

## Land & Water Exhibit - Deschutes Historical Museum Lesson Plan

**Title:** Perseverance, Persistence, and Potatoes: The Life and Legacy of George Shima  
created by Owen Flannery, MAT

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**Rationale:** The story of George Shima is the story of so many immigrants throughout the history of the United States. Shima's life was full of personal, professional, and political obstacles, yet he managed to persist and almost always find a way to be successful despite resistance from his fellow farmers and the institutions in power at the time. Shima's resilience allowed him to become the first Japanese-American millionaire and build an empire worth \$18 million in 1910 (the equivalent of nearly half a billion dollars today). Even with his tremendous financial success, Shima faced opposition from others due to his race and many of the national attitudes towards Asian immigrants that has plagued the United States on multiple occasions over the past 150+ years.

**Grade Level & Possible Subject/Course:** 8th grade American History

**Suggested Timeframe:** Approximately 40 minutes

### Learning Objective:

- Understand who George Shima was and his significance in the agriculture industry, particularly in the development of the potato farming industry of the western United States.
- Discuss the challenges Shima faced as a Japanese immigrant and how he overcame them.
- Analyze the impact of George Shima's story on the broader themes of immigration and perseverance.

### Related ODE 2024 Social Science [Standards:](#)

- 8.32 - Identify and analyze methods of subversion, resistance, challenge, and perseverance, within and among the intersecting identities of ethnic and social groups traditionally excluded from historical narratives.

### Key Concept

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## Resilience and perseverance

**Lesson’s Central Question:** How did George Shima’s resilience and perseverance impact his success in agriculture, as well as his experience as an immigrant? What roles do resilience and perseverance play in the overall lived experience of immigrants and other groups that have faced oppression?

### Materials or Prep Needed:

- Slides for Direct Instruction: [CLICK HERE](#)
- Bend Bulletin Article: [CLICK HERE](#)
- Source: National Park Service: [CLICK HERE](#)

### Lesson Plan:

Steps & Timing	Teacher	Students
Intro (2-3 min)	<p>Ask students to take a minute to think about a recent meal they enjoyed? Were there any vegetables included in this meal? Where might these vegetables have been grown? Did the meal include potatoes?</p> <p>Quick share-out with an emphasis on responses that included potatoes (ie. burger &amp; fries, sandwich &amp; chips, breakfast w/. hash browns, etc.)</p>	<p>Brief brainstorm (30 seconds)</p> <p>Raise hands and respond.</p> <p>(Could do partner share then share out to the whole group)</p>
Activity #1 (15 min)	Direct Instruction using slides found above.	Students will follow along, using whatever the teacher’s standard note-taking procedures may be.
Activity #2 (15 min)	Teacher will present students with an article from the Bend Bulletin’s February 21, 1922 issue titled “Shima’s Withdrawal” .	Students will read the article from the Bend Bulletin looking for key words and phrases emphasizing opposition or

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	<p>Based on student literacy needs, teacher may have students read the article aloud together as a class (popcorn read, volunteers, etc.)</p> <p>Teacher will then provide a brief summary, along with a brief discussion to clarify any questions students may have.</p> <p>This activity will allow students to establish contextualization and corroboration skills.</p>	<p>resistance towards George Shima and the laborers who worked on his farmlands.</p> <p>Students will be asked to identify 2-3 examples of anti-Japanese sentiment within the article.</p> <p>Students will then share their findings with the class as a part of the overall discussion of the anti-Asian sentiment that existed during this time, as well as at many other points throughout the United States' history.</p>
<p>Exit Ticket</p> <p>(Use any time left)</p> <p>*could also be used as Entry Ticket if time does not allow</p>	<p>Teacher will pose the following question to students:</p> <p>List 2-3 examples of resilience that allowed George Shima to become successful. Be sure to include both the losses (what was the problem he faced), as well as the wins (how did he overcome his failures)?</p>	<p>Students will produce a written response to the Exit Ticket question.</p> <p>*Students with literacy demands can utilize electronic devices to type responses or text to speech tools if necessary.</p>

**Connection to a contemporary issue or challenge:**

Extension - In future lessons, students will look at additional instances of anti-Asian sentiments throughout United States history (Japanese internment camps during WWII) and begin to analyze and apply their thinking to immigration today, especially as it relates to agriculture and agricultural labor.

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