



## “THEIR SACRIFICE, OUR FREEDOM”

### WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

#### War in Europe Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **High School**

Time Required: **2 Days**

#### Introduction

These lesson plans accompany the video *“Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom – World War II in Europe”*, covering the European Theater, and are planned for two days.

Part 1 of the video gives an excellent introduction or review of the steps leading to World War II. It describes the highlights of European and American foreign policy in the 1930’s through to the Allied invasion of Africa and Sicily. Part 2 covers from D-Day to V-E Day and may also be used as an introduction or review. Along with excellent video, eyewitness accounts and commentaries are presented by our veterans giving the added value of thoughts and details on what it was like to be there at that time and place.

There are several options to using these lesson plans. Part 1 may be used in the following ways:

- A. As an introduction to give the students an overview of foreign policies that led to war.
- B. As a review after teaching the 1930’s and the steps leading to war.
- C. Along with Part 2, as a review of the European Theater before testing.

Part 2 may be used in the following ways:

- A. As an introduction to U.S. troops fighting in Europe.
- B. As a review after teaching the battles on the European Front.
- C. Along with Part 1, as a review of the European Theater before testing.

#### Materials

- Video – *“Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in Europe”*
- Art supplies and poster board

## Unit Goals

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Label and identify Hitler's seizure of territories in 1930's
2. Analyze Allied efforts to deal with Hitler in the 1930's
3. Describe U.S. foreign policy in the 1930's.
4. Label and identify Allied and Axis powers
5. Have an understanding of Allied strategy to defeat Germany set-up at Casablanca
6. Identify Allied and German military leaders.
7. Describe major battles in European Theater.
8. Discuss eyewitness accounts of our veterans' experiences during the war.

## **Day 1**

### ***Part 1 used as an introduction to foreign policy of 1930's***

#### Aim:

1. Define dictator and the tools he uses to control his people.
2. Identify Axis leaders: Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo.
3. Using Map of Europe, contrast Europe in 1930's and then under Nazi control.
4. Identify Allied leaders of the time: FDR, Chamberlain, Churchill, and Stalin.
5. Analyze Allied reactions to Hitler's aggression.
6. Introduce video using focus questions.
7. Show Part 1 (17 minutes).

#### Procedure:

The students will:

1. Brainstorm how modern dictators like Saddam Hussein, Castro, or Kim Il Sung control their people: examples of fear, force and propaganda.
2. Identify Axis dictators and countries.
3. Using map in text, contrast Europe after World War I with Europe of 1941.
4. Read focus questions and watch video.
5. Do focus questions in paired partners.
6. Discuss answers with class.

#### Assessment

List five questions that you would like to ask our veterans after watching the video.

#### Other Activities:

Compare and contrast Hitler's actions to Saddam Hussein.



Research why President George Bush said prior to Operation Desert Storm, “We are not going to have another Munich.”

Create a time line of Hitler’s seizure of territories from 1936 to 1941.

Using the Map of Europe, 1940, label countries of Europe. Color the countries as follows:  
Nazi dominated countries – red; neutral countries – white; Allied countries - green

### **Part 1 of video used as review**

#### Aim:

1. Review Allied and Axis leaders.
2. Read focus questions and watch video (17 minutes)
3. Do focus questions in paired partners
4. Discuss answers with class.
5. Compare and contrast Hitler’s actions to Saddam Hussein
6. Compare and contrast the reaction of the Allies in the 1930’s to the reactions of the Allies today with Iraq.

#### Procedure:

The students will:

1. Identify and list leaders of the Axis and Allies and their respective countries.
2. Read focus questions and watch video (17 minutes).
3. Do focus questions in paired partners.
4. Discuss answers with class.
5. Work in groups using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast Hitler and Saddam Hussein and the reaction of the Allies then and today to aggression by dictators.

#### Assessment

List five questions or comments that you would like to ask our veterans after watching the video.

Research why President George Bush said prior to Operation Desert Storm, “We are not going to have another Munich.”

## **Day 2**

### **Part 2 of video as an introduction to our troops fighting in Europe**

#### Aim:

1. Using Map of Europe, 1940, set scene for Part 2 of video

2. Locate 3 major battles: D-Day, Operation Market Garden, and Battle of the Bulge
3. Brainstorm for prior knowledge of battles using K-W-L chart.
4. Using focus questions, video and discussion as introduction to battles in Western Europe.
5. View video (23 minutes).

Procedure:

1. Using map of Europe, trace Allied advances towards Germany locating;
  - a. Normandy beaches
  - b. Netherlands – Operation Market Garden
  - c. Ardennes, Belgium – Battle of the Bulge
  - d. Advance of Soviet Union from East
2. Fill in K-W-L chart about battles.
3. View Part 2 of video. Present focus questions for Part 2 of video.
4. Complete K-W-L chart.
5. Do focus questions in paired partners.
6. Discuss answers with class.

Assessment:

Divide class into 7 groups. Assign one of the following to each group: Munich Conference, Casablanca Conference; Atlantic Charter; Invasion of Poland and Western Europe; D-Day; Market Garden; and Battle of the Bulge. Using their text, commentaries and video, the students will work as a group, pairs or individually to write a letter home describing their experiences in the event or battle.

*Using entire video as review before testing*

**Day 1**

Aim:

1. Review Allied and German policies during 1930's.
2. Review important Allied battles.
3. Discuss eyewitness accounts of our veterans.
4. Present focus questions and show video (40 minutes).
5. Review using focus questions

Procedure:

1. Introduce video as review of steps leading to war and Allied fighting in Europe.
2. Stress importance of eyewitness accounts to learn attitudes of our troops.
3. Read focus questions and watch video.
4. Divide into groups to answer focus questions.
5. Discuss questions.

Assessment:

Divide class into 7 groups. Assign one of the following to each group: Munich Conference, Casablanca Conference; Atlantic Charter; Invasion of Poland and Western Europe; D-Day; Market Garden; and Battle of the Bulge. Using their text, commentaries and video, the students will work as a group, pairs or individually to write a letter home describing their experiences in the event or battle.

**Day 2**

Aim:

1. Create posters to review important locations: generals, battles, dates and winners for European Theater.

Procedure:

Students will gather in their groups to create a poster for their event or battle. The following information must be on the Poster:

1. Title of event or battle
2. Large map of battle or country where event is occurring
3. Date
4. Allied generals of the battle; German, if possible (D-Day)
5. Pictures of people attending conferences
6. Short description of event or battle including significance
7. Letter written home from previous day's assessment

**Focus Questions – Part 1**

Some or all of these questions may be presented as focus questions for students before watching the video.

1. How did World War I affect Germany?
2. Describe examples of Hitler using fear, force, and propaganda.
3. Describe the attitudes of our veterans towards the war.
4. Why didn't Britain and France do something to stop German aggression?
5. What was the U.S. attitude toward the war?
6. Why did Japan attack Manchuria and China?

7. Describe examples of Japan using fear, force, and propaganda?
8. How do you think our country reacted to the attack on Pearl Harbor?
9. How did our veterans feel about the preparation of our forces for fighting in North Africa?
10. What decision was made at the Casablanca Conference?

**Answers:**

1. Depression, war damages
2. Parades, flags, huge rallies, speeches, weapons, troops attacking
3. Not fun; never going to get killed, chaos, desire to serve; scared but do what you have to do; buddy doing the same; Lord watching over us; lucky
4. War didn't affect them, lost a whole generation in World War I
5. Neutrality; not our problem; stay out of it; not ready; small army
6. Greedy for more land
7. Waving flags; soldier with sword; attack by troops
8. Answers will vary
9. Guns not as good; tanks much less in range; troops inexperienced; Germans are much better
10. Churchill, Stalin and FDR decide to attack Sicily and Italy first. How does Stalin feel about it?

**Focus Questions – Part 2**

1. What are some of our veterans' memories?
2. What happened on D-Day, June 6, 1944?
3. Describe some of the problems our veterans faced on D-Day.
4. What was the job of the Dragon Wagon?
5. What was the job of the Red Ball Express?

6. What was the purpose of the English-led Operation Market Garden? Was it a success?
7. Describe Hitler's goal in the Battle of the Bulge?
8. How did the weather affect our troops in the Battle of the Bulge?
9. What are some of the messages our veterans want you to remember?
10. What is the advantage of being able to hear our veterans' eye-witness accounts and commentaries?

Answers:

1. Traveling on troop ships; practical training; praying and laughing on the way to D-Day; seeing officers shot down; landing out of their zone; bullets going through plane; being outnumbered.
2. Allied invasion of Normandy; Operation Overlord; German defense of Atlantic Wall.
3. Rope ladders going off the ships; almost drowned; getting to beach without helmet or gun; heavy gear (51 lbs.) weighed them down
4. Get disabled tanks and bring them back to base to be repaired.
5. Trucks brought supplies to troops on the front line (175,000 tons per day).
6. Take bridges in the Netherlands before the Germans could destroy them. Hold them until Allies got there. Failure – Germans got the plan.
7. Ardennes not defended well. No attack expected. Hitler's tanks and troops drive through American lines hoping to come around and attack the British from the rear. Hitler creates a huge bulge in American lines. Germans run out of fuel and the attack withers.
8. Planes were fogged in and not air support or supplies were given. Our troops had no winter uniforms or gloves in the coldest winter in years, so they suffered from frost bite.
9. Possible answers: War is hell. Freedom isn't free. Remember the sacrifices of our soldiers. I knew we'd win.
10. Answers will vary

## MAP OF EUROPE, 1940





## National Standards

### History

- 7-12 Analyze the factors contributing to the rise of fascism, national socialism, and communism in the interwar period. (Analyze multiple causation.)
- 5-12 Evaluate American responses to German, Italian, and Japanese aggression in Europe, Africa, and Asia from 1935 to 1941. (Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.)
- 9-12 Evaluate the wartime aims and strategies hammered out at conferences among the Allied powers. (Hypothesize the influence of the past.)
- 7-12 Describe military experiences and explain how they fostered American identity and interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. (Utilize literary sources including oral testimony.)

### English Language Arts

- 7. Students conduct research on issues and issues by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- 8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

## Pennsylvania Standards

Reading, Writing, and Listening - 1.8.8.A, B; 1.6.8.F; 1.6.8.E; 1.4.8.B; 1.2.8.B

Social Studies Standards – 8.1.8.B, C; 8.1.8.B; 8.3.8.D