

“THEIR SACRIFICE, OUR FREEDOM”

WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

War in Europe Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **Middle School**

Time Required: **5 Days**

Introduction

This unit covers the European Theater. Preceding these lessons, the students have covered the rise of dictators and identified Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. These lessons begin with Hitler’s seizure of territories and end with V-E Day in Europe, and covers five days.

Part 1 of the video gives an excellent introduction or review of the steps leading to World War II. The video begins with the end of World War I and the Great Depression. It proceeds through the 1930’s and how the depression affected Germany giving rise to Hitler and his party. Hitler’s aggression that leads to the start of the war is covered, and U.S. involvement through 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. In this unit, it is used as an introduction of U.S. troops fighting in Europe. 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.

Materials

- Video – “*Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in Europe*” (Part 1 – 17 minutes; Part 2 – 20 minutes)
- Internet resources
- Map of European Theater

Unit Goals

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Label and identify Hitler’s seizure of territories in 1930’s
2. Identify participants in the Munich Conference and understand the effects of appeasement.
3. Describe U.S. neutrality efforts in the 1930’s.
4. Identify Churchill and Roosevelt and the goals of the Atlantic Charter.
5. List effects of the fall of France on U.S. neutrality.
6. Describe terms and effects of Russian German Non-aggression Pact.

7. Label and identify Allied and Axis powers.
8. Have an understanding of Allied strategy to defeat Germany set-up at Casablanca.
9. Identify Allied and German military leaders.
10. Describe major battles in European Theater.
11. Hear eyewitness accounts of our veterans' experiences during the war.
12. Research and write newspaper articles on assigned topics from the video.

Day 1

Aim:

The students will:

1. Understand how Hitler used fear, force and propaganda in taking over territory.
2. Locate territories and countries seized by Germany.
3. Locate Munich and identify participants and results of Conference.
4. Define appeasement and describe its effects.
5. Assign students to bring in poster board and art supplies for Friday.

Procedure:

1. In paired partners, brainstorm how Saddam Hussein or another modern dictator uses fear, force and propaganda to control his people.
2. Describe how Hitler used these tools, and his theories of race to control his people.
 - a. Force: Violence, forced labor, secret police, early concentration camps
 - b. Fear: Measures used above create the fear.
 - c. Propaganda: Parades, control of the press, radio
3. Examine German posters from WWII for examples of race propaganda.
4. Using map in text, identify territories and countries seized by Nazis.
5. On map, locate Munich and identify participants in conference and controversy over Sudetenland.
6. Define appeasement and its effects on Hitler and Allies.

Assessment

Student Handout #1 - Create a time line of all important events in Hitler's rise to power covered in today's lesson.

Other activities:

Research and analyze cartoons on the Iraq War, either on-line or in newspapers.

Draw a cartoon either for or against isolationism during the 1930's or covering a provision in the Atlantic Charter.

Day 2

Aim:

1. Review U.S. foreign policy in the 1930's.
2. List and describe the Neutrality Acts.
3. Define "cash and carry".
4. Describe "lend-lease" after the fall of France.
5. Identify Churchill and FDR and their decisions made at the Atlantic Charter.

Procedure:

The student will:

1. Define and review isolationism. Contrast with today's foreign policy.
2. Using text, list the provisions of the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936 and 1937 creating chart as a response of actions before WWI.
3. Examine time line for events in 1939, and define cash and carry as a response to Germany's aggression in Europe.
4. List further changes in our neutrality as a result of Hitler's actions.
 - a. June 1940, Destroyer Base Deal and FDR's "bridge of ship"
 - b. January, 1941, Lend-Lease Act and "Arsenal of Democracy".
5. Identify British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his role in the Battle of Britain.
6. Describe Churchill's decisions made with FDR at the Atlantic Charter, August 1941.

Assessment:

Review U.S. policies using flow chart to show progression of U.S. neutrality from 1935 to 1941.

Day 3

Aim:

1. Define and describe the Russian-German Non-aggression Pact and its effect on German policy.
2. Using map, trace Hitler's invasion of Poland, Western Europe, and Russia.
3. Locate and describe Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and its effect on U.S.
4. Describe decision at Casablanca to attack Germans in Africa and Italians in Sicily.
5. Introduce video stressing value of eyewitness accounts and commentaries as primary sources.
5. Present Focus Questions for video – Part 1, and show video – *"Their Sacrifices, Our Freedom – War in Europe"*, (17 minutes).
6. Discuss answers with class.

Procedure:

The students will:

1. Read to find out in their texts the term of the Russian German Non-aggression Pact and its effect on Germany: green light to attack Poland.
2. On map, trace Hitler's attack beginning with Poland through Western Europe and finally the Soviet Union. Discuss problems of two front war.
3. Locate Pearl Harbor. Discuss effect of attack on American public and our neutrality. (An in-depth study of Pearl Harbor would be include in lesson plans on the Pacific Front which would be the next unit.)
4. Locate Allied landing in West Africa and Sicily on map.
4. Read focus questions before watching video. Watch video.
5. Do focus questions in paired partners.
6. Discuss answers with class with emphasis on attitudes of veterans.

Assessment:

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

Other Activities:

Write letters to our veterans thanking them for their sacrifices.

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

On Map of Europe, 1940, identify countries by drawing flags of each country on map. Color
Nazi controlled countries - grey; and Allied controlled countries - green

Day 4

Aim:

1. Using Map of Europe, 1940, set scene for Part 2 of video.
2. Locate three major battles: D-Day, Operation Market Garden, and Battle of the Bulge.
3. Provide topics from video for further research.

Procedure:

The students will:

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 (20 minutes).
4. Complete K-W-L chart.

Assessment:

World War II Newspaper Assignment to be worked on Day 5 also.

Using the storyline titles below from the video, students will work in pairs to write a concise 2 to 4 paragraph news story about the event or topic. Be sure to include a creative title for your article, date and a picture.

Omaha Beach

Dragon Wagons

LST's and Higgins boats

Bridge at Remagen, Germany

Red Ball Express

General Patton's drive for Berlin

Battle for Bastogne

VE Day

German account of the first day of the Battle of the Bulge

American account of the first day of the Battle of the Bulge

Day 5

Aim:

1. Students will work in pairs to complete focus questions.
2. Discuss focus questions with students.
3. Students will work on their newspaper assignments to be completed by the end of class.

If time, articles may be put together to make three class newspapers. Assign students to create headlines for their groups. The articles would be grouped as follows:

Omaha Beach

LST's and Higgins boats

Dragon Wagons

Red Ball Express

German account of first day of Battle of the Bulge

American account of first day of Battle of the Bulge



Battle for Bastogne

Bridge at Remagen, Germany

General Patton's drive for Berlin

VE Day



Student Handout #1

Time Line

Name _____

Date: _____

European Aggression in the 1930's

Using your text, place the following events in correct order on a time line starting with the year 1930 to 1939.

Hitler seizes Austria

Hitler seizes the rest of Czechoslovakia

World War II begins

Hitler names himself Fuhrer of Germany

Hitler invades Poland. Blitzkrieg!

Hitler seizes the Rhineland

President Hindenburg names Hitler Chancellor

Mussolini invades Ethiopia

Hitler seizes the Sudetenland

Appeasement of Munich

Hitler begins to re-arm

Define blitzkrieg: _____

What did the Allies do in response to Hitler's aggression: _____



Student Handout #2

Name _____

Date: _____

Focus Questions – Part 1

1. How did the Great Depression affect Germany? _____

2. Describe examples of Hitler’s use of propaganda. _____

3. Describe the comments of our veterans about the war. _____

4. Why didn’t Britain and France do something to stop German aggression? _____

5. What was the U.S. policy toward the war in Europe? _____

6. How did our veterans feel about the army’s preparation of our forces for fighting in North Africa?

7. What problems did our troops face in Africa? _____

8. How do you think our country reacted to the attack on Pearl Harbor? _____

9. What Allied leaders participated in the Casablanca Conference? _____

10. Contrast fighting in Africa and Italy: _____



Define the following terms: warmonger, renegade, Lend-Lease, Flying Fortress, Fuhrer

Identify the following people: Hitler, Mussolini, Eisenhower, Churchill, Stalin

Answers:

1. Inflation, unemployment, poverty
2. Parades, flags, huge rallies, speeches
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. Hitler's seizure of territories didn't affect them, lost a whole generation in World War I
5. Isolationism, neutrality; not our problem; stay out of it
6. Our troops were well trained.
7. Desert warfare; Germany so well armed with better machine guns and tanks; German tanks have better armor than ours
8. Answers will vary
9. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin
10. Africa: desert fighting, sand, heat, effect on men and weapons

Italy: mud and mountains; Germans have high terrain (Monte Casino); effect on men and weapons.



Student Handout #3

Name _____

Date: _____

Focus Questions – Part 2

1. What happened on D-Day, June 6, 1944? _____
2. What are some of our veteran paratroopers' memories of the day? _____

3. Identify General Eisenhower and his role that day _____

4. What are some of our veterans' memories of crossing the English Channel on D-Day?

5. What was the job of the Dragon Wagon? _____
6. What was the job of the Red Ball Express? _____
7. What was the purpose of the English-led Operation Market Garden? Was it a success?

8. Describe Hitler's goal in the Battle of the Bulge: _____

9. How did the weather affect our troops in the Battle of the Bulge? _____

10. What are some of the messages our veterans want you to remember? _____

11. What is the advantage of being able to hear our veterans' eye-witness accounts and commentaries?
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Answers:

1. Allied invasion of Normandy, France
2. Traveling on troop ships; practical training; praying and laughing on the way over to D-Day; seeing officers shot down; landing out of their zone; bullets going through plane; being outnumbered.
3. American General who had commanded invasion of Africa; now Allied Commander in Chief.
4. Rope ladders going off the ships; almost drowned; getting to beach without helmet or gun; heavy gear (51 lbs.) weighed them down
5. Get disabled tanks and bring them back to base to be repaired.
6. Trucks brought supplies to troops on the front line (175,000 tons per day).
7. Take bridges in the Netherlands before the Germans could destroy them. Hold them until Allies got there. Failure – Germans got the plan.
8. German troops effort to stop Allies from moving into Germany by cutting through the center of Allied lines and coming from behind to attack other troops on the line..
9. Freezing cold caused our soldiers to suffer frost bite; supplies could not be brought in due to snow storm; planes could not fly support for our troops. Weapons froze. Troops did not have cold weather uniform.
10. Possible answers: War is hell. Freedom isn't free. Sacrifices of our troops brought our freedom. Many didn't come home – still there.

Less than one million World War II veterans are left today. They helped to save our world.

11. Answers will vary. Some might include – They were eyewitnesses. Hear their emotion in their voices.

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.)
- 7-12 Explain the breakdown of the Versailles settlement and League of Nations in the 1930's. (Challenge arguments of historical inevitability.)
- 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.)
- 5-12 Explain the major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific Theaters. (Draw upon data in historical maps.)
- 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 - 1.1.8.A, D, G; 1.2.8.A, B; 1.4.8.B; 1.6.8.F; 1.6.8.E, F; 1.8.8.A, B, C

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