

U.S. History: 1865 to the Present

Study Guide - US2.7 - World War II

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK -- 2015 STANDARDS

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STANDARD USII.7A

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major causes and effects of American involvement in World War II by

a) identifying the causes and events that led to American involvement in the war, including the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Political and economic conditions in Europe following World War I led to the rise of fascism and to World War II.

The rise of fascism threatened peace in Europe and Asia.

As conflict grew in Europe and Asia, American foreign policy evolved from neutrality to direct involvement.

Causes of World War II

- **Political instability and economic devastation** in Europe resulting from **World War I**:
 - Worldwide **depression**
 - High war **debt** owed by Germany
 - High **inflation**
 - Massive **unemployment**
- Political instability marked by the **Rise of Fascism**:
 - **Fascism** is political philosophy in which total power is given to a **dictator**;
 - individual freedoms are denied and **nationalism** and, often, **racism** are emphasized.
 - **Fascist dictators** included **Adolf Hitler** (Germany), **Benito Mussolini** (Italy), and **Hideki Tojo** (Japan).
 - These dictators led the countries that became known as the **Axis Powers**.



The Allies

- **Democratic nations** (the United States, Great Britain, Canada) were known as the **Allies**.
 - The **Soviet Union** joined the **Allies** after being invaded by Germany.
- **Allied leaders** included
 - Franklin D. **Roosevelt** and, later,
 - Harry S. **Truman** (United States),
 - Winston **Churchill** (Great Britain), and
 - Joseph **Stalin** (Soviet Union).



The "Big Three" at Yalta make final plans for the defeat of Germany

Gradual change in American policy from neutrality to direct involvement

- **Isolationism** (Great Depression, legacy of World War I)
- **Economic and military aid** to Allies (**Lend-Lease program**)
- **Direct involvement** in the war

War in the Pacific

- Rising tension developed between the United States and Japan because of **Japanese aggression** in East Asia and the Pacific region..
- On **December 7, 1941**, Japan attacked the United States at **Pearl Harbor** without warning.
- The United States **declared war** on Japan.
- **Germany** declared war on the United States.



STANDARD USII.7B

b) Major events and turning points of the war in Europe and the Pacific.

Despite initial Axis success in both Europe and the Pacific, the Allies persevered and ultimately defeated Germany and Japan.

The Holocaust is an example of prejudice and discrimination taken to the extreme.



Major events & turning points of World War II

- **Germany invaded Poland**, setting off war in Europe.
 - The **Soviet Union** also **invaded Poland** and the Baltic nations.
- **Germany invaded France** and captured Paris.
- **Germany bombed London**, and the **Battle of Britain** began.
- The United States gave Britain **war supplies and old naval warships** in return for military bases in Bermuda and the Caribbean (**Lend Lease**).
- Japan bombed **Pearl Harbor**.
- After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, **Germany declared war** on the United States.
- The United States **declared war on Japan** and Germany.
- The United States was **victorious** over Japan in the **Battle of Midway**. This victory was the **turning point** of the war in the **Pacific**.
- **Germany invaded the Soviet Union**. The Soviet Union defeated Germany at **Stalingrad**, marking the **turning point** of the war in Eastern Europe.
- American and other Allied troops landed in **Normandy**, France, on **D-Day** to begin the **liberation** of Western Europe.
- The United States dropped **two atomic bombs** on Japan (**Hiroshima and Nagasaki**) in 1945, forcing Japan to **surrender** and ending World War II.



The Holocaust

- Anti-Semitism
- Aryan supremacy
- Systematic attempt to rid Europe of all Jews
- Tactics:
 - **Boycott** of Jewish stores
 - **Discriminatory laws**

- Segregation
- Ghettos
- Imprisonment and killing of Jews and others in **concentration camps** and **death camps**
- **Liberation** by Allied forces of Jews and others who survived in concentration camps

STANDARD USII.7c

c) Impact of the war on the home front.

World War II affected every aspect of American life.

Americans were asked to make sacrifices in support of the war effort and the ideals for which Americans fought.

Americans at home support the war effort

American involvement in World War II brought an **end to the Great Depression**.

Factories and workers were needed to produce goods to win the war.

Thousands of American **women took jobs** in defense plants during the war (e.g., **Rosie the Riveter**).

Americans at home supported the war by **conserving** and **rationing** resources (e.g., **victory gardens, ration books, scrap drives**).



Effect on the war on race relations in America

The need for workers temporarily **broke down some racial barriers** (e.g., hiring in defense plants), although discrimination against African Americans continued.



While many **Japanese Americans** served in the armed forces, others were treated with distrust and prejudice, and many were forced into **internment camps**.