Rights Under Pressure

Wartime decisions and their consequences

USH.C.5.1.F "Explain the reasons for President Roosevelt's executive order for the incarceration of Americans of Japanese descent, the experiences of Japanese families, and the Supreme Court's decision in Korematsu v. United States of America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline two reasons given for the policy, circle two effects on families, and number the Court's ruling and the dissenters' objection.

Exclusion, Confinement, and the Court

1. On February 19, 1942, weeks after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. Military leaders argued that a Japanese invasion or sabotage on the West Coast was possible. The order let the military exclude people from designated areas; it did not name Japanese Americans. Officials used it to force people of Japanese ancestry from their homes, without individual proof of wrongdoing. Wartime fear and longstanding anti-Japanese prejudice helped turn a claimed security measure into mass removal.

2. About 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were removed from the West Coast, and roughly two-thirds were U.S. citizens. Families had little time to decide what to do with homes, farms, and shops. Many sold possessions at a loss. After temporary detention centers, they were sent to remote camps surrounded by fences and guarded by soldiers. Families lived in crowded barracks and shared bathrooms. Children attended classes, while adults worked or tried to keep family life steady under confinement.

3. Fred Korematsu, a U.S. citizen, refused to leave his California home under a military exclusion order and was convicted. In 1944, the Supreme Court upheld his conviction in Korematsu v. United States. The majority accepted the government's claim that wartime military necessity justified excluding people of Japanese ancestry. Dissenting justices warned that the ruling permitted discrimination based on race. The Court ruled on exclusion, not on whether the camps themselves were constitutional. Its decision shows how a claimed threat can shape rights in wartime.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did wartime fears and prejudice combine to lead to mass removal?

2. How did removal and camp conditions affect families in two different ways?

3. Why did the Court uphold Korematsu's conviction, and what did its ruling address?

4. How did the dissenters' view of the exclusion differ from the majority's?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence label for an imagined suitcase packed by a Japanese American family in 1942. Connect the government's stated security reason, a likely family experience, the Court's reasoning, and a question the case raises about wartime rights.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline two reasons given for the policy, circle two effects on families, and number the Court's ruling and the dissenters' objection. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did wartime fears and prejudice combine to lead to mass removal?	**Officials feared invasion or sabotage, and longstanding anti-Japanese prejudice helped turn that fear into the removal of people of Japanese ancestry without individual proof of wrongdoing.**
2	How did removal and camp conditions affect families in two different ways?	**Families had little time to handle their property, and many sold possessions at a loss. In the camps, they lived in crowded barracks and shared bathrooms.**
3	Why did the Court uphold Korematsu's conviction, and what did its ruling address?	**The majority accepted wartime military necessity as a reason for exclusion. It ruled on Korematsu's conviction for violating an exclusion order, not on the constitutionality of the camps.**
4	How did the dissenters' view of the exclusion differ from the majority's?	**The majority accepted exclusion as a wartime security measure; dissenters warned that the ruling permitted racial discrimination.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imagined suitcase holds the few belongings a family could carry after officials ordered them from their home. The government claimed exclusion would protect the West Coast from possible sabotage, though families were removed without individual proof of wrongdoing. In 1944, the Supreme Court accepted wartime military necessity when it upheld Fred Korematsu's conviction for refusing to leave. What should a government have to prove before it takes away people's freedom during a war?

Accept other passage-supported family experiences and questions about wartime rights. Students should distinguish the Court's ruling on exclusion from a ruling on the camps themselves.