

SAMPLE ANSWERS: Rationing

What Was Happening?

World War II put a heavy burden on U.S. supplies of basic materials like food, shoes, metal, paper, and rubber. The Army and Navy were growing, as was the nation's effort to aid its allies overseas. Civilians still needed these materials for consumer goods as well. To meet this surging demand, the U.S. government took steps to conserve crucial supplies, including establishing a rationing system that impacted virtually every family in the United States.

Summarize the historical background:

Everyday supplies were needed to successfully fight WWII. They were needed on the battlefield, for U.S. troops, and our allies. But supply could not match demand and the government needed a way to reallocate materials.

What Rights Were Restricted?

To help assist with the war effort, Americans were called upon to make sacrifices. In 1940, Congress passed the Priorities and Allocation Act. This act limited the purchase of any material or resource by civilians that could be used to produce goods for the war effort and provide for the national defense. The government issued a number of "points" to each person, even babies, which had to be turned in along with money to purchase goods made with restricted items. In 1943 for example, a pound of bacon cost about 30 cents, but a shopper would also have to turn in seven ration points to buy the meat. These points came in the form of stamps that were distributed to citizens in books throughout the war.

What right(s) were restricted?	Property rights Due process Right of individuals to conduct day to day life and business without interference from the government
What was the rationale provided at the time?	Necessary for the war effort and national defense

What Did The Courts Say?

Quote	Summarize in your own words
<i>private interest has merely come into collision with a public interest and has had to yield</i>	Sometimes public interest has to come before private interest
<i>Undoubtedly, it is the duty of the Court to protect the rights of citizens under the Constitution where such jurisdiction is conferred upon it under the Constitution, and to see that citizens are not deprived of their property without due process of law, even for a public use; but, at the same time, I do not think the Court should be too zealous in reaching out to find grounds upon which to invalidate regulations of the type involved here, in the face of a pressing national emergency such as every sane person in this country knows exists</i>	While rights are important, sometimes during a national emergency some may be regulated
<i>still have faith that our Government, as early as it reasonably can under the circumstances, will do justice by its citizens whose property is thus affected. In the past it has endeavored to do justice and there is every reason to believe it will make the same effort in the future</i>	There should be and is a time limit on the suspension of rights
<i>A nation which could not fight would be powerless to secure 'the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.' Self preservation is the first law of national life, and the Constitution provides the necessary powers in order to defend and preserve the United States</i>	Restricting these rights are necessary to protect other rights Government is allowed to take these actions under "necessary and proper" clause
<i>the Congress and the President exert the war power of the nation, and they have wide discretion as to the means to be employed successfully to carry on</i>	Constitution gives war powers and power to carry out the war to President and Congress
<p>Based on the court's words, analyze the constitutionality of the government-imposed restriction on rights:</p> <p>Rationing was constitutionally an approved restriction of rights given the public interest and national emergency of war under which they were occurring. There would be an expectation that this restriction of rights would be lifted once the war was over however.</p>	