

World War II Begins

1. What event started World War II? When did it begin?
2. What is a blitzkrieg?
3. Explain why Germany was able to take France so quickly.
4. What air battle lasted from August until October 1940?
5. Why did Hitler decide to attack the Soviet Union?
6. What is the scorched-earth policy?
7. How were the Neutrality Acts amended during the war?
8. What was the Selective Training and Service Act?
9. Explain the Lend-Lease Act.
10. Describe the importance of the Atlantic Charter.
11. With Europe involved in war, what territories were taken by Japan?
12. How did the US try to control Japanese expansion in the Pacific?
13. Describe the attack on Pearl Harbor.

- ✓ CHART/GRAPH
 - U.S. Military Personnel on Active Duty
 - U.S. Military Aircraft Production
 - Pearl Harbor Casualties
- ✓ GRAPHIC ORGANIZER The Allies and the Axis Powers
- ✓ VIDEO



Lesson 2

World War II Begins

ESSENTIAL QUESTION *Why does conflict develop?*

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

War began in Europe, and the United States found itself drawn in—despite the widespread desire for neutrality.

War in Europe

GUIDING QUESTION *How did World War II begin?*

In 1937 President Roosevelt spoke out against the growing “epidemic of world lawlessness.” He knew the American people favored isolationism. “We are determined to keep out of war,” Roosevelt promised. At the same time, he saw the danger posed by Japan, Germany, and Italy. “We cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement,” he warned. These words proved true.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler sent his armies into Poland. Two days later, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

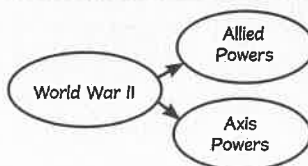
The German attack on Poland was swift and fierce. The Germans called the offensive a **blitzkrieg** (BLIHTS-kreeg), or “lightning war.” While German planes hit their **targets**, German tanks punched through Polish defenses. Thousands of German soldiers poured into the country.

The German blitzkrieg was so effective that Britain and France could do nothing to help Poland. The country fell within weeks. By late September 1939, Hitler and Stalin were dividing Poland between them, as planned in their prewar agreement.

ReadingHELPDESK

Taking Notes: *Categorizing*

As you read, use a diagram like this one to list the nations that were part of the Allied Powers and the nations that were part of the Axis Powers.



Content Vocabulary

- blitzkrieg
- disarmament

Stalin also forced Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to allow Soviet military bases on their soil. When he tried to do the same to Finland, war broke out between the two nations. The Finns held out heroically until March 1940 before surrendering.

The Spread of War

The British and French—the Allies—believed Germany would turn west after defeating Poland and attack France. Allied forces settled in on the Maginot (mah·zhuh·NOH) Line, a string of steel-and-concrete bunkers along the French-German border.

Through the winter of 1939–1940, these troops waited for an attack that did not come.

April finally brought a German attack—but not in France. German forces attacked Denmark and Norway to the north. In May the Germans at last turned west to invade the Netherlands and Belgium. After German bombing raids, the Netherlands surrendered. The Belgians fought courageously. Yet in spite of help from Allied troops, the Germans overwhelmed them.

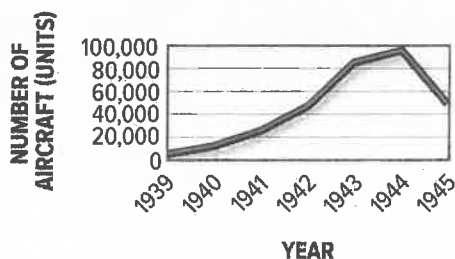
After Belgium collapsed, Allied troops retreated to the northern French port of Dunkirk. These troops found themselves trapped between the Germans and the French coast of the English Channel. In a daring move, more than 800 British ships—warships, ferries, and fishing boats—crossed the channel again and again. These ships rescued more than 300,000 French and British soldiers from the shore and carried them to safety.



German tanks roll through Poland. It would take Hitler's forces only a month to crush the Poles and conquer their country.

MOBILIZING FOR WAR

U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION



Source: John Ellis, *World War II: A Statistical Survey*

U.S. Military Personnel on Active Duty

1939	334,473
1940	458,365
1941	1,801,101
1942	3,858,791
1943	9,044,745
1944	11,541,719
1945	12,123,455

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*

INFOGRAPHIC

After Germany's invasion of Poland, the United States began to expand its armed forces and defense plants.

- 1 CALCULATING** Between which years did the United States military personnel see its greatest numerical increase? Its greatest percentage increase?
- 2 CRITICAL THINKING**
Making Inferences Why do you think increases in the armed forces and military production rose greatly after 1941?

There was no rescuing France, however. In June, the Germans crossed the Somme River and swept into France. Italy joined the war on the side of Germany and attacked France from the southeast. Germany and Italy—and later Japan—formed the Axis Powers. On June 14, 1940, German troops marched into Paris. The French surrendered one week later.

Britain Battles for Survival

In the summer of 1940, all that stood between Hitler and control of Western Europe was Great Britain. The island nation prepared for invasion. First, though, came terror from the sky. In August 1940, German warplanes began bombing British air bases, shipyards, and factories. The planes also bombed cities, destroying parts of London and killing many people.

Hitler believed the bombing raids would destroy the British air force and break British morale. The British people, however, did not give up. One reason was the leadership of the new prime minister, Winston Churchill. When Hitler called for Britain to surrender, Churchill refused:



When Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned in May 1940, Winston Churchill (right) succeeded him.

► **CRITICAL THINKING**
Analyzing Visuals What does this picture suggest about Churchill's personality?

PRIMARY SOURCE

“ We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender. ”

—from a speech to the British House of Commons

The Battle of Britain continued in the skies until October. The British Royal Air Force mounted a heroic defense. The Germans suffered heavy losses, and Hitler gave up his invasion plans.

Germany Turns on Stalin

Germany's defeat in Britain shook Hitler. He decided Germany needed the Soviet Union's resources and its land as “living space.” In June 1941, he broke his agreement with Stalin and attacked the Soviet Union.

ReadingHELPDESK

blitzkrieg fast, sudden attack by massed forces

Academic Vocabulary
target object of an attack

Reading In the Content Area: Analyzing Primary Sources

Read the quotation from Winston Churchill on this page. Explain the inspirational qualities of Churchill's words and how they might have affected the people of Great Britain during the Battle of Britain.

In the early phase of Hitler's invasion, German troops destroyed Soviet planes and tanks and captured half a million Soviet soldiers. Stalin ordered a scorched-earth policy: The Soviets burned their cities, destroyed crops, and blew up dams that provided electric power. This made it harder for the Germans to supply their troops and to keep advancing.

✓ PROGRESS CHECK

Examining Why did Hitler end plans to invade Britain?

The United States and the War

GUIDING QUESTION *Why did the United States gradually become involved on the side of the Allies?*

Most Americans sided with the Allies, but they did not want war. Isolationists formed the America First Committee. It promoted the idea that the United States should stay out of Europe's problems.

Roosevelt vowed to remain neutral. At the same time, he prepared for the possibility of war. In 1938 Congress voted to increase the size of the navy. Then, in 1939, it revised the Neutrality Acts to allow warring nations to buy U.S. goods if they paid cash and moved the goods in their own ships. In 1940 Roosevelt made a deal with the British to give them 50 destroyers from the existing U.S. fleet in exchange for leases on eight British military bases. That same year, Roosevelt also signed the Selective Training and Service Act. This was the first U.S. peacetime draft. It called up men aged 21–35 to serve in the military.

The 1940 Election

With the world in crisis, President Roosevelt chose to run for a third term. He became the first president to break George Washington's two-term tradition. Roosevelt promised, "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." Republican candidate Wendell L. Willkie agreed with most Roosevelt policies, but Americans preferred to keep a president they knew.

President Roosevelt won a third term in 1940. Many Americans were reluctant to change presidents with the world at war.



Build Vocabulary: Multiple Meaning Words

You can use the word *target* as a verb, meaning "to aim at."

Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

Predicting Consequences

Although the United States did not officially enter the war until December 8, 1941, hostile fire killed a number of Americans before that date. Among them were the crew of the USS *Reuben James*, an American destroyer that was escorting a convoy headed for Great Britain with war supplies. A German submarine torpedoed the *Reuben James* early on October 31, 1941, sinking the ship and killing 115 of the 160 crew. It was the first U.S. Navy ship lost in the months leading up to the entry of the United States into the war. How do you think the United States responded to the sinking of the *Reuben James*?

The United States' Involvement Grows

In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act. It allowed the United States to sell, lend, or lease weapons to any country "vital to the defense of the United States." Isolationists opposed the law. They believed that it would bring the United States closer to war.

Roosevelt also instructed the navy to protect British ships when they were close to American shores. After Germans fired on U.S. ships, Roosevelt ordered Americans to shoot German and Italian ships on sight in certain areas.

The Atlantic Charter

President Roosevelt also worked with Prime Minister Churchill to draw up what was called the Atlantic Charter. The document was not a military alliance, but it did set goals for the world after "the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny." In the Atlantic Charter, the two nations urged **disarmament** (dihs·ARM·uh·mihnt)—giving up weapons. They also called for creation of a "permanent system" for preserving peace.

PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining Why did isolationists oppose the Lend-Lease Act?

The Japanese Threat

GUIDING QUESTION *What happened as the result of the attack on Pearl Harbor?*

While the war went on in Europe, Japan continued its expansion in the Far East. After the fall of France, Japan seized French Indochina. Japan also planned to take the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, and the American territory of the Philippines.

The United States Responds

Trying to halt Japan's expansion, the United States applied economic pressure. Roosevelt froze all Japanese **funds**, or money, in U.S. banks. He also stopped the sale of gasoline and other resources that Japan needed. This angered the Japanese.

The Japanese prime minister, Fumimaro Konoye (FOO·mee·ma·roh koh·no·YEH), wanted to hold talks with the United States. He did not believe Japan could defeat the United States in a war. General Tōjō did not agree, and Konoye

ReadingHELPDESK

disarmament giving up military weapons

Academic Vocabulary

funds money

resigned. On November 20, talks went forward in Washington. Meanwhile, Tōjō planned a surprise attack on the United States.

Attack on Pearl Harbor

At 7:55 A.M. on Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked the United States military base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Ships, anchored in a neat row, and airplanes, grouped together on the airfield, made easy targets. The people at Pearl Harbor were taken completely by surprise.

The attack destroyed many ships and airplanes. More than 2,300 soldiers, sailors, and civilians were killed. In addition, more than 1,000 individuals were injured. Lieutenant Commander Charles Coe recalled the scene:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“The capsizing of the *Oklahoma* was ... the most awful thing I had ever seen. To watch this big battleship capsize and to see only her bottom sticking up out of the water like the back of a turtle and to realize that U.S. officers and men were still in there—well, I just couldn’t believe it. It made me realize that war had come to Hawaii.”

—from *December 7, 1941*

Calling December 7 a “date which will live in infamy,” Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy—Japan’s allies—declared war on the United States. Congress then declared war on them. The United States had joined the Allies in the fight against the Axis.

PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?

U.S. LOSSES AT PEARL HARBOR

Casualties	Killed	Wounded
Navy	1,998	710
Marine Corps	109	69
Army	233	364
Civilian	48	35

Ships	
Sunk or beached	12
Damaged	9

Aircraft	
Destroyed	154
Damaged	159

INFOGRAPHIC

1 MAKING INFERENCES

Why do you think so many naval personnel were killed or injured at Pearl Harbor?

2 CRITICAL THINKING

Speculating If the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had not done such damage to U.S. citizens and property, do you think the United States would have entered the war? Explain.

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

- Describe the significance of the following terms to the early years of World War II:
 - blitzkrieg
 - disarmament

Answer the Guiding Questions

- Identifying** What was the outcome of the presidential election in 1940?

- Listing** What were the main goals of the Atlantic Charter?
- Identifying** Explain why the United States entered World War II.
- INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** President Roosevelt called December 7 “a date which will live in infamy.” Write a paragraph explaining what you think he meant by this statement.