



The War at Home

Objectives

1. Find out how the United States built its military and converted its economy to meet wartime needs.
2. Learn how American women contributed to the war effort.
3. Discover how World War II affected Japanese Americans and other groups of people at home.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Use Context to Determine Meaning

By examining text around an unfamiliar word, you can often determine its meaning. For example, the unfamiliar word might be referred to or further described in the sentences before or after the sentence in which it is used.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

convert, p. 816

vague, p. 819

Key Terms and People

rationing, p. 817

intern, p. 818

A. Philip Randolph, p. 819

bracero, p. 820

Main Idea

The United States increased the size of its military and directed the economy toward the war effort.

★ **Background Knowledge** As you have read, World War II totally involved all the people and resources of each nation. In this section, you will explore the American home front. You will also examine problems that certain groups of Americans faced.

Organizing for War

The first challenge the United States faced was to build up its armed forces. Even before Pearl Harbor, Congress had enacted a draft law. Just days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Congress revised the law to require people to serve for the entire war.

Building the Military Eventually, more than 15 million volunteers and draftees would wear the American uniform during World War II. The number included Americans from every ethnic and religious group. In newly built military bases around the country, recruits trained to fight in the jungles of the Pacific, the deserts of North Africa, and the farmlands and towns of Europe.

Hundreds of thousands of American women were also in uniform during World War II. They served as nurses or in noncombat roles in special branches such as the Women's Army Corps (WACs). Women pilots ferried bombers from base to base, towed targets, and taught men to fly.

Vocabulary Builder

convert (kuhn VERT) *v.* to change from one purpose to another

A Wartime Economy Industry quickly converted its output from consumer to military goods. The government established a War Production Board to supervise the changeover and set goals for production. As a result, military output nearly doubled.

The war quickly ended the Great Depression. Unemployment fell as millions of jobs opened up in factories. Minority workers found jobs where they had been rejected in the past.

Supporting the War Effort All Americans were expected to play a role in supplying Allied forces with food, clothing, and war equipment. As in World War I, Americans planted victory gardens to supplement food supplies and bought war bonds to help pay military costs.

To conserve needed resources, the government imposed rationing. **Rationing** is the act of setting limits on the amount of scarce goods people can buy. Americans were issued ration coupons to purchase coffee, sugar, meat, shoes, gasoline, tires, and many other goods.

War bond campaigns, rationing, and victory gardens did more than help pay for the war effort. They also gave citizens at home a sense that they were helping to win the war. Thus, they helped maintain public morale during the long struggle.

✓Checkpoint What was the War Production Board?

Women in Industry

With millions of men in uniform, defense industries needed a new source of labor. The government began a large-scale effort to recruit women for industry.

Millions of women took over jobs in factories and shipyards. Some welded, tended blast furnaces, or ran huge cranes. Others became bus drivers, police officers, or gas station attendants. A fictional character, "Rosie the Riveter," became a popular symbol of all women who worked for the war effort.

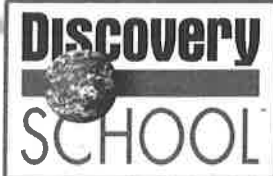


Use Context to Determine Meaning

To determine the meaning of the word *morale*, use paragraph clues and this question: How do people feel during difficult times?

Main Idea

During the war, American women took over many industrial jobs.



Explore More Video

To learn more about the role of women in World War II, view the video.

Rosie the Riveter This famous poster of Rosie the Riveter (right) assured American women that they were strong enough to handle the challenges of wartime factory work. At left, two real-life "Rosies" work together to build an aircraft. **Critical Thinking:** **Link Past and Present** Why do you think this poster of Rosie the Riveter is still popular with many women today?



Because women were needed in industry, they were able to gain better pay and working conditions. The government agreed that women and men should get the same pay for the same job. Some employers, however, found ways to avoid equal pay.

War work gave many American women a new sense of confidence and independence. "It gave me a good start in life," said welder Nova Lee Holbrook. "I decided that if I could learn to weld like a man, I could do anything it took to make a living."

 **Checkpoint** What jobs did women do during the war?

Main Idea

Because of wartime fears, many Japanese Americans were forced to live in detention camps.

Japanese American Internment

Two frightened boys line up for baggage inspection at an internment camp for Japanese Americans. One internee later recalled, "We didn't know where we were going, how long we'd be gone. We didn't know what to take." **Critical Thinking: Apply Information** Why were these boys forced to leave their homes during World War II?

Ordeal for Japanese Americans

At the start of the war, about 300,000 people of Japanese origin lived in the United States. More than half resided in Hawaii. The rest lived mostly on the West Coast, especially in California.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, many Americans feared that Japanese Americans would act as spies to help enemy submarines shell military bases or coastal cities. In truth, such suspicions were baseless. There was not a single documented case of disloyalty by a Japanese American.

Internment The intense anti-Japanese fears led President Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066 in February 1942. The order was used to intern, or temporarily imprison, some 110,000 Japanese Americans for the duration of the war.

Internees were allowed to bring with them only what they could carry. They had to sell the rest of their possessions quickly, at a fraction of their worth. The U.S. Army then transported them from the West Coast to small, remote internment camps enclosed by barbed wire. Armed soldiers looked down on them from guard towers.

In the 1944 case of *Korematsu v. United States*, the Supreme Court ruled that military necessity justified internment. Still, three of the nine justices dissented. One wrote:

"We must accord great respect and consideration to the judgments of the military authorities who are on the scene and who have full knowledge of the military facts. . . . At the same time, however, it is essential that there be definite limits to military discretion. . . . Individuals must not be left impoverished of their constitutional rights on plea of military necessity that has neither substance nor support."

—Frank Murphy, dissenting opinion,
Korematsu v. United States



As the war ended, the government released the internees. In 1948, it made a small payment to them for the property they had lost. However, a formal apology did not come until 1990. At that time, the government paid \$20,000 to each surviving internee.

Japanese Americans in Uniform For Japanese Americans, being imprisoned on such vague charges was a humiliating experience. Still, about 17,000 Japanese Americans showed their loyalty by joining the armed services. All-Japanese units fought in North Africa, Italy, and France, winning thousands of military awards and medals. One group of Japanese American soldiers, the 442nd Nisei Regimental Combat Team, became the most highly decorated military unit in United States history.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why were many Japanese Americans interned?

Tensions at Home

Japanese Americans were not the only group to face wartime restrictions. About 11,000 German Americans and several hundred Italian Americans were also held in government camps as "enemy aliens." Most of these were foreign-born residents who had not yet achieved citizenship. Other German Americans and Italian Americans faced curfews or travel restrictions.

African Americans As in past wars, African Americans served in segregated units during World War II. Groups such as the NAACP and the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses protested against the racial policy of the armed forces and the military nursing corps.

Discrimination was also widespread in industries doing business with the government. Some African American leaders pointed out that while the nation was fighting for democracy overseas, it still permitted injustice at home.

Union leader **A. Philip Randolph**, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, threatened a mass protest unless Roosevelt moved to end discrimination in the armed forces. In response, the President ordered employers doing business with the government to support racial equality in hiring. To enforce the order, he set up the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to investigate charges of discrimination.

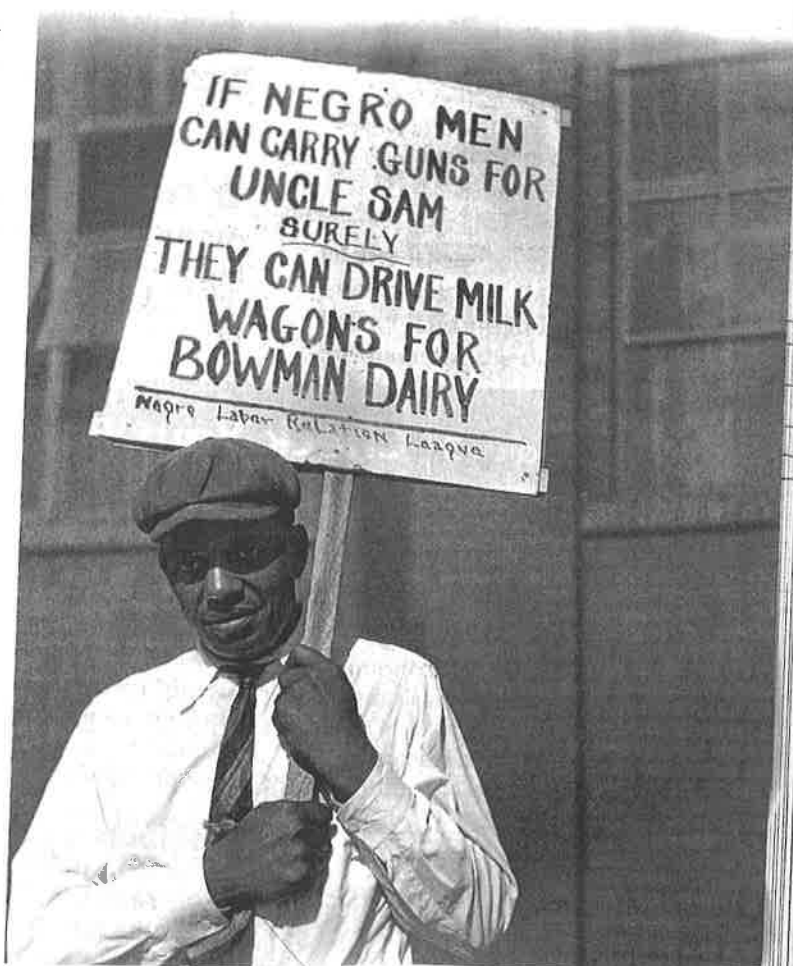
The FEPC and the growing need for workers opened many jobs that previously had been closed to African Americans. By the end of 1944, about two million African Americans were working in war plants.

Vocabulary Builder

vague (vayg) *adj.* uncertain; not precise or exact

Main Idea

Enemy aliens, African Americans, and Mexican Americans faced discrimination at home.



Demanding Fair Employment

This man is picketing at a dairy that hires *only* white people as drivers. **Critical Thinking: Analyze Information** What is the main idea of the picket sign shown here?



Young man in a "zoot suit"

However, as employment of African Americans increased, so did racial tension. Thousands of Americans—black people and white people—moved to cities to work in industry. Competition for scarce housing led to angry incidents and even violence. In 1943, race riots broke out in Detroit, New York, and other American cities.

Mexican Americans About half a million Mexican Americans served in the armed forces during World War II. At the same time, the Mexican American population was increasing. Because of the need for workers, the United States signed a treaty with Mexico in 1942. It allowed American companies to hire **braceros**, or Mexican laborers. As more Mexicans moved north to work on farms and railroads, they often faced prejudice and violent strife.

Young Mexican Americans in Los Angeles often dressed in showy "zoot suits." Their clothing and language set them apart. In June 1943, bands of sailors on shore leave attacked young Mexican Americans, beating them and clubbing them on the streets. The incident sparked several days of rioting.

Newspapers blamed the "Zoot Suit Riots" on the Mexican Americans. But in her newspaper column, Eleanor Roosevelt argued that the riots were the result of "longstanding discrimination against the Mexicans in the Southwest."

Checkpoint How did African Americans seek fairer treatment during the war?

★ **Looking Back and Ahead** Despite problems at home, Americans were united in their resolve to push on to victory in Europe and the Pacific. In the next section, you will see how that victory was won.

Section 3

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. **(a) Recall** What economic restrictions did Americans face during World War II?
(b) Identify Costs and Benefits What were the costs of these restrictions? What were the benefits?
2. **(a) Recall** What happened to Japanese Americans on the West Coast during the war?
(b) Draw Conclusions Do you think restricting people's civil liberties during wartime is ever justified? Why or why not?



Reading Skill

3. **Use Context to Determine Meaning** Reread the text following the subheading "Mexican Americans." Use different clues to determine the meaning of the word *strife*.

Vocabulary Builder

4. Draw a table with three rows and three columns. In the first column, list the following key terms: **rationing**, **intern**, **bracero**. In the next column, write the definition of each. In the last column, make a small illustration that shows the meaning.

Writing

5. A thesis statement expresses the main idea for a piece of writing. Based on what you have read in this section, write a thesis statement that could be developed using multimedia support on one of the following topics:

- the internment of Japanese Americans
- women's contribution to the war effort
- rationing and other domestic war measures

Follow your thesis statement with a description of the kinds of multimedia materials you would use to support and develop it.