

Korematsu v. United States / A Question of Loyalty

Directions:

1. Read the **Background** information.
 2. Read the **Loyalty Questionnaire** (page 2).
 3. Answer the **Questions to Consider** (page 7).
 4. Complete the **Extension Activity** if your teacher assigns it (page 8).
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Background

Justice Black's majority opinion in *Korematsu v. United States* never questioned the judgment of military authorities that there were disloyal members of the Japanese and Japanese American population. The opinion also never questioned the military's claim that they could not quickly determine the number of disloyal people.

We cannot reject as unfounded the judgment of the military authorities and of Congress that there were disloyal members of that population, whose number and strength could not be precisely and quickly ascertained.

Nonetheless, while in the internment camps, a loyalty questionnaire was distributed. The loyalty questionnaire had two purposes: the first was to determine who could have been eligible to serve in the military and the second goal was to determine who might require further confinement in the camps. Justice Black made reference to this questionnaire in his decision:

That there were members of the group who retained loyalties to 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.

While accepting the military's claim that the entire group had to be confined because they could not quickly ascertain who was loyal and disloyal, Justice Black used the numbers from this simple questionnaire to support the military's opinion that some people of Japanese origin were disloyal.

Putting aside this contradiction in logic, an examination of the loyalty questionnaire reveals the difficulties it must have presented for the internees and their families.

Loyalty Questionnaire

WRA-126 Rev.

Budget Bureau No. 13-RO22-43

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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY APPLICATION FOR LEAVE CLEARANCE

Relocation Center _____

Family No. _____

Center Address _____

1. _____
 (Surname) (English given name) (Japanese given name)

(a) Alias _____

2. Names and ages of dependents you propose to take with you

3. Date of Birth _____ Place of birth _____

4. Citizenship _____

5. Last two addresses at which you lived 3 months or more (exclude residence at relocation center and assembly center):

_____ From _____ to _____

_____ From _____ to _____

6. Sex _____ Height _____ Weight _____

7. Are you a registered voter? _____ Year first registered _____

Where? _____ Party _____

8. Marital status _____ Citizenship of spouse _____

Race of spouse _____

9. _____

(Father's name) (Town or City) (State or Country) (Occupation)

10. _____

(Mother's name) (Town or City) (State or Country) (Occupation)

In items 11 and 12, you need not list relatives other than your parents, your children, your brothers and sisters. For each person, give name, relationship to you, citizenship, complete address, and occupation.

11. Relatives in the United States (if in military service, indicate whether a selectee or volunteer):

(a)	_____	_____	_____
	(Name)	(Relationship to you)	(Citizenship)
	_____	_____	_____
	(Complete address)	(Occupation)	(Volunteer or selectee)
(b)	_____	_____	_____
	(Name)	(Relationship to you)	(Citizenship)
	_____	_____	_____
	(Complete address)	(Occupation)	(Volunteer or selectee)
(c)	_____	_____	_____
	(Name)	(Relationship to you)	(Citizenship)
	_____	_____	_____
	(Complete address)	(Occupation)	(Volunteer or selectee)

(If additional space is necessary, attach sheets)

12. Relatives in Japan (see instruction above item 11):

_____	_____	_____
(Name)	(Relationship to you)	(Citizenship)
_____	_____	_____
(Complete address)	(Occupation)	
_____	_____	_____
(Name)	(Relationship to you)	(Citizenship)
_____	_____	_____
(Complete address)	(Occupation)	

13. Education

Name	Place	Years of attendance
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Kindergarten)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Grade School)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Japanese language school)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(High School)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Junior college, college, or university)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Type of military training, such as R.O.T.C. or Gunji Kyoren)	_____	From _____ to _____
_____	_____	From _____ to _____
(Other schooling)	(Years of attendance)	

14. Foreign travel (give dates, where, how, for whom, with whom, and reasons therefore):

15. Employment (give employers' names and kind of business, addresses, and dates from 1935 to date):

16. Religion _____ Membership in religious groups _____

17. Membership in organizations (clubs, societies, associations, etc.)

Give name, kind of organization, and dates of membership

18. Knowledge of foreign languages (put check mark in proper squares):

(a) Japanese _____			(b) Other _____ (specify)		
Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor
Reading _____			Reading _____		
Writing _____			Writing _____		
Speaking _____			Speaking _____		

19. Sports and hobbies _____

20. List five references, other than relatives or former employers preferably persons resident in areas where you formerly resided, giving address, occupation, and number of years known:

(Name)	(Complete Address)	(Occupation)	(Years known)
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21. Have you ever been before an Alien Enemy Hearing Board? _____ (Yes) _____ (No)

If so, give date and disposition of case:

(a) Have you ever been arrested or similarly detained? _____ (Yes) _____ (No)

If so, state offense, date, court and disposition of case:

(b) Have you ever been subjected to any disciplinary action since your evacuation?

____ (Yes) _____ (No)

If so, state the circumstances and disposition of your case.

22. Give details of any foreign investments:

(a) Accounts in foreign banks. Amount \$ _____

Bank _____ Date account opened _____

(b) Investments in foreign companies. Amount \$ _____

Company _____ Date acquired _____

Contents _____

23. List contributions you have made to any society, organization, or club:

Organization	Place	Amount	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

24. List magazines and newspapers to which you have subscribed or have customarily read:

25. To the best of your knowledge, was your birth ever registered with any Japanese governmental agency for the purpose of establishing a claim to Japanese citizenship?

(a) If so registered, have you applied for cancellation of such registration?

____ (Yes or No)

When _____ Where? _____

26. Have you ever applied for repatriation to Japan? _____

27. If the opportunity presents itself and you are found qualified, would you be willing to volunteer for the Army Nurse Corps or the WAAC?

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization? _____

29. Have you ever worked for or volunteered your services to the Japanese or Spanish government?

____ If so, indicate which and give dates:

____ (Yes) _____ (No)

30. Have you ever registered any of your children with a Japanese or Spanish Consul?
 _____ If so, indicate which and give dates:
 (Yes) (No)

Names	Dates	Names	Dates
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

31. Have you ever sent any of your children to Japan? _____
 (Yes) (No)

Names	Dates	Names	Dates
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

32. State any type of leave previously applied for, and indicate whether leave clearance has previously been applied for, giving date and place of application.

33. If employment is desired, but no definite offer has been received, list the kinds of employment desired in order of preference:
 First choice _____
 Second choice _____
 Third choice _____

a) Will you take employment in any part of the United States?

 (Yes) (No)

b) Give location preference _____

 (Date) (Signature)

 (Seal of Selective Service System) Form Approved
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Questions to Consider

1. Which questions on the form do you think are relevant and important to determine a person's loyalty to the United States? Explain.
2. Which questions on the form do you think are irrelevant or not important to determine a person's loyalty to the United States? Explain.
3. Look carefully at questions 27 and 28. These were given special attention by the military authorities and are referred to in Justice Black's opinion. People who answered "no" to these questions were considered to be disloyal.
 - a. Can you think of reasons why a person would answer "no" to question 27 other than disloyalty?
 - b. First generation Japanese immigrants (*Issei*) were unable to obtain American citizenship. How might this have complicated their ability to answer question 28?
 - c. Are there other challenges or issues you see with these questions?
4. What surprised you about the questionnaire?

Extension Activity

Visit the Smithsonian's A More Perfect Union website to read what the internees thought about the questionnaire and to see an original copy of it. (https://amhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/non-flash/loyalty_questionnaire.html)