

Lesson 3: The Journey to “Camp”

Euphemism	Why this term was used	Accurate Terms
Assembly center	Assembly centers were temporary camps, usually located at racetracks or fairgrounds, where Japanese-Americans were confined while more permanent camps were being built. Calling them “assembly centers” hid the fact that they functioned as prisons, with barbed wire fences and armed guards.	Temporary detention center <i>or</i> temporary incarceration camp
Evacuation	The word “evacuation” refers to temporarily removing people away from an immediate threat, such as a fire or flood. By referring to the removal of Japanese-Americans as an evacuation, the U.S. made it seem like they were helping and protecting these individuals.	Forced removal <i>or</i> exclusion
Internment	“Internment” is the act of confining enemy aliens [citizens of a country the government has declared war against]. The word applied to Japanese citizens held by the U.S. government, but not to the Japanese-American citizens held in camps.	Incarceration
Non-alien	The U.S. government referred to Japanese-Americans born in the United States as “non-aliens”, hiding the fact that they were American citizens.	American citizens
Relocation	The word “relocate” suggests that people voluntarily moved from one location to another. The U.S. government used this term to make it seem that Japanese-Americans wanted to leave their homes, instead of being forcibly removed.	Forced removal
Relocation center	Relocation centers were permanent camps Japanese-Americans were confined for the duration of World War II. The U.S. government used this term to give the impression Japanese-Americans were staying at pleasant and comfortable camps, not compounds surrounded by guard towers and fences.	Incarceration camp

(Adapted from *Power of Words Handbook: A Guide to Language about Japanese Americans in World War II* by National JACL Power of Words II Committee, 2013)