

Japanese-American Internment Camps DBQ Sources

Directions: You will use the accompanying documents (1-10) to answer the question: **After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, was the treatment of Japanese-Americans justified?** The question is designed to assess your ability to analyze historical documents and create an argument in the form of an 8-sentence body paragraph.

1. Closely read the document-based question (DBQ) carefully. Determine exactly what the question is asking you to do.
2. Close read each document carefully. Be certain to underline key phrases and words that help you better understand the document's meaning.
 - a. As you analyze the documents, consider both the document's source and the author's point of view.
 - b. Look carefully at the source's author, think about his or her position/background, and determine if he or she has a potential bias that might impact reliability.
 - c. As you analyze the documents, try to group the documents by looking for common themes and connections amongst each that connect to the DBQ question.

Document 1:

The Munson Report

Background: *In 1941, a special representative of the State Department, named Curtis B. Munson was told by the former American President, Roosevelt, to write a report about the loyalty of Japanese Americans in California and Hawaii. This report was written 1 month before the bombing of Pearl Harbor.*

There is no Japanese "problem" on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will undoubtedly be some sabotage financed by Japan and executed largely by imported agents...In each Naval District, there are about 250 to 300 suspects under surveillance. It is easy to get on the suspect list, merely a speech in favor of Japan at some banquet being sufficient to land one there. The Intelligence Services are generous with the title of "suspect" and are taking no chances. Privately, they believe that only 50 or 60 in each district can be classes as really dangerous. The Japanese are hampered as saboteurs because of their easily recognized physical appearance. It will be hard for them to get near anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is far more danger from Communists and people of the Bridges type on the Coast than there is from Japanese. The Japanese here is almost exclusively a farmer, a fisherman or a small businessman. He has no entrée to plants or intricate machinery.

Source: *The Munson Report, delivered to President Roosevelt by Special Representative of the State Department Curtis B. Munson, November 7, 1941. The excerpt above is from the 25-page report.*

Document 2:

Editorial “Americans in Concentration Camps”

Background: *This is an editorial from The Crisis, founded in 1910. The Crisis is one of the oldest black periodicals in the United States. The publication is dedicated to promoting civil rights.*

Along the eastern coast of the United States, where the numbers of Americans of Japanese ancestry in comparatively small, no concentration camps have been established. From a military point of view, the only danger on this coast is from Germany and Italy...But the American government has not taken any such high-handed action against Germans and Italians – and their American-born descendants – on the East Coast, as has been taken against Japanese and their American-born descendants on the West Coast. Germans and Italians are “white.”

Color seems to be the only possible reason why thousands of American citizens of Japanese ancestry are in concentration camps. Anyway, there are no Italian-Americans or German- or German-American citizens in such camps.

Source: *Harry Paxton Howard, “Americans in Concentration Camps,” The Crisis, September 1942.*

Document 3:
Executive Order 9066

Background: *Two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor President Roosevelt issued the following order authorizing “exclusion” from designated military areas.*

Executive Order No. 9066

Whereas the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918,...

Now...by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders... to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he... may determine.

The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order...

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
February 19, 1942.

Source: *Executive Order No. 9066, February 19, 1942.*

Document 4:

War Relocation Authority Confidential Office Memo

Background: *After some Japanese Americans attempted to challenge the internment policy in the courts, the War Relocation Authority included the following statements in a confidential memo on August 12, 1942.*

The Action taken with respect to Japanese in this country is justifiable on the grounds of military necessity for several reasons.

1. All Japanese look very much alike to a white person - it is hard for us to distinguish between them. It would be hard to tell a Japanese soldier in disguise for a resident Japanese. The danger of infiltration by Japanese parachutists, soldiers, etc. is, therefore, reduced and the chances of detecting any attempt at infiltration are increased.
2. The Japanese Government has always tried to maintain close ties with and control over Japanese people in this country with the result that many of them have never really been absorbed into American life and culture. Many Japanese worship the Emperor and regard his orders as superior to any loyalty they may owe the United States.
3. The action taken was reasonable and necessary for the protection of the Japanese themselves. It minimized the dangers of mob violence and local disorders growing out of war hysteria and racial discrimination. Through lessening the possibility of harsh treatment of Japanese in this country...it took away an excuse for even harsher retaliatory treatment of American prisoners by Japan.

Source: *The War Relocation Authority Confidential Memo, August 12, 1942. The excerpt is from a 2-page memo.*

Document 5:

Korematsu v. the United States

Background: *Fred Korematsu was a resident of San Leandro, California – within the military exclusion zone – and a U.S. citizen. His refusal to follow the exclusion order resulted in prosecution. Appeals were upheld all the way to the Supreme Court in 1944, where for the first time there was a dissent to the court's decision.*

Justice Black delivered the opinion of the court...

It should be noted, to begin with, that all legal restrictions which curtail the civil rights of a single racial group are immediately suspect. That is not to say that all such restrictions are unconstitutional...

Exclusion of those of Japanese origin was deemed necessary because of the presence of a number of disloyal members of the group, most of whom we have no doubt were loyal to this country. It was because we could not reject the finding of the military authorities that it was possible to bring about an immediate segregation of the disloyal from the loyal that we sustained the validity of the curfew order as applying to the whole group... That there were members of the group who retained loyalties in Japan has been confirmed by investigations made subsequent to the exclusion. Approximately five thousand American citizens of Japanese ancestry refused to swear unqualified allegiance to the United States and to renounce allegiance to the Japanese Emperor, and several thousand evacuees requested repatriation to Japan.

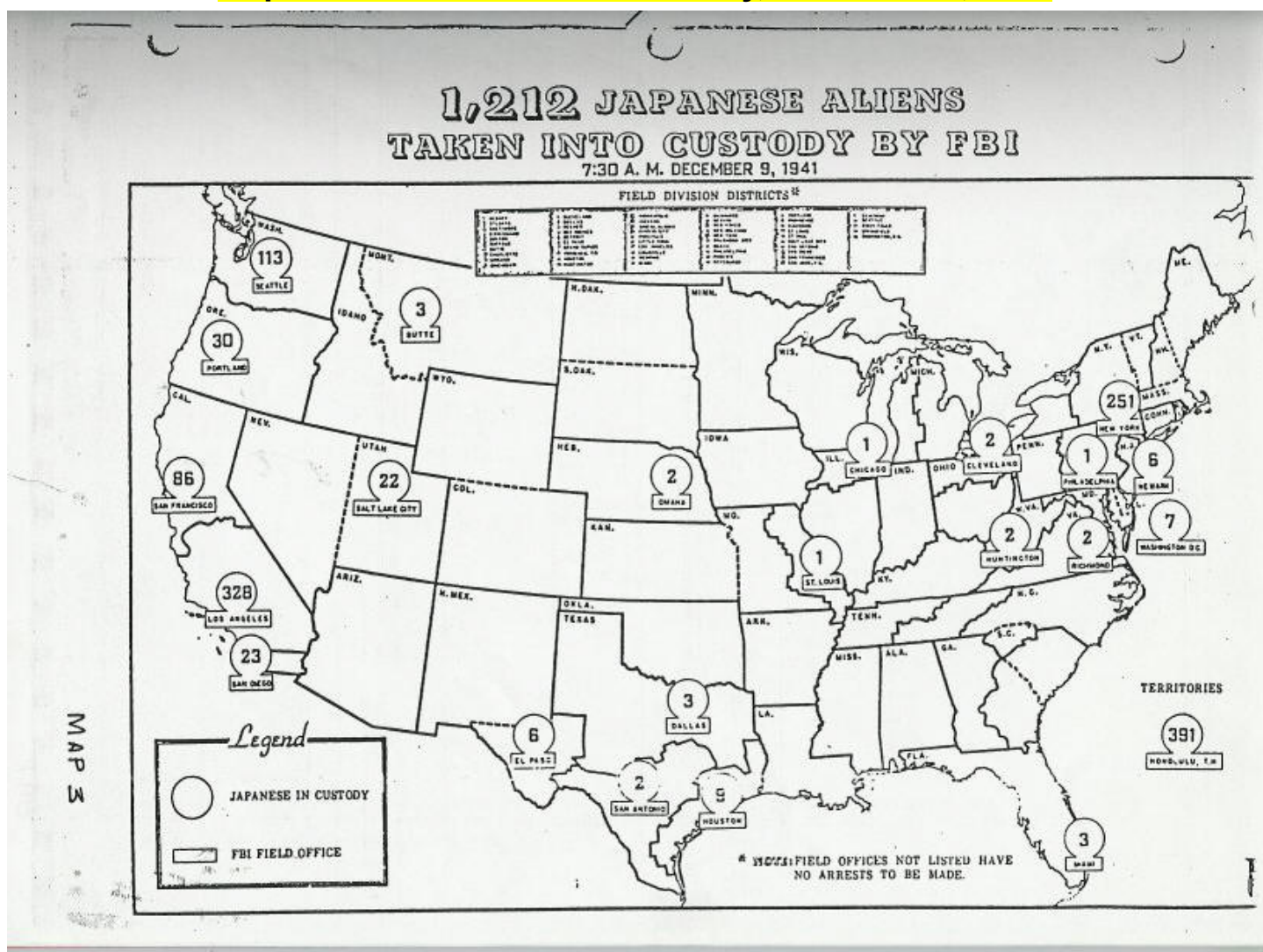
We uphold the exclusion order as of the time it was made and when the petitioner violated it... In doing so, we are not unmindful of the hardships imposed by it upon a large group of American citizens... But hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardships. All citizens alike, both in and out of uniform, feel the impact of war in greater and lesser measure. Citizenship has its responsibilities as well as its privileges, and in times of war, the burden is always heavier...

3 of the justices disagreed with the decision. They said:

This exclusion of 'all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien,' from the Pacific Coast area on a plea of military necessity in the absence of martial law ought not to be approved. Such exclusion goes over 'the very brink of constitutional power' and falls into the ugly abyss of racism.

Source: *Supreme Court Case K orematsu v. United States, 1944.*

Maps of Aliens Taken into Custody, December 8, 1941

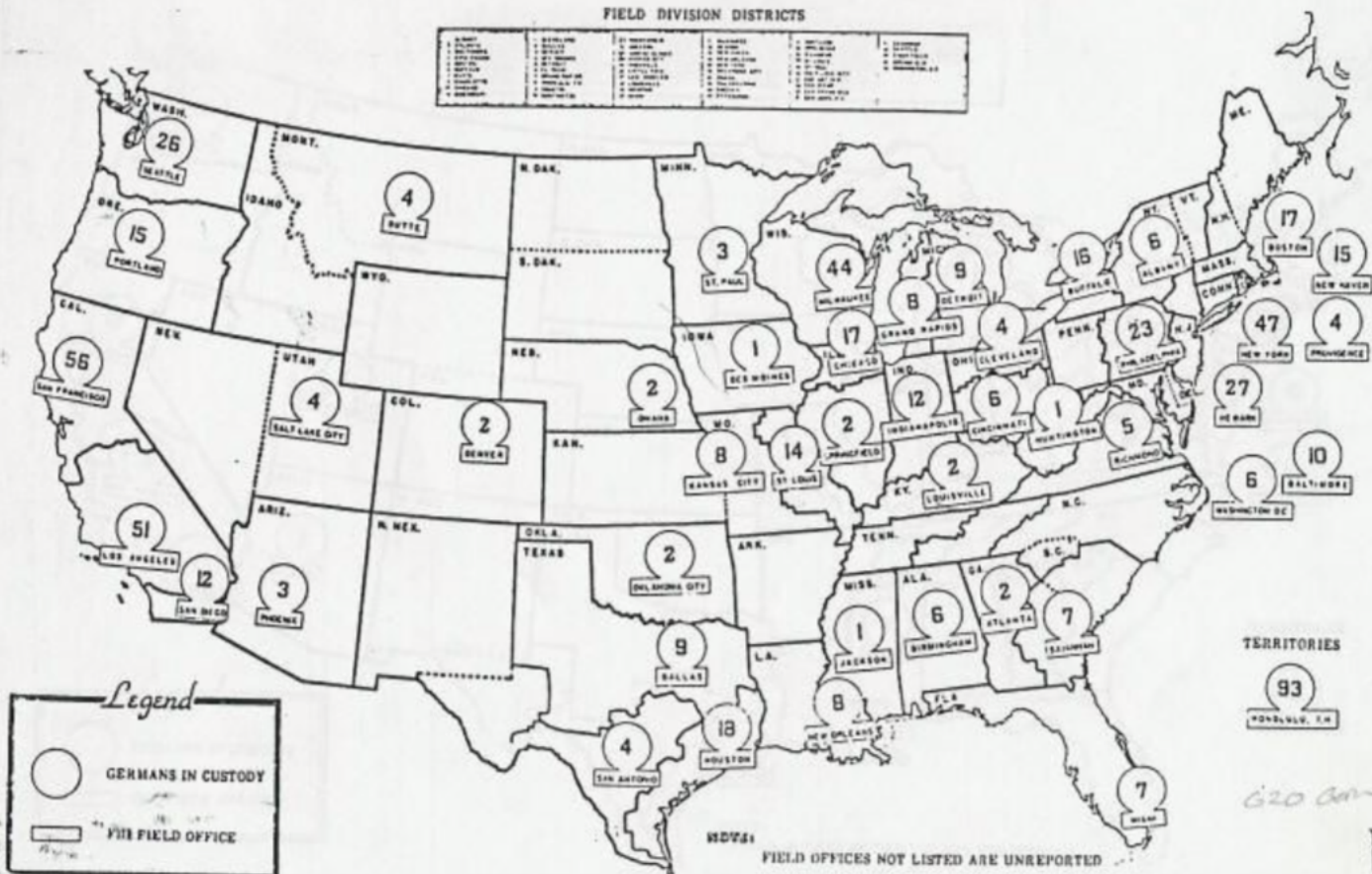


620 GERMAN ALIENS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY FBI

12:30 P. M. DECEMBER 9, 1941

FIELD DIVISION DISTRICTS

ALBANY	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE
ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE
ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE
ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE
ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE
ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE	ALBUQUERQUE



Document 7:

Letter from the Office of War Information

Background: *A letter to President Roosevelt, April 22, 1943.*

Dear Mr. President:

My friends in the War Relocation Authority...are deeply distressed over the effects of the entire evacuation and relocation program upon the Japanese-Americans, particularly upon the young citizen group... It is hard for them to escape a conviction that their plight is due more to racial discrimination, economic motivations, and wartime prejudices than to any real necessity from the military point of view for evacuation from the West Coast.

Life in a relocation center cannot possibly be pleasant. The evacuees are surrounded by barbed wire fences under the eyes of armed military police. They have suffered heavily in property losses; they have lost their businesses and their means of support. The State Legislatures, Members of the Congress, and local groups, by their actions and statements bring home to them almost constantly that as a people they are not really welcome anywhere. States in which they are now located have enacted restrictive legislation forbidding permanent settlement, for example. The American Legion, many local groups, and city councils have approved discriminatory resolutions, going so far in some instances as to advocate as to advocate confiscation of their property. Bills have been introduced which would deprive them of citizenship... They also know that some of the military leaders responsible for evacuation were motivated by a conviction that all persons of Japanese blood in this country cannot be trusted. Public statements to this effect have appeared in the press only recently.

Furthermore, in the opinion of the evacuees, the Government may not be excused for not having attempted to distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal in carrying out the evacuation.

Under such circumstances, it would be amazing if extreme bitterness did not develop. Respectfully yours,

M.S. Eisenhower
Associate Director

Document 8:
Photos from Internment Camps



*A boy behind a
barbed wire fence,
Tule Lake*

*Original caption: "Mr.
George Oni and his
daughter Georgette
Chize Oni bidding
farewell to brother
Henry Oni."*

February 7, 1946



*Three children eating
in mess hall*

*Minidoka Relocation
Center, Hunt, Idaho.*

Christmas, 1944.

*Courtesy of National
Archives*

"It is not the American way to have children growing up behind barbed wire and under the scrutiny of armed guards. Living conditions in the centers almost preclude privacy for individuals, and family life is disrupted. Family meals are almost impossible in the dining halls, and children lack the normal routine home duties which help to build good discipline. One of the major worries of parents in the relocation centers is the way the children are "getting out of hand" as a result of the decrease in parental influence and the absence of the normal regimen of family economy and family life."

Dillon S. Myer, Director of the WRA, one-year anniversary statement of the WRA

Document 9:

Government Pamphlet Explaining Internment

Relocation of Japanese-Americans

The United States Government, having called upon these people to move from their homes, also assumed a responsibility for helping them to become reestablished. To carry out this responsibility, the President, on March 18, 1942, created a civilian agency known as the War Relocation Authority.

The job of this agency is to assist in the relocation of any persons who may be required by the Army to move from their homes in the interest of military security. So far, the work of WRA has been concerned almost exclusively with people of Japanese descent who formerly lived close to the Pacific rim of the country.

The relocation centers are NOT and never intended to be internment camps or places of confinement. They were established for two primary purposes: (1) To provide communities where evacuees might live and contribute, through work, to their own support pending their gradual reabsorption into private employment and normal American life; and (2) to serve as wartime homes for those evacuees who might be unable or unfit to relocate in ordinary American communities.

Source: *A War Relocation Authority pamphlet explaining the background and nature of the US program for relocating Japanese Americans, May 1943. This is written by the government agency.*

Document 10:
In Defense of Internment

Background: *Michelle Malkin is a Filipino American syndicated columnist and FOX News commentator. In her 2004 book, “In Defense of Internment: The Case for ‘Racial Profiling’ in World War II and the War on Terror,” Malkin argues that internment was justified by intercepted intelligence about a West Coast, Japanese spy network. The passage above is an excerpt from that book.*

In a time of war, the survival of the nation comes first. Civil Liberties are not sacrosanct...No one was exempt from the hardships of World War II, which demanded a wide range of civil rights sacrifices on the part of citizen and non-citizen, majority and minority alike. Ethnic Japanese forced to leave the West Coast of the United States and relocate outside of prescribed military zones after the Pearl Harbor attack endured a heavy burden, but they were not the only ones who suffered and sacrificed. Enemy aliens from all Axis nations – not just Japan – were subjected to curfews, registration, censorship, and exclusion from sensitive areas. Thousands of foreign nationals from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and elsewhere were deemed dangerous, interned, and eventually deported.

Source: *In Defense of Internment: The Case for ‘Racial Profiling’ in World War II and the War on Terror*, Michelle Malkin, 2004.

8-Sentence Body Paragraph

Directions: Using evidence from the documents, write an 8-sentence body paragraph answering the overarching question: **After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, was the treatment of Japanese-Americans justified?**