

The Second World War, Grade 9-12

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Lesson Plan Summary: After this lesson plan, students will be able to: identify the causes, major events, important people, and significant outcomes of World War II. They will describe the life of a typical soldier during WWII, and create a letter that might have been written home from a WWII soldier to his family. This lesson should take a total of four, 50-minute-long periods to complete – two for the lecture, and two for the project.

Objectives:

History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to:

- identify the major eras in world history and describe their defining characteristics;
- identify changes that resulted from important turning points in world history such as the development of farming; the Mongol invasions; the development of cities; the European age of exploration and colonization; the scientific and industrial revolutions; the political revolutions of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries; and the world wars of the 20th century;
- apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods;
- explain the significance of the following dates: 1066, 1215, 1492, 1789, 1914-1918, and 1939-1945.

TEKS §113.33. World History Studies (c)(1)(A,B,C,D)

History. The student understands how the present relates to the past. The student is expected to:

- identify elements in a contemporary situation that parallel a historical situation;
- describe variables in a contemporary situation that could result in different outcomes.

TEKS §113.33. World History Studies (c)(2)(A,B)

History. The student understands the impact of totalitarianism in the 20th century.

The student is expected to:

- identify and explain causes and effects of World Wars I and II, including the rise of nazism/ fascism in Germany, Italy, and Japan; the rise of communism in the Soviet Union; and the Cold War;
- analyze the nature of totalitarian regimes in China, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union.

TEKS §113.33. World History Studies (c)(9)(A,B)

Citizenship. The student understands the significance of political choices and decisions made by individuals, groups, and nations throughout history. The student is expected to:

- evaluate political choices and decisions that individuals, groups, and nations have made in the past, taking into account historical context, and apply this knowledge to the analysis of choices and decisions faced by contemporary societies;
- describe the different roles of citizens and non-citizens in historical cultures, especially as the roles pertain to civic participation.

§113.33. World History Studies (c)(17)(A,B)

Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

- identify ways archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and geographers analyze limited evidence;
- locate and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information;
- analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;
- explain and apply different methods that historians use to interpret the past, including the use of primary and secondary sources, points of view, frames of reference, and historical context;
- use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple sources of evidence;
- evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author;
- identify bias in written, oral, and visual material;
- support a point of view on a social studies issue or event;
- use appropriate mathematical skills to interpret social studies information such as maps and graphs.

§113.33. World History Studies (c)(25)(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)

Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

- use social studies terminology correctly;
- use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation;
- interpret and create databases, research outlines, bibliographies, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

§113.33. World History Studies (c)(26)(A,B,C)

Procedure:

1. Through either reading or lecture/notes format, provide information to students regarding World War II. Use the attached reference notes from a World History Class as a guide.

2. For day two, guide students through the collection of letters from James Carlton Owens to his family describing his life as a WWII soldier, as well as other pieces of the collections pertaining to World War II, found on the TIDES website (<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2006/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=all&CISOBOX1=james%20owens%20&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP2=exact&CISOBOX2=&CISOFIELD2=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP3=any&CISOBOX3=&CISOFIELD3=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP4=none&CISOBOX4=&CISOFIELD4=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=/EastTexRC&t=a>).
3. Finally, have students pretend they are a World War II soldier. Based on the information from the notes and from the TIDES website, have students create a postcard using a 4x6 blank note card. On one side, students will draw and color picture of an image they might have seen as a soldier. On the other, students will write a brief letter home (8-10 lines) describing their lives as soldiers. Have students share their postcards with the class.

Extension:

Some students may want to create a whole journal of their time as a soldier rather than a single post-card of their experiences.

Bray's Notes World War II

During the 1930's, dictators were gaining power throughout Europe, and no one stopped them.

- Japan took Manchuria and left the League of Nations, then invaded China
- Italy and Mussolini tried to invade Ethiopia to pay back former loss – won
 - o League of Nations sanctioned, but had no power to enforce
- Germany – Hitler built up military, occupied the Rhineland

The Western powers appeased these dictators; France was weak, Germany was understandably upset by the Treaty of Versailles, NO ONE wanted another war; US passed Neutrality Acts stating they were not getting involved in European affairs...

Axis powers began to form (Rome to Berlin to Tokyo Axis) between Italy, Germany, and Japan – all agreed to not bother one another's quests, and to bring down USSR.

Spanish Civil War: The king of Spain abdicated in 1931, and a republic with a liberal constitution was formed.

- Liberals wanted further reforms - Conservatives (with military) no change
- 1936, Francisco Franco (Conservative) led revolt
 - Nationalists (Fascist, conservatives) vs. the Liberal Loyalists
- Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco, GB, France, and US neutral
- Almost 1 million died, esp. in attacks by German bombers
- 1939 Franco won – became Fascist dictator

- Germany:** Hitler tried to increase the size of Germany and bring all Germans together
- Anschluss – union of Austria and Germany – Annexed by putting Nazis in power
 - Czechoslovakia - Germany wanted Sudetenland given to Czechs after WWI, began to invade
 - o Munich conference, 1938, Britain and France appeased Hitler and forced Czechs to give in; Hitler promised not to take any more.

Things moved quickly after that – March 1939 Hitler took the rest of Czechoslovakia, and had an eye on Poland

- Hitler made pact with Russia (he hated/feared communism, but did not want any competition in Eastern Europe)
 - o They pledged to support one another's Polish division, and not get in one another's way
- September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and Britain and France declared war on Germany

Global Conflict

Invasion of Poland demonstrated Blitzkrieg or 'lightening war'

- Started with air strikes, then tanks and troops
- Russia moved in on East-side, and took their territory as well as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and part of Finland

French waited behind Maginot line (line of defense built up along the northeastern edge of France) – British reinforced line – there was no action for several months, many called this a 'phony war'

Then in April 1940, Hitler went through Norway, Denmark and Belgium, (went right around Maginot Line) and invaded France trapping the British – British sent every vessel they had to get their troops off the beach at Dunkirk – more than 300,000 troops were safely brought home

Germans attacked French from the north, Italians attacked from the south – French surrendered, Germans set up puppet state of Vichy, France in the South.

Some French, including an emerging leader, Charles De Gaulle fled to Great Britain and set up resistance government

Axis powers successful in North Africa under the leadership of Rommel, the Desert Fox, who won several major victories in 1941 and 1942

British were the only ones left in Western Europe who had not been invaded; Winston Churchill took over for Chamberlain as Prime Minister, and pledged to stop Hitler. Germans launched Operation Sea Lion – invasion of Britain – began with air strikes that were devastating (Blitz), but it only strengthened the resolve of the British and was overall a failure

Germans then set off on Operation Barbarossa – invasion of Soviet Union – Stalin was taken completely by surprise, 2 ½ million Soviets died, but Hitler’s soldiers were stopped by the Russian winter

- The siege of Leningrad began – 2 years long – most survived on very little (ate wallpaper....); Stalin asked Churchill for help.

U.S. Involvement: United States neutral at first, then secretly helped the British

- US passed ‘lend-lease act stating they would help anyone fighting for freedom in the World.
- In August 1941, the US and GB pledged to help each other
- December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in response to the US refusing to sell Japan war materials; more than 2400 killed
- US immediately declared war on Japan, and then Germany and Italy declared war on the US
- Allies not very successful in the Pacific in the beginning – lost many territories, and had major battles at the Philippines, Guadalcanal and Midway Island, but Japanese would not be successful for long.

Global Conflict: Allied Successes

Occupied Territory: Hitler still hung up on ‘superior race’; took art, technology, and other resources from conquered lands

Worst part was the Holocaust – genocide – particularly the Jewish people, but he killed gypsies and the mentally ill as well.

- Hitler’s “Final Solution” was to kill them all
- Built ‘death camps at Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka
 - o Prisoners forced to work on railroads, or in factories; some killed right away, others had horrible tests performed on them.
- Some rebelled, but to no avail, others protected by friends

Japan was pushing for ‘Asia for Asians’ – wanted ALL westerners out. Created the ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ – conquered a lot of land, and were brutal to those they conquered

Allies: Big three (Roosevelt for US, Stalin for USSR, Churchill for GB) began to meet regularly to discuss strategy

- Wanted to wrap up war in Europe before heading to Asia
- All resources directed towards war – consumer goods put on hold
- Women took men’s places in the workforce, even served in the military

Several battles helped turn the tide of the war:

- El Alamein – Rommel (Desert Fox) finally stopped by Montgomery (British) and pushed back to Tunisia
- Eisenhower began at Morocco and met them there – Rommel defeated
- Italy – July 1943 – Allied invaded Italy, using Africa as a launching point – Mussolini was overthrown, Hitler sent reinforcements which spread him thin, Germans put up a good fight in Italy, but eventually were defeated

- Red Army – Germans were stalled at Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), tried to take Stalingrad, but failed
 - o Surrounded the city, but were then surrounded themselves
 - o Hitler driven out of the USSR, and Soviets moved into Eastern Europe
- France: Allied landing in France at Normandy was successful – had been planned for MONTHS – Allies had tricked Germans with fake bases and false transmissions. Eisenhower was now Allied commander, and led the invasion on June 6, 1944 (D-Day) – Allies eventually made it to Paris, other Allies came in through southern France, and Paris was liberated – by September, France was once again free.

Toward Victory

Pacific: Different type of fighting in Asia

- Japanese VERY successful at first, especially in Philippines – Bataan death march, thousands died
- Finally during the battles of Midway and Coral Sea, Allies were successful
 - o Began Island hopping, blockade by Nimitz slowing Japan down

Meanwhile, the Allies were pushing towards Germany

- In Belgium, the Battle of the Bulge stopped Hitler
 - o Hitler's popularity declining, constantly under threat of assassination, Germany being bombed non-stop, 135,000 died in Dresden alone
- By the end of April, 1945, Russians and Allies met in Berlin
- Germany surrendered May , 1945, May 8 1945 considered V-E Day

By mid 1945 Japan lost navy and air force, but still had huge army

- Invasion too risky, Kamikazes were deadly
- Allies testing other methods – came displaced scientists, including Einstein, discovered Atom-bombs
- Truman decided to use it on Japan
- August 6, 1945, Hiroshima bombed – 70,000 died instantly; 8/9 Nagasaki bombed
- Japan surrendered 8/10 (Hirohito leader)

Post War

Europe in ruins, again

- 75 million around the world dead
- Nazi atrocities came to forefront
 - o Nuremberg Trials punished guilty Nazis
- Democracies established by Allies in attempt to strengthen war-torn areas
- United Nations (50 countries) established April 1945
 - o Every member nation had 1 vote, security council given more power – 5 member – US, Russia, Brit, France, China – could veto any

decision; did more than keep peace, tried to solve and prevent world problems (World health Organization, and Food and Agricultural Organization)

- New powers came about – US and USSR – they had conflicts which led to the Cold War – state of tension and hostility – especially in Eastern Europe
- Stalin (USSR) wanted to extend communism and create buffer against Germany
 - o He had troops in Eastern Europe, US was influencing Italy and Japan
 - o Roosevelt and Churchill against his view, Truman, too – USSR went ahead
 - o Churchill called at an ‘Iron Curtain’ dividing Eastern and Western Europe
 - ‘Blocks’ formed – East – communist, West – democratic
 - o US became heavily involved in foreign affairs
 - o Stalin became more aggressive in Turkey and Greece
- March 1947, Truman doctrine issued – US would defend democracy everywhere – policy of ‘containment’ to contain communism
- US offered aid package to strengthen countries against communism – Marshall Plan – gave food and \$\$ to Europe
- Stalin tried to get Eastern Europeans to reject US aid
- Germany became divided – East was dismantled by USSR, West supported by US and GB
 - o Crisis created in Berlin – USSR tried to close Berlin to the west, GB and US airlifted food and fuel to West Berlin – Soviets gave up blockade, Berlin divided.

1949 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) formed, and in 1955 USSR formed Warsaw Pact in response

Led to arms race, bigger better weapons and a ‘balance of terror’