

# U.S. History: 1865 to the Present

## Study Guide - USII.6 - World War II – 2023 Standards

Reformatted version created by SOLpass - www.SOLpass.org

### USII.6A – CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II: FASCISM, TOTALITARIANISM & APPEASEMENT

a) explain the rise and spread of fascism and totalitarianism internationally and the policy of appeasement towards Nazi Germany



#### Why did World War II happen?

After **World War I**, many European countries faced serious problems:

- **High war debt** (especially for Germany)
- **Inflation**
- **Massive unemployment**
- **A worldwide economic depression**



#### Rise of Fascism

**Fascism:** A system where power is held by a dictator who denies individual freedoms, promotes **extreme nationalism**, and often uses **racism**.

#### Fascist dictators:

- **Adolf Hitler** (Germany – Nazi Party)
- **Benito Mussolini** (Italy)
- **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).



#### Axis vs. Allies

- **Axis Powers:** Germany, Italy, Japan
- **Allied Powers:** United States, Great Britain, Canada, Soviet Union (joined later)



#### Appeasement

- Many European countries tried to avoid another war by **appeasing** Hitler (letting him take land), but it didn't work—he kept demanding more.

### STANDARD USII.6B – CAUSES FOR AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

b) explain the causes and events that led to American involvement in the war, including the attack on Pearl Harbor;

#### U.S. Policy Shift from neutrality to direct involvement

- At first: **Isolationism** (stay out of war)
- Later: Gave supplies to Allies (**Lend-Lease Act**)
  - The United States gave Britain **war supplies and old naval warships** in return for military bases in Bermuda and the Caribbean
- After Pearl Harbor: **Direct involvement**



#### Pearl Harbor

- On **December 7, 1941**, Japan attacked **Pearl Harbor** (Hawaii) without warning.
- The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan → Germany declared war on the U.S.



#### By this time,

Germany controlled **Europe** from the **Black Sea** to the **English Channel**.



Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941

## USII.6C – KEY BATTLES IN EUROPE

c) *locate and describe the major events and turning points of the war in Europe including, but not limited to the allied invasion of Italy, the invasion of Normandy (D-Day), the Battle of the Bulge, and the Battle of Berlin;*

### Major Events and Turning Points:

- Germany invaded **Poland** → War began (September 1, 1939)
- Germany invaded **France**, captured **Paris**
- **Battle of Britain** – Germany bombed London, but Britain did not surrender
- **Germany invaded the Soviet Union**. The Soviet Union defeated Germany at **Stalingrad**, marking the **turning point** of the war in Eastern Europe.
- **D-Day** (June 6, 1944) – Allies invaded **Normandy, France**, beginning the liberation of Western Europe
- **Battle of the Bulge** and **Battle of Berlin** weakened Germany

### Outcome:

- **May 8, 1945 – V-E Day (Victory in Europe)**: Germany surrendered
- Germany lost because it faced a **three-front war**:
  - Soviet Union in the east
  - U.S. and British forces in France and Italy
  - Devastating defeats in battle

## USII.6D – KEY BATTLES IN THE PACIFIC

d) *locate and describe the major events and turning points of the war in the Pacific including, but not limited to the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Battle of Midway, and the Battle of Okinawa;*

### Turning Points in the Pacific:

- **Battle of Midway** (1942) – Major U.S. victory over Japan, turning point in the Pacific
- **Battle of Iwo Jima & Battle of Okinawa** – Costly but crucial Allied victories



## Atomic Bombs

The U.S. dropped **atomic bombs** on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki** in August 1945 forcing Japan to **surrender** and ending World War II

- These bombs were developed through the **Manhattan Project** (U.S., U.K., and Canada)

## War Ends:

- **September 2, 1945 – V-J Day (Victory over Japan):** Japan surrendered
- WWII lasted **six years and one day** (Sept 1, 1939 – Sept 2, 1945)

## STANDARD USII.6E ALLIED AND AXIS LEADERS

e) explain and evaluate the role of key political and military leaders of the **Allies** and **Axis powers** including, but not limited to the United States, Germany, Japan, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Great Britain;

## 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:

- Franklin D. **Roosevelt** and, later,
- Harry S. **Truman** (United States – after FDR's death),
- Winston **Churchill** (Great Britain), and
- Joseph **Stalin** (Soviet Union).



## Axis Leaders:

- **Adolf Hitler** (Germany – Nazi Party)
- **Benito Mussolini** (Italy)
- **Hideki Tojo** (Japan)



Even though the U.S. played a dominant role, all Allied nations were **necessary for victory**.

## STANDARD USII.6F PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED

f) identify the roles and sacrifices of U.S. armed forces, including prisoners of war (POWs), women, and segregated units, as well as other notable heroics including, but not limited to the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Women Airforce Service Pilots, the Navajo Code Talkers, and the Bedford Boys;

### Americans Fought and Sacrificed:



- Over 125,000 African Americans served
- **Tuskegee Airmen** – heroic Black pilots
- **442nd Regimental Combat Team** – brave Japanese American unit
- **Navajo Code Talkers** – used their language as a secret code
- **Bedford Boys** – suffered heavy losses on D-Day



### Women in War:

- Took factory jobs: "**Rosie the Riveter**"
- Served in:
  - **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)**
  - **Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)**







## Important Notes:

- **Racial and gender barriers** began to shift
- African Americans demanded more rights after fighting Nazi racism abroad
- Military remained segregated until **1948** (Truman desegregated it)
- Japanese Americans were **forced from their homes** and placed in **internment camps**—even if they were U.S. citizens

## STANDARD USII.6G THE HOME FRONT

*g) evaluate the effects of the war on the home front including, but not limited to women in the workforce, the incarceration of Japanese Americans, rationing, conservation, and war bonds*

Factories worked non-stop to build weapons and supplies



Americans supported the war by:

- **Rationing** food and gas
- **Conserving** resources
- Buying **war bonds**



Japanese Americans were **forced from their homes** and placed in **internment camps**—even if they were U.S. citizens

U.S. **geography, natural resources, and diversity** helped us build a strong war effort.

## STANDARD USII.6H THE HOLOCAUST

*h) examining the causes and consequences of the Holocaust including, but not limited to Jewish life before the Holocaust, antisemitism, the rise of the Nazi Party, Nuremberg Laws, persecution of Jews and other targeted groups, resistance efforts, the United States' response, and the Nuremberg Trials;*



### What Happened:

- **The Holocaust:** Nazi Germany's plan to eliminate all Jews
- Over **6 million Jews** were murdered, along with **5 million others** (Roma, disabled people, political enemies)



Victims of the Holocaust



### Terms to Know:

- **Genocide:** The killing of an entire group of people
- **Antisemitism:** Hatred of Jewish people
- **Nuremberg Laws:** Stripped Jews of rights
- **Ghettos & Camps:** Jews were forced into overcrowded neighborhoods and death camps
- **Wannsee Conference:** Nazi plan for "The Final Solution" (mass extermination)

### U.S. Response:

- Early on, the U.S. **turned away Jewish refugees**
- Later, U.S. and Allies **liberated survivors** in camps
- After the war, **Nuremberg Trials** punished Nazi leaders for war crimes



### Aftermath:

- Holocaust survivors migrated to **British-controlled Palestine**
- This led to the creation of the **modern State of Israel in 1948**

# STANDARD USII.6I SURRENDER AND VICTORY

- i) *describe the events that led to the surrender of the Axis powers and America's role in the Allied victory including, but not limited to the Manhattan Project, as well as events that shaped post-war peace.*

**Germany and Japan surrendered** after massive losses

The **Manhattan Project** helped end the war quickly with atomic bombs

WWII showed the need for a group to keep world peace



## United Nations

Created after the war to:

- Keep peace
- Encourage cooperation among nations

Protect human rights



## SUMMARY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- WWII was caused by **fascism**, **economic problems**, and **aggression** by the Axis Powers.
- The **U.S. joined after Pearl Harbor** and played a major role in both Europe and the Pacific.
- The war changed **life at home**, broke down **racial barriers**, and led to the **Holocaust**.
- The war ended with **V-E Day (May 8, 1945)** and **V-J Day (Sept 2, 1945)**.
- It led to the **United Nations** and new global responsibilities for the U.S.