

Focus on U.S. History:

The Era of World War II Through Contemporary Times

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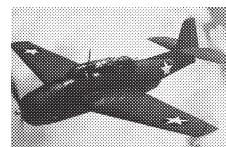
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The United States and World War II

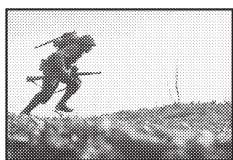
UNIT 1



TEACHER GUIDE

The objectives of this unit are for students to understand the causes and course of World War II and the effects of the war on life in the United States. Rising international tensions in the 1930s climaxed with the outbreak of war in 1939. A strong isolationist movement in the United States fought against U.S. involvement in the war, while President Roosevelt took a series of steps to help the Allies that brought the United States into virtual war with Germany in the North Atlantic. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought the United States fully into the global war. American society was transformed by wartime

mobilization, with many women working in wartime industries. Japanese-Americans suffered through internment. U.S. soldiers fought their way with other Allies across Europe and into Germany by 1945, discovering Hitler's concentration camps in the process. U.S. forces battled their way across the Pacific toward Japan. The momentous decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan ended the war in the summer of 1945. The activities in this unit are designed to draw students into a better understanding of the many facets of World War II.



Student Activities

Steps Toward War solidifies students' knowledge of the steps that brought the United States from neutrality to unofficial participation in the war in Europe. Students number a series of events in the order in which they occurred during the later 1930s and early 1940s. The Extra Challenge has students evaluate these steps from the perspective of an opponent of wartime involvement.

Neutrality or Involvement? presents the opinions of President Roosevelt and two prominent isolationists on the question of getting involved in the war in Europe. Students evaluate the statements by answering a series of questions. The Extra Challenge asks students to role-play a debate between supporters and opponents of the various steps President Roosevelt took that drew the United States into virtual war. Students draw on this and the previous activity for their role-play.

Destroyers for Bases uses mapping to evaluate the destroyers-for-bases deal and its actual relationship to national defense.

The United States and Japan helps students understand why Japan and the United States went to war with each other by presenting a series of incidents between the two nations from 1905 through 1941. Students explain how each incident affected relations between the U.S. and Japan.

"We Are Now in This War" presents President Roosevelt's radio address to the nation on December 9, 1941, two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Students put themselves in the place of an American listening to the address, and describe their reactions to the speech. The Extra Challenge asks students to compare this Roosevelt war address with Woodrow Wilson's war message of April 2, 1917.

The War in the Pacific strengthens students' geographical knowledge of the Pacific region through mapping of countries, islands, and military actions in the Pacific theater of World War II.

World War II Soldiers presents students with the experiences of World War II soldiers, in their own

words. Students are invited to read more wartime narratives and then write their own first-person account of a World War II combat action they took part in.

Women and War Work presents the retrospective comments of women who worked in wartime industries during World War II, describing both the work experience and the impact it had on their lives after the war. Students are invited to interview similar women and read other oral histories, then write an essay or editorial column on the connection between women's World War II work and the women's movement of later years.

Wartime Shortages puts students in the place of ordinary homefront Americans as they are forced to cope with wartime shortages and rationing. The Extra Challenge asks students to figure out what adjustments they would have to make in their lives if gasoline for cars were rationed today.

Japanese Internment: The Justifications for It presents the Supreme Court's reasoning in upholding wartime internment of Japanese-Americans and also General DeWitt's statement of why internment was necessary. A series of questions guides students through an evaluation of the statements. The Extra Challenge asks students to write a dissenting Court opinion or letter to the editor.

Japanese Internment: One Girl's Experience presents the account of a Japanese-American girl about parts of her internment experience. Students are invited to read more personal narratives of internees and then put themselves into the place of a Japanese-American internee and write a series of journal accounts about their experiences.

The Atomic Age Begins presents President Truman's comments on his decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan, plus U.S. scientists' advice to do so. Students role-play a debate between concerned scientists and military planners on this decision.

Name _____

Date _____

Unit 1

STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

The United States and World War II

Rising Tensions Lead to War in Europe

During the 1930s, countries around the world struggled through the Great Depression. Nations and people worked to cope with and get through the economic hard times. At the same time, dictators and military leaders in Germany, Italy, and Japan made a series of aggressive moves. These escalating actions climaxed in the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

- First, Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and took it over from China.
- Next, Germany began to rearm itself in 1935.
- Then, in 1936, Adolf Hitler, Germany's ruler, sent German troops into an area of Germany called the Rhineland, next to France. This violated World War I peace treaty provisions.
- Italy, ruled by Benito Mussolini, invaded the African nation of Ethiopia in 1935 and made it part of Italy in 1936.
- In 1937, Japan invaded more parts of China.
- German troops marched into Austria and took that nation over in 1938.
- In 1938 and 1939, Hitler's armies took over most of Czechoslovakia.

The League of Nations did little to try to stop all these aggressions. Great Britain and France also did very little, other than making a few protests. On September 1, 1939, the German army marched into Poland. Britain and France finally decided they had to act. On September 3, 1939, they declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

Allies*

Great Britain
France
Soviet Union

fought against

Axis

Germany
Italy
Japan

* The U.S. joined the Allies later in the war.



TBF Avenger

The United States: Involvement or Isolation?

As had happened in World War I, the United States chose to remain out of the war at first. Most Americans favored the Allied nations of France and Britain. But many Americans were also strong **isolationists**. That is, they wanted the United States to stay uninvolved in European affairs. President Franklin Roosevelt, though, wanted to help the Allies resist Axis aggression. This became especially important after Germany defeated France and began bombing Britain heavily in 1940.

Roosevelt persuaded Congress to make some changes in the U.S. neutrality laws.

- In 1939, Congress allowed the sale of arms on a cash-and-carry basis.
- In 1940, Roosevelt swapped 50 old destroyers for British naval bases.

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*Focus on U.S. History: The Era of **Repro**
World War II Through Contemporary Times*

Name _____

Date _____

The United States and World War II *(continued)*

- In 1941, Congress approved the lend-lease program. This allowed Roosevelt to supply Britain with military goods on credit.
- The U.S. Navy then started protecting ships carrying these supplies from attacks by German submarines.

The United States and Germany were now unofficially at war in the Atlantic.

Meanwhile, Japan was making conquests in the Pacific area. It became an ally of Germany and Italy in 1940. France and the Netherlands had fallen to Germany. So Japan now took over French Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies. Japanese troops continued to hold large areas of China.

Japan's moves in Asia did not please the United States. It stopped shipments of war-related raw materials to Japan. Late in 1941, officials from Japan and the U.S. met in Washington, D.C. They talked about possible changes in Japanese policy. While these talks were going on, Japanese warplanes suddenly bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The American forces were caught completely off guard. U.S. ships sank in the harbor, and thousands of American sailors died.



War ships in the Philippines

The date was December 7, 1941. President Roosevelt called it "a date that will live in

infamy." On December 8, the United States and Great Britain declared war on Japan. Several days after that, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

Wartime in the United States

The United States faced a huge job in getting its people and economy geared for war.

Millions of men and women joined the armed services.
Raw materials and food were rationed. Many consumer goods were no longer made.
The government regulated wages and prices.
Farms produced 20 percent more crops.
Manufacturing doubled.
War plants and army camps made population centers out of formerly quiet rural areas.

As had happened in World War I, women and minorities flocked to jobs in World War II war industries. For many women, it was their first chance to work outside the home, even if they did get paid less than men for the same work. Both women war workers and homemakers whose husbands were in the military developed a new independent spirit.



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Focus on U.S. History: The Era of **Repro**
World War II Through Contemporary Times

Name _____

Date _____

Unit 1

STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

The United States and World War II *(continued)*

Blacks in the military were treated more fairly in this war than in the last one. However, the armed services remained segregated. The war also raised awareness of U.S. racism. U.S. armies were fighting against Hitler's brand of "Aryan" racism. This caused many Americans to question laws and customs at home that treated blacks as second-class citizens. Black civilians and military personnel clearly saw the contradiction. They became increasingly vocal in demanding equality in all areas of their lives.

One group that was treated with shocking discrimination during the war was Japanese Americans. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, anti-Japanese hysteria swept the western United States. Japanese Americans who lived along the West Coast were rounded up and sent to bleak internment camps in interior states. Most of these people were native-born American citizens. They had to sell almost all their possessions before they left, usually for a small fraction of what it all was worth. They were guilty of nothing other than having Japanese ancestry. Even so, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the internment policy.

The War in Europe and the Pacific

In 1942, the Axis Powers controlled almost all of Europe and North Africa. By the time U.S. forces got to Europe in significant numbers in 1943, the tide had begun to turn. Allied forces drove the Axis out of North Africa. Soviet troops began to drive the invading German army back toward eastern Europe. Allied ships and aircraft had contained the German submarine threat to Atlantic shipping. The Allies invaded Italy in mid-1943. On D-Day—June 6, 1944—the Allies invaded France. Early in 1945, Allied forces moved into Germany on the west

while Soviet troops moved into Germany on the east. The German army surrendered on May 8, 1945, or V-E Day—Victory in Europe Day.

Japan's tide of victory also faltered in 1942. The turning points in the Pacific were two naval battles in May and June of that year.

The Battle of the Coral Sea stopped a Japanese naval fleet from attacking Australia.

The Battle of Midway kept Hawaii safe from a Japanese invasion.

U.S. and Japanese forces then fought a series of fierce battles over small, strategic islands. Each one that the U.S. captured was a stepping-stone west across the Pacific toward Japan itself. Meanwhile, U.S., Australian, and New Zealand forces fought their way northwest through the larger islands of the Pacific. Soon the Americans held island bases from which they bombed the home islands of Japan itself.



Submarine officer at periscope

(continued)

Focus on U.S. History: The Era of **Repro**
World War II Through Contemporary Times

Name _____

Date _____

The United States and World War II *(continued)*

If the Japanese hadn't surrendered after Nagasaki, the U.S. wouldn't have dropped another atomic bomb on Japan. Why not? The two atomic bombs that were used were the only ones the U.S. had.

It seemed that only an American invasion of Japan would cause the fiercely resisting Japanese to surrender. President Truman thought the loss of American lives in such an invasion would be too high. So he made the momentous decision to use the newly developed atomic bomb. On August 6, 1945, a U.S. plane dropped a single atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. This single bomb killed 80,000 people and destroyed most of the city. On August 9, the U.S. dropped a second atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. On August 14, Japan surrendered. Japan and the Allies signed the surrender papers on September 1, 1945, or V-J Day—Victory over Japan Day. World War II was over.

The Holocaust

When Allied soldiers invaded Germany and Poland, they made a horrifying discovery. They found Hitler's concentration camps.

Here, the Nazis had shot and gassed to death millions of Jews from Germany and countries Germany had occupied. Other people Hitler hated had died in the camps too, including gypsies and homosexuals. This program of mass murder by the Nazis is called the **Holocaust**. Important and unanswered questions about the Holocaust remain. How much did the Allies know about what was happening to Europe's Jews and other persecuted people? Why didn't they allow Jews to emigrate and save themselves? Why didn't they bomb rail lines leading to the camps?

The planned killing of most of a racial, political, or cultural group is called **genocide**. It is not an accepted part of war. From 1945 to 1946, Nazi leaders were tried for war crimes in a special court at Nuremberg, Germany. Twelve of these men received death sentences. Others got life in prison.

Starved prisoners in concentration camp in Ebensee, Austria



Name _____

Date _____

Unit 1
WORKSHEET 1

Steps Toward War

Directions: The United States entered World War II officially when Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in December 1941. But by that time, the United States was in fact at war in the Atlantic Ocean. Below are steps that brought the United States from neutrality to unofficial participation in the war. Number them in the order in which they occurred in time—1 for the first, 2 for the second, and so on.



USS *Shaw* exploding during Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor

- _____ destroyers for bases deal
- _____ U.S. occupies Iceland
- _____ Congress allows U.S. merchant ships to arm themselves
- _____ “cash and carry” policy: U.S. can sell arms to European Allied powers
- _____ Nye Committee investigation
- _____ President Roosevelt declares a state of unlimited national emergency
- _____ Lend-Lease Act
- _____ President Roosevelt orders U.S. Navy boats to “shoot on sight” any German military boats
- _____ U.S. occupies Greenland
- _____ Neutrality Acts passed by U.S. Congress
- _____ U.S. peacetime draft authorized
- _____ Congress appropriates \$4 billion for national defense
- _____ U.S. Navy starts to patrol the North Atlantic to locate German submarines and send their locations to British military
- _____ President Roosevelt commits to the top-secret Manhattan Project

Extra Challenge: Suppose you opposed getting into the war. Which steps would you support as not getting us into war? Which steps go too far toward getting us into the war?