

World War II Study Notes

US President: Franklin Roosevelt

British Prime Minister: Winston Churchill

Japan: Emperor Hirohito

Soviet Union Communist Leader: Joseph Stalin

Keep in mind that most Americans feared communism, as religion was outlawed in the Soviet Union. Karl Marx (famous communist) once said, "Religion is the opiate of the people."

Italy Fascist dictator: Benito Mussolini (Il Duce) He wanted to restore Italy to the glory days of the Roman Empire. He wanted to rebuild the Empire by invading the Mediterranean and Africa.

German Chancellor Adolph Hitler (Der Fuhrer)

With the end of the 1st World War, Germany had been punished harshly, and their economy had collapsed. Germans were desperate for better times, and this desperateness helped the Nazi party come into power.

Nuremberg Laws

"At the annual party rally held in Nuremberg in 1935, the [Nazis](#) announced new laws which institutionalized many of the racial theories prevalent in Nazi ideology. The laws excluded German Jews from Reich citizenship and prohibited them from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of "German or related blood." Ancillary ordinances to the laws disenfranchised Jews and deprived them of most political rights.

The Nuremberg Laws, as they became known, did not define a "Jew" as someone with particular religious beliefs. Instead, anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents was defined as a Jew, regardless of whether that individual identified himself or herself as a Jew or belonged to the Jewish religious community. Many Germans who had not practiced Judaism for years found themselves caught in the grip of Nazi terror. Even people with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity were defined as Jews.

For a brief period after Nuremberg, in the weeks before and during the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin, the Nazi regime actually moderated its anti-Jewish attacks and even removed some of the signs saying "Jews Unwelcome" from public places. Hitler

did not want international criticism of his government to result in the transfer of the Games to another country. Such a loss would have been a serious blow to German prestige.

After the Olympic Games (in which the Nazis did not allow German Jewish athletes to participate), the Nazis again stepped up the persecution of German Jews. In 1937 and 1938, the government set out to impoverish Jews by requiring them to register their property and then by "Aryanizing" Jewish businesses. This meant that Jewish workers and managers were dismissed, and the ownership of most Jewish businesses was taken over by non-Jewish Germans who bought them at bargain prices fixed by Nazis. Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat non-Jews, and Jewish lawyers were not permitted to practice law.

Like everyone in Germany, Jews were required to carry identity cards, but the government added special identifying marks to theirs: a red "J" stamped on them and new middle names for all those Jews who did not possess recognizably "Jewish" first names -- "Israel" for males, "Sara" for females. Such cards allowed the police to identify Jews easily." www.ushmm.org/outreach/nlaw.htm

Concentration Camps: Hitler's Final Solution was a eugenics plan that involved murdering as many Jews as possible.

Buchenwald - A concentration camp located near Weimar, Germany

Dachau - The first concentration camp opened by the Nazis in 1933 near Munich, Germany. It served as a camp to concentrate political opponents of the Third Reich, democratic supporters of the Weimar Republic, Socialist, Communists and others who were mainly non-Jews

Auschwitz - Name for concentration and death camp Oswiecim, located in southern Poland, which was in fact a complex of forty smaller camps in the region

Death Camps - These camps were Nazi centers of murder or extermination. Jews and non-Jews were brought to them to be put to death as part of Hitler's "Final Solution." The six death camps (Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek, Chelmno and Belzec) were established solely for the murder of Europe's Jews. Eventually, had the war continued, they would have been used to annihilate other groups the Nazis considered inferior, like the Poles. The death camps, especially Auschwitz, were also the places of death for nearly a half million Gypsies.

Death Marches - The prisoners of Auschwitz and other camps in Poland were forced

by the Germans to march to camps in Germany as the Russian armies approached from the east. The death camps were taken apart and the prisoners were forced onto the roads in the bitter January cold of 1945. About one third of the prisoners died on the death marches.

Extermination Camps - Six camps established in Poland for the purpose of killing Jews -- Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek, Chelmno, and Belzec

WWII Vocabulary

Anti-Semitism - Prejudice against Jews; dislike of Jews; discrimination or persecution of Jews

Gas Chamber - Buildings or parts of building which were sealed off and airtight so that large numbers of people could be murdered by poison gas which was released into the chamber.

Dictatorship: a government in which one person or a small group of people hold all of the power

Ghettos: a section of a city- the Jews were forced to live in ghettos by the Nazis. The ghettos were sometimes surrounded by guards, barbed wire or brick walls. If Jews were found outside the ghetto without special permission, they were killed.

Concentration camps: areas where Nazis imprisoned Jews, Gypsies, Homosexuals, and others

Kristallnacht - "Crystal Night" or "Night of Broken Glass": Name for anti-Jewish attacks organized by the Nazis in Germany and Austria which took place over November 9th and 10th, 1938

Genocide: the deliberate killing of an entire race of people

Holocaust: This term refers to the time period when the Nazis were attempting to exterminate the Jews.

eugenics: the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population by such means as discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits

Appeasement: the act of giving in to an aggressor in order to keep peace

Luftwaffe: the German Air Force

Panzer: a German tank used in World War II

Blitzkrieg: a swift military offensive using ground and air forces

Amphibious: operating both on land and in water

Paratroopers: a soldier trained to go into battle by parachute, especially one who is also a member of an airborne unit

Atomic bomb: explosive device whose destructive power is due to the uncontrollable release of energy from the fission of heavy nuclei, usually uranium-235 or plutonium-239, by neutrons sustaining a rapid chain reaction

Draft: a system in which people are ordered to join the armed services in time of war

Embargo: a government order that prohibited commercial ships from entering or leaving its ports, often as a measure during war

Partisans: freedom fighters; a member of a group that has taken up armed resistance against occupying enemy forces

Non-combat: support role in the military, such as nurses, doctors

Rationing: a fixed and limited amount of something, especially food, given or allocated to a person or group from the stocks available, especially during a time of shortage or a war

War bonds: These were used by the government to help finance the war: a certificate issued by a government or company promising to pay back borrowed money at a fixed rate of interest on a specified date

Japanese Internment Camps/ Relocation Centers: <http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/camps.html>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/TQ0312008/>

Maginot Line: a vast fortification that spread along the French/German border but became a military liability when the Germans attacked France in the spring of 1940 using blitzkrieg. This completely destroyed the Maginot Line's purpose, and the Americans had to rescue the French.

Fascism: any movement, ideology, or attitude that favors dictatorial government,

centralized control of private enterprise, repression of all opposition, and extreme nationalism

Nationalism: proud loyalty and devotion to a nation which can become excessive or fanatical devotion to a nation and its interests, often associated with a belief that one country is superior to all others

Scapegoat: somebody who is made to take the blame for other; the Jews become the scapegoat for the Germans anger about WW I.

Operation Overlord : the code name for the invasion of northwest Europe during World War II by Allied forces.

adapted from <http://www.holocaustcenterbuff.com/vocabulary.htm>

WWII Vocabulary Practice <http://quizlet.com/set/214349/>

People to Know

Franklin Roosevelt
Winston Churchill
Bernard Montgomery
Dwight Eisenhower
Harry S. Truman
Albert Einstein
Neville Chamberlin
Allies
Navajo Code Talkers
George Bush Sr.
Ira Hayes
George S. Patton
Erwin Rommel
Axis
Nazis
Kamikaze
Adolph Hitler
Eva Braun:
Benito Mussolini
Goebbels
Goering
Himmler
Ribbentrop
Hess

Emperor Hirohito

Adolf Hitler 1889-1945



Dictator of Nazi Germany, Supreme Commander and Commander-in-Chief of German armed forces. His refusal to heed the advice of his Generals was a large factor in the demise of German military fortunes. He committed suicide in his Berlin bunker in April 1945.

Hermann Goering 1893-1946



Chief of the Luftwaffe and one of the most powerful men in Germany. Vain, greedy and incompetent at his appointed task, he spent most of the war enriching his personal wealth. Sentenced to death after the Nuremberg Trials, he committed suicide before he could be hanged.

Joseph Goebbels 1897-1945



Minister for Propaganda, he had total control of the German press and radio. He was doggedly loyal to his Fuhrer, and was once named by Hitler as his possible successor.

Heinrich Himmler 1900-1945



Head of the SS, the Waffen SS and Gestapo and Minister of the Interior. By the end of the War, Himmler had become the second most powerful man in Germany. He committed suicide in 1945 after being captured by the Allies.

Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch 1881-1948



Commander-in-Chief of the German Army from 1938 until he resigned at the end of 1941. His resignation was due to a combination of ill-health, the failure of the German army at Moscow and Hitler's refusal to heed any of his advice. After Brauchitsch's resignation, the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Army was assumed by Hitler himself.

Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel 1882-1946



Chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) from 1938 until the end of the War. This meant that his position was as Hitler's chief of staff and

Events

Nuremberg Laws: 1935

The Gestapo is placed above all laws: 1936

Mussolini's forces take Ethiopia: 1936

Civil War starts in Spain: 1936 (end in 1936)

Hitler meets with Chamberlain in Munich and appeases him; he brags to the world, "I have secured peace for our time." 1936

Stalin begins executions 1937

Kristallnacht- 1938

Nazis now have invaded and taken over Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia 1939

Britain, France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand declare war on Germany 1939
United States proclaims that they will stay neutral

Soviets and the Nazis sign agreement and divide up Poland, Soviets attack Finland – 1939

1940

Nazis invade Denmark and Norway.

Nazis invade France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands

Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister.

Holland surrenders to the Nazis.

Belgium surrenders to the Nazis.

Germans bomb Paris

Norway surrenders to the Nazis

Italy declares war on Britain and France.

Marshal Pétain becomes French Prime Minister.

France signs an armistice with the Nazis.

Britain recognizes Gen. Charles de Gaulle as the Free French leader.

Battle of Britain begins

Soviets take Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Italians occupy British Somaliland in East Africa.

German bombing offensive against airfields and factories in England.

Air battles and daylight raids over Britain.

Hitler declares a blockade of the British Isles.

First German air raids on Central London.

First British air raid on Berlin.

Hitler plans Operation Sealion (the invasion of Britain) and German Blitz against England begins.

Italians invade Egypt.

Massive German air raids on London, Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester.

United States military conscription bill passed.

Tripartite (Axis) Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan.

German troops enter Romania.

Italy invades Greece.

Roosevelt re-elected as U.S. president.

Greeks defeat the Italian 9th Army.

Romania joins the Axis Powers.

British begin a western desert offensive in North Africa against the Italians.

Massive German air raid on London.

1941

Jan 22, 1941 - Tobruk in North Africa falls to the British and Australians.

Feb 11, 1941 - British forces advance into Italian Somaliland in East Africa.

Feb 12, 1941 - German General Erwin Rommel arrives in Tripoli, North Africa.

Feb 14, 1941 - First units of German 'Afrika Korps' arrive in North Africa.

March 7, 1941 - British forces arrive in Greece.

March 11, 1941 - President Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act.

March 27, 1941 - A coup in Yugoslavia overthrows the pro-Axis government.

April 3, 1941 - Pro-Axis regime set up in Iraq.

April 6, 1941 - Nazis invade Greece and Yugoslavia.

April 17, 1941 - Yugoslavia surrenders to the Nazis.
April 27, 1941 - Greece surrenders to the Nazis.
May 10, 1941 - Deputy Führer Rudolph Hess flies to Scotland.
May 10/11 - Heavy German bombing of London; British bomb Hamburg.
May 15, 1941 - Operation Brevity begins (the British counter-attack in Egypt).
May 24, 1941 - Sinking of the British ship Hood by the Bismarck.
May 27, 1941 - Sinking of the Bismarck by the British Navy.
June 4, 1941 - Pro-Allied government installed in Iraq.
June 8, 1941 - Allies invade Syria and Lebanon.
June 14, 1941 - United States freezes German and Italian assets in America.
June 22, 1941 - Germany attacks Soviet Union as Operation Barbarossa begins.
In June - Nazi SS Einsatzgruppen begin mass murder.
July 3, 1941 - Stalin calls for a scorched earth policy.
July 12, 1941 - Mutual Assistance agreement between British and Soviets.
July 14, 1941 - British occupy Syria.
July 26, 1941 - Roosevelt freezes Japanese assets in United States and suspends relations.
July 31, 1941 - Göring instructs Heydrich to prepare for the Final Solution.
Aug 1, 1941 - United States announces an oil embargo against aggressor states.
Aug 14, 1941 - Roosevelt and Churchill announce the Atlantic Charter.
Aug 20, 1941 - Nazi siege of Leningrad begins.
Sept 1, 1941 - Nazis order Jews to wear yellow stars.
Sept 3, 1941 - First experimental use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.
Sept 19, 1941 - Nazis take Kiev.
Sept 29, 1941 - Nazis murder 33,771 Jews at Kiev.
Oct 2, 1941 - Operation Typhoon begins (German advance on Moscow).
Dec 5, 1941 - German attack on Moscow is abandoned.
Dec 6, 1941 - Soviet Army launches a major counter-offensive around Moscow.
Dec 7, 1941 - Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor; Hitler issues the Night and Fog decree.
Dec 8, 1941 - United States and Britain declare war on Japan.
Dec 11, 1941 - Germany declares war on the United States.
Dec 16, 1941 - Rommel begins a retreat to El Agheila in North Africa.
Dec 19, 1941 - Hitler takes complete command of the German Army.

Pearl Harbor <http://www.nps.gov/usar/>

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pearl.htm>

1942

Jan 1, 1942 - Declaration of the United Nations signed by 26 Allied nations.

Jan 13, 1942 - Germans begin a U-boat offensive along east coast of USA.

Jan 20, 1942 - SS Leader Heydrich holds the Wannsee Conference to coordinate the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

Jan 21, 1942 - Rommel's counter-offensive from El Agheila begins.

Jan 26, 1942 - First American forces arrive in Great Britain.

In April - Japanese-Americans sent to relocation centers.

In June - Mass murder of Jews by gassing begins at Auschwitz.

June 25, 1942 - Eisenhower arrives in London.

June 30, 1942 - Rommel reaches El Alamein near Cairo, Egypt.

July 5, 1942 - Soviet resistance in the Crimea ends.

July 9, 1942 - Germans begin a drive toward Stalingrad in the USSR.

July 22, 1942 - First deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto to concentration camps; Treblinka extermination camp opened.

Aug 7, 1942 - British General Bernard Montgomery takes command of Eighth Army in North Africa.

Aug 12, 1942 - Stalin and Churchill meet in Moscow.

Aug 17, 1942 - First all-American air attack in Europe.

Aug 23, 1942 - Massive German air raid on Stalingrad.

Sept 2, 1942 - Rommel driven back by Montgomery in the Battle of Alam Halfa.

Sept 13, 1942 - Battle of Stalingrad begins.

Oct 5, 1942 - A German eyewitness observes SS mass murder.

Oct 18, 1942 - Hitler orders the execution of all captured British commandos.

Nov 8, 1942 - Operation Torch begins (U.S. invasion of North Africa).

Dec 2, 1942 - Professor Enrico Fermi sets up an atomic reactor in Chicago.

Dec 13, 1942 - Rommel withdraws from El Agheila.

Dec 17, 1942 - British Foreign Secretary Eden tells the British House of Commons of mass executions of Jews by Nazis; U.S. declares those crimes will be avenged.

1943

Jan 10, 1943 - Soviets begin an offensive against the Germans in Stalingrad.

Jan 14-24 - Casablanca conference between Churchill and Roosevelt. During the conference, Roosevelt announces the war can end only with an unconditional German surrender.

Jan 23, 1943 - Montgomery's Eighth Army takes Tripoli.

Feb 2, 1943 - Germans surrender at Stalingrad in the first big defeat of Hitler's armies.

Feb 18, 1943 - Nazis arrest White Rose resistance leaders in Munich.

March 2, 1943 - Germans begin a withdrawal from Tunisia, Africa.

March 16-20 - Battle of Atlantic climaxes with 27 merchant ships sunk by German U-boats.

March 20-28 - Montgomery's Eighth Army breaks through the Mareth Line in Tunisia.

April 6/7 - Axis forces in Tunisia begin a withdrawal toward Enfidaville as American and British forces link.

April 19, 1943 - Waffen SS attacks Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto.

May 7, 1943 - Allies take Tunisia.

May 13, 1943 - German and Italian troops surrender in North Africa.

May 16, 1943 - Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto ends.

June 11, 1943 - Himmler orders the liquidation of all Jewish ghettos in Poland.

July 9/10 - Allies land in Sicily.

July 19, 1943 - Allies bomb Rome.

July 25/26 - Mussolini arrested and the Italian Fascist government falls; Marshal Pietro Badoglio takes over and negotiates with Allies.

July 27/28 - Allied air raid causes a firestorm in Hamburg.

Sept 8, 1943 - Italian surrender is announced.

Sept 11, 1943 - Germans occupy Rome.

Sept 12, 1943 - Germans rescue Mussolini.

Sept 23, 1943 - Mussolini re-establishes a Fascist government.

Oct 13, 1943 - Italy declares war on Germany

Nov 6, 1943 - Russians recapture Kiev in the Ukraine.

Nov 18, 1943 - Large British air raid on Berlin.

Nov 28, 1943 - Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin meet at Teheran.

Dec 24-26 - Soviets launch offensives on the Ukrainian front.

1944

Jan 6, 1944 - Soviet troops advance into Poland.

March 18, 1944 - British drop 3000 tons of bombs during an air raid on Hamburg, Germany.

May 12, 1944 - Germans surrender in the Crimea.

June 5, 1944 - Allies enter Rome.

June 6, 1944 - D-Day landings.

June 9, 1944 - Soviet offensive against the Finnish front begins.

July 20, 1944 - German assassination attempt on Hitler fails.

July 24, 1944 - Soviet troops liberate first concentration camp at Majdanek.

Aug 4, 1944 - Anne Frank and family arrested by the Gestapo in Amsterdam, Holland.

Aug 19/20 - Soviet offensive in the Balkans begins with an attack on Romania.

Aug 25, 1944 - Liberation of Paris.

Sept 4, 1944 - Finland and the Soviet Union agree to a cease-fire.

Oct 14, 1944 - Allies liberate Athens; Rommel commits suicide.

Oct 21, 1944 - Massive German surrender at Aachen.

Oct 30, 1944 - Last use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Dec 4, 1944 - Civil War in Greece; Athens placed under martial law.

Dec 16-27 - Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes.

Dec 17, 1944 - Waffen SS murder 81 U.S. POWs at Malmedy.

Jan 16, 1945 - U.S. 1st and 3rd Armies link up after a month long separation during the Battle of the Bulge.

Jan 17, 1945 - Soviet troops capture Warsaw.

Jan 26, 1945 - Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz.

Feb 4-11 - Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin meet at Yalta.

In April - Allies discover stolen Nazi art and wealth hidden in salt mines.

April 1, 1945 - U.S. troops encircle Germans in the Ruhr; Allied offensive in North Italy.

April 12, 1945 - Allies liberate Buchenwald and Belsen concentration camps; President Roosevelt dies. Truman becomes President.

April 16, 1945 - Soviet troops begin their final attack on Berlin; Americans enter Nuremberg.

April 18, 1945 - German forces in the Ruhr surrender.

April 21, 1945 - Soviets reach Berlin.

April 28, 1945 - Mussolini is captured and hanged by Italian partisans; Allies take Venice.

April 29, 1945 - U.S. 7th Army liberates Dachau.

April 30, 1945 - Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

May 2, 1945 - German troops in Italy surrender.

May 7, 1945 - Unconditional surrender of all German forces to Allies.

May 8, 1945 - V-E (Victory in Europe) Day.

May 9, 1945 - Hermann Göring is captured by members of the U.S. 7th Army.

May 23, 1945 - SS Reichsführer Himmler commits suicide; German High Command and Provisional Government imprisoned.

June 5, 1945 - Allies divide up Germany and Berlin and take over the government.

June 26, 1945 - United Nations Charter is signed in San Francisco.

July 1, 1945 - U.S., British, and French troops move into Berlin.

Aug 6, 1945 - First atomic bomb dropped, on Hiroshima, Japan.

Aug 8, 1945 - Soviets declares war on Japan and invade Manchuria.

Aug 9, 1945 - Second atomic bomb dropped, on Nagasaki, Japan.

Aug 14, 1945 - Japanese agree to unconditional surrender.

Sept 2, 1945 - Japanese sign the surrender agreement; V-J (Victory over Japan) Day.

Oct 24, 1945 - United Nations is officially born.

Nov 20, 1945 - Nuremberg war crimes trials begin.

1946

Oct 16 - Hermann Göring commits suicide two hours before his scheduled execution.

Your Complete Timeline with links:

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/ww2time.htm>

Other Resources:

<http://www.worldwar-2.net/>

National Archives <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/depression-wwii.html>

Songs, Pictures, Timelines http://www.cortland.edu/history/sst/world_ww2.asp

More Primary Sources <http://www.archives.state.al.us/teacher/ww2/>

Web Site List <http://www.besthistorysites.net/WWii.shtml>

Children of World War 2 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2children/>

Student Guide to World War 2 <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/Britain.html>

Maine Memory Network <http://www.mainememory.net/>

[Decoding Nazi Secrets](#)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/decoding/>

This NOVA site is a companion to a PBS special that offers an intriguing look into espionage and breaking the code of Nazi messages. Not only can students learn the facts behind World War II ciphering, they can also send their own coded messages using Shockwave technology.

[World War II: An American Scrapbook](#)

<http://tqjunior.thinkquest.org/4616/>

This ThinkQuest entry uses interviews from primary sources to present a picture of life during the Second World War from the vantage point of the United States. Lesson plans **Rosie the Riveter's Recipes, It's My Right**, and **HISTories-HERstories** are extensions of the content presented on the site and are designed with middle school students in mind. The site also challenges other students to investigate their families' involvement in the war and submit their stories to the site.

[Atomic Archive](#)

<http://www.atomicarchive.com/index.shtml>

Perhaps the most ominous legacy of the Second World War -- indeed of the entire 20th century -- was the development and deployment of atomic weaponry. This site offers extensive treatment of both the years developing this capability and the use of atomic weapons in warfare. Biographies, documents, treaties, photographs, videos, maps, and much more are brought together for an in-depth study of the ethical and historical implications for this major turning point in human existence.

[Voice Vision: Holocaust Survivor Oral Histories](#)

<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/>

This University of Michigan site uses Adobe Acrobat and RealPlayer technologies to present about a dozen firsthand accounts of life in the concentration camps during the Second World War. The pages are a little slow loading, but the richness of information and the impact of the experiences these people endured make it worth the effort to wait and be immersed in their accounts!