

World War II and Its Aftermath (1931–1955)

SECTION 1

AGGRESSION, APPEASEMENT, AND WAR

TEXT SUMMARY

In the 1930s, Italy, Germany, and Japan wanted to build new empires. The three nations formed an alliance known as the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. They agreed to let each other attack and take over new lands. The League of Nations had no power to stop them. Most other countries avoided conflict out of fear of war. The world was busy recovering from the Great Depression. No one halted the acts of aggression that led to World War II. (See diagram below.)

had failed. Britain and France promised to protect Poland from Nazi attack.

In August of 1939, Hitler made a pact with Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union. The long-time enemies agreed not to fight each other. One week later, German armies invaded Poland. Britain and France kept their promise. On September 3, 1939, they declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

THE BIG IDEA

During the 1930s, dictators undermined peace by committing acts of aggression and taking foreign lands.

In 1936, civil war broke out in Spain. Italy and Germany helped General Franco gain control. Both sides used new weapons and committed horrible acts of violence. The brutal war showed how much destruction a modern war could cause.

German aggression continued. Britain and France still tried to keep peace through a policy of **appeasement**, or giving in to the demands of an aggressor. The United States remained neutral. By 1939, Hitler had taken all of Austria and Czechoslovakia. It was clear that appeasement

GRAPHIC SUMMARY:

Aggressive Steps to World War II



Throughout the 1930s, nothing stopped the acts of aggression that finally led to war.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kept nations from stopping aggressive attacks by Japan, Germany, and Italy?

2. **Diagram Skills** What act finally forced Britain and France to declare war? In what year did that act take place?

THE GLOBAL CONFLICT: AXIS ADVANCES

TEXT SUMMARY

During World War II, the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan were on one side. Allied powers of France and Britain were on the other. The Allies were soon joined by the Soviet Union, China, and the United States.

Axis powers wanted to conquer Europe. The Germans used a type of warfare called **blitzkrieg**, or “lightning war.” Planes and new, faster tanks swiftly took Poland. The blitzkrieg overran most of Europe. France fell in June 1940. Britain stood alone against the Axis.

In September 1940, Hitler began a bombing, or **blitz**, of London. The British Royal Air Force used newly developed radar that detected approaching aircraft. They held off the Germans. The British, led by Prime Minister Churchill, would

not give up. In June 1941, Hitler ended the bombing.

Then Germany turned to attack the Soviet Union for its many natural resources. The Russians fought back with great spirit. German troops suffered in the icy winter. In the end, the assault made Britain and the Soviet Union allies.

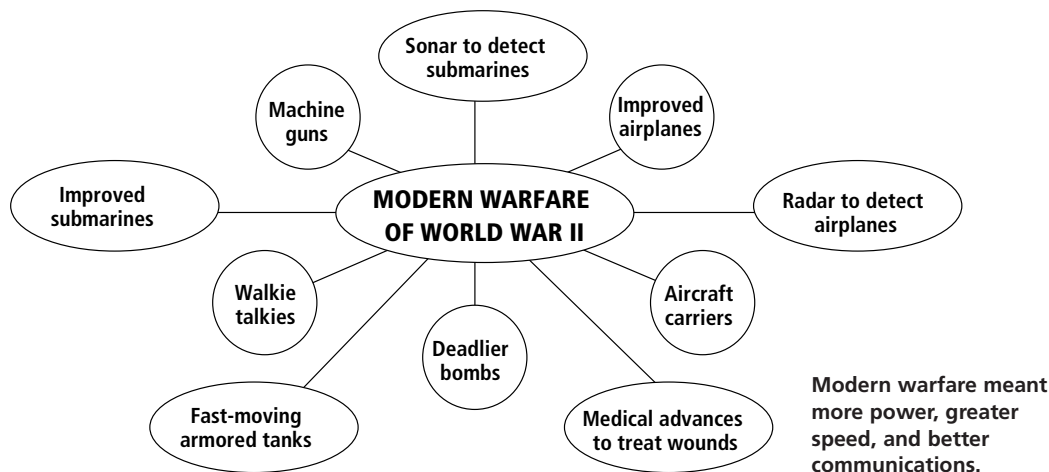
The Japanese wanted control of the Pacific but felt that the United States stood in their way.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes bombed a naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The next day, the United States declared war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

THE BIG IDEA

Armed with modern technology, the Axis powers rolled over much of Europe in the early years of World War II.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Modern Warfare of World War II



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Japan attack the United States, and what was the result of the attack?
2. **Diagram Skills** Which invention would have allowed (a) officers to keep in touch with their soldiers (b) planes to take off from the middle of the ocean?

THE GLOBAL CONFLICT: ALLIED SUCCESSES

TEXT SUMMARY

Germany and Japan wanted to establish total control of the people they conquered. The Germans robbed occupied lands of art and resources. Hitler planned to kill all people he thought were “racially inferior.” Nazi racism was aimed most directly at the Jews. The Nazis built **concentration camps**, or detention centers for civilians, where Jews were starved, shot, or gassed to death. By 1945, over six million Jews had died in what became known as the **Holocaust**. Gypsies, Slavs, and the mentally ill were victims, too. The Japanese were also brutal rulers. They killed and tortured prisoners. They stole food crops and forced conquered people into slave labor.

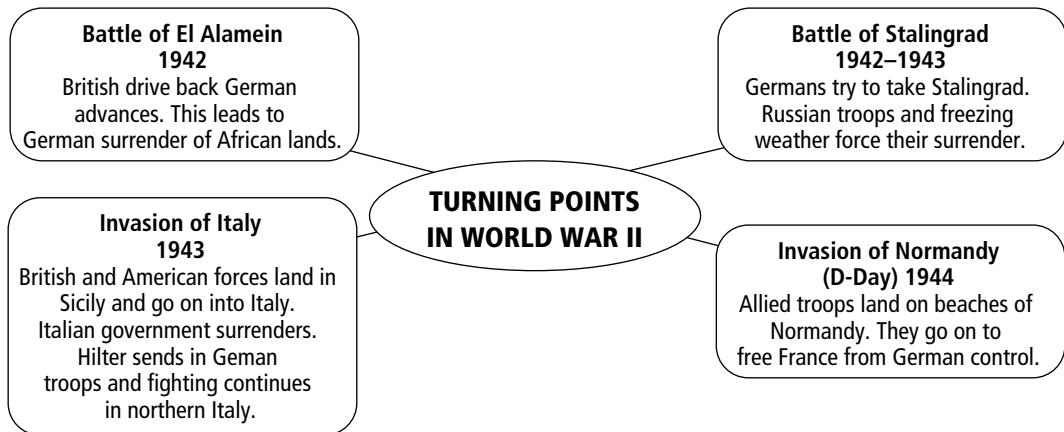
THE BIG IDEA

From 1939 until mid-1942 the Axis had a string of successes. The tide began to turn when the Allies won key victories in 1942 and 1943.

Up until 1942, it looked like the Axis was winning the war. However, the Allied nations began to wage total war. Factories made tanks instead of cars. The Allies rationed goods to supply their troops. Women aided the war effort. They replaced men in jobs, served in the armed forces, and joined resistance groups. Even democratic countries limited civil rights during wartime. A fear of spies led the United States to force many Japanese Americans to live in special camps.

By 1942, Allied victories turned the tide of war. (See diagram below.) The first turning points came in North Africa, Italy, and the Soviet Union. On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), Allied soldiers landed at Normandy in France. They broke through the German lines and freed Paris. By the end of September 1944, all of France was free.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Allied Victories of 1942–1943



In 1942 and 1943, Allied victories turned the tide of war in their favor.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the Germans and the Japanese treat the people they conquered?

2. **Diagram Skills** Give two reasons why the Germans were forced to surrender at Stalingrad.

TEXT SUMMARY

After their attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese won battle after battle. However, the tide of war turned in 1942. In the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway Island, American victories stopped the Japanese advance. Successful attacks moved United States forces closer to Japan. By 1944, their planes were bombing Japanese cities. Still, Japan would not **surrender**, or give up.

In Europe, Hitler fought to stop an Allied invasion of Germany. The bloody Battle of the Bulge in Belgium was the last real German effort. Air attacks pounded Germany day and night. Early in 1945, the Soviets moved in from the east, while the other Allied forces closed in from the west. As Soviet troops fought their way into Berlin,

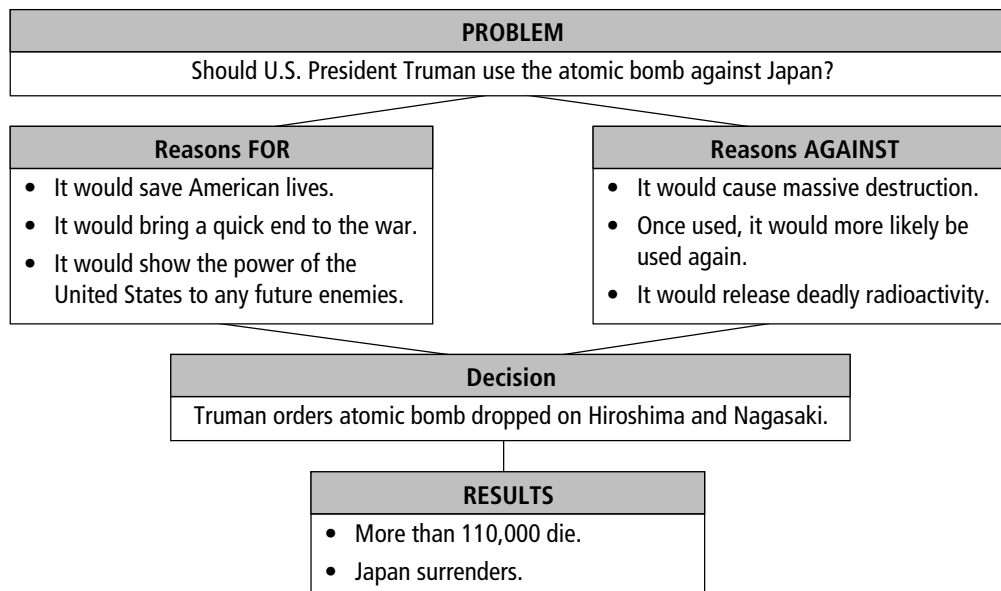
Hitler committed suicide. Berlin fell on May 2, 1945. On May 7, Germany surrendered.

The Allies still had to defeat Japan. United States scientists had created an atomic bomb, more powerful than any yet known. President Harry Truman decided this bomb would bring the quickest end to the war. (See diagram below.) Truman warned the Japanese, but they would not surrender. So, on August 6, 1945, a United States plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. Still, Japan did not give up. Three days later, a second bomb hit the city of Nagasaki. On August 10, the Japanese asked for peace. World War II was over.

THE BIG IDEA

The Axis powers finally fell in 1945, with the surrender of Germany in May and Japan in August.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Atomic Bomb: A Difficult Decision*



People continue to discuss whether or not the United States should have used the atomic bomb against Japan.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What two battles were turning points in the Pacific war?

2. **Chart Skills** Do you think the United States should have used the atomic bomb? Explain your answer.

FROM WORLD WAR TO COLD WAR

TEXT SUMMARY

As the Allies celebrated victory, the costs of war began to come clear. The war killed as many as 75 million people. The Soviet Union had the most casualties, with more than 22 million dead. Cities were in ruins. Survivors faced hunger and disease. To keep the peace, 50 countries set up the United Nations (UN). The UN aimed to stop war, guard rights, and improve health and education.

After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union created the strongest military forces on Earth. Many Eastern European countries and part of Germany came under Soviet domination. The Soviet

leader Stalin wanted to spread communism and create a **buffer** zone to prevent attacks from the West. The United States and other democratic countries opposed Stalin's plan. Tension between the two powers led to the **Cold War**, a state of conflict without armed battle. The "iron curtain" that separated Eastern Europe and free nations in the West became a symbol of the Cold War.

The United States took steps to stop the spread of communism. (See diagram below.) In 1949, the free nations of the West set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). To counter NATO, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact, joining the Soviet Union and its satellite nations in Eastern Europe.

THE BIG IDEA

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as dominant new superpowers.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Cold War Efforts to Halt Communism

Truman Doctrine (1947)	Marshall Plan (1947)	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (1949)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. program to stop the spread of communism • Formed by U.S. President Harry Truman • Offered to poor nations likely to fall to communism • States that United States would give military and economic aid to any country fighting communism • Aid given to Greece and Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave U.S. financial aid to rebuild Europe • Named after U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall • Gave over \$17 billion in aid, including food, machinery, and raw materials • Welcomed by all nations of Europe except the Soviet Union and its Communist allies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined United States, Canada, Britain, France, Italy, and six smaller nations in a military alliance • Formed to stop Communist takeovers in Europe • Maintained troops, military equipment, and weapons • Considered an attack against one member an attack against all

After World War II, the United States acted to stop the spread of communism.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the Cold War? Why did it begin?

2. **Chart Skills** How much aid did the United States send Europe under the Marshall Plan?