World War II
1942-1945

Essential Questions:
What were the major events of World War II from 1942 to 1945?
How did the Allies win the war
From 1939 to 1942, the Axis Powers dominated Europe, North Africa, & Asia.
Germany used blitzkrieg tactics to dominate Eastern & Western Europe

England was wounded from German attacks in the Battle of Britain

Hitler broke the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact & marched into Russia
The German & Italian armies dominated Northern Africa, threatened the Suez Canal & the oil fields in the Middle East.
The Japanese dominated Asia, crippled the U.S. navy after the Pearl Harbor attack, & seized most Western colonies in the Pacific.
However, the Allied Powers began to turn the tide of the war in 1942 & defeated the Axis Powers by 1945.
When the USA entered WWII, Stalin wanted the Allies to open a Western Front & divide German army. Instead, Britain & USA agreed to fight the Axis Powers in North Africa (Stalin was angry).
The Allies defeated Germany at the Battle of El Alamein in 1942 & then pushed the Axis Powers out of Africa.

American & British troops invaded Italy, took Sicily in 1943, seized Rome in 1944.

In 1945, Mussolini was captured & executed by the Italian resistance.
Meanwhile, the Soviet army stopped the German attack at Moscow & Leningrad in 1942

The Soviets defeated the German army at the Battle of Stalingrad
The Soviet victory at Stalingrad was a turning point in World War II because the Russians began pushing towards Germany from the East by 1943.
In 1943, Joseph Stalin (USSR), Franklin Roosevelt (USA), & Winston Churchill (Britain) met in Tehran to coordinate a plan to defeat Germany.

At the Tehran Conference, the “Big Three” agreed to open a second front to divide the German army.
By 1944, the Allies decided to open a Western Front by invading Nazi-occupied France.

Operation Overlord (called D-Day) in June 1944 was the largest land & sea attack in history.
The Normandy invasion was deadly, but the Allied victory created a Western Front…
...and allowed the Allies to push towards Germany from the West

At the same time, the Soviet army pushed from the East

By March 1945, the Allies were fighting in Germany & pushing towards Berlin

Forced to fight a two-front war, Hitler ordered a massive counter-attack at the Battle of the Bulge...but lost
In February 1945, the “Big Three” met at the Yalta Conference to create a plan for Europe after the war was over. They agreed to allow self-determination (free elections) in nations freed from Nazi rule. Stalin agreed to send troops to help the U.S. invade Japan. They agreed to occupy Germany after the war. They agreed to create & join a United Nations.
As the Allies pushed into Germany & Poland, troops discovered & liberated concentration & death camps.
In April 1945, the Soviet army captured Berlin.
On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide.
On May 9, 1945, the German government signed an unconditional surrender to the Allies.
The world celebrated V-E Day (Victory in Europe)
While the war was coming to an end in Europe, the Allies continued to fight the Japanese in the Pacific.
After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the USA sent troops to the Pacific theater. The Pacific war revealed a new kind of fighting by using aircraft carriers.
The turning point in the war in the Pacific came at the Battle of Midway. After Midway, the Allies began to regain islands controlled by Japan.
Japan did not play by traditional rules in war

“Kamikaze” pilots flew planes into battleships & aircraft carriers

Japanese soldiers refused to surrender & tortured Allied prisoners of war
The U.S. developed an island-hopping strategy to skip the heavily defended islands and seize islands close to Japan.

From 1943 to 1945, the Allies took back the Philippines and were moving in on Japan.
The problem for the Allies was the time & troops it would cost to retake the thousands of islands the Japanese controlled in the Pacific.

The fight for Guadalcanal took 6 months & cost 25,000 Japanese & 2,000 U.S. lives.
In 1945, the Allies won the islands of Iwo Jima & Okinawa.

The War in the Pacific covered huge distances. The Allies used a strategy called island-hopping, closing in on Japan by sea. The final attacks, however, were by air and used the first atomic bombs.
From these islands, the U.S. began firebombing Japanese cities.
By May 1945, the war in Europe was over & U.S. began preparing for a land invasion of Japan.

Despite losing control of the Pacific & withstanding fire bomb attacks, Japan refused to surrender.

...But, perhaps a land invasion was not necessary...
In 1939, Albert Einstein wrote U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt about the potential to build a nuclear weapon.

FDR created a top-secret program called the Manhattan Project.

[Image of Albert Einstein giving a speech]

Albert Einstein
Old Grove Rd.
Nassau Point
Peconic, Long Island
August 2nd, 1939

F.D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
White House
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:

In the course of the last four months it has been made probable - through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America - that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable - though much less certain - that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.
Physicist Enrico Fermi at the University of Chicago developed the nuclear reaction.
The bomb was constructed in a secret city in Oak Ridge, TN.
Nuclear plant in Hanford, WA developed the plutonium
In July 1945, the bomb was successfully tested at Los Alamos, New Mexico during Project Trinity.
In April 1945, FDR died & his VP Harry Truman had to decide how to end the war in the Pacific.
How to End the War?
Critical Thinking Activity

Assume the role of an advisor to President Truman & help him decide how to end the war:

- Identify the main problem
- Brainstorm possible alternatives to solve the problem
- For each possibility, think of one positive & one negative consequence
- Identify the one best solution & be prepared to present your advice
In July 1945, the Big Three met at the Potsdam Conference to discuss the end of WWII. Truman learned the atomic bomb was ready & issued the Potsdam Declaration to Japan: “surrender or face destruction”
When Japan refused to surrender, Truman ordered the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

### Hiroshima: Day of Fire

**Impact of the Bombing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ground temperatures</td>
<td>7,000°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane force winds</td>
<td>980 miles per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy released</td>
<td>20,000 tons of TNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings destroyed</td>
<td>62,000 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed immediately</td>
<td>70,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead by the end of 1945</td>
<td>140,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths related to A-bomb</td>
<td>200,000 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After 3 days, Japan did not surrender so a 2nd atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.
After the second atomic bomb, Emperor Hirohito agreed to a surrender.
World War II was over
Conclusions: The Impact of World War II

Military Casualties, World War I and World War II

- British Empire/Commonwealth
- Germany
- Japan
- Russia/U.S.S.R.
- United States

Number Dead in Millions

0  2  4  6  8  10  12

Comparison of military casualties between World War I and World War II for different countries.
Conclusions: The Impact of World War II

Lives Lost in World Wars

World War I
10 million dead

Civilian 14%
Military 86%

World War II
51 million dead

Civilian 67%
Military 33%

Worldwide, World War II took the lives of more people, mostly civilians, than any other war.
Conclusions: The Impact of World War II

- World War II was the biggest, most deadly, & most impactful war in world history:
  - Europe was destroyed by the war & lost its place as the epicenter of power in the world
  - The USA & USSR emerged as super powers & rivals competing for influence in the world
  - A United Nations was formed to replace the League of Nations to help promote peace
  - Colonized nation began to demand independence from Europeans