A Nation at Home

Trace how wartime decisions changed civilian lives

9-12.US2.20 "Analyze the impact of events and policies on the Homefront during World War Two."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three government actions, circle a civilian effect linked to each action, and number each action-effect pair to show how wartime policies changed life in different ways.

War Reaches the Home Front

1 In 1942, a West Coast shipyard hired workers to build ships for the war. Federal war contracts pushed factories to make military goods instead of many consumer products. Women entered paid industrial jobs in larger numbers, and African Americans moved to defense centers seeking better wages. These jobs helped families earn money and helped the military get ships faster. Yet a paycheck did not guarantee equal treatment. Some employers kept Black workers out of higher-paying jobs, while crowded housing made life difficult for newcomers. When servicemen returned, many women faced pressure to leave their wartime jobs.

2 Across town, the same war reached the grocery counter and gas pump. The federal government rationed goods such as sugar, meat, and gasoline to conserve scarce supplies and support the military. Families used ration coupons, so having money alone did not allow them to buy unlimited amounts. Rationing asked households to change meals and travel plans, and it aimed to spread limited goods more fairly. People also bought war bonds, lending money to the government to help pay for the war. These policies linked daily choices to the war effort, but they also limited what civilians could buy.

3 Not every wartime policy asked for the same sacrifice. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 in 1942. The order allowed the military to exclude people from designated areas. The government then forced about 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, most of them U.S. citizens, from their West Coast homes into incarceration camps. Families lost control of homes, businesses, and belongings, and many suffered financial losses. The government claimed national security, but it imprisoned people without individual proof of wrongdoing. While shipbuilding offered some residents new wages, this policy stripped other residents of freedom and security.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did federal war contracts create opportunities for workers, and why were those opportunities unequal?

2. How did rationing support the war effort, and how did it change what families could do?

3. How did war bonds affect a family's money differently from ration coupons?

4. Compare the effects of shipbuilding and Executive Order 9066 on people living on the West Coast.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence recommendation to a town council for one action it should take after the war. Use two specific impacts from different paragraphs of the passage, and explain how your action would address both.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.20

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three government actions, circle a civilian effect linked to each action, and number each action-effect pair to show how wartime policies changed life in different ways. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did federal war contracts create opportunities for workers, and why were those opportunities unequal?	**Contracts increased demand for ships, bringing industrial jobs and wages to women and African Americans. Some Black workers were barred from higher-paying jobs, and many women later faced pressure to leave their jobs.**
2	How did rationing support the war effort, and how did it change what families could do?	**Rationing conserved scarce goods for the military and aimed to distribute limited supplies more fairly. Coupons limited purchases, changing families' meals and travel plans.**
3	How did war bonds affect a family's money differently from ration coupons?	**Buying bonds lent a family's money to the government to help pay for the war. Ration coupons limited how much of certain goods a family could buy, even if it had money.**
4	Compare the effects of shipbuilding and Executive Order 9066 on people living on the West Coast.	**Shipbuilding brought jobs and wages to some residents. Executive Order 9066 led to the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans, taking away their freedom and causing financial losses.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town council should create a housing and job-placement office open to all residents. War contracts drew workers to defense centers, but newcomers faced crowded housing and some Black workers were denied higher-paying jobs. Forced removal under Executive Order 9066 also caused Japanese American families financial losses. Fair job referrals and housing aid would address both the unequal opportunities of wartime industry and the harm caused by incarceration.

Accept other feasible local actions if the response connects them to two accurate impacts from different paragraphs. The explanation should show how the proposed action addresses both impacts, not merely name them.