

# **“Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat”: World War II and the Holocaust**

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**Year 3**  
**History Unit 1**  
**Sourcebook**

## Lesson 1: Anti-Semitism



*Arrival of Hungarian Jews at Auschwitz, Poland, in 1944 (German Federal Archives)*

**How did a history of anti-Semitism in Europe make the Holocaust possible?**

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## Homework

### An Introduction to the Holocaust

*The following text was adapted from the article “An Introduction to the Holocaust” published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.*

The Holocaust was the organized, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazis in Europe during World War II. *Holocaust* is a word of Greek origin that means “sacrifice by fire.” The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed Germans were “racially superior” and that the Jews were “inferior” and a threat to the so-called German racial community.

During the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived “racial inferiority” — Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others), and African Germans. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals.



*Nazis protesting Jewish-owned businesses in 1933 before the “Final Solution.” Their signs say “Germans, defend yourselves! Don’t buy from Jews.” (Published by Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-14469 under the CC-BY-SA 3.0)*

## What was the Holocaust?

In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe was over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that Nazi Germany would later occupy during World War II. By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two of every three European Jews as part of the “Final Solution,” the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.

As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans and their collaborators persecuted and murdered millions of other people. Between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war were killed or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans deported millions of Polish and Soviet civilians for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland, where they worked and often died under awful conditions.

## The “Final Solution”

In the early years of the Nazi regime, the government established concentration camps to detain political and ideological opponents. Increasingly in the years before the outbreak of war, **SS** [*armed wing of the Nazi party*] and police officials also imprisoned Jews, Roma, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred in these camps.

To concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Nazis created ghettos and forced-labor camps for Jews during the war years. The German authorities also established many forced-labor camps for non-Jewish enemies and prisoners.

Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, mobile killing units and, later, militarized Order Police officials began to carry out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist Party officials. German SS and police units murdered more than a million Jewish men, women, and children, and hundreds of thousands of others.

Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany, from occupied territories, and from the countries of many of its allies to ghettos and to killing centers (often called extermination camps), where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities.

## The End of the Holocaust

In the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp inmates by train or on forced marches — often called “death marches” — in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, as well as prisoners on forced marches from one camp to another. The marches continued until May 7, 1945 — the day the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

For the Western Allies, World War II officially ended in Europe on the next day, May 8, while Soviet forces announced their “Victory Day” on May 9, 1945. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many survivors found shelter in displaced-persons camps run by the Allied powers. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews emigrated to Israel, including 136,000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe. Other Jewish survivors emigrated to the United States and other nations. The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated European Jews and eliminated hundreds of Eastern European Jewish communities entirely.

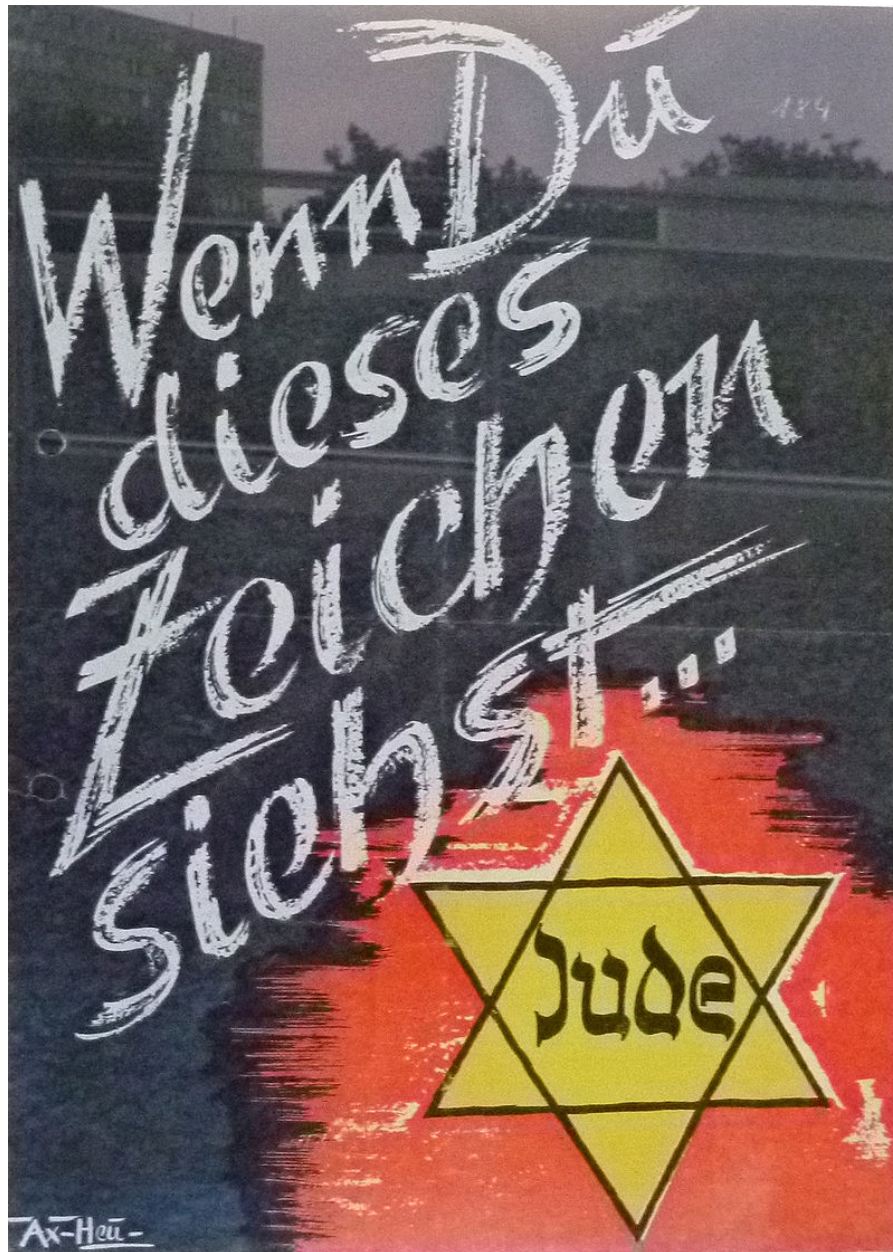
*An Introduction to the Holocaust. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org*

German Propaganda  
Image 1



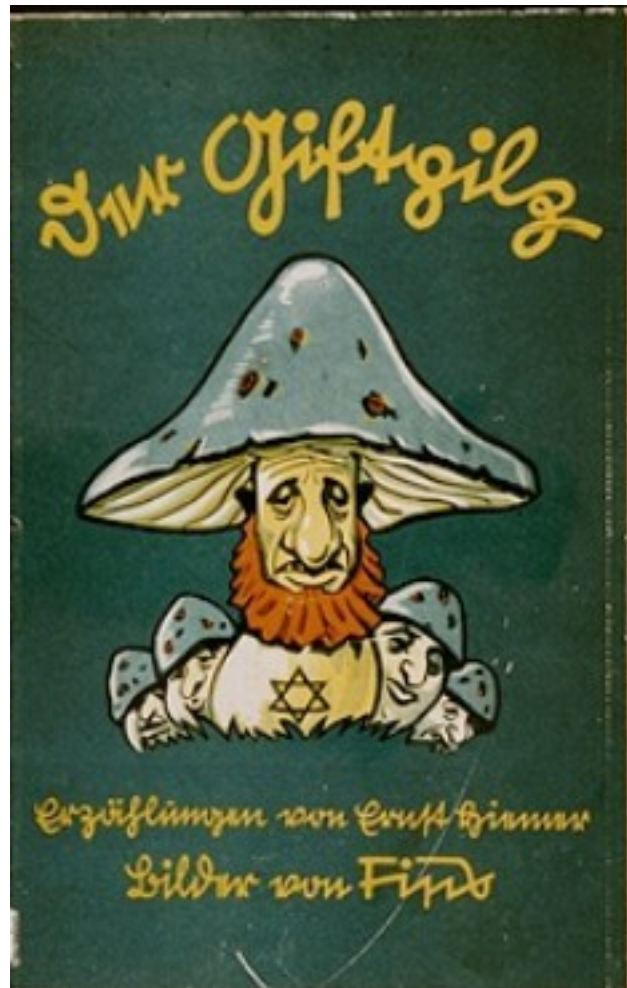
The Poster for the propaganda exhibition "The Eternal Jew" in 1937.  
(Wikimedia)

Image 2



*The sign reads, "When you read this sign..." with the word "Jude," German for "Jew," in the Star of David. (Wikimedia)*

Image 3



Cover of a German anti-Semitic book for children, *Der Giftpilz* (The Poisonous Mushroom), by Ernst Hiemer, published in Germany by Der Stuermer-Verlag, 1938 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

## Lesson 2: The Election of 1932



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-03497A  
Foto: o. Ang. | 31. Juli 1932

*Men in Berlin hold propaganda signs in July 1932, by Georg Pahl (German Federal Archives)*

## Why did Germans vote for the Nazi Party?



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## Homework

### Germany After World War I

Read the tables below, as well as the articles “Weimar Germany 1918–1924” on BBC’s “Bitesize” website, “National Socialism and Hitler’s Nazi Party” on the Newsela website, and “Comparing Economic Systems” on Independence Hall’s USHistory.org website.

### Political Party Beliefs

The following table outlines the platform for each of the three major political parties in Germany in the beginning of the 1930s.

Political Party	Summary
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Controlled 30 percent of the Reichstag in 1928 (most popular party)</li><li>● Based on socialist principles</li></ul>
Communist Party (KDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Based on communist principles</li><li>● Appealed to many members of the middle class, who were financially suffering due to the Depression</li><li>● In 1928, held 10 percent of the Reichstag</li><li>● The fourth most popular party</li></ul>
National Socialist Party (NSDAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Blamed the communists for the loss of World War I</li><li>● Believed that communism and nationalism did not go hand in hand; developed a national socialism</li></ul>

*(Data retrieved from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)*

## Political Party Platforms

The following table gives excerpts from the platforms of each of the three competing political parties in the German election of 1932.

Political Parties	Excerpts from Political Platforms
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We are committed to maintaining the Republic and a policy that will allow Germany to take its rightful place among the free governments of Europe.</li> <li>● We will support the present German Republic so that freedom, democracy, and justice will live in the hearts of our German countrymen.</li> <li>● We will honor all of Germany's obligations, political and financial, so that Germany's honor and respect will not be decreased in the eyes of the world.</li> <li>● We plan to create more jobs by undertaking an extensive program of public works.</li> <li>● We believe in the right of those who disagree with the party to speak and write on those issues without interference.</li> </ul>
Communist Party (KDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We are committed to the overthrow of the existing, oppressive Republic and all of its economic and social institutions.</li> <li>● We favor the establishment of land-reform programs so the government can take over the land and distribute it for the common good.</li> <li>● To the German people: The cause of your misery is the fact that French, British, and American capitalists are exploiting German workers to get rich themselves. Germans, unite to get rid of this terrible burden.</li> </ul>
National Socialist Party (NSDAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We want a union of all Germans to form a great Germany on the basis of the right to self-determination of peoples.</li> <li>● Abolish the Treaty of Versailles.</li> <li>● Force Allies to return lands lost in World War I and colonies to give Germans adequate living space.</li> <li>● We want the state to ensure that every citizen can live decently and earn his livelihood. If it is impossible to provide food for the whole population, aliens must be expelled.</li> <li>● German blood must be a requirement for German citizenship. No Jew can be a member of the nation.</li> <li>● Guarantee for jobs and benefits for workers.</li> </ul>

*(Data retrieved from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)*

## **Document A**

### **Case Study #1: Eric von Ronheim**

Eric von Ronheim, the head of a Frankfurt textile factory, is very concerned about the Depression. Sales are down and so are profits. If only Germany had not been treated so ruthlessly at Versailles, he argues, the nation would be far better off. Instead, the government has had to impose heavy taxes to pay reparations to its former enemies. As a result, Germans are overtaxed, with little money to spend on textiles and other consumer goods. The worldwide Depression has made matters worse by eliminating possible foreign markets for German products. Even if the Depression were over, Ronheim does not think taxes would come down, because of reparation payments.

Ronheim considers the Communists a serious threat to Germany. He fears that if they set up a government like the one in the Soviet Union, capitalists like him would receive no mercy from the workers. He also thinks that Germany would become subservient to its old enemy, the Soviet Union.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

## **Document B**

### **Case Study #2: Wilhelm Schultz**

Wilhelm Schultz works with his father on the family farm in eastern Brandenburg [in Germany], near the Polish border. The Versailles Treaty has had a profound effect on Schultz and his family. The treaty turned part of Pomerania, Poznan, and West Prussia over to Poland. Even though his uncle lives just a few miles away, his home is now in Poland rather than Germany. Schultz's grandfather lives in Danzig, now an independent city under the mandate of the League of Nations. Schultz can only visit his grandfather by traveling through Poland; he now needs a passport and other official documents. This does not seem right to Schultz. As a child, he was taught to admire Germany's heroes, some of whom fought the Poles. So he is dismayed that his government signed the Treaty of Versailles that has subjected many Germans, including his uncle, to Polish rule.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

**Document C**  
**Case Study #3: Otto Hauptmann**

Otto Hauptmann works in a factory in Berlin. Although his trade union has actively worked for better conditions and higher wages, it has recently been losing ground in the Depression. Hauptmann blames their lack of success on the 1923 inflation and the current Depression. He believes that the union would be more successful if the economy were more stable. Still, it is the union that has kept him employed. At a time when many of his friends have been laid off, his union persuaded the owners of his factory to keep men with seniority. In factories with weaker unions, managers kept only the young, claiming they would be more productive. As long as the Depression deepens, however, the chances that he will keep his job diminish.

Hauptmann worries about some of the ideas that his fellow workers have expressed recently. They argue that when the owners are forced to cut back production, they take it out on the workers. So the only way to end the Depression is to let the workers control the factories and the government. Hauptmann disagrees. He thinks that the workers do get fair treatment as long as they have a strong union. Moreover, he believes that managing the factories and government should be left to those who understand these complicated jobs.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

**Document D**  
**Case Study #4: Gerda Munchen**

Gerda Munchen is the owner of a small Munich grocery store started by her parents. For years, her parents had saved to send her to the university, but Munchen chose not to go, and the money stayed in the bank. In 1923, she had planned to use the money to pay for her children's education. But that year, hyperinflation hit Germany because the government had printed so much money, she was told, to pay reparations invoked by the Versailles Treaty. Just before her older daughter was to leave for the university, the bank informed the family that its savings were worthless. This was a blow to Munchen, but even more of a blow to her daughter, whose future hung in the balance.

Munchen does not think she will ever regain her savings. With so many people out of work, sales are down sharply. In addition, Munchen's small grocery is having a tough time competing with the large chain stores, which can offer far lower prices. She and her children question a system that has made life so difficult for hardworking people.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

## Document E

### Case Study #5: Elisabeth von Kohler

Elisabeth von Kohler, a prominent attorney who attended the University of Bonn, has a strong sense of the German cultural, literary, and historical traditions. She believes that her people's contributions to Western civilization have been ignored. Kohler would like to see the republic lead a democratic Europe. She disapproves of the methods the Weimar Republic often uses to repress extremist parties.

Her sense of justice is even more outraged by the way the Allies, particularly France, view Germany. She, and others like her, who believe in Germany and its traditions, would like to prove to these countries that the Germans are a great race. She is proud to be an attorney and a German woman in the Weimar Republic.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

## Document F

### Case Study #6: Karl Schmidt

Karl Schmidt is an unemployed worker who lives in the rich steel-producing Ruhr Valley. Like so many men in the Ruhr, he lost his job because of the Depression. Many steel mills have been forced to shut down until there is a market for their goods. On the day that Karl's mill closed, the owners announced that shrinking profits made it impossible to keep the workers in their jobs.

Such might be the case, Karl states, yet he notes that the owners of the steel mills still live in big houses and drive expensive cars. Why are they protected from the Depression while their former employees suffer? Although the government did provide unemployment compensation, the money was barely enough to support Schmidt, his wife, and their two children. The government claims that it could not afford to continue even these payments any longer.

Schmidt feels that the government would be in a stronger position to help people if it cut off all reparation payments. But he also knows that if the government did so, the French might occupy the Ruhr Valley just as they did in 1923. What is needed is a government that is responsive to the workers — perhaps even one that is run by the workers, as some of his friends maintain. And he is convinced that Germany needs a government strong enough to stop reparation payments.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*

## Lesson 3: Nazi Aggression and Appeasement



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-H12704  
Foto: o. Ang. | 22. September 1938

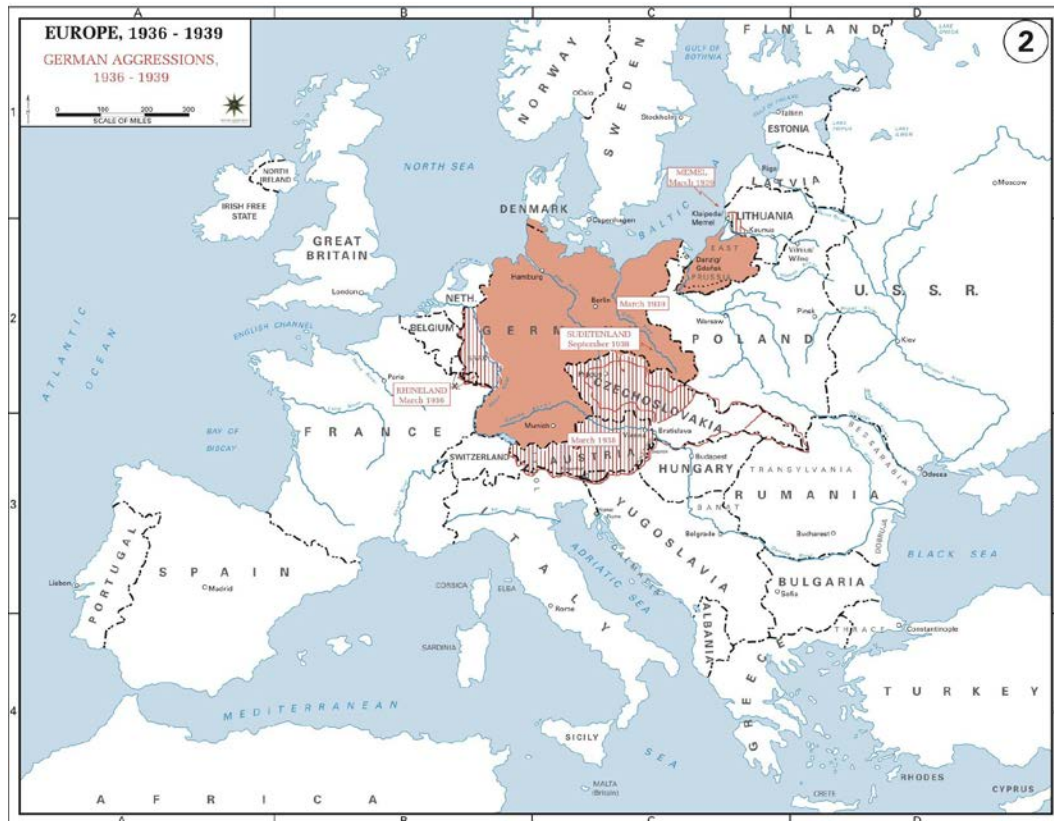
*Hitler traveling to meet British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in Dresden, Germany, in 1938  
(German Federal Archives)*

## Why did European leaders appease Nazi aggression?

## Homework

### Nazi Aggression and European Appeasement

The following text was adapted from the article "German Prewar Expansion," published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In addition, read the article "National Socialism and Hitler's Nazi Party" on the Newsela Website and watch the video "Hitler's Rise to Power on the Facing History and Ourselves website.



Map of German aggression between 1938 and 1939 (WestPoint.edu)

## Pursuit of Empire

At the Lausanne Conference of 1932, Germany, Britain, and France agreed to the formal suspension of reparations payments from the defeated countries after World War I. Thus, when Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January 1933, the financial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the post–World War I peace agreement, had already been revised. Hitler was determined to overturn the remaining military and territorial provisions of the treaty to create a German empire in Europe.

Germany had already been secretly rebuilding its army before the Nazi takeover of power. The Nazis continued this **rearmament** [*expansion of military*] and rapidly expanded arms production. Military conscription was reintroduced on March 16, 1935, in open violation of the Treaty of Versailles. At the same time, Hitler announced the expansion of the German army to more than 500,000 men.

In the 1925 Treaty of Locarno, Germany had recognized both the permanence of its borders with France and Belgium and the demilitarization of the Rhineland. On March 7, 1936, however, Hitler ignored this agreement and ordered the German armed forces into the demilitarized Rhineland. Hitler's action brought condemnation from Britain and France, but neither nation intervened.

After a prolonged period of intense propaganda inside Austria, German troops entered the country on March 12, 1938, receiving the enthusiastic support of most of the population. Austria was incorporated into Germany on the following day. In April, this German annexation was retroactively approved in a vote that was manipulated to indicate that about 99 percent of the Austrian people wanted the union (known as the Anschluss) with Germany. Aggressive Nazi campaigning and propaganda was used to convince the German and Austrian people that strength and empire would result from their unity. Still vulnerable and scared of the Depression and feeling embarrassed following WWI, many Germans and Austrians were convinced by the Nazis' promises for national greatness. Neither Jews nor Roma (Gypsies) were permitted to vote.

## The Munich Agreement and the Partition of Czechoslovakia

In 1938, Hitler threatened to unleash a European war unless the Sudetenland, a border area of Czechoslovakia containing an ethnic German majority, was surrendered to Germany. The leaders of Britain, France, Italy, and Germany held a conference in Munich, Germany, on September 29 and 30, 1938, in which they agreed to the German annexation of the Sudetenland in exchange for a pledge of peace from Hitler. Czechoslovakia agreed under significant pressure from Britain and France.





*Adolf Hitler greeting British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1938 (Published by Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1976-063-32 under the CC-BY-SA-3.0 license.)*

On March 15, 1939, Hitler violated the Munich Agreement and moved against the Czechoslovak state. The Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia were proclaimed a part of Germany and were occupied by German forces. Slovakia became an independent state, closely allied with Germany. Hungary, which had annexed territory in southern Slovakia after the Munich conference, seized part of the Ukraine. Czechoslovakia ceased to exist.

On March 23, 1939, German troops suddenly occupied Memel, Lithuania. Hitler then demanded the annexation of the Free City of Danzig in Poland to Germany and access for Germany through the so-called Polish Corridor to East Prussia.

Convinced that Hitler would not negotiate, Britain and France guaranteed to protect Polish territory against German aggression. With Hitler determined to attack Poland, Europe was on the brink of war in late summer 1939. On September 1, 1939, Hitler and the Nazi army invaded Poland. Left with little other choice, on September 3, Great Britain, France, and Poland declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

*Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org*

**Document A**  
**Timeline of German Aggression**

**March 13, 1938:** Germany annexes Austria.

**September 29-30, 1938:** France, Italy, and Great Britain sign the Munich Agreement with Germany, agreeing to avoid war in order to maintain peace.

**March 15, 1939:** Germany breaks the Munich Agreement and invades Czechoslovakia.

**March 31, 1939:** France and Great Britain pledge their support to Poland.

**August 23, 1939:** Germany and the Soviet Union sign the Nazi–Soviet Pact, promising not to attack each other while sharing power over Eastern Europe.

**September 1, 1939:** Germany invades Poland.

**September 3, 1939:** Great Britain, France, and Poland declare war on Germany.

## Document B German Annexation of Austria

To justify the annexation of Austria, Hitler called for a public vote on whether the unification should stand. This is an excerpt from a speech he gave on April 9, 1938, the day before the vote. As Hitler points out in his speech, he himself was born in Austria and grew up there.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1985-083-10  
Foto: o. Ang. | März 1938

*Hitler travels through Austria in 1938 to promote German-Austrian reunification.  
(German National Archives)*

When one day we shall be no more, then the coming generations shall be able to look back with pride upon this day, the day on which a great **Volk** [*German people*] affirmed the German community. In the past, millions of German men shed their blood for this **Reich** [*reference to German nation under Hitler*]. How merciful a fate to be allowed to create this Reich today without a suffering. Now, rise, German Volk, subscribe to it, hold it tightly in your hands! I wish to thank Him who allowed me to return to my homeland so that I could return it to my German Reich! May every German realize the importance of the hour tomorrow, assess it and then bow his head in reverence before the will of the Almighty who has wrought this miracle in all of us within these past few weeks.

Hitler, Adolf. April 9, 1938, Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

## Document C

### Neville Chamberlain: To the House of Commons

*In 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met twice with Adolf Hitler in response to German aggression. On September 30, 1938, they signed the Munich Agreement, which gave the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia to Germany. In exchange, Hitler agreed that Germany would stop its invasions and territorial expansion. The excerpt below is from Chamberlain's speech to the United Kingdom's House of Commons on October 5, 1938.*

What is the alternative to this bleak and barren policy of the inevitability of war? In my view it is that we should seek by all means in our power to avoid war, by analyzing possible causes, by trying to remove them, by discussion in a spirit of collaboration and goodwill. I cannot believe that such a program would be rejected by the people of this country, even if it does mean the establishment of personal contact with dictators. ...

I do indeed believe that we may yet secure peace for our time, but I never meant to suggest that we should do that by disarmament, until we can induce others to disarm too. Our past experience has shown us only too clearly that weakness in armed strength means weakness in diplomacy, and if we want to secure a lasting peace, I realize that diplomacy cannot be effective unless behind the diplomacy is the **strength** [*in this context, military*] to give effect. ...

I cannot help feeling that if, after all, war had come upon us, the people of this Country would have lost their spiritual faith altogether. As it turned out the other way, I think we have all seen something like a new spiritual revival, and I know that everywhere there is a strong desire among the people to record their readiness to serve their Country, wherever or however their services could be most useful.

*Chamberlain, Neville. October 5, 1938. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*

**Document D**  
**Winston Churchill: To the House of Commons**

*Winston Churchill, a British politician who would eventually replace Chamberlain as prime minister, was a fierce critic of appeasement. The following excerpt is from Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in response to Chamberlain on October 5, 1938.*

I will begin by saying what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated, namely, that we have sustained a total defeat. ...

The utmost he [Chamberlain] has been able to gain for Czechoslovakia and in the matters which were in dispute has been that the German dictator, instead of snatching his victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course.

I have always held the view that the maintenance of peace depends upon the accumulation of deterrents against the aggressor, coupled with a sincere effort to redress grievances. ... After the [German] seizure of Austria in March, I ventured to pledge that in conjunction with France and other powers they would guarantee the security of Czechoslovakia while the Sudeten-Deutsch question was being examined either by a League of Nations Commission or some other impartial body, and I still believe that if that course had been followed events would not have fallen into this disastrous state.

I venture to think that in the future the Czechoslovak State cannot be maintained as an independent entity. You will find that in a period of time, which may not be measured by years, but may be measured only by months, Czechoslovakia will be engulfed in the Nazi regime. ...

We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has befallen Great Britain and France. ... This is only the beginning of the reckoning.

*Churchill, Winston. October 5, 1938. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*

## Lessons 4–5: American Isolationism



*Frame of the film Prelude to War, created by the U.S. Army, 1941 (Wikimedia)*

**To what extent did Americans support entry into World War II?**

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## Homework

### The Outbreak of War

*The following text was adapted from the essay "World War II" by historian Kenneth Jackson, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and from an article published by the U.S. Department of State.*

In 1931, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, a northern province of China. In July 1937, the Japanese moved again, this time directly against the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek. The atrocities that followed shocked the world. Meanwhile, in 1936, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler moved aggressively into the Rhineland, previously a demilitarized zone, and in 1938, he incorporated Czechoslovakia and Austria into the Third Reich. By this time, the Western world was fully alert to the menace of the fanatically ambitious and confident Führer. Then, in the early morning hours of September 1, 1939, Hitler sent his armies into Poland. Two days later, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. Within a matter of weeks the Soviet Union, which had recently signed a nonaggression treaty with Hitler, attacked Poland from the east. Within a month, Polish resistance collapsed, and Warsaw fell. World War II had begun.

In general, the American people did not want to have any part in a European war. They felt protected by great oceans on both sides of the North American continent. And they felt that, in World War I, American boys had fought and bled in France mostly to make fortunes for munitions makers and arms merchants. Moreover, the United States had allowed its armed forces to wither in the 1920s and 1930s, so that when World War II broke out in Europe, its army of 190,000 men ranked about 18th in the global rankings, about on a par with Romania and Bulgaria.



*Mussolini (left) and Hitler in Munich, September 28, 1938 (German Federal Archives)*

The United States might never have entered World War II if Germany, Japan, and Italy had stopped after their initial conquests. But the three Axis powers made astonishing gains in the years before the Pearl Harbor attack. After taking over Norway and neutralizing Sweden, the Nazis turned their attention to the big prize. Early in the morning of May 10, 1940, Hitler launched a blitzkrieg or lightning war against France, whose army had previously been considered the finest in the world. The revolutionary nature of the German offensive, generally credited to the brilliant strategist Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, was to concentrate all available tanks into a few specialized and highly mobile armored divisions rather than to spread them out evenly among infantry units. These army tank formations were to smash holes in the enemy line and then break out into the rear, creating havoc on the roads and, supported by Luftwaffe dive-bombers, preventing the Allies from plugging the gaps. They did this by attacking through the dense Ardennes forests in Luxembourg and southern Belgium, crossing the Meuse River long before the Allied high command had thought possible. The British and French armies actually had more and better tanks than the attackers, but new strategic and tactical concepts carried the contest. The German tank columns swept everything before them, and the French defenses soon collapsed. In fact, the almost total collapse of the proud French army in May 1940 remains one of the most incredible events in all of military history. France initiated the peace process in June, and Hitler's victorious troops marched past the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

The British Expeditionary Force, which had been sent in 1939 to help defend France from the Wehrmacht, was cut off when German panzer divisions cut west toward the English Channel, effectively isolating more than 300,000 Allied troops. Fortunately for Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the Royal Navy was able to extricate his trapped soldiers from the port of Dunkirk. But at the end of June 1940, essentially all of Western Europe was under the control of Berlin.

Hitler expected Great Britain to recognize German superiority and to remove itself from active involvement in Europe. He believed Germany sought lebensraum, meaning growing space, in the east and had no intention of dismantling the British Empire. Why not just divide the world? Why would the Anglo-Saxons not be content with their vast holdings in Asia, on the other side of the world? When London refused to capitulate or to do the sensible thing, the Führer unleashed the Luftwaffe, the German air force, on the English homeland, expecting that its heavy blows would bring Churchill to his senses.



*Firemen at work in a bomb-damaged street in London, 1941 (National Archives Catalog)*

At about the same time, in a dramatic BBC radio address from London on June 18, 1940, General Charles de Gaulle called upon his French countrymen to resist their German conquerors. Meanwhile, Italy, not satisfied with its conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 to 1936, turned its attention toward Greece. And Japan expanded its military operations in China.

In 1941, however, Hitler made a colossal blunder. In fact, perhaps no event in human history can match in significance the Führer's decision to invade the Soviet Union in the early summer. He had not defeated Great Britain, and yet he was turning his armies to the east, initiating a two-front war. When his soldiers crossed the U.S.S.R. frontier on June 22, the Nazis leader's new opponent became Joseph Stalin, a dictator as ruthless and cunning as himself, and the head of both the largest country and the largest army on earth. The eastern front, which involved hundreds of combat divisions stretched over thousands of miles of windswept terrain, would turn out to be a human furnace that consumed soldiers as hungrily as steam engines consume coals. Germany essentially bled to death in Russia, as four-fifths of all Wehrmacht soldiers who perished in the war died while fighting the Red Army. For the Soviet Union, the carnage was even worse. A staggering 27 million U.S.S.R. citizens died in what for them will always be "the Great Patriotic War."



## American Isolationism

During the 1930s, the combination of the Great Depression and the memory of tragic losses in World War I contributed to pushing American public opinion and policy toward isolationism. Isolationists advocated non-involvement in European and Asian conflicts and non-entanglement in international politics. Although the United States took measures to avoid political and military conflicts across the oceans, it continued to expand economically and protect its interests in Latin America. The leaders of the isolationist movement drew upon history to bolster their position. In his “Farewell Address,” President George Washington had advocated non-involvement in European wars and politics. For much of the 19th century, the expanse of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans had made it possible for the United States to enjoy a kind of “free security” and remain largely detached from Old World conflicts. During World War I, however, President Woodrow Wilson made a case for U.S. intervention in the conflict and a U.S. interest in maintaining a peaceful world order. Nevertheless, the American experience in that war served to bolster the arguments of isolationists; they argued that marginal U.S. interests in the conflict did not justify the number of U.S. casualties.

Upon taking office, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt believed the U.S. should join the war, but he was limited by the strength of isolationism in Congress. In 1933, Roosevelt proposed a congressional measure that would have granted him the right to consult with other nations to place pressure on aggressors in international conflicts. The bill ran into strong opposition from the leading isolationists in Congress, including progressive politicians such as senators Hiram Johnson of California, William Borah of Idaho, and Robert La Follette of Wisconsin. In 1935, controversy over U.S. participation in the World Court elicited similar opposition. As tensions rose in Europe over Nazi Germany’s aggressive maneuvers, Congress pushed through a series of Neutrality Acts, which served to prevent American ships and citizens from becoming entangled in outside conflicts. Roosevelt lamented the restrictive nature of the acts, but because he still required congressional support for his domestic New Deal policies, he reluctantly acquiesced.

The isolationists were a diverse group, including progressives and conservatives, business owners and peace activists, but because they faced no consistent, organized opposition from internationalists, their ideology triumphed time and again. Roosevelt appeared to accept the strength of the isolationist elements in Congress until 1937. In that year, as the situation in Europe continued to grow worse and war between Japan and China began in Asia, the president gave a speech in which he likened international aggression to a disease that other nations must work to “**quarantine** [*place in isolation*].” At that time, however, Americans were still not prepared to risk their lives and livelihoods for peace abroad. Even the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 did not suddenly diffuse popular desire to avoid international entanglements. Instead, public opinion shifted from favoring complete neutrality to supporting limited U.S. aid to the Allies short of actual intervention in the war.

*Jackson, Kenneth T., World War II. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

**Dr. Seuss Political Cartoon: American Isolationism**

*The following political cartoon was created by Dr. Seuss, the popular children's book author, and published in PM magazine on October 1, 1941.*

**... and the Wolf chewed up the children and spit out their bones ...  
But those were Foreign Children and it really didn't matter."**



(Wikimedia)

## Document A

### Pro Involvement in the War

*Senator James F. Byrnes, a Democratic senator from South Carolina, delivered the following speech on January 17, 1941.*

We know that our own Democracy is threatened by forces that now seek to destroy Democracies across the Atlantic. ... If Great Britain falls, the United States will stand practically alone on the edge of the **precipice** [*cliff*]. ...

Over the radio and from platforms, it is argued that it is none of our business whether Britain stands or falls. ... Let us face the facts. The reason we are feverishly working to provide an Army and Navy is to defend ourselves against the Axis powers. If we could be certain that Britain would defeat Hitler, we could and would stop using money for military purposes. But we cannot be certain of it. We are certain only that each day Britain holds Hitler, we are better able to defend America. If Britain can hold Hitler for a year, we can hold him forever. Self-preservation, therefore, demands that we now give Britain aid instead of sympathy.

Well meaning people believe that by wishing war away, they can keep war away. Not one of the nations whose people today lie crushed beneath the German war machine wanted war. ... On the streets of London [before the war] I saw a peace parade. ... But while the British prayed for peace, Hitler prepared for war. ...

There is danger in any course we pursue. But if we aid Britain, and the conflict of war remains in Europe, our own cities will stand intact, **stalwart** [*devoted*] witnesses to the progress recorded by our way of life. Our citizens will sleep in peace with the realization that no bombs will crash through the roof. ... So long as Great Britain is able to hold Hitler at bay, America can arm and contribute its share to the all-important task of holding him, without suffering any of the ravages of modern war.

On the other hand, if we fail to aid Britain and next summer the British should **succumb** [*give in*] to Hitler's assaults, and the British fleet fall into the hands of Hitler, all this will be changed. With the German fleet in the Atlantic and the Japanese fleet in the Pacific, every individual, every institution in this hemisphere, will be in peril. We should stand alone, friendless, in a world ruled by madmen. ...

*Byrnes, James F. January 17, 1941. Courtesy of TeachingAmericanHistory.org.*

## Document B

### Against Involvement in the War

*Charles Lindbergh was an American cultural hero in the 1930s. A record-breaking pilot, in 1927 he became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic. Lindbergh was a strong Isolationist (and, many would argue, an anti-Semite). Below is an excerpt from his Des Moines, Iowa speech, delivered on September 11, 1941.*

It is now two years since this latest European war began. From that day in September 1939 until the present moment, there has been an ever-increasing effort to force the United States into the conflict.

That effort has been carried on by foreign interests, and by a small minority of our own people; but it has been so successful that, today, our country stands on the verge of war. ...

When this war started in Europe, it was clear that the American people were solidly opposed to entering it. Why shouldn't we be? We had the best defensive position in the world; we had a tradition of independence from Europe; and the one time we did take part in a European war, left European problems unsolved and debts to America unpaid. ...

The Roosevelt administration ... has been carrying this country toward war. ... They have used the war to add unlimited billions to a debt which was already the highest we have ever known. And they have just used the war to justify the restriction of congressional power, and the assumption of dictatorial procedures on the part of the president and his appointees. ...

We are on the verge of war, but it is not yet too late to stay out. It is not too late to show that no amount of money, or propaganda ... can force a free and independent people into war against its will. It is not yet too late to retrieve and to maintain the independent American destiny that our forefathers established in this new world.

*Lindbergh, Charles. September 11, 1941. Courtesy of Schwartz, Steven, National Security, Isolationism, and the Coming of World War II. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

## Lesson 6: U.S. Entry into World War II



*Pearl Harbor attack, December 7, 1941 (Naval History and Heritage Command)*

## Why did the United States join World War II?

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## Homework

### U.S. Entry into WWII

*The following text was adapted from the essay "World War II" by historian Kenneth Jackson, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt followed the news of fighting in Europe with obvious concern. He knew his countrymen did not want to be involved, and indeed he ran for an unprecedented third term in the White House with the slogan "He kept us out of war." Isolationist sentiment was powerful, and no less a personage than Charles Lindbergh led an America First movement that aimed to avoid all foreign entanglements. Moreover, many ethnic Americans were not anxious to help the British. German Americans and Italian Americans, for example, while loyal to the United States, were also proud that Hitler and Mussolini had restored pride and confidence to their homelands, while Irish Americans, long hostile to the government in London, did not want to go to war to advance the interests of the hated English. On the other side of the interventionist divide, Jewish Americans were more aware of Hitler's intense anti-Semitism and of the new regulations and laws that limited Jewish access to the professions in Germany. They also knew that when brown-shirted Nazi thugs attacked Jewish businesses and synagogues, the Berlin government had done nothing to protect its Jewish citizens.

FDR was of course aware of these cross-currents. And he also knew that if Germany ever controlled all of Europe, its power would be colossal. So, sometimes quietly, sometimes forcefully, he moved his nation to a state of greater preparedness. On July 19, 1940, he signed into law the largest shipbuilding program in American history, one that would essentially double the size of the already impressive United States Navy. And the Army, directed by Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, began to grow to a size more appropriate to a great power. Also in 1940, the president took the momentous step of federalizing the National Guard of all the states. If the American republic was ever to be dragged into the conflict, Roosevelt wanted the nation to be ready.

### Japanese Ambitions

Japanese leaders felt that they were being unfairly held back by the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, which together controlled most of the natural resources, especially oil, to the south of Japan, in places now known as Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Essentially, the Western powers said they would not send scrap iron and sell resources to the Japanese if their government did not remove its troops from China and renounce its ambitions there.

Why should the proud Japanese, with their centuries of tradition, their modern navy, and their ambitions for future glory, give up their dreams because those dreams did not fit with the wishes of white Westerners? They wanted their own empire and their own seat at the table among the great nations of the world.

This meant certain war with the West. It would require a bold attack on the United States Pacific Fleet, which President Roosevelt had recently redeployed from its homeport in San Diego to Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. Such an assault would require careful planning, intense training, absolute secrecy, and complete surprise. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's plan was to first cripple the American fleet and then to force a gigantic naval battle in the Pacific. The Japanese, according to Yamamoto's plan, would win and force Roosevelt to yield to Tokyo's demands. As such, Japan made a direct strike against the United States, which was the one country with the natural resources, the population, and the industrial capacity to crush Japan.



*Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto (Wikimedia)*

## Japan Attacks Pearl Harbor

By every military measure, Japan's early morning attack on the great fleet anchorage at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was a success. Its aircraft carriers managed to cross the Pacific Ocean without being spotted, and its torpedo and dive-bombers achieved complete surprise against the sleeping American fleet. All eight American battleships were disabled or sent to the bottom, as were dozens of smaller vessels. More than a thousand sailors died on the USS *Arizona* alone, and they represented less than half of the Navy losses that day. By contrast, the Japanese attackers lost only a few pilots and planes, and no ships. Admiral Yamamoto had every reason to be proud. He had only two reasons for immediate concern. First, the three large American aircraft carriers attached to the Pacific Fleet were not in Pearl Harbor, but were at sea on a practice mission, and the Japanese aviators could not find them. Second, Yamamoto had not thought to order his pilots to blow up the giant oil tanks and fuel storage facilities that dotted the area around Pearl Harbor.

But those were minor issues compared to the admiral's greatest worry. Despite his great victory, he thought the Japanese had simply awakened a sleeping giant. Yamamoto expected the Japanese army and navy to run wild for six months, but then, he feared, the United States would gather its enormous human and material resources and hurl them against the admiral's island nation. And in the case of a protracted war against the American republic, Japan's most famous officer realized that the cause was almost hopeless.

The great national debate about whether the United States should get involved in World War II essentially ended when the first bombs fell on the Hawaiian Islands. Few Americans had ever been to Japan, and fewer still cared about it one way or the other. But as radios across the land sent out the news of a sneak attack on the American base at Pearl Harbor, a gigantic nation — a “sleeping giant,” as Admiral Yamamoto called it — was roused to fury. The next day, a Monday, President Roosevelt spoke before a joint session of Congress. Referring to December 7 as “a day which will live in infamy,” he asked for a Declaration of War against the Empire of Japan, which was approved without debate and almost without dissent. Surprisingly, on December 10, Germany declared war on the United States even though Hitler's treaty with Japan was a defensive arrangement that did not require him to act, because Japan had been the aggressor. The Führer made many miscalculations during the war; perhaps this was his biggest mistake.

President Roosevelt was happy that the United States was in the war, and in fact, he had manipulated the Japanese into firing the first shot. But he had expected the initial Japanese attack to be against the Philippines, not on a presumably impregnable naval base in the middle of a huge ocean. He was shocked by what happened at Pearl Harbor and was horrified by the destruction of his battleships and the devastating number of deaths on December 7. But the American nation could make up such human and material losses. And the president knew how to funnel national anger at Japan into a much more critical war against Germany. FDR understood better than his countrymen that Germany was the greater threat and that Japan could be dealt with almost at leisure. It was a sentiment shared by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. When he heard of the Pearl Harbor disaster, he actually breathed a sigh of relief, noting in his wartime diary: “So we have won after all.”

*Jackson, Kenneth T., World War II. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

**Document A**  
**President Roosevelt: Radio Address**

*President Roosevelt gave the following speech on the radio on December 29, 1940, to defend the proposed Lend Lease Act, which would provide arms to Allied forces. The act was passed on March 11, 1941.*

Never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger as now. ...

The Nazi masters of Germany have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then to use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world. ...

In view of the nature of this undeniable threat, it can be asserted that the United States has no right or reason to encourage talk of peace, until there is a clear intention on the part of the aggressor nations to abandon all thought of dominating or conquering the world. ...

If Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, [Australia], and the high seas — and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere. It is no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun — a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military. ...

We must be the great arsenal of democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself. We must apply ourselves to our task with the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of patriotism and sacrifice as we would show were we at war.

*Roosevelt, Franklin D. March 11, 1941. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.*



## Document B

### President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Pearl Harbor Address to the Nation

*On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt delivered the following speech in Washington, D.C. Watch him deliver this address on the War Archives channel on YouTube and follow along with the text below.*

Yesterday, Dec. 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the **solicitation** [*request*] of Japan, was still in conversation with the government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air **squadrons** [*air force units*] had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleagues delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

This morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As commander in chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the **onslaught** [*fierce attack*] against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this **premeditated** [*deliberate*] invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

**Hostilities** [*opposition; acts of warfare*] exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces — with the **unbending** [*tough, relentless*] determination of our people — we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and **dastardly** [*wicked and cruel*] attack by Japan on Sunday, Dec. 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

*Roosevelt, Franklin D., December 8, 1941. Courtesy of PBS.org.*

**Document C**  
**“Remember Dec. 7th!”**

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan and Germany. “Remember Dec. 7th!” is a propaganda poster created shortly after the bombing.



*This poster combines imagery suggesting the destruction of the base — smoke and a tattered American flag — with a quotation from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address: “We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain.” (National Museum of the U.S. Navy)*

## Lesson 7: Japanese Internment



*Japanese child tagged for evacuation, Salinas, California, 1942  
(Library of Congress)*

## Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?

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## Homework

### Japanese Internment

*The following text was adapted from an article published by the National Archives.*

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared that the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, would live in infamy. The attack launched the United States fully into the two theaters of the world war. Prior to Pearl Harbor, the United States had been involved in the European war only by supplying England and other anti-fascist countries of Europe with the munitions of war.

The attack on Pearl Harbor also launched a rash of fear about national security, especially on the West Coast. In February 1942, just two months after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt, as commander-in-chief, issued Executive Order 9066, which had the effect of relocating all people 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 people of Japanese descent from harm at the hands of Americans who had strong anti-Japanese attitudes.

In Washington and Oregon, the eastern boundary of the military zone was an imaginary line along the rim of the Cascade Mountains; this line continued down the spine of California from north to south. From that line to the Pacific coast, the military restricted zones in those three states were defined.

Roosevelt's order affected 117,000 people of Japanese descent, two-thirds of whom were native-born citizens of the United States. The Issei were the first generation of Japanese in this country; the Nisei were the second generation, numbering 70,000 American citizens at the time of internment. Within weeks, all people of Japanese ancestry — whether citizens or enemy aliens, young or old, rich or poor — were ordered to assembly centers near their homes. Soon they were sent to permanent relocation centers outside the restricted military zones.

For example, people of Japanese ancestry in western Washington State were removed to the assembly center at the Puyallup Fairgrounds near Tacoma. From Puyallup to Pomona, internees found that a cowshed at a fairgrounds or a horse stall at a racetrack was home for several months before they were transported to a permanent wartime residence. Relocation centers were situated many miles inland, often in remote and desolate locales. Sites included Tule Lake, California; Minidoka, Idaho; Manzanar, California; Topaz, Utah; Jerome, Arkansas; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Poston, Arizona; Granada, Colorado; and Rohwer, Arkansas.

As four or five families with their sparse collections of clothing and possessions squeezed into and shared tar-papered barracks, life took on some familiar routines of socializing and school. However, eating in common facilities and having limited opportunities for work interrupted other social and cultural patterns. People who became troublesome were sent to a special camp at Tule Lake, California, where dissidents were housed.

In 1943 and 1944 the government assembled a combat unit of Japanese Americans for the European theater. It became the 442d Regimental Combat Team and gained fame as the most highly decorated of World War II. Their military record bespoke their patriotism.

As the war drew to a close, the relocation centers were slowly evacuated. While some people of Japanese ancestry returned to their hometowns, others sought new surroundings. For example, the Japanese American community of Tacoma, Washington, had been sent to three different centers; only 30 percent returned to Tacoma after the war. Japanese Americans from Fresno had gone to Manzanar; 80 percent returned to their hometowns.

The internment of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II sparked constitutional and political debate. In the 1940s, two men and one woman — Hirabayashi, Korematsu, and Endo — challenged the constitutionality of the relocation and curfew orders. While the men received negative judgments from the court, in the 1944 case *Ex Parte Mitsuye Endo*, the Supreme Court ruled that “Mitsuye Endo is entitled to an unconditional release by the War Relocation Authority.” Some people refer to the relocation centers as concentration camps; others view internment as an unfortunate episode, but a military necessity. During the Reagan–Bush years, Congress moved toward the passage of Public Law 100-383 in 1988, which acknowledged the injustice of the internment, apologized for it, and provided a \$20,000 cash payment to each person who was interned.

One of the most stunning ironies in this episode of American civil liberties was articulated by an internee who, when told that the Japanese were put in those camps for their own protection, countered, “If we were put there for our protection, why were the guns at the guard towers pointed inward instead of outward?”

*Japanese Relocation During World War II. Courtesy of National Archives, Archives.gov.*

## **Document A**

### **The Munson Report**

*In 1941, President Roosevelt ordered the State Department to investigate the loyalty of Japanese Americans. Special Representative of the State Department Curtis B. Munson carried out the investigation in October and November 1941 and presented what came to be known as the “Munson Report” to the president on November 7, 1941. The excerpt below is from the 25-page report.*

There is no Japanese “problem” on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will undoubtedly be some sabotage financed by Japan and executed largely by imported agents. ... In each Naval District there are about 250 to 300 suspects under surveillance. It is easy to get on the suspect list, merely a speech in favor of Japan at some banquet being sufficient to land one there. The Intelligence Services are generous with the title of suspect and are taking no chances. Privately, they believe that only 50 or 60 in each district can be classed as really dangerous. The Japanese are hampered as **saboteurs** [*a person who deliberately destroys something to gain a military advantage*] because of their easily recognized physical appearance. It will be hard for them to get near anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is far more danger from Communists and people of the **Bridges type** [*a reference to Harry Bridges, a leader of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union*] on the Coast than there is from the Japanese. The Japanese here are almost exclusively farmers, fishermen, or small businessmen. He has no **entrée** [*permission to enter*] to plants or **intricate** [*complicated*] machinery.

*Munson, Curtis B. Munson Report. November 7, 1941. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*

## Document B

### Harry Paxton Howard: “Americans in Concentration Camps”

*The following quote is from an editorial by Harry Paxton Howard entitled “Americans in Concentration Camps,” published in The Crisis in September 1942, shortly after the establishment of internment camps for Japanese Americans. Founded in 1910, The Crisis is the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an organization dedicated to promoting civil rights.*

Along the eastern coast of the United States, where the number of Americans of Japanese ancestry is comparatively small, no concentration camps have been established. From a military point of view, the only danger on this coast is from Germany and Italy. ... But the American government has not taken any such high-handed action against Germans and Italians — and their American-born descendants — on the East Coast, as has been taken against Japanese and their American-born descendants on the West Coast. Germans and Italians are “white.” Color seems to be the only possible reason why thousands of American citizens of Japanese ancestry are in concentration camps. Anyway, there are no Italian American or German American citizens in such camps.

*Paxton, Harry. Americans in Concentration Camps. September 1942. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*

## Document C

### The Korematsu Supreme Court Ruling

*In 1944, Fred Korematsu, a Japanese American convicted of evading internment, brought his case to the Supreme Court. In a controversial ruling, the court decided that national security outweighed Korematsu’s individual rights and upheld the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066. The excerpt below is from the court’s majority opinion written by Chief Justice Hugo Black.*

We uphold the exclusion order. ... In doing so, we are not unmindful of the hardships imposed by it upon a large group of American citizens. ... But hardships are part of war, and war is an **aggregation** [*sum*] of hardships. All citizens alike, both in and out of uniform, feel the impact of war in greater or lesser measure. Citizenship has its responsibilities, as well as its privileges, and, in time of war, the burden is always heavier. **Compulsory** [*mandatory*] exclusion of large groups of citizens from their homes, except under circumstances of direct emergency and peril, is inconsistent with our basic governmental institutions. But when, under conditions of modern warfare, our shores are threatened by hostile forces, the power to protect must be **commensurate** [*in proportion*] with the threatened danger. ...

To cast this case into outlines of racial prejudice, without reference to the real military dangers which were presented, merely confuses the issue. Korematsu was not excluded from the Military Area because of hostility to him or his race. He was excluded because we are at war with the Japanese Empire, because the... military authorities feared an invasion of our West Coast, and ... because they decided that the military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily, and, finally, because Congress ... determined that our military leaders should have the power to do just this.

*Black, Hugo. 1944. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*

## Document D

### Personal Justice Denied

*In 1980, Congress established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to investigate the detention program and the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066. The Commission released its report, Personal Justice Denied: The Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, on February 24, 1983. The passage below is an excerpt from this report.*

The Commission held 20 days of hearings in cities across the country, particularly on the West Coast, hearing testimony from more than 750 witnesses: evacuees, former government officials, public figures, interested citizens, and historians and other professionals who have studied the subjects of Commission inquiry. An extensive effort was made to locate and to review the records of government action and to analyze other sources of information, including contemporary writings, personal accounts, and historical analyses. ...

Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity, and the decisions which followed from it — detention, ending detention, and ending exclusion — were not driven by analysis of military conditions. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. Widespread ignorance of Japanese Americans contributed to a policy conceived in haste and executed in an atmosphere of fear and anger at Japan. A grave injustice was done to American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry who, without individual review or any ... evidence against them, were excluded, removed, and detained by the United States during World War II.

*The Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. February 24, 1983.  
Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.*



## Lesson 8: The Battlefield



*Soviet soldiers during the Battle of Stalingrad, 1943 (Wikimedia)*

**To what extent were the experiences of soldiers on each front of the war similar?**

## Homework The Battlefield

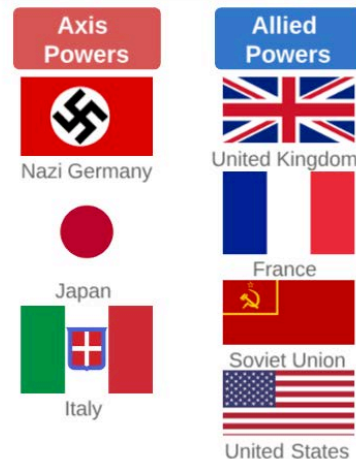
The following text was adapted from the essay "World War II" by historian Kenneth T. Jackson, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.



The tanks, artillery, ships, and trucks churned out by the arsenal of democracy would be useful only if brave men could be found to take them into harm's way. In this respect, the United States proved to be exceptionally fruitful. After Pearl Harbor, induction centers across the nation were swamped with volunteers who were anxious to take a swing at the brash Japanese. Even so, by 1943, Washington had resorted to a draft of all able-bodied males between 18 and 40. The Marine Corps expanded from one division to five, while the Navy put more than a thousand ships to sea. The Army was the largest of all the services, and its basic training facilities at Fort Benning, Georgia (infantry); Fort Bragg, North Carolina (airborne); Fort Sill, Oklahoma (artillery); and Fort Hood, Texas (armor), became small cities in their own right. By 1945, about 16 million Americans had served in uniform, a figure that did not include the merchant marine, where responsibilities were as important and jobs as dangerous as those of any soldier, sailor, or airman.

As the war continued into 1942, 1943, and 1944, and as millions of new soldiers and sailors joined the armed forces, separation and longing became the most common emotional experiences of the time. As long as the men were stateside, there was at least a chance of seeing a loved one. The songs of the time — "Till We Meet Again" and "I'll Be Seeing You, in All the Old Familiar Places," among others — reflected the feelings of loneliness that were felt in every town and by almost every family.

### Who Fought in World War II?



Eventually, most soldiers and Marines were shipped overseas, and their last view of America was from the ports of embarkation — New York on the East Coast and San Francisco on the West. But before leaving, they typically spent a week or ten days at a final staging area — Camp Shanks and Camp Kilmer near New York City were the largest — where they received required inoculations and made out their last wills and testaments.

### **American Troops on the Way**

That last period in the United States often offered the opportunity for a few days of liberty. Because trains across the country were jammed and overloaded, there was no chance for a trip home. But the port of embarkation, especially Manhattan, was another story. There, among the bright lights, nightclubs, and stage-door canteens of the largest city in the world, they drank and laughed and at least pretended to be confident and happy.

The next step was to board a troopship. Whether they sailed on converted transatlantic liners like the *Queen Elizabeth* or the *Queen Mary* or ordinary transports, quarters were tight, pleasures were few, and danger was constant. Especially in the Atlantic Ocean, where German U-boats lurked beneath the surface, the most common way to get to Europe was in a convoy of about 50 or 60 similar ships, all protected by a screen of destroyers and maybe one cruiser. Mercifully, the Allied navies gained superiority over the Nazi submarines before most American soldiers crossed the ocean, and only 8,000 men were lost out of four million who made the journey aboard the defenseless cargo vessels.

### **Allied Forces Gain Ground Against Germany and Japan**

By late 1942, the tide had turned against the Axis. In June, the United States Navy won its greatest victory ever in the Battle of Midway, in which an outnumbered American carrier force inflicted devastating losses on the then superior Japanese fleet. By September, American Marines were clawing back on Guadalcanal and beginning an island-hopping campaign that required them to fight their way across the Pacific. The good news, however, was that after the Battle of Midway, the Japanese were no longer able to undertake offensive operations. It was just a matter of time before the Rising Sun was crushed by American air and naval superiority.

The German army was another matter. Generally regarded as the finest fighting force in the war, it had superbly trained and battle-hardened soldiers, sophisticated weapons, and brilliant tactical leaders, such as von Manstein, Rommel, and Heinz Guderian. Only an enormous sacrifice by many nations could bring it down. But it happened. In the fall of 1942, the British Eighth Army counterattacked against the Afrika Korps and soon sent Rommel scurrying home to Germany. Meanwhile, the Americans who had landed in Morocco and Algeria trapped thousands of Nazi soldiers who could not escape across the Mediterranean Sea. In 1943, a combined Anglo-American force invaded Sicily and then Italy, ultimately knocking that country out of the war. And in perhaps the most devastating battle of all time, at Stalingrad between August 1942 and February 1943, the proud German Sixth Army, conqueror of France, was systematically annihilated by a vengeful Red Army. Thereafter, Hitler's legions were rarely able to attack. Instead, they were bludgeoned by enormous forces coordinated by the Big Three — Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin.

After the successful Allied landings in 1943 in Sicily and Italy, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army and probably the most important officer on the Allied side in the war, recommended to FDR that Dwight D. Eisenhower be made Supreme Commander of the Allied crusade in Europe. Marshall had wanted the job for himself, but President Roosevelt said he would not be comfortable if his right-hand man were not nearby in Washington.

By the early months of 1944, Eisenhower was in charge of all American and Allied ground, sea, and air forces in Europe and busy assembling a gigantic invasion force in England. His mission was to assault the Nazi Atlantic Wall, a network of artillery, beach hazards, and pillboxes that were designed to slaughter anyone foolish enough to come out of the water.

*Jackson, Kenneth T. World War II (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

**Group 1: The Eastern Front**  
**Document A**  
**The Eastern Front**

*Read the introduction and examine the photographs in journalist Alan Taylor's photo essay "World War II: The Eastern Front" on the Atlantic website.*

**Document B**  
**Eastern Front Timeline**

**June 22, 1941:** Germany invades the U.S.S.R. in Operation Barbarossa. Germany successfully gained a large portion of Soviet territory by the end of July.

**September 1941:** Germany launches a siege of Leningrad, a major Soviet city. Citizens of Leningrad dig ditches to protect the city from invasion. The siege lasts 900 days, until finally the Soviets defeat Germany in January 1944. During the siege, nearly one million civilians die.

**October 1941:** Germany attacks Moscow, the Soviet capital. Cold winter weather helps the Soviets defeat the German Army, which was unprepared for the extreme weather.

**September 1942:** Germany tries to surround Stalingrad. The Soviets defeat Germany after six months of fighting and more than one million Soviet lives and nearly one million Axis lives lost.

**October 1943–May 1945:** The Soviets begin to push the Germans out of their territory. In May, the Soviets take the offensive and surround Berlin.

**Document C**  
**Stories from the Siege of Leningrad**

*Alexander Werth, a war correspondent, interviewed civilians during the Siege of Leningrad. Below is his interview with Anna Andreyevna Gorenko, the manager of the Astoria Hotel in Leningrad.*

The Astoria looks like a hotel now, but you should have seen it during the famine! It was turned into a hospital — just hell. They used to bring here all sorts of people, mostly intellectuals, who were dying of hunger. Gave them vitamin tablets, tried to pep them up a bit. But a lot of them were too far gone and died almost the moment they got here. I know what it is to be hungry. I was so weak I could hardly walk. ...

You just stepped over corpses in the street and on the stairs. ... Some people went quite insane with hunger. And the practice of hiding the dead somewhere in the house and using their ration cards was very common indeed. There were so many people dying all over the place, authorities couldn't keep track of all the deaths. ...

*Werth, Alexander. Russia at War 1941-1945. 1964. Courtesy of EyeWitnessstoHistory.com.*

**Group 2: The North African, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern Front**  
**Document A**  
**North Africa**

*Read the introduction and examine the photographs in journalist Alan Taylor's photo essay "World War II: The North African Campaign" on the Atlantic website.*

**Document B**  
**The Middle East**

*The Allies initially believed that the Middle East could become a major operational theater because they thought the Germans might invade the area. This did not materialize, although when Allied forces occupied much of the area in anticipation of such an invasion, there was fighting against Vichy French forces in Lebanon and Syria, and against Iraq in the Anglo-Iraqi War, which ended when Baghdad fell to British forces.*

*As in most of the Arab world, there was no unanimity among the Palestinian Arabs as to their position regarding the combatants in WWII. Some signed up for the British army to join the mixed Palestine Regiment unit, but others saw an Axis victory as their best hope of gaining Arab control of Palestine. During the war, the British forbade Jews who were escaping Nazi persecution to enter Palestine, and placed them in detention camps or deported them. However, more than 30,000 Palestinian Jews fought for Great Britain during World War II. By 1940, the Haganah and other underground Jewish militias ordered a complete ceasefire with the British, in favor of the joint war effort against the Axis, but continued smuggling attempts of Jewish refugees from Iraq and Europe into British Palestine.*

*Adapted from Middle East Theatre of World War II. Wikipedia.*



*Iraqi warplanes, guarded by Arab Legionnaires, refuel during their journey from Ismailia, Egypt, to reinforce Habbaniya, Iraq, during the Anglo-Iraqi War. (Wikimedia)*



*British forces firing near Ramadi, Iraq (Wikimedia. Published under the CC BY-SA 3.0 License.)*

## Document C The Mediterranean

*Fascist Italy aimed to carve out a new Roman Empire, while British forces aimed initially to retain the status quo. Italy launched various attacks around the Mediterranean, which were largely unsuccessful. With the introduction of German forces, Yugoslavia and Greece were overrun. Allied forces then began an invasion of Southern Europe, resulting in the Italians overthrowing Mussolini and joining the Allies. A prolonged battle for Italy took place between Allied and German forces, and as the strategic situation changed in southeast Europe, British troops returned to Greece.*

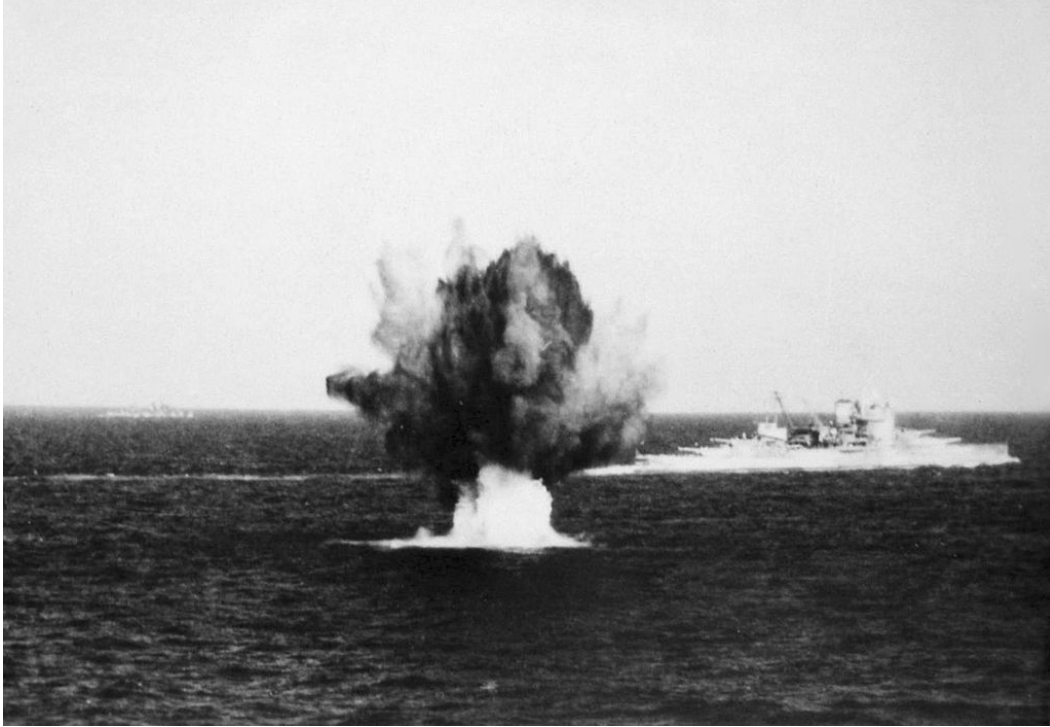
*This theater of war had the longest duration of the Second World War and resulted in the destruction of the Italian empire and altered the strategic position of Germany. This led to German divisions being deployed to Africa and Italy and total losses (including those captured upon final surrender) of over half a million. Italian losses amounted to around 177,000 men, with a further several hundred thousand captured during the various campaigns. British losses amounted to more than 300,000 men killed, wounded, or captured, and total American losses in the region came to 130,000.*

*Adapted from Wikipedia. Published under the CC BY-SA 3.0 license.*



*Troops and vehicles being landed under shell fire during the invasion of mainland Italy at Salerno in September 1943 (Wikimedia)*





*HMS Warspite under attack in the Mediterranean, 1940 (Wikimedia)*

**Document D**  
**The Invasion of Sicily**

*Read war correspondent Walter Bernstein's account of the Invasion of Sicily on the EyeWitness to History website.*



## Document C

### The Battle of the Midway

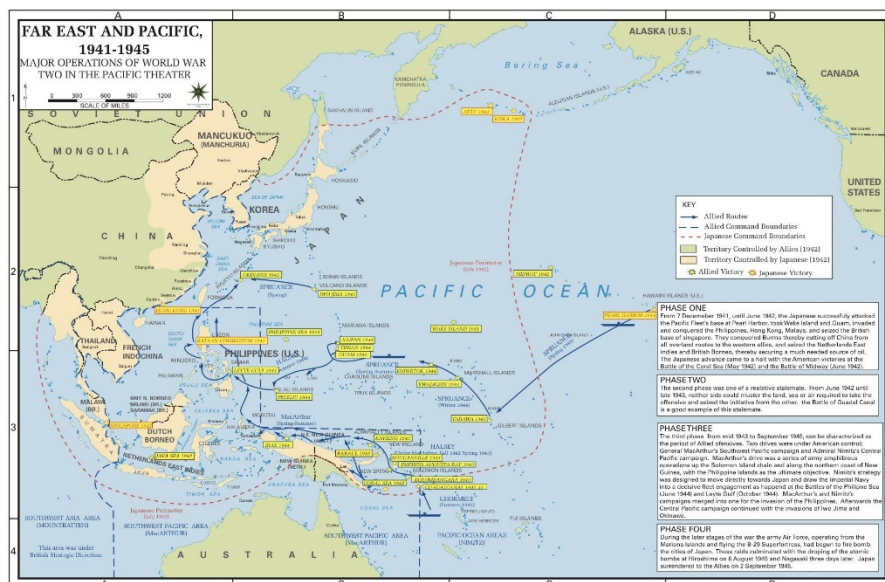
*The Battle of the Midway was a major turning point in the South Pacific. Only six months after Pearl Harbor, the Americans defeated the Japanese in an air battle. Mitsuo Fuchida witnessed the battle from the deck of the aircraft carrier Akagi. The excerpt below is from his book, Midway, the Battle that Doomed Japan: The Japanese Navy's Story, published in 1955.*

Five minutes! Who would have dreamed that the tide of battle would shift completely in that brief interval of time?

At that instant a lookout screamed: "Hell-divers!" I looked up to see three black enemy planes plummeting toward our ship. Some of our machine guns managed to fire a few frantic bursts at them, but it was too late. The plump silhouettes of the American "Dauntless" dive-bombers quickly grew larger, and then a number of black objects suddenly floated eerily from their wings. Bombs! Down they came straight toward me! I fell intuitively to the deck and crawled behind a command post **mantelet** [rolled mattresses providing protection from bombs].

The terrifying scream of the dive-bombers reached me first, followed by the crashing explosion of a direct hit. There was a blinding flash and then a second explosion, much louder than the first. I was shaken by a weird blast of warm air. There was still another shock, but less severe, apparently a near miss. Then followed a startling quiet as the barking of guns suddenly ceased. I got up and looked at the sky. The enemy planes were already gone from sight. ...

Looking about, I was horrified at the destruction that had been wrought in a matter of seconds. There was a huge hole in the flight deck just behind the amidship elevator. The elevator itself, twisted like molten glass, was drooping into the hangar. Deck plates reeled upward in grotesque configurations. Planes stood tail up, belching livid flame and jet-black smoke. Reluctant tears streamed down my cheeks as I watched the fires spread, and I was terrified at the prospect of induced explosions which would surely doom the ship.



*Fuchida, Mitsuo. Midway, the Battle that Doomed Japan: The Japanese Navy's Story. 1955. Courtesy of EyewitnessToHistory.com.*

**Group 4: The Western Front**  
**Document A**  
**Key Battles on the Western Front**

**April 1940: Invasion of Denmark**

The German invasion of Denmark was the fighting that followed the German army crossing the Danish border on April 9, 1940, by land, sea, and air. Lasting approximately six hours, the German ground campaign against Denmark was one of the shortest military operations of the Second World War, and Denmark fell under Nazi control.

**May 1940: The German Invasion of the Low Countries**

The Nazis invaded Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in May 1940. On May 10, the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. In the Netherlands, the attack lasted four days until Dutch forces surrendered on May 14. However, Dutch troops continued to resist until May 17 when Germany successfully completed its occupation of the whole nation.

The German invasion of Belgium faced tougher resistance, as the Allied armies attempted to block it using tanks. After 18 days, the Germans finally succeeded in occupying Belgium, following the surrender of the Belgian army on May 28, 1940.

The German invasion of Luxembourg lasted just one day. The Luxembourg government fled to Great Britain, allowing the German government to occupy the nation.

**May–June 1940: Battle of France**

Germany invaded France on May 10, 1940. Over the course of six weeks, German forces battled and defeated Allied forces. British, Belgian, and French forces attempted to stop the Germans. At the Battle of Dunkirk from May 26 to June 4, the Germans beat the Allies, forcing the Allied forces to flee to Great Britain. After Dunkirk, the German Forces pushed past the Maginot Line, a defensive line of fortifications built by the French in the 1930s to deter invasion by Germany. On June 14, the Germans reached and occupied Paris, the French capital. The French army collapsed, and on June 22, the Germans and French signed the Second Armistice at Compiègne, which divided France. The Vichy government in the South of France was unoccupied and remained governed by the French until November 1942, when the Germans took over. The rest of France was divided among Germany and Italy.

**July–May 1941: Battle of Britain**

The German air force attacked Great Britain in July 1940. The entire Battle of Britain was fought entirely by air forces. The Germans wanted to make Britain agree to a peace settlement. Hitler had been hopeful, given the swift defeat of Western Europe, that Britain, too, would quickly fall.

One of the most famous battles of the invasion, the London Blitz, began in the fall of 1940. London was systematically bombed by the German air force for 56 out of 57 nights. Even with the heavy bombing, the British Royal Air Force decisively defeated the Nazis and prevented Nazi occupation of Great Britain.

## June–August 1944: Operation Overlord

Despite Great Britain's victory over Germany, the fall of the rest of Western Europe to the Nazis marked an end of the Allied efforts against Germany on the Western Front until 1944. On June 6, 1944, the Allies, now with the support of the United States, launched Operation Overlord, the code name for the Battle of Normandy and the subsequent invasion. The Allied invasion of Normandy led to the liberation of France and the rest of Western Europe, marking a victorious turning point on the Western Front for the Allies.

*Adapted from List of World War II Battles, Wikipedia.*

## Document B Vichy, France

*In May 1940, the first violence broke out between France and Germany. Germany began bombing France and began invading. By the end of June, the Germans had made their way deep into France. On June 22, 1940, France signed a peace agreement with Germany; in July, France formed a new government, led by World War I veteran Philippe Pétain, who gained full power over the French government. The new government, known as the Vichy, governed in cooperation with the Nazis, allowing them to occupy the northern half of France and take millions of French soldiers as prisoners.*



*German Chancellor Adolf Hitler (right) shakes hands with head of state of Vichy, France, Marshal Philippe Pétain, in occupied France on October 24, 1940. (Published by Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-H25217 under the CC BY-SA 3.0 license.)*

## Document C

### Winston Churchill: “Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat”

*In May 1940, Winston S. Churchill was appointed prime minister of Great Britain, replacing Neville Chamberlain. Churchill proved to be an inspiring leader in the fight with Germany. On May 13, 1940, he gave his first speech to the House of Commons, three days after Germany invaded Western Europe.*

We are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history. We are in action at many points — in Norway and in Holland — that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean. The air battle is continuing, and many preparations have to be made here at home.

I would say to the House as I said to those who have joined this government: I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs — Victory in spite of all terror — Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

*Churchill, Winston. May 13, 1940. Courtesy of Modern History Sourcebook, Fordham University, Sourcebooks.Fordham.edu.*

**Document D**  
**A Soldier's Letter from Normandy**

*Below is a letter from France on July 22, 1944, from a soldier called John to his "Darling."*



*"Into the Jaws of Death — U.S. Troops Wading Through Water and Nazi Gunfire." Soldiers taking part in the Normandy invasion (National Archives)*

News on 90th has been released. Maybe you know something now of what the boys have gone through: constant contact with the enemy since D-Day. They've taken their losses, too. ... And you go on about your business, with a little more emptiness inside, a little more tiredness, a little more hatred of everything concerning war.

There is a certain cemetery where some of my closest friends in the division lie. I saw it grow — shattered bodies lying there waiting for graves to be dug. Now it is filled. The graves are neat and trim, each with its cross. Occasionally I visit it when passing by. Always there are flowers on the graves: Sometimes a potted geranium has been newly brought in; sometimes there is a handful of daisies. The French people, especially the children, seem to have charged themselves with this little attention. Our bombers are roaring overhead just now, in the hazy afterglow of sunset. In a few seconds I'll hear the crunch of bombs — a good-night kiss for the Nazis. There they go!

The war news is good; but we're fighting over optimism. I suppose people at home are elated; the boys up front are still in their foxholes.

*Courtesy of PBS.org.*

## Lesson 9: American Home Front



Propaganda poster entitled "Volunteer, and choose your own branch of the service — Uncle Sam," by Arthur Edrop (Library of Congress)

**How did World War II affect American life on the home front?**



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## Homework

### American Home Front

*The following text is adapted from the article “The World War II Home Front” by historian Allan M. Winkler and published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.*

World War II had a major impact on the United States. Although no battles occurred on the American mainland, the war affected all phases of American life. It required huge efforts for the military, but it also demanded an enormous production effort to provide the materials necessary to fight.

The war ended the Great Depression. Military spending that began in 1940 to support the defense effort gave the nation’s economy the boost it needed, and millions of unemployed Americans returned to work to make the weapons of war needed to protect the United States.

A huge network of wartime agencies developed to coordinate war production. By mid-1945, the United States had produced 80,000 landing craft, 100,000 tanks and armored cars, 300,000 airplanes, 15 million guns, and 41 billion rounds of ammunition. It had also produced the world’s first two atomic bombs.

As propaganda came of age, in a new Office of War Information, Americans rose to the challenge of doing whatever was necessary to support the war effort. They bought billions of dollars’ worth of **bonds** [*government loans*] to help offset the cost of the war. They saved metals and fats to be recycled into military materiel and collected rubber. They planted “victory gardens” to provide fruits and vegetables for personal use. “Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without” became the slogan of the day.

The war caused disruptions at home. Americans faced shortages that required them to deal with rationing. They had to provide the necessary coupons to be able to purchase items in short supply like sugar, meat, or gasoline. Housing shortages caused problems for people moving to war-production centers. Even so, midway through the conflict, seven out of ten Americans said they had not had to make any “real sacrifices” as a result of the war.

For groups discriminated against in the past, the war was a vehicle for lasting social and economic gains. For women and blacks in particular, the war was a spark — and a model — for future change.

The war brought enormous changes in American women’s lives. Women were second-class citizens at the start of the struggle. Facing discrimination in the job market, they found many positions simply closed to them before the war. As millions of men entered the military services, both government and industry used propaganda to get women to work in the factories. Women responded — in huge numbers. The number of working women rose from 14,600,000 in 1941 to 19,370,000 in 1944. In 1944, 37 percent of all adult women were in the labor force. At the peak of the industrial effort, women constituted 36 percent of the civilian workforce. At the same time, the type of women who worked shifted. Traditionally, working women had been single and young. Between 1940 and 1944, married women made up over 72 percent of the total number of female employees. By the end of the war, half of all female workers were over 35.

Women loved the work and wanted to continue after the war. Some women were able to continue working, but most left their positions. Still, their experience helped lay the foundation for a women’s movement in later years, and the war was an important step on the road to equal rights.

African Americans likewise benefited from the demands of war. At the start of the struggle, their unemployment rate was twice that of whites, and many of the jobs they held were unskilled. They could not join the Air Corps or the Marine Corps. In the Navy, they could enlist only in the all-black branch. In the Army, they were segregated from whites. One black American soldier recalled being turned away from a lunchroom in Salina, Kansas, only to see German prisoners of war being served at the same counter.

Blacks became increasingly assertive. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, a widely circulated black newspaper, announced a “Double V” campaign — V for victory in the struggle against the dictators abroad and V for victory in the campaign for equality at home. These efforts foreshadowed the protest campaigns of the subsequent Civil Rights Movement.

War, by its very nature, has always sparked change, and World War II followed that pattern. In the United States, World War II made Americans more willing to involve themselves — politically and diplomatically — with the outside world. It also expanded their hopes and expectations and forever altered the patterns of their lives at home.

*“World War II”: History Now 14 (Winter 2007)*

**Station 1: Bonds on the Home Front**  
**“Any Bonds Today?” (Lyrics)**

*The song “Any Bonds Today?” was an incredibly popular propaganda song during World War II. It encouraged the American people to buy war bonds to support the war effort. Watch the video on the Internet Archive website and follow along with the lyrics below.*

Any bonds today?  
Bonds of freedom  
That’s what I’m selling  
Any bonds today?  
Scrape up the most you can  
Here comes the freedom man  
Asking you to buy a share of freedom today  
Any stamps today?  
We’ll be blessed  
If we all invest  
In the U.S.A.  
Here comes the freedom man  
Can’t make tomorrow’s plan  
Not unless you buy a share of freedom today.

*Any Bonds Today? Courtesy of National Archives, Archives.gov.*

## War Bonds Poster

The following image depicts a poster created and distributed in 1942 by the U.S. government encouraging American citizens to buy war bonds to support the war effort.



War bonds poster, 1942 (Digital Library, University of North Texas, [Digital.Library.UNT.edu](http://Digital.Library.UNT.edu))

**Station 2: Women on the Home Front**  
**Rosie the Riveter: “We Can Do It!”**

*Rosie the Riveter was a classic icon of working women during WWII. Rosie was meant to encourage American women to work in factories and contribute to the war effort on the home front.*



*Rosie the Riveter appears on a propaganda poster that reads, “We Can Do It!” (Wikimedia)*

## WOW Poster

During World War II, many women joined the workforce. With men at war, industries needed workers, especially factories that produced goods necessary for war. Thus, many propaganda posters encouraged women to work in factories to support their husbands and brothers abroad. The poster below is an example of this type of propaganda.



A woman wistfully thinks about her man in battle while she works at an important job at home. She is called a "WOW" — Woman Ordnance Worker. (Library of Congress)

**Station 3: Rationing on the Home Front  
Energy Conservation Poster**

Americans at home played a significant part in supporting the war effort as well. Americans were asked to ration not only food and materials but also energy, to ensure enough was saved to support the troops on the battlefield.



*This poster urges Americans to practice energy conservation at home and lists ways to reduce heating costs. (U.S. Government Printing Office. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

## Rationing Poster

Americans rationed food to ensure that there was enough to feed soldiers abroad. Propaganda played an essential role in ensuring there was enough food for Americans at home as well as soldiers.



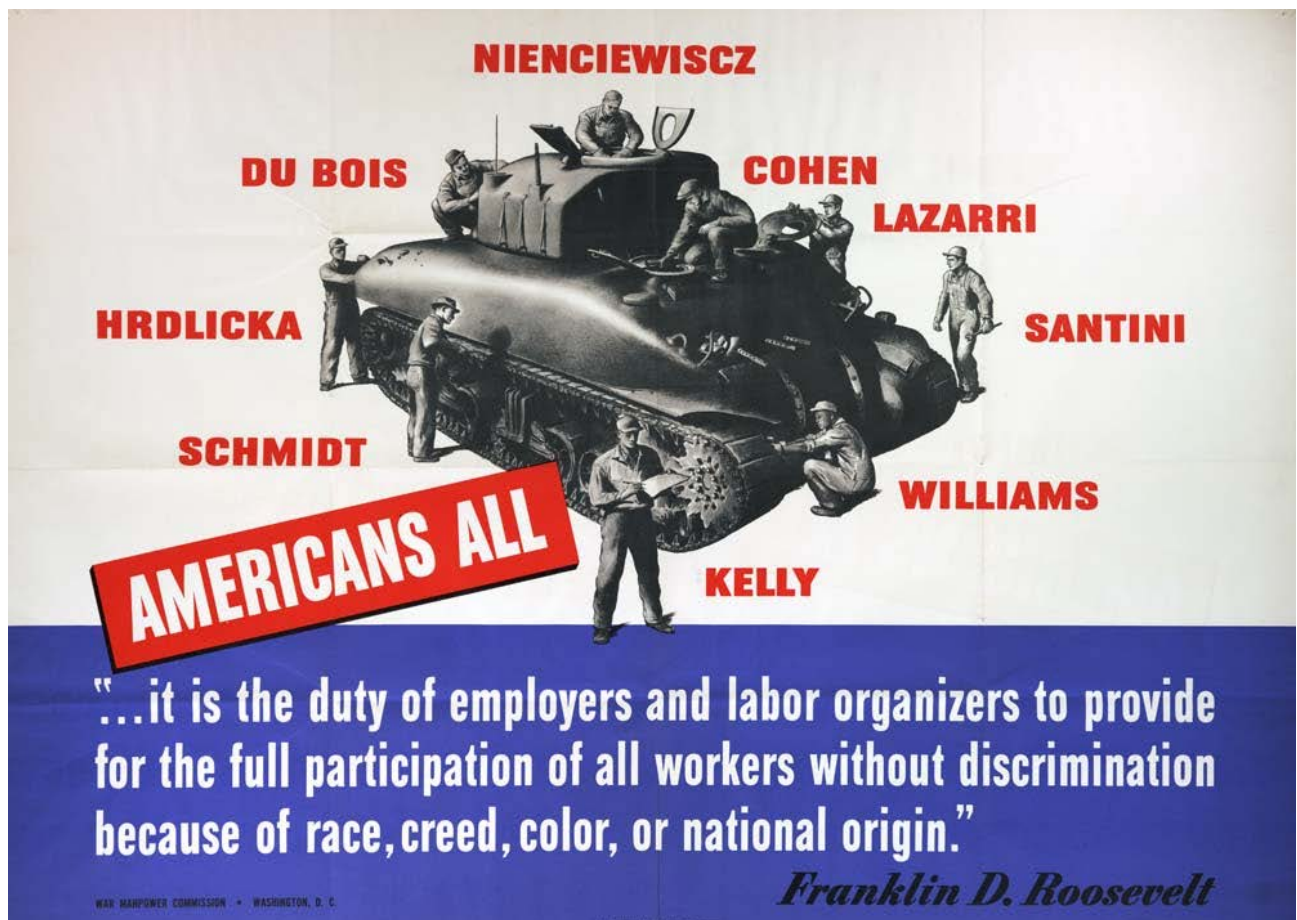
This poster depicts the rationing books and stamps that everyone used to make sure the limited food was fairly distributed. (U.S. Government Printing Office. Courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections)



#### Station 4: Racial Discrimination on the Home Front War Manpower Commission

Because many men were away at war, there was a labor shortage in many American industries. As a result, President Roosevelt established the War Manpower Commission (WMC) in 1942 to make sure the nation was taking full advantage of its potential labor supply, as nearly seven million laborers were needed to fill American industries. General Frank McSherry, director of operations for the WMC, delivered the speech "Manpower Problems and the War Effort" on July 7, 1942. Below is an excerpt from that speech.

Employers can no longer afford to discriminate against Negroes and workers of other minority groups. ... **Aliens** [foreigners], where it is possible under government restrictions, must be considered for war production jobs. ... We cannot afford to permit any preconceived prejudices or artificial hiring standards to interfere with the production of tanks, planes, and guns.



This poster, published by the War Manpower Commission in 1942, highlights the need to draw laborers from all segments of the American population. The workers' last names suggest a variety of ethnicities and national origin. The text paraphrases President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 of 1941 forbidding discrimination in defense production. (War Man Power Commission. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

McSherry, Frank. *Manpower Problems and the War Effort*. July 7, 1942. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

## United We Win

*The government was well aware of the demoralizing effects of racial prejudice on the American population and its impact on the war effort. Consequently, it promoted posters, pamphlets, and films highlighting the participation and achievement of African Americans in military and civilian life. Like all propaganda posters, these posters appealed to patriotism and duty.*



*This poster was made in 1943. (National Archives)*

## Lesson 10: The Holocaust



*Child survivors of Auschwitz, 1945 (USHMM)*

**How did the Holocaust devastate the lives of people across Europe?**

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## Homework

### The Final Solution

*The following article was adapted from the article “Final Solution: Overview,” published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.*

The Nazis frequently used euphemisms to disguise the true nature of their crimes. They used the term “Final Solution” to refer to their plan to annihilate the Jewish people. It is not known when the leaders of Nazi Germany definitively decided to implement the “Final Solution.” The genocide, or mass destruction, of the Jews was the culmination of a decade of increasingly severe discriminatory measures.

Under the rule of Adolf Hitler, the persecution and segregation of Jews was implemented in stages. After the Nazi Party achieved power in Germany in 1933, its state-sponsored racism led to anti-Jewish legislation, economic boycotts, and the violence of the *Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”) pogroms, all of which aimed to isolate Jews from society and drive them out of the country.

### Nazi Anti-Semitism

Within the context of the economic depression of the 1930s and using not only racist but also older social, economic, and religious imagery, the Nazi Party gained popularity. And after the party seized power, it gained legitimacy, in part by presenting “Jews” as the source for a variety of political, social, economic, and ethical problems facing the German people.

Inspired by Adolf Hitler’s theories of racial struggle and the “intent” of the Jews to survive and expand at the expense of Germans, the Nazis, as a governing party from 1933 to 1938, ordered anti-Jewish boycotts, staged book burnings, and enacted anti-Jewish legislation. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws defined Jews by race and mandated the total separation of “Aryans” and “non-Aryans.” On November 9, 1938, the Nazis destroyed synagogues and the shop windows of Jewish-owned stores throughout Germany and Austria (*Kristallnacht*). These measures aimed at both legal and social segregation of Jews from Germans and Austrians.

*Kristallnacht*, the initiation of World War II in 1939, and the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 marked the transition to the era of destruction, in which genocide would become the key focus of Nazi anti-Semitism. To justify the murder of the Jews, both to the perpetrators and to bystanders in Germany and Europe, the Nazis used not only racist arguments but also arguments derived from older negative stereotypes, including Jews as communist subversives, as war profiteers and hoarders, and as a danger to internal security because of their inherent disloyalty and opposition to Germany.

### Escalation

After the September 1939 German invasion of Poland [the beginning of World War II], anti-Jewish policy escalated to the imprisonment and eventual murder of the European Jewish population. The Nazis first established **ghettos** [*enclosed areas designed to isolate and control the Jews*] in the **Generalgouvernement** [*a territory in central and eastern Poland overseen by a German civilian government*] and the **Warthegau** [*an area of western Poland annexed to Germany*]. Polish and Western European Jews were deported to these ghettos, where they lived in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions with inadequate food.

The creation of ghettos was a key step in the Nazi process of separating, persecuting, and ultimately destroying Europe's Jews. The intent of the ghettos was to segregate Jews from the rest of the population. They were designed to be temporary: Some lasted only a few days or weeks, others for several years. The vast majority of ghetto inhabitants died from disease or starvation, were shot, or were deported to killing centers.

German occupation authorities established the first ghetto in Poland in October 1939. The largest ghetto in Poland was the Warsaw ghetto. In Warsaw, more than 400,000 Jews were crowded into an area of 1.3 square miles. Tens of thousands of Western European Jews were also deported to ghettos in the east.

### Massive Killing Operations Begin

After the June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazi secret police, known as the SS, and other police units began massive killing operations aimed at entire Jewish communities. By autumn 1941, the SS and the police introduced mobile gas vans. These paneled trucks had exhaust pipes built to pump poisonous carbon monoxide gas into sealed spaces, killing those locked within.



*The deportation of children from the Lodz Ghetto in Poland to a concentration camp (Wikimedia)*

On July 17, 1941, four weeks after the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler tasked SS chief Heinrich Himmler with responsibility for all security matters in the occupied Soviet Union. Hitler gave Himmler broad authority to physically eliminate any perceived threats to permanent German rule. Two weeks later, on July 31, 1941, Nazi leader Hermann Goering authorized SS general Reinhard Heydrich to make preparations for the implementation of a "complete solution of the Jewish question."

authorities also deported a small minority of Jews from ghettos to forced-labor camps and concentration camps. In August 1944, German SS and police completed the destruction of the last major ghetto, in Lodz.

With the implementation of the "Final Solution," the Germans destroyed the ghettos. The Germans either shot ghetto residents in mass graves located nearby or deported them to killing centers. German SS and police

### Killing Centers

In the autumn of 1941, SS chief Heinrich Himmler assigned German General Odilo Globocnik, the SS and police leader for the Lublin District, with the implementation of a plan to systematically murder the Jews of the Generalgouvernement, code named Operation Reinhard. As part of Operation Reinhard, Nazi leaders established three killing centers in Poland — Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka — with the sole purpose of the mass murder of Jews.

The Majdanek camp, a labor camp, served from time to time as a killing site for Jews residing in the Generalgouvernement. In Majdanek gas chambers, the SS killed tens of thousands of Jews, primarily forced laborers too



*Crematoriums at Majdanek camp with bones piled in front of them (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)*

weak to work. The SS and police killed at least 152,000 people, mostly Jews, but also a few thousand Roma (Gypsies), in gas vans at the Chelmno killing center, about thirty miles northwest of Lodz. In the spring of 1942, Himmler designated Auschwitz II (Auschwitz-Birkenau) as a killing facility. SS authorities murdered approximately one million Jews from various European countries at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers, either with poison gas or by shooting. After, the bodies were burned in crematoriums or buried in mass graves. In its entirety, the “Final Solution” called for the murder of all European Jews by gassing, shooting, and other means. Six million Jewish men, women, and children were killed during the Holocaust — two-thirds of the Jews living in Europe before World War II.

### **Non-Jewish Targets**

Although the Jews were their primary targets, the Nazis also persecuted other groups for racial or ideological reasons. Among the earliest victims of Nazi discrimination in Germany were political opponents — primarily members of the Communist Party, Socialist Party, Social Democrat Party, and trade union leaders. In 1933, the SS established the first concentration camp, Dachau, as a detention center for thousands of German political prisoners. The Nazis also persecuted authors and artists who were Jewish or whose works in any way challenged Nazi ideology.

The Nazis targeted Roma on racial grounds. The legal interpretations of the 1935 **Nuremberg Laws** [*German laws that defined Jews by blood according to racist theories*] were later adapted to include Roma. The Nazis termed Roma unproductive and socially unfit. Those deported to the Lodz Ghetto were among the first to be killed in mobile gas vans at the Chelmno killing center in German-occupied Poland. The Nazis also deported more than 20,000 Roma to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, where most of them were murdered in the gas chambers.

The Nazis viewed Poles and other Slavic peoples as inferior as well. Poles who were considered ideologically dangerous, including thousands of intellectuals and Catholic priests, were targeted for execution. Between 1939 and 1945, at least 1.5 million Polish citizens were deported to German territory for forced labor. Hundreds of thousands were also imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps. It is estimated that the Germans killed at least 1.9 million non-Jewish Polish civilians during World War II.

The Nazis imprisoned Christian church leaders who opposed Nazism, as well as thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses who refused to salute Adolf Hitler or to serve in the German army. Through the so-called Euthanasia Program, the Nazis murdered an estimated 200,000 individuals with mental or physical disabilities. The Nazis also persecuted male homosexuals, whose behavior they considered destructive to the German nation. The Nazis imprisoned “chronic” homosexuals in concentration camps, as well as thousands of others accused of “asocial” or criminal behavior. Nazi ideology identified a multitude of enemies and led to the systematic persecution and murder of many millions of people, both Jews and non-Jews.

*Final Solution’: Overview. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USHMM.org.*



**Document A**  
**Elie Wiesel: *Night***

*Elie Wiesel was a Romanian-born Holocaust survivor. In March 1944, the Nazis occupied Hungary, where Wiesel and his family lived at the time. All the Jewish people of Hungary were rounded up to live in ghettos. In May, Wiesel and his family were deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. Upon arrival, his mother and sister were murdered, while Wiesel and his father were forced to work. Later, Wiesel and his father were deported again to Buchenwald concentration camp, where his father died. Wiesel wrote the memoir *Night* in 1960, recounting his experiences during the Holocaust. Below is an excerpt from *Night*, just as Wiesel and his father arrive at Auschwitz.*

“Shut up, you moron, or I’ll tear you to pieces! You should have hanged yourselves rather than come here. Didn’t you know what was in store for you here at Auschwitz? You didn’t know? In 1944?”

True. We didn’t know. Nobody had told us. He couldn’t believe his ears. His tone became harsher:

“Over there. Do you see that chimney over there? Do you see it? And the flames, do you see them?”

(Yes, we saw the flames.)

“Over there, that’s where they will take you. Over there will be your grave. You still don’t understand? ... Don’t you understand anything? You will be burned! Burned to a cinder! Turned into ashes!”

His anger changed into fury. We stood stunned, petrified. Could this be just a nightmare? An unimaginable nightmare? ...

Not far from us, flames, huge flames, were rising from a ditch. Something was being burned there. A truck drew close and unloaded its hold: small children. Babies! Yes, I did see this, with my own eyes ... children thrown into the flames. (Is it any wonder that ever since then, sleep tends to elude me?) So that was where we were going. A little farther on, there was another, larger pit for adults. I pinched myself: Was I still alive? Was I awake? How was it possible that men, women, and children were being burned and that the world kept silent? No. All this could not be real. A nightmare perhaps. ... Soon I should wake with a start, my heart pounding, and find that I was back in the room of my childhood, with my books. ...

My forehead was covered with cold sweat. Still, I told [my father] that I could not believe that human beings were being burned in our times; the world would never tolerate such crimes. ... “The world? The world is not interested in us. Today, everything is possible, even the crematoria. ...” His voice broke.

“Father,” I said. “If that is true, then I don’t want to wait. I’ll run into the electrified barbed wire. That would be easier than a slow death in the flames.”

He did not answer. He was weeping. His body was shaking. Everybody around us was weeping. ... There it was now, very close to us, the pit and its flames. I gathered all that remained of my strength in order to break rank and throw myself onto the barbed wire. Deep down, I was saying goodbye to my father, to the whole universe, and against my will. ... My heart was about to burst. There. I was face-to-face with the Angel of Death. ... No. Two steps from the pit, we were ordered to turn to left and herded into barracks. I squeezed my father’s hand. ...



Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.

Never.

*Elie Wiesel, Night, translated by Marion Wiesel. Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.*

## **Document B**

### **Franz Stangl: Nazi SS**

*Born in Austria in 1908, Franz Stangl joined the Austrian police in 1931 and became a criminal investigations officer in the political division. In 1940, Stangl joined the Euthanasia Program at its Hartheim Castle institute — one of six centers where people with mental and physical disabilities and other “asocial” Germans were killed. In March 1942, Stangl became commandant of the Sobibór extermination camp in Poland. Later that year he was appointed commandant of Treblinka, where he was responsible for the deaths of 870,000 Jews. After the war, Stangl returned to Austria, where he was arrested by the Americans for being an SS member (they did not know that he had participated in the extermination of Jews). However, Stangl was found out when the Americans began investigating the Euthanasia Program. About to be charged in May 1948, Stangl escaped to Rome, Syria, and eventually Brazil, where he and his family lived under their own names until discovered in 1967. Stangl was tried in Germany and sentenced to life in prison, where he died in 1971.*

*While in prison, Stangl was interviewed by Gitta Sereny, a British journalist. The interviews were published in a book entitled Into That Darkness. The following is an excerpt from one of their discussions in prison.*

**Q:** Would it be true to say that you finally felt they weren't really human beings?

**A:** When I was on a trip once, years later in Brazil ... my train stopped next to a slaughterhouse. The cattle in the pens, hearing the noise of the train, trotted up to the fence and stared at the train. They were very close to my window, one crowding the other, looking at me through the fence. I thought then, “Look at this; this reminds me of Poland; that's just how the people looked, trustingly, just before they were put in tins.”

**Q:** You said “tins.” What do you mean?

**A:** ... I couldn't eat tinned meat after that. Those big eyes ... which looked at me ... not knowing that in no time at all they'd all be dead. ...

**Q:** So you didn't feel they were human beings?

**A:** Cargo. They were cargo.

**Q:** When do you think you began to think of them as cargo?

**A:** I think it started the day I first saw Totenlager [the sub-camp where the gas chambers stood] in Treblinka. I remember Wirth [first commander of the camp] standing there, next to the pits full of blue-black corpses. It had nothing to do with humanity; it couldn't have; it was a mass — a mass of rotting flesh. Wirth said, “What shall we do with this garbage?” I think unconsciously that started me thinking of them as cargo.

**Q:** There were so many children, did they ever make you think of your children, of how you would feel in the position of those parents?

**A:** No ... I can't say I ever thought that way ... you see, I rarely saw them as individuals. It was always a huge mass. I sometimes stood on the wall and saw them in the tube [the passage leading to the gas chamber area]. But — how can I explain it — they were naked, packed together, running, being driven with whips like. ...

**Q:** Could you not have changed that? ... In your position, could you not have stopped the nakedness, the whips, the horror of the cattle pens?

**A:** No, no, no. This was the system. Wirth had invented it. It worked. And because it worked, it was irreversible.

*Sereny, Gitta. Into That Darkness, Vintage Books, 1974.*

## Lesson 11: U.S. Response to the Holocaust



*Jewish refugee children en route to Philadelphia, 1939 (Library of Congress)*

**How did the U.S. response to the Holocaust evolve over time?**

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## Homework

### American Response to the Holocaust

Read the article “American Response to the Holocaust” on the History Channel website.

### U.S. Response to the Holocaust

*Jan Karski, a messenger for the Polish resistance, was one of the first people to share eyewitness accounts of ghettos and camps with Allied leaders outside Europe. The following excerpt is from his recollection of a meeting with the Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, 1942.*

It is not true, as sometimes has been written, that I was the first one to present to the West the whole truth of the fate of the Jews in occupied Poland. There were others. ... The tragedy was that these testimonies were not believed. Not because of ill will, but simply because the facts were beyond the human imagination.

I experienced this myself. When I was in the United States and told [Supreme Court] Justice Felix Frankfurter the story of the Polish Jews, he said, at the end of our conversation, “I cannot believe you.” We were with the Polish ambassador to the U.S., Jan Ciechanowski. Hearing the justice’s comments, he was **indignant** [*angry*]. “Lieutenant Karski is on an official mission. My government’s authority stands behind him. You cannot say to his face that he is lying.” Frankfurter’s answer was, “I am not saying that he is lying. I only said that I cannot believe him, and there is a difference.”

*Polonsky, Antony. My Brother's Keeper. 1990. Antony Polonsky.*

## Lesson 12: The Fall of the Nazis



*Four soldiers reading about the Nazi surrender, May 1945 (Wikimedia)*

## How did the Allies defeat the Nazis?

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## Homework

### The Fall of the Nazis

*The following text was adapted from the essay "World War II" by historian Kenneth T. Jackson, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the article "Liberation of Nazi Camps," published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.*

The story of D-Day, June 6, 1944, has been told many times. Suffice it to say here that General Eisenhower did four things that will distinguish him forever. First, he made a decision on June 5 that only he could make—to go forward with the invasion despite a terrible weather forecast. By contrast, Field Marshal Rommel, the commander of the Atlantic Wall, who no doubt saw the same predictions, decided that the weather would be so awful that he could safely go back to Germany to visit his wife and son. Eisenhower took a chance that the weather would break and allow the landings to go forward. Fortunately, his hunch proved to be correct.

Second, the Supreme Commander took personal responsibility for possible failure, preparing a statement for release to the press in case the invasion force was hurled back into the sea. In such a circumstance, General Eisenhower reported that his soldiers and sailors had done everything he or anyone else could have expected, and that his withdrawal from the beachhead was his fault alone. As it happened, his message never had to be released.

Third, Eisenhower, knowing that having given the order to attack, he could do nothing more of a supervisory nature on the afternoon and evening of June 5, visited the airfields where many thousands of American paratroopers were already making final preparations to be dropped into the midnight darkness behind German lines. With parachutes on their backs, they had blackened their faces and wore heavy camouflage as they stood in groups waiting to board their aircraft. Members of the 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions, they would be the first invaders to land anywhere in Nazi-occupied France, and Ike knew that hundreds of them, maybe more, would be killed the next day. So the commanding general walked informally among the young men, many of them only teenagers, chatting about their hometowns, working his way through the throng, recognizing the perils they would all soon be facing.

Finally, as the thousands of ships of the main invasion force pushed away from piers and began to cross the English Channel for the short voyage to Normandy, General Eisenhower read a personal message to the troops who were about to go ashore:

*You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.*

## The End of the War

The D-Day landings were successful, and despite bitter fighting over the coming months, the Allies used their heavy artillery, their enormous air armada, and their dozens of well-equipped infantry divisions to pulverize the once invincible German war machine. With the Red Army smashing into East Prussia from the east, the British and American heavy bombers raining destruction from the skies on German cities, and Allied armored columns crossing the Rhine River and encircling trapped Wehrmacht divisions, Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, 1945. All resistance ceased within the week. Upon accepting the surrender of Nazi officials, General Eisenhower sent to his superiors what is surely the most succinct message ever sent by a victorious commander: "The mission of this Allied force was accomplished at 0241 hours, May 7th, 1945."



*Soldiers arrive at Omaha Beach during the Normandy Invasion.*  
(Wikimedia)

## Liberation of Concentration Camps

As Allied troops successfully moved across Europe against Nazi Germany, they began to encounter tens of thousands of concentration camp prisoners. These prisoners were suffering from starvation and disease.

Soviet forces were the first to approach a major Nazi camp, reaching Majdanek near Lublin, Poland, in July 1944. The Germans attempted to hide the evidence of mass murder by destroying the camp. Camp staff set fire to the large crematorium used to burn bodies of murdered prisoners, but the gas chambers were left standing. In the summer of 1944, the Soviets also discovered the sites of the Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka killing centers. The Germans had dismantled these camps in 1943, after most of the Jews of Poland had already been killed.

The Soviets liberated Auschwitz, the largest killing center and concentration camp, in January 1945. The Nazis had forced the majority of Auschwitz prisoners to march westward (in what became known as "death marches"). Soviet soldiers found more than 6,000 emaciated prisoners alive when they entered the camp. There was clear evidence of mass murder in Auschwitz. The Germans had destroyed most of the warehouses in the camp, but in the remaining ones, the Soviets found personal belongings of the victims. They discovered, for example, hundreds of thousands of men's suits, more than 800,000 women's outfits, and more than 14,000 pounds of human hair.

In the following months, the Soviets liberated additional camps in the Baltic states and in Poland. Shortly before Germany's surrender, Soviet forces liberated the Stutthof, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück concentration camps.

U.S. forces liberated the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, Germany, on April 11, 1945, a few days after the Nazis began evacuating the camp. On the day of liberation, an underground prisoner resistance organization seized control of Buchenwald to prevent atrocities by the retreating camp guards. American forces liberated more than 20,000 prisoners at Buchenwald. They also liberated Dora-Mittelbau, Flossenbürg, Dachau, and Mauthausen.



*Survivors of Mauthausen cheer American soldiers as they pass through the main gate of the camp several days after the liberation of the camp on May 9, 1945. (Wikimedia)*

British forces liberated concentration camps in northern Germany, including Neuengamme and Bergen-Belsen. They entered the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, near Celle, in mid-April 1945. Some 60,000 prisoners, most very ill due to a typhus epidemic, were found alive. More than 10,000 of them died from the effects of malnutrition or disease within a few weeks of liberation.

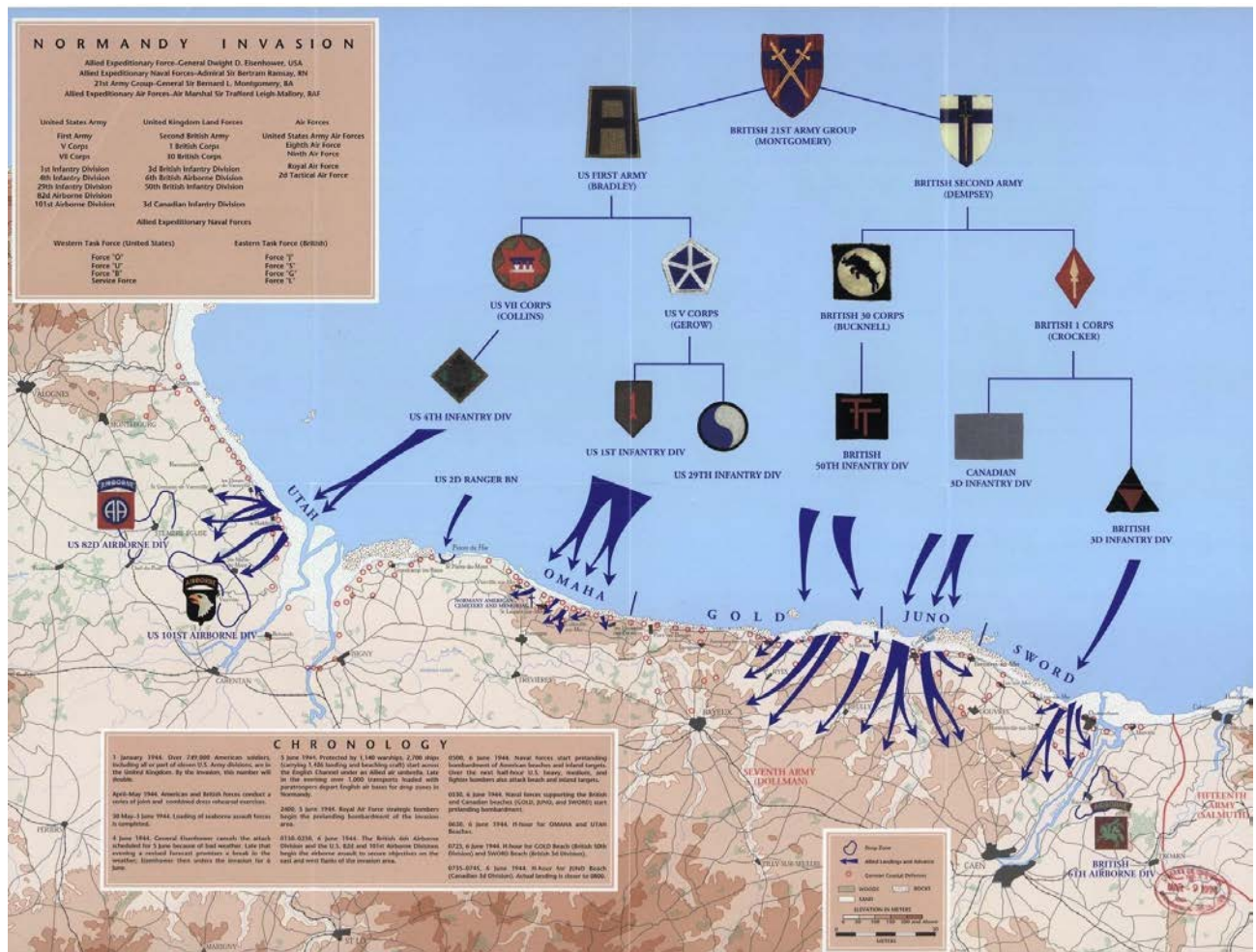
Liberators confronted unspeakable conditions in the Nazi camps, where piles of corpses lay unburied. Only after the liberation of these camps was the full scope of Nazi horrors exposed to the world. The small percentage of inmates who survived resembled skeletons because of the demands of forced labor, the lack of food, and the years of mistreatment. Many were so weak that they could hardly move. Disease remained an ever-present danger, and many of the camps had to be burned down to prevent the spread of epidemics. Survivors of the camps faced a long and difficult road to recovery.



## Station 1: The Invasion of Normandy D-Day Invasion of Normandy

Allied troops arrived early in the morning on Normandy Beach. Hitler believed the invasion to be a diversion from a real attack at Calais, France, so he was not prepared for the scale of the Normandy attack. When the Allies attacked Normandy, Hitler was forced to fight the Allies on the Eastern Front in Russia as well as on the Western Front in France.

Watch the video “D-Day Invasion of Normandy” on the History Channel website, in addition to examining the map below.



The invasion routes of the Allied forces at Normandy Beach on June 6, 1944 (Library of Congress)

## Station 2: The Liberation of France The Liberation of France

*From August 19 through August 25, 1944, the Allies battled the Germans to liberate the city of Paris from Germany.*

*Watch the video “Liberation of Paris (1944) | A Day That Shook the World” on YouTube.*



*Allied troops and French citizens celebrate the end of the Nazi occupation in Paris. (Library of Congress)*

### **Station 3: The Battle of the Bulge**

#### **Battle of the Bulge**

*The Battle of the Bulge was Germany's last attempt to defeat the Allies on the Western Front. On December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a surprise attack against the Allies in the Ardennes Mountains. Despite the brutality of the German attack and many casualties, the Allies won the battle.*

*Watch the video "World War II in HD: Battle of the Bulge | History" on YouTube.*



*German soldiers advancing at the Battle of the Bulge (National Archives)*

#### **Station 4: The Liberation of Concentration Camps** **The Liberation of Concentration Camps**

*Soviet soldiers were the first to liberate concentration camp prisoners in the final stages of the war. On July 23, 1944, they entered the Majdanek camp in Poland, and later they took over several other killing centers. On January 27, 1945, they entered Auschwitz and found hundreds of sick and exhausted prisoners. American, French, and British forces also liberated concentration camps in the final months of World War II.*

*Watch the video “The Holocaust” on the History Channel website.*



*Survivors of Mauthausen cheer American soldiers as they pass through the main gate of the camp. The photograph was taken several days after the liberation of the camp. Mauthausen, Austria, May 9, 1945. (Wikimedia)*

## Station 5: The Nazi Surrender

### The Nazi Surrender

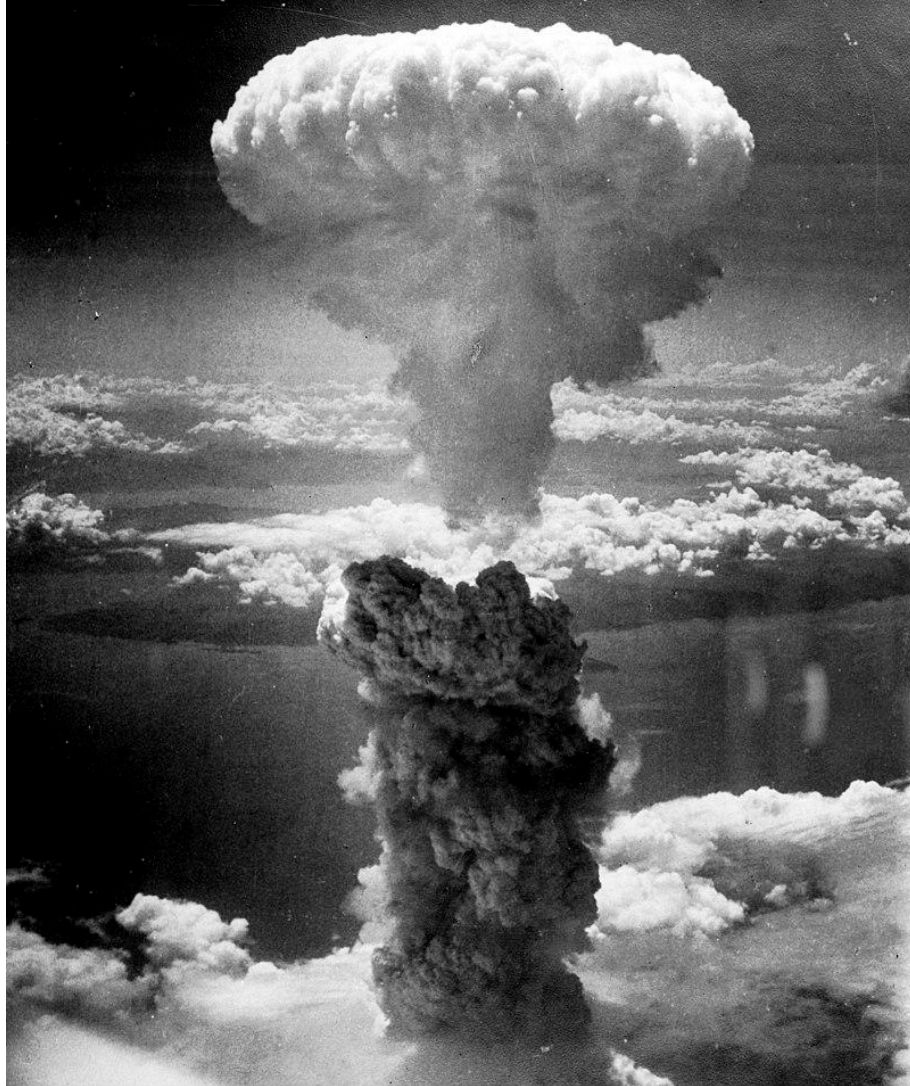
*By early spring 1945, Soviet forces were surrounding Berlin from the east and the Allies were approaching Berlin from the west. In response to his coming defeat, Hitler committed suicide. When the Soviets conquered Berlin on May 2, the remaining German leaders knew the war was over. On May 7, the Nazis unconditionally surrendered to the Allies. On May 8, victory was declared in Europe — a day now celebrated as V-E Day.*

*Watch the video “WWII in HD — VE Day” on YouTube.*



*Nazi Colonel General Alfred Jodl, center, signs the instrument of surrender ending Nazi Germany's involvement in World War II in Reims on May 7, 1945. (National Archives)*

## Lesson 13: The Atomic Bomb



*The detonation of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki on August 9, 1945,  
by Charles Levy (National Archives)*

**Should the United States have dropped  
the Atomic Bomb on Japan?**

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## Homework

### The Atomic Bomb

*The following text was adapted from the essay "World War II" by Kenneth Jackson, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. In addition, read the article "Atomic Bomb" on the History Channel U.K. website.*

Although the warlords in Tokyo could boast of brave and devoted soldiers, of airplanes (like the vaunted "Zero") that were as fine as any anywhere, and of ships and sailors that were world class, Japan never had a chance against the United States. It did not have enough of anything, except courage and fanaticism, to compete with a continental nation with almost infinite resources. At Tarawa, at Iwo Jima, and at Okinawa, the Japanese fought almost to the last man. It was no use. In desperation, they created an elite force of suicide pilots, called kamikaze, who took off with only enough fuel for a one-way trip. Their mission was to crash their aircraft into the ships of the United States Navy. They died in glory, but they were too few and too late. And after President Harry S. Truman (FDR had died in April 1945) ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even the most fanatical Japanese militarist had to realize that further resistance was madness. On August 14, 1945, Truman announced over the radio that the war was over. On September 2, 1945, on the deck of the great battleship the USS *Missouri*, representatives of the Japanese government signed the formal instrument of surrender. World War II had ended.



*Japanese kamikaze fighters (Wikimedia)*

The effects of the atomic bomb were horrific for the Japanese. One survivor of the bomb, Yoshitaka Kawamoto, described his experience:

*All I can remember was a pale lightning flash for two or three seconds. Then, I collapsed. I don't know how much time passed before I came to. It was awful, awful. The smoke was coming in from somewhere above the debris. Sandy dust was flying around. ... I crawled over the debris, trying to find someone who was still alive. Then, I found one of my classmates lying alive. I held him up in my arms. It is hard to tell, his skull was cracked open, his flesh was dangling out from his head. He had only one eye left, and it was looking right at me. ...*

*I, so, was running, hands were trying to grab my ankles, they were asking me to take them along. I was only a child then. And I was horrified at so many hands trying to grab me. I was in pain, too. So all I could do was to get rid of them, it is terrible to say, but I kicked their hands away. I still feel bad about that. I went to Miyuki Bridge to get some water. At the river bank, I saw so many people collapsed there. ... I was small, so I pushed on the river along the small steps. The water was dead people. I had to push the bodies aside to drink the muddy water. We didn't know anything about radioactivity that time. I stood up in the water and so many bodies were floating away along the stream.*

*Jackson, Kenneth T., World War II. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)*

**Against the Use of the Atomic Bomb**  
**Document A**  
**Admiral William Leahy: Diary and Memoirs**

*The excerpts below are from various writings by the president's chief of staff, Fleet Admiral William Leahy.*

**Diary, 1945**

It is my opinion at the present time that a surrender of Japan can be arranged with terms that can be accepted by Japan and that will make fully satisfactory provisions for America's defense against future trans-Pacific aggression.

**Memoirs, 1979**

[T]he use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender. ...

[I]n being the first to use it, we ... adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.

*Leahy, William. I Was There. Whittlesey House, 1950, pg. 451*

**Document B**  
**Historical Narrative: Hiroshima as Victimization**

*Read the excerpt labeled "Hiroshima as Victimization" from John W. Dower's essay "Three Narratives of our Humanity" in the Atomic Bomb lesson on the Stanford History Education Group website.*

**Document C**  
**Experience After the Bombing**

*The following is an excerpt from the memoirs of Michiko Yamaoka, a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing.*

I spent the next year bedridden. All my hair fell out. When we went to relatives' houses later they wouldn't even let me in because they feared they'd catch the disease. There was neither treatment nor assistance for me. Those people who had money, people who had both parents, people who had houses, they could go to the Red Cross Hospital or the Hiroshima City Hospital. They could get operations. But we didn't have any money. It was just my Mom and I. Keloids [scar tissue] covered my face, my neck. I couldn't even move my neck. One eye was hanging down. I was unable to control my drooling because my lip had been burned off. ... My fingers were all stuck together. I couldn't move them. ...

From the American point of view, they dropped that bomb in order to end the war faster, in order to create more damage faster. But it's inexcusable to harm human beings in this way. I wonder what kind of education there is now in America about atomic bombs. They're still making them, aren't they?

*Arnove, Anthony and Zinn, Howard. Voices of A People's History of the United States, pgs. 363–366*



## **In Favor of the Use of the Atomic Bomb**

### **Document A**

#### **Paul Fussell: *Thank God for the Atomic Bomb***

*Read the excerpt from Paul Fussell's book *Thank God for the Atomic Bomb* in the *Atomic Bomb* lesson on the Stanford History Education Group website.*

### **Document B**

#### **James Byrnes and Leo Szilard: The Russians**

*Read Leo Szilard's account of his meeting with James Byrnes in the *Atomic Bomb* lesson on the Stanford History Education Group website.*

### **Document C**

#### **Historical Narrative: Hiroshima as Triumph**

*Read the excerpt labeled "Hiroshima as Triumph" from John W. Dower's essay "Three Narratives of Our Humanity" in the *Atomic Bomb* lesson on the Stanford History Education Group website.*