

Korematsu v. United States / Cartoon Analysis— Answer Key



Observe

1. What people and objects are shown? Make a list of what you see in the cartoon including captions and labels.

Student answers will vary. There is a military style truck driving across a border. It is leaving the “military zone” and going in the direction of “out of harm’s way.” On the side of the truck there are two signs. One that identifies the occupants as California born Japanese Citizens and another that says they are loyal to the U.S. There is an American flag flying which appears to be slightly exaggerated.

2. What is the setting?

The cartoon is set on the border of the “Military Zone” which was much of the West Coast. The city in the background is likely San Francisco since the cartoon was published there. The truck is traveling East into the interior of the country.

3. Are there any objects or people that seem to be exaggerated? If so, why do you think the artist exaggerated?

There is an American flag flying which appears to be slightly exaggerated perhaps to show that the military zone is under U.S. control.

Reflect

4. What is happening in this image?

People of Japanese ancestry (who were born in California) are being forced to leave an area that is considered a military zone and are being moved somewhere else (to an internment camp).

5. What is significant about the date this cartoon was published (March 6, 1942)?

The cartoon was published 3 months after the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese forces. It was published about 3 weeks after Executive Order 9066 which ordered the internment on February 19, 1942.

6. What does this image remind you of? Can you think of events or news stories that are similar? Do these images or issues relate to your community in any way?

Student answers will vary.

Evaluate the Message

7. In your opinion, what is the cartoonist’s message? What elements of the cartoon give you that impression?

The cartoonist is trying to convey that supposedly this removal is being done for their own good, to get them out of harm’s way. Yet the cartoonist also notes with the use of the signs on the truck that the people are loyal to the U.S. and were born in the U.S. so do not pose a threat to national security.

8. Do you agree with the point of view and message of the cartoonist? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary.

9. What, if anything, should be done about the problem portrayed in the cartoon? Who should do it?

Student answers will vary but might include that the Supreme Court should have recognized the unconstitutionality of the internment camps and Executive Order 9066.

Question

10. What do you still wonder about?

Student answers will vary.