Hughes gives a book of poetry to Granby.



## LANGSTON HUGHES

is an American poet that is particularly known for his insightful, colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He came into popularity during The Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes was very active in the American Civil Rights Movement and fought against discrimination against African Americans.



Read his famous poem “Dreams” carefully and answer the questions on the next page.

## DREAMS

By: Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.



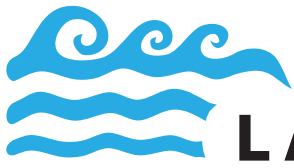
**DISCRIMINATION:** The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.



**BARREN:** (of land) too poor to produce much or any vegetation. (of a place or building) bleak and lifeless.



**METAPHOR:** a word or phrase that is used to make a comparison between two people, things, animals, or places.

**LANGSTON HUGHES**

1) Based on *Dreams*, what things does Langston Hughes compare dreams to in a metaphor?

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2) Why does he choose these things? What do those things have in common?

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3) What do these comparisons say about what Langston Hughes thinks about dreams?

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4) How is this opinion about dreams related to the Civil Rights Movement?

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# POEM OF THE SEA

In *I Sing the Rising Sea*, the poetry of Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman play an important role in the lives of the Granby Sr., Kimmie, Granby Jr., and Misaki. Both poets write about nature often and are considered excellent examples of American poetry. Although they write about similar topics they each have their own style. Below are examples of both Hughes and Whitman's poetry about nature. After you read their poetry try to write a poem about the ocean. Remember it's ok to have your own poetry style!



## from LEAVES OF GRASS

By: Walt Whitman

GIVE me the splendid silent sun, with all his  
beams full-dazzling;  
Give me juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red from  
the orchard;  
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass  
grows;  
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape;  
Give me fresh corn and wheat—give me  
serene-moving animals, teaching content;  
Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high  
plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking  
up at the stars;

## SEA CALM

By: Langston Hughes

How still,  
How strangely still  
The water is today,

It is not good

## YOUR POEM

By: \_\_\_\_\_





# SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATIONS

In *I Sing the Rising Sea*, several characters make scientific observations. Granby Jr and Misaki are climatologists living in Antarctica and Emperor Hirohito makes observations about sea creatures. In both cases the observer takes a patient look and records or measures what they see. It is especially important to take note of any changes. Observations are an important part of the Scientific Method.



Now it's your turn to be the scientist and collect facts based on observations **you** make.

Step 1: Pick a spot in nature to observe. This spot is now your subject. This spot should be safe and a place you see often. Example: your backyard.

Step 2: Make your first observation. Create a simple drawing of the subject and write down a few notes. Don't forget to write down what time it is. Example: In my backyard there is a tree that has a lot of green leaves. There are also a few flower buds.

Step 3: Repeat your observation. Return to the same spot at the same time and draw and take notes on what you see. What is different? Has anything changed? Example: There are some new flowers that have bloomed on the tree.

Step 4: Repeat your observations for one week.

Step 5: Draw conclusions. What is different about your last drawing from your first drawing? Why do you think that change happened? What do you think your subject would look like a week from now based on the pattern that you saw? What did you learn?

**TEACHER TIP:** The next page of the guide can be copied and distributed for students to record their observation.

## **DRAW YOUR OBSERVATIONS**

## **NOTES**

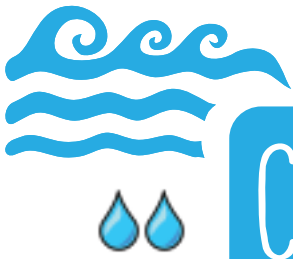


# BEST FRIEND VENN DIAGRAMS

In *I Sing the Rising Sea*, Granby Jr. and Rosa become best friends in Ocean View in the 1930s. Their friendship continues throughout Rosa's life, even after she moves to New York City and Granby is sent to Japan to fight in World War II. They are different ages, ethnicities and gender but that does not stand in the way of their friendship.

Think about your best friend. What do you have in common? What about you is different? Fill out the venn diagram with information about you and your best friend below.





# CLOSE READING

## WALT WHITMAN

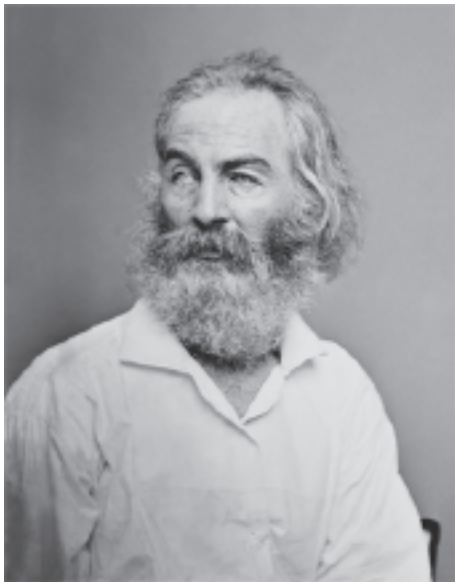
(May 31, 1819 – March 26, 1892) is a very unique poet whose style is hard to categorize. He has a distinct voice and a complex world view. Whitman loved nature in the way of a romantic poet but also supported and was intrigued by the science and rationalism movement growing up around him. Whitman's greatest legacy is his invention of a truly American free verse.



Whitman is the perfect poet for scientists like Granby Jr. and Misaki. His truly American subject matter serves as an inspiration for Langston Hughes while the romantic tendencies of his work would appeal to Kimie and Granby Sr.



## I HEAR AMERICA SINGING



**"[T]here shall be love between the poet and the man of demonstrable science. In the beauty of poems are the tuft and final applause of science."**  
— Walt Whitman

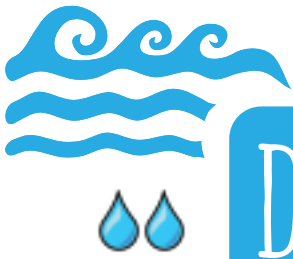
I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it  
should be, blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank  
or beam,  
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work,  
or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his  
boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat  
deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the  
hatter singing as he stands;  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's, on his way  
in the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at  
sundown;  
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the  
young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or  
washing, each singing what belongs to her, and  
to none else;  
The day what belongs to the day—at night, the  
party of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious  
Songs.

**WALT WHITMAN**

On the previous page is “I Hear America Singing”. Read the poem closely and answer the reading comprehension questions below in short paragraphs.

While you read take note of Whitman’s form and style as well as his subject matter. In poetry how a poet writes can be just as revealing as what they write.

- 1) Based on on “I Hear America Singing”, what do you think Whitman’s general attitude toward America is? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
- 2) Do you think that all of the singing in the poem is actual singing (as in, “la la la”) or metaphorical singing? Does the singing shift from one register to another? How can you tell?
- 3) Is it important that Whitman acknowledges the labor of women alongside that of men? What does it mean that he groups mothers into the category of workers that he creates in the poem?
- 4) Do you think that Whitman’s view of manual labor is overly rosy? Is he ignoring any truths about what it means to work a hard job?
- 5) What is the effect of all of the long lines in the poem? How do the long lines intersect with the vision of America that Whitman presents?
- 6) If Whitman were writing the poem today, do you think he’d be writing about the same sorts of folks? Or would he be writing about checkout cashiers, flight attendants, and call center workers? How has labor changed in America in the past 150 years?



# DOUBLE VICTORY POSTERS

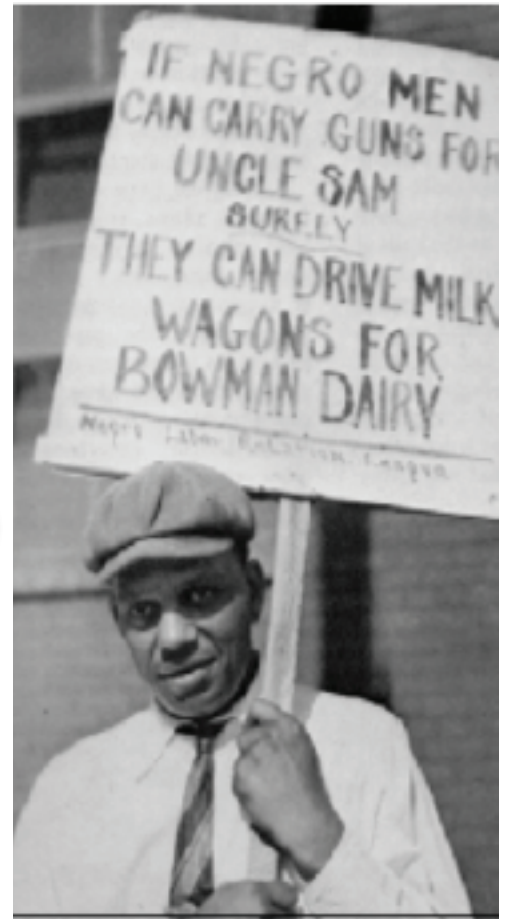
Imagine fighting in a war for a country that does not protect you while you are at home. A country that does not guarantee you the very same rights and ideals you are fighting to protect abroad. For African American service men and women, like Granby Sr., during World War II they didn't have to imagine it they lived it. During WWII, African Americans fought for a Double Victory —one aboard against the Axis countries of Germany, Japan, and Italy, and one at home against racism discrimination, and inequality.

In a war fought over the American ideals of justice, equality, and "unalienable rights" African Americans hoped those very principles would follow them home.

Soldiers like Granby Sr. fought on multiple fronts while African Americans at home like Langston Hughes used their voice to speak out against racial injustice.



Organizations like the NAACP organized in places like Harlem to put political pressure on the federal government to end Jim Crow laws and institutional inequity. How did the treatment of African Americans during World War II shape the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s?



## TIMELINE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE 1940S:

1942

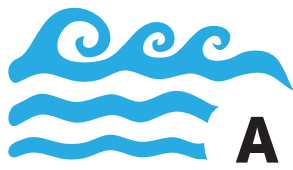
African American men (1942) and women (1944) admitted to the US Navy, and African American males into the Marines (1942).

1944

African American anti-aircraft battalion serve critical role in D-Day invasion

1944

African Americans fighting integrated units during the Battle of the Bulge under George Patton



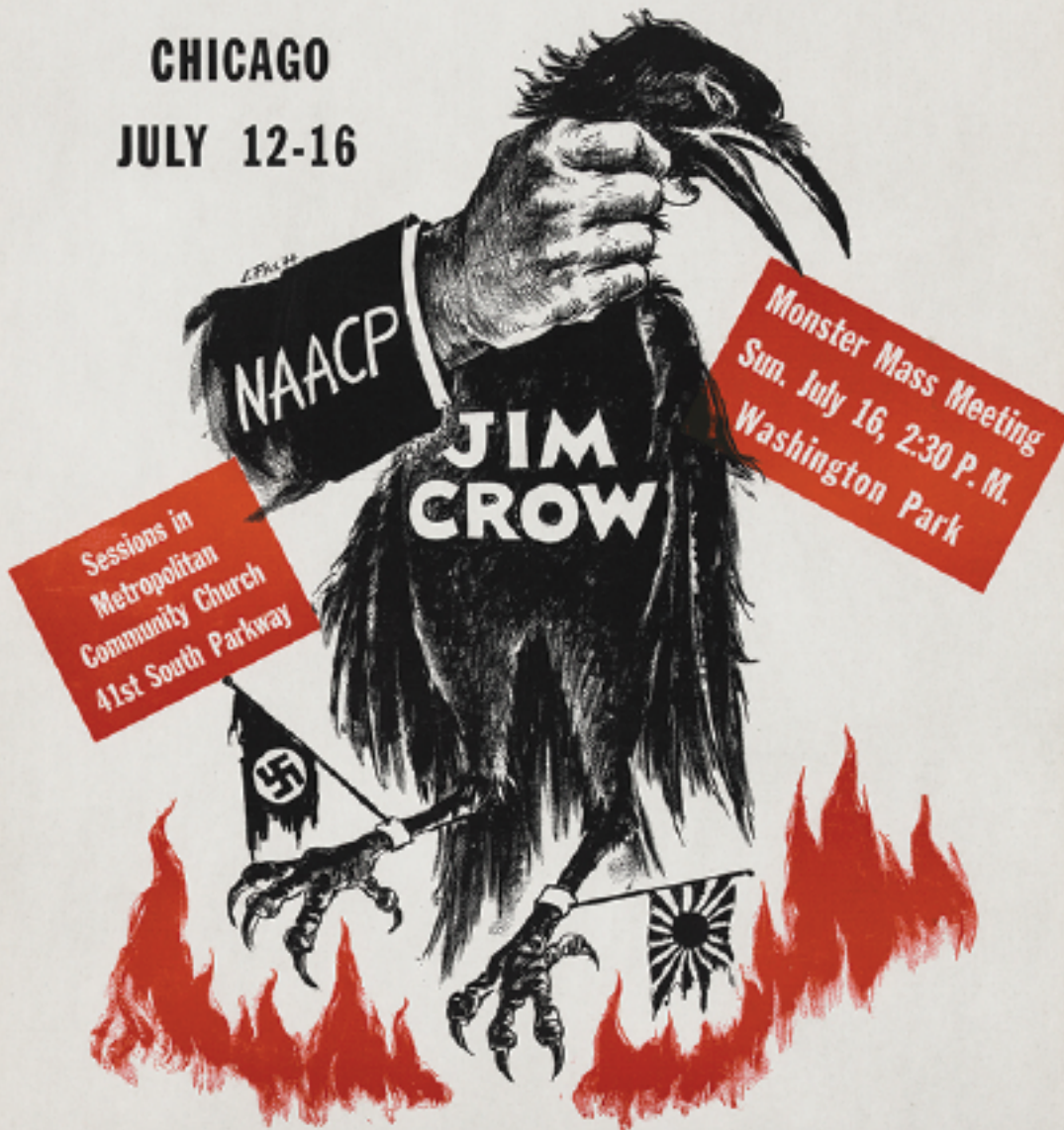
*"Come, let us take counsel together!"*

**Attend NAACP**

**WARTIME CONFERENCE FOR TOTAL PEACE**

**CHICAGO**

**JULY 12-16**



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for THE ADVANCEMENT of COLORED PEOPLE**  
**JOIN NOW!**

Chicago Branch:  
3456 SO. STATE STREET

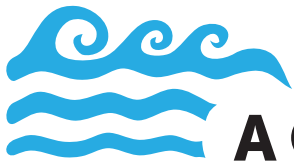
- OR -

National Office:  
69 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

This political poster is advertising for a community meeting to rally against racial inequity in the military as well as on the home front. Think about the questions to the right of the poster then on the next page draw a political poster for a contemporary cause for equality.

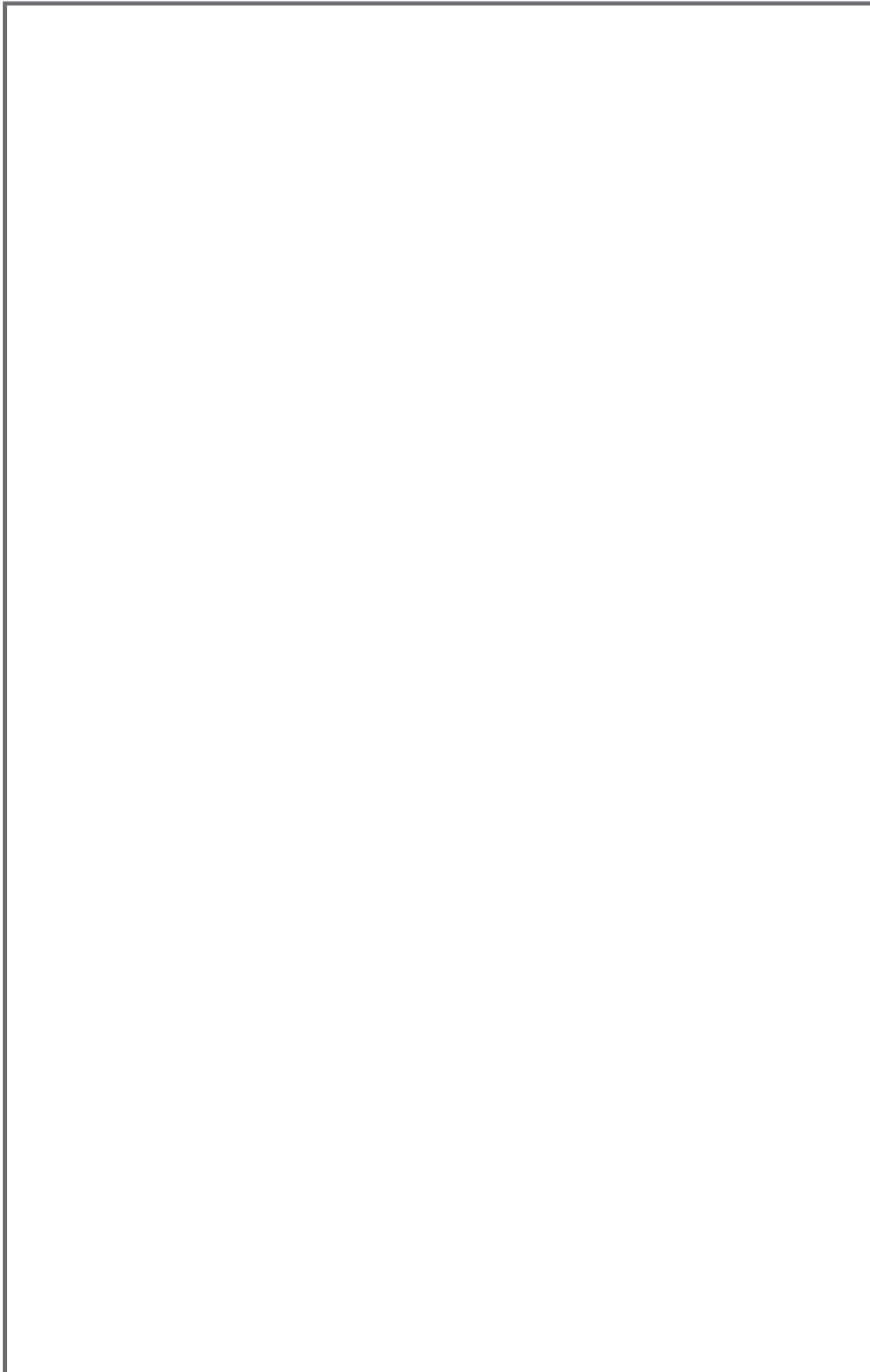
**Questions to consider:**

- 1) What colors are used in the poster? Why were these colors chosen? Are they symbolic?
- 2) What political cause is being promoted?
- 3) Who is sponsoring the event?
- 4) Why is the word TOTAL highlighted?
- 5) How is Jim Crow represented?
- 6) How are the axis power represented?
- 7) What is the overall tone of the poster?
- 8) Is that tone appropriate for the message?
- 9) Do you think the image is successful?



## DOUBLE VICTORY POLITICAL POSTER

# ACTIVITY

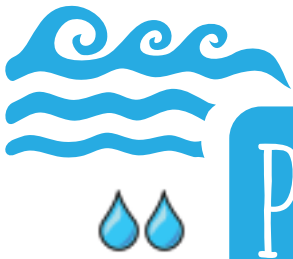


Draw your poster here!

### **Questions to consider:**

- 1) What cause are you representing?
- 2) What is the overall tone you would like to convey?
- 3) What actions are you hoping to cause in someone who sees this poster?
- 4) What images can you use to convey your message?
- 5) What four colors can you use symbolically in your political poster?





# POEM OF POST-WAR JAPAN

The cultural history of Japan until the late 19th early 20th century was incredibly isolated from the west. The ideals of honor, duty, and national pride made up the backbone of a feudal and Shogunate Japan. The shogun system could only exist in a climate of absolute loyalty and a fierce belief in the unity and superiority of Japan. These attitudes made Japan a tireless foe for America in the Pacific. However, after the defeat of Japan in World War II, the United States led the Allies in the occupation and rehabilitation of the Japanese state. Between 1945 and 1952, the U.S. occupying forces, led by General Douglas A. MacArthur, enacted widespread military, political, economic, and social reforms.

The Japan of Granby Sr. and Kimie was an occupied country trying to rebuild literally and emotionally from the destruction of war.



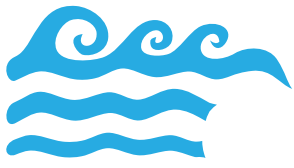
Scenes on the street contained desperate images of destruction as well as a new blending of the eastern and western way of life. As Emperor Hirohito stepped down from his rule by divine right MacArthur assumed the power of the occupier.

## IMAGES OF POST WAR JAPAN



### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In September, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur took charge of the Supreme Command of Allied Powers (SCAP) and began the work of rebuilding Japan. Although Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China had an advisory role as part of an "Allied Council," MacArthur had the final authority to make all decisions. The occupation of



Imagine the sounds and smells that would accompany this level of destruction.

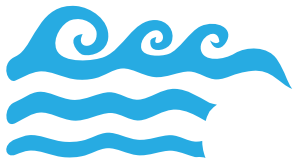


Japan can be divided into three phases: the initial effort to punish and reform Japan, the work to revive the Japanese economy, and the conclusion of a formal peace treaty and alliance.

In 1947, Allied advisors essentially dictated a new constitution to Japan's leaders. Some of the most profound changes in the document included downgrading the emperor's status to that of a figurehead without political control and placing more power in the parliamentary system, promoting greater rights and privileges for women, and renouncing the right to wage war, which involved eliminating all non-defensive armed forces.

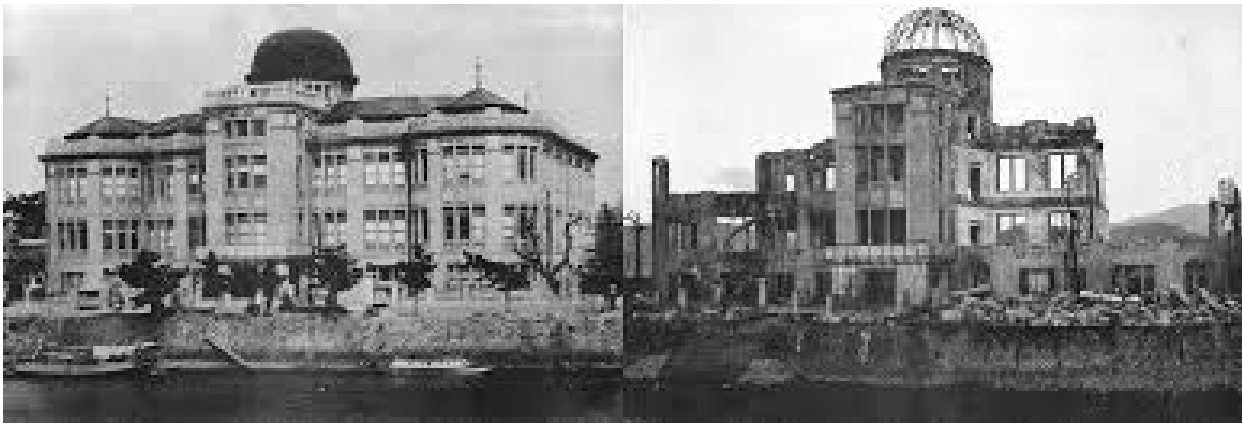


*General MacArthur and Japanese Emperor Hirohito*



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**



Look at these images from before and after WWII and the atomic bombs. Imagine living in the before photo and trying to live in the after.



POEM OF POST-WAR JAPAN  
**ACTIVITY**

Based on the images above and your own research try to imagine yourself living through the transition of post war Japan like Misaki and Granby Sr. Are you an American Soldier of a Japanese townspeople? What in your life has changed? Write a poem that reflects this monumental change in your world.





VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## **I SING THE RISING SEA**

SEPTEMBER 13 - OCTOBER 9 | ODU'S GOODE THEATRE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 at 2:15PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 at 10AM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 at 10:30AM

## **OLIVER TWIST**

OCTOBER 28 - NOVEMBER 13 | TCC's ROPER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 at 10AM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 at 10:30AM

## **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

DECEMBER 7 - 24 | THE WELLS THEATRE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16 at 10AM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15 at 10:30AM

## **A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE**

JANUARY 17 - FEBRUARY 5 | THE WELLS THEATRE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1 at 10AM

## **THE WIZ**

APRIL 11 - 30 | THE WELLS THEATRE

TUESDAY, APRIL 19 at 10AM

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 at 10:30AM

For more information, [vastage.org/student-matinees/](http://vastage.org/student-matinees/)

# STUDENT MATINEES

VSC would like to thank  
**The Batten Educational Achievement Fund  
of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation**

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