



# Essay Question #1

## DISCRIMINATION

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“Discrimination continued during World War II despite the patriotism of all groups of Americans.”

# African-Americans

- Like World War I, the Second World War, despite all the democratic rhetoric, brought few changes for African Americans. Lawful segregation continued to limit access to public facilities in the South, laws restricting black suffrage remained intact, and the threat of economic reprisal and death at the hands of whites prevented black citizens from owning land and gaining economic independence.



# African-Americans

- Still, one thing had changed; black veterans returned home transformed. With their wartime experiences came new frustrations, and a more urgent desire to take charge of their lives and protest ill treatment. The fear and anger they felt on the battlefield didn't fade at war's end but, instead, intensified. Black veterans were determined to discard the mask of accommodation. No longer would they veil their true feelings and allow whites to degrade, humiliate, and terrorize their communities. "I had spent five years with white men, and women, from Africa to Italy, through Paris, and into the Fatherland itself," Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins reflects in *Devil in a Blue Dress*, a novel by Walter Mosley. "I ate with them and slept with them, and I killed enough blue-eyed young men to know that they were just as afraid to die as I was." Black soldiers returning from World War II would provide the fuel for the growing Civil Rights Movement.

# Japanese-Americans

- In February 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which had the effect of relocating all persons of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and aliens, inland, outside of the Pacific military zone. The objectives of the order were to prevent espionage and to protect persons of Japanese descent from harm at the hands of Americans who had strong anti-Japanese attitudes.
- The *Korematsu vs. United States* upheld President Roosevelt's decision to relocate the Japanese-Americans. The Court decided to side with the government because and held that the need to protect against espionage outweighed Korematsu's rights. Justice Black argued that compulsory exclusion, though constitutionally suspect, is justified during circumstances of "emergency and peril."

# Japanese-Americans

- The internment of the Japanese, or people the Government believed were Japanese, took place because of the attack on Pearl Harbor. This was main cause for Jefferson's decree.



# Japanese-Americans

- The United States government were not relocating the Japanese for their safety, but instead they were being relocated because the government were afraid of the Japanese at this point.
- This happened even though many of the Japanese-Americans that were being relocated were patriotic citizens living in the United States chasing the American Dream.

# Mexican-Americans

- Like Japanese and black Americans, Mexican Americans also suffered from discriminatory practices in the 1930s. In California and the Southwest, they had been a principal source of agricultural labor in the 1920's. During the depression however, high unemployment and drought in the Midwest caused a dramatic growth in white migrant workers who pushed west in search for work. Discrimination in New Deal programs and competition for jobs forced many thousands of Mexican Americans to return to Mexico.

# The End

