



11th Grade World War II Inquiry

Why Was the US on the Winning Side of World War II?



Liberman, poster of African-American and white men working together, “United We Stand,” United States Government Printing Office, 1943. Materials published by the U.S. Government Printing Office are in the public domain and, as such, not subject to copyright restriction. However, the Library requests users to cite the URL and Northwestern University Library if they wish to reproduce images from its poster database. <https://images.northwestern.edu/multiresimages/inu:dil-612a23e9-155d-4cff-bd2b-1cfaa6259c5a>

Supporting Questions

1. Why was the home front so important to the war front?
2. What did the United States contribute to the Allies’ victory in Europe?
3. How did the United States win the war against Japan?



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Why Was the US on the Winning Side of World War II?

New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea & Practices	11.8. WORLD WAR II (1935–1945): The participation of the United States in World War II was a transformative event for the nation and its role in the world. ✔ Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence ✔ Chronological Reasoning and Causation
Staging the Compelling Question	Watch a brief documentary on the dedication of the National World War II Memorial and discuss how the war affected veterans’ families.

Supporting Question 1
Why was the home front so important to the war front?
Formative Performance Task
Participate in a silent conversation on big paper on the supporting question.
Featured Sources
Source A: “Wartown: War Production in America” Source B: Image bank: Propaganda posters Source C: “By the Numbers: Wartime Production”

Supporting Question 2
What did the United States contribute to the Allies’ victory in Europe?
Formative Performance Task
Create a “found poem” using words and phrases from the featured sources.
Featured Sources
Source A: “Why Hitler’s Grand Plan during the Second World War Collapsed” Source B: “World War II Deaths by Countries” Source C: “D-Day”

Supporting Question 3
How did the United States win the war against Japan?
Formative Performance Task
Participate in a fishbowl conversation on the supporting question.
Featured Sources
Source A: Excerpt from <i>Every War Must End</i> Source B: Images of World War II: The Pacific Islands Source C: Transcript of President Truman announcing the bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT Why was the US on the winning side of World War II? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.
	EXTENSION Investigate the impact of World War II on particular groups in the United States (e.g., women, African Americans, Mexican braceros).
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND Research how World War II affected students’ communities. ASSESS Determine the most impactful ways in which students’ communities contributed to the war effort. ACT Develop a World War II exhibit for display in the school or a local museum that captures the contributions of people from students’ communities.



Overview

Inquiry Description

The goal of this inquiry is to help students understand the various factors that caused the United States to be on the winning side in World War II. The compelling question “Why was the US on the winning side of World War II?” engages students with both the economic and military factors that contributed to a successful war effort. Students start with an examination of the home front before looking at military factors in the wars in Europe and the Pacific. Students should be able to articulate a variety of factors that caused the Allied victory.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (11.8a) As situations overseas deteriorated, President Roosevelt’s leadership helped move the nation from a policy of neutrality to a pro-Allied position and, ultimately, direct involvement in the war.
- (11.8b) United States entry into World War II had a significant impact on American society.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take four to six 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Why was the US on the winning side of World War II?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence while acknowledging competing views.

Staging the Compelling Question

Teachers can stage the compelling question by having students watch a brief documentary on the dedication of the National World War II Memorial. Teachers may choose to lead a student discussion about the roles that their family members played during World War II and how the war affected the families of students in the class or those within their larger community.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“Why was the home front so important to the war front?”—initiates the inquiry by asking students to consider factors beyond the battlefield that contributed to the Allied victory in World War II.



Although citizens on the home front contributed in various ways, this supporting question focuses on the sheer size of the industrial force with which the United States responded to World War II. The featured sources are a clip from Ken Burn’s *The War*, an image bank of propaganda posters, and wartime production data from the United States and abroad as they consider the valuable role that American businesses and workers played in the war effort. The formative performance task has students participate in a silent conversation on big paper about the supporting question, which will allow for in-depth exploration of the question. Teachers may scaffold this task by providing a silent conversation prompt. More information on a silent conversation on big paper can be found in Appendix A and at the following website: <https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/big-paper-building-silent-con>.

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“What did the United States contribute to the Allies’ victory in Europe?”—expands the inquiry to focus on the larger war in Europe. The first two featured sources—a secondary analysis of the war and data on casualties—aim to help students understand that, while the United States played a significant role in the war effort, it was part of a larger Allied effort and that much of the human cost was paid by the Soviets. The third featured source, a documentary on D-Day, prompts students to engage with the United States’ most famous battle and its cost. The formative performance task asks students to create a “found poem” by carefully selecting and organizing words and phrases from the featured sources. Writing found poems provides a structured way for students to review material and synthesize their learning. More information on found poems can be found in Appendix B and at the following website: <https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/found-poems>.

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“How did the United States win the war against Japan?”—shifts the focus to the Pacific. The featured sources are a secondary account that looks at Japan’s lack of a plan for victory after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a series of photographs to help them understand the type of fighting that occurred in the Pacific, and the press release discussing the use of the atomic bomb. The final formative performance task has students participate in a fishbowl conversation on both this supporting question and the larger patterns from the inquiry. More information on a fishbowl can be found in Appendix C and at the following website: <https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/fishbowl>.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the home front and the wars in Europe and the Pacific. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their distinct claims. In this task, students construct evidence-based arguments

responding to the compelling question “Why was the US on the winning side of World War II?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- The United States was on the winning side because it was able to out produce and outlast both Germany and Japan.
- The United States was on the winning side because of mistakes made by both Germany and Japan.
- The United States was on the winning side in Europe because of its allies, but won the war in Asia mostly on its own.

Students could extend these arguments by investigating the impact of World War II on particular groups in the United States (e.g., women, African Americans, Mexican braceros).

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their knowledge of how World War II impacted the United States. They demonstrate that they *understand* by researching how World War II affected their community. They show their ability to *assess* by determining the most impactful ways that their community contributed to the war effort. And they *act* by developing a World War II exhibit for display in the school or a local museum that captures the contributions of people from their community.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source A: Ken Burns, video clip describing war production, “Wartown: War Production in America,” *Ken Burns’s The War*, Public Broadcasting Station, 2007

NOTE: Teachers and their students can view the effects of World War II on the United States economy and workforce in the segment “Wartown: War Production in America” by clicking on this link:

http://www.pbs.org/thewar/detail_5382.htm.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source B: Image bank: Propaganda posters



Image 1: J. Howard Miller, poster featuring Rosie the Riveter, “We Can Do It,” *Westinghouse*, 1942

Public domain. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/its_a_womans_war_too/images_html/we_can_do_it.html



Image 2: Jean Carll, poster featuring servicemen firing rifles, “Give ‘em Both Barrels,” United States Government Printing Office, 1941

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Image 3: Liberman, poster of African-American and white men working together, “United We Stand,” United States Government Printing Office, 1943

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Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source C: Author unknown, charts detailing the aircraft and tank production by different belligerents from WWII as well as U.S. production totals, "By the Numbers: Wartime Production," *National WWII Museum*, no date

Aircraft Production (all types)

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
United States	2,141	6,068	19,433	47,836	85,898	96,318	46,001
Britain	7,940	15,049	20,094	23,672	26,263	26,461	12,070
Soviet Union	10,382	10,565	15,737	25,436	34,900	40,300	20,900
Germany	8,295	10,862	12,401	15,409	24,807	40,593	7,540
Japan	4,467	4,768	5,088	8,861	16,693	28,180	8,263

Tank Production (all types)

United States	60,973
Soviet Union	54,500
Britain	23,202
Germany	19,926
Italy	4,600
Japan	2,464

**United States Military Production Totals**

Battleships	10
Aircraft Carriers	27
Escort Carriers	110
Submarines	211
Cruisers/Destroyers/Escorts	907
Rail Road Locomotives	7,500
Guns and Howitzers	41,000
Landing Craft	82,000
Tanks and Armored Vehicles	100,000
Ships of All Type	124,000
Aircraft	310,000
Steel Production (tons)	434,000
2 1/2-ton Trucks	806,073
Vehicles of All Types	2,400,000
Rifles and Carbines	12,500,000
Yards of Cotton Textiles	36,000,000,000
Rounds of Ammunition	41,000,000,000

<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/wartime-production.html>



Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source A: Richard J. Evans, article describing factors that led to Germany's decline, "Why Hitler's Grand Plan during the Second World War Collapsed," *The Guardian*, 2009

Why Hitler's Grand Plan during the Second World War Collapsed

Two years into the war, in September 1941, German arms seemed to be carrying all before them. Western Europe had been decisively conquered, and there were few signs of any serious resistance to German rule. The failure of the Italians to establish Mussolini's much-vaunted new Roman empire in the Mediterranean had been made good by German intervention. German forces had overrun Greece, and subjugated Yugoslavia. In North Africa, Rommel's brilliant generalship was pushing the British and allied forces eastwards towards Egypt and threatening the Suez canal. Above all, the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 had reaped stunning rewards, with Leningrad (the present-day St Petersburg) besieged by German and Finnish troops, Smolensk and Kiev taken, and millions of Red Army troops killed or captured in a series of vast encircling operations that brought the German armed forces within reach of Moscow. Surrounded by a girdle of allies, from Vichy France and Finland to Romania and Hungary, and with the more or less benevolent neutrality of countries such as Sweden and Switzerland posing no serious threat, the Greater German Reich seemed to be unstoppable in its drive for supremacy in Europe.

Yet in retrospect this proved to be the high point of German success. The fundamental problem facing Hitler was that Germany simply did not have the resources to fight on so many different fronts at the same time. Leading economic managers such as Fritz Todt had already begun to realise this. When Todt was killed in a plane crash on 8 February 1942, his place as armaments minister was taken by Hitler's personal architect, the young Albert Speer. Imbued with an unquestioning faith in Hitler and his will to win, Speer restructured and rationalised the arms production system, building on reforms already begun by Todt. His methods helped increase dramatically the number of planes and tanks manufactured in German plants, and boosted the supply of ammunition to the troops.

US Military Might

But by the end of 1941 the Reich had to contend not only with the arms production of the British empire and the Soviet Union but also with the rapidly growing military might of the world's economic superpower, the United States. Throughout 1941, rightly fearing the consequences of total German domination of Europe for America's position in the world, US President Franklin D Roosevelt had begun supplying Britain with growing quantities of arms and equipment, guaranteed through a system of "lend-lease" and formalised in August by the Atlantic Charter. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in early December, Hitler saw the opportunity to attack American convoys without inhibition, and declared war on the US in the belief that Roosevelt would be too preoccupied with countering the Japanese advance in the Pacific to trouble overmuch with events in Europe.

Yet such was the economic might of the Americans that they could pour increasing resources into the conflict in both theatres of war. Germany produced 15,000 new combat aircraft in 1942, 26,000 in 1943, and 40,000 in 1944. In the US, the figures were 48,000, 86,000 and 114,000 respectively. Added to these were the aircraft produced in the Soviet Union – 37,000 in 1943, for example – and the UK: 35,000 in 1943 and 47,000 in 1944. It was the same story with tanks, where 6,000 made in Germany each year had to face the same number produced annually in Britain and the Dominions, and three times as many in the Soviet Union. In 1943 the combined allied production of machine-guns exceeded 1 million, compared with Germany's 165,000. Nor did Germany's commandeering of the economies of other European countries do much to redress the balance. The Germans' ruthless requisitioning of fuel, industrial facilities and labour from France and other countries reduced the economies of the subjugated parts of Europe to such a state that they were unable – and, with their workers becoming ever more refractory, unwilling – to contribute significantly to German war production.



Above all, the Reich was short of fuel. Romania and Hungary supplied a large proportion of Germany's needs. But this was not enough to satisfy the appetite of the Wehrmacht's gas-guzzling tanks and fighter planes. Rommel's eastward push across northern Africa was designed not just to cut off Britain's supply route through the Suez canal but above all to break through to the Middle East and gain control over the region's vast reserves of oil. In mid-1942 he captured the key seaport of Tobruk. But when he resumed his advance, he was met with massive defensive positions prepared by the meticulous British general Bernard Montgomery at El Alamein. Over 12 days he failed to break through the British lines and was forced into a headlong retreat across the desert. To complete the rout, the allies landed an expeditionary force further west, in Morocco and Algeria. A quarter of a million German and Italian troops surrendered in May 1943. Rommel had already returned to Germany on sick leave. "The war in north Africa," he concluded bitterly, "was decided by the weight of Anglo-American material." If he had been provided with "more motorised formations," and a more secure supply line, he believed, he could still have driven through to the oilfields of the Middle East. But it was not to be.

By the time of Montgomery's victory, it had become clear that the Germans' attempt to compensate for their lower levels of arms production by stopping American supplies and munitions from reaching Britain across the Atlantic had also failed. In the course of 1942, a determined construction campaign increased the number of U-boats active in the Atlantic and the Arctic from just over 20 to more than 100; in November 1942 alone they sank 860,000 tonnes of allied shipping, aided by the Germans' ability to decipher British radio traffic while keeping their own secret.

Battle of the Atlantic

But from December 1942, the British could decode German ciphers once more and steer their convoys away from the waiting wolf-packs of U-boats. Small aircraft carriers began to accompany allied convoys, using spotter planes to locate the German submarines, which had to spend most of their time on the surface in order to move with any reasonable speed and locate the enemy's ships. By May 1943 the allies were building more ship tonnage than the Germans were sinking, while one U-boat was being sunk by allied warships and planes on average every day. On 24 May 1943 the commander of the U-boat fleet, Admiral Karl Dönitz, conceded defeat and moved his submarines out of the north Atlantic. The battle of the Atlantic was over.

The most dramatic and most significant reversal of German fortunes came, however, on the eastern front. The sheer scale of the conflict between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army dwarfed anything seen anywhere else during the second world war. From 22 June 1941, the day of the German invasion, there was never a point at which less than two-thirds of the German armed forces were engaged on the eastern front. Deaths on the eastern front numbered more than in all the other theatres of war put together, including the Pacific. Hitler had expected the Soviet Union, which he regarded as an unstable state, ruled by a clique of "Jewish Bolsheviks" (a bizarre idea, given the fact that Stalin himself was an antisemite), exploiting a vast mass of racially inferior and disorganised peasants, to crumble as soon as it was attacked.

But it did not. On the contrary, Stalin's patriotic appeals to his people helped rally them to fight in the "great patriotic war," spurred on by horror at the murderous brutality of the German occupation. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were deliberately left to die of starvation and disease in makeshift camps. Civilians were drafted into forced labour, villages were burned to the ground, towns reduced to rubble. More than one million people died in the siege of Leningrad; but it did not fall. Soviet reserves of manpower and resources were seemingly inexhaustible. In a vast effort, major arms and munitions factories had been dismantled and transported to safety east of the Urals. Here they began to pour out increasing quantities of military hardware, including the terrifying "Stalin organ," the Katyusha rocket-launcher. In the longer run, the Germans were unable to match any of this; even if some of their hardware, notably the Tiger and Panther tanks, was better than anything the Russians could produce, they simply could not get them off the production lines in sufficient quantities to make a decisive difference.

War in the Snow

Already in December 1941, Japan's entry into the war, and its consequent preoccupation with campaigns in the Pacific, allowed Stalin to move large quantities of men and equipment to the west, where they brought the German advance to a halt before Moscow. Unprepared for a winter war, poorly clad, and exhausted from months of rapid advance and bitter fighting, the German forces had to abandon the idea of taking the Russian capital. A whole string of generals succumbed to heart attacks or nervous exhaustion, and were replaced; Hitler himself took over as commander-in-chief of the army.

Hitler had already weakened the thrust towards Moscow by diverting forces to take the grainfields of the Ukraine and push on to the Crimea. For much of 1942, this tactic seemed to be succeeding. German forces took the Crimea and advanced towards the oilfields of the Caucasus. Here again, acquiring new supplies of fuel to replenish Germany's dwindling stocks was the imperative. But Soviet generals had begun to learn how to co-ordinate tanks, infantry and air power and to avoid encirclement by tactical withdrawals. German losses mounted. The German forces were already dangerously short of reserves and supplies when they reached the city of Stalingrad on the river Volga, in August 1942.

Three months later, they had still not taken the city. Stalingrad became the object of a titanic struggle between the Germans and the Soviets, less because of its strategic importance than because of its name. When the Germans moved their best troops into the city, leaving the rear to be guarded by weaker Romanian and Italian forces, the Soviet generals saw their chance, broke through the rearguard and surrounded the besieging forces. Short of fuel and ammunition, the Germans under General Paulus were unable to break out. As one airfield after another was captured by the Red Army, supplies ran out and the German troops began to starve to death. On 31 January 1943, refusing the invitation to commit suicide that came with Hitler's gift of a field marshal's baton, Paulus surrendered. Some 235,000 German and allied troops were captured; more than 200,000 had been killed. It was the turning point of the war.

Last Great Counter-Attack

From this moment on, the German armies were more or less continuously in retreat on the eastern front. The Red Army around Stalingrad was threatening to cut off the German forces in the Caucasus, so they were forced to withdraw, abandoning their attempt to secure the region's oil reserves. In early July 1943 came the last great German counter-attack, at Kursk. This was the greatest land battle in history, involving more than four million troops, 13,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 12,000 combat aircraft. Warned of the attack in advance, the Red Army had prepared defences in depth, which the Germans only managed partially to penetrate. A tragi-comic incident happened when an advancing Soviet tank force fell into its own side's defensive ditches; nearly 200 tanks were wrecked, or destroyed by the incredulous Waffen-SS forces waiting for them on the other side. The local party commissar, Nikita Khrushchev, covered up this disaster by persuading Stalin that they had been destroyed in a huge battle that had eliminated more than 400 German tanks and won a heroic victory. The legend of "the greatest tank battle in history" was born.

In fact it was nothing of the kind. So enormous were the Russian reserves that the loss of the tanks made little difference in the end, as fresh troops and armour were moved in to rescue the situation. More than one million soldiers, 3,200 tanks and self-propelled guns, and nearly 4,000 combat aircraft entered the fray on the Soviet side and began a series of successful counter-offensives. The Germans were forced to retreat. The missing German tanks had not been destroyed; they had been pulled out by Hitler to deal with a rapidly deteriorating situation in Italy. After the war, German generals claimed bitterly they could have won at Kursk had Hitler not stopped the action. In reality, however, the Soviet superiority in men and resources was overwhelming.

And the tanks really were needed in Italy. Following their victory in north Africa, the allies had landed in Sicily on 10 July 1943 to be greeted in Palermo by Italian citizens waving white flags. A fortnight later, reflecting the evaporation of Italy's will to fight on, the Fascist Grand Coalition deposed Mussolini and began to sue for peace. On 3 September an armistice was signed, and allied forces landed on the Italian mainland. German troops had already

invaded from the north, taking over the entire peninsula. Following the armistice, they seized 650,000 Italian soldiers and shipped them off to Germany as forced labourers to join millions of others drafted in from Poland and the Soviet Union to replace German workers sent to the front to replenish the Wehrmacht's rapidly diminishing manpower. In a daring commando raid on the Alpine hotel where Mussolini was being held prisoner, SS paratroopers liberated the former dictator, who was put in charge of a puppet regime based on the town of Salò. But as the allied armies made their way slowly northwards towards Rome, nothing could disguise the fact that Germany's principal ally had now been defeated.

German Morale

These events had a devastating effect on German morale at home. In particular the catastrophe of Stalingrad began to convince many Germans that the war could not be won. Worse was to come. Meeting at Casablanca in January 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt decided on a sustained campaign of bombing German cities. A series of massive raids on the industrial area of the Ruhr followed, backed up by the destruction of key dams by the famous "bouncing bombs" on 16 May 1943. Arms production was severely affected. And in late July and early August 1943, the centre of Hamburg was almost completely destroyed in a firestorm created by intensive incendiary bombing that killed up to 40,000 people, injured a further 125,000, many of them seriously, and made 900,000 homeless. Refugees from the devastated city spread a sense of shock and foreboding all across Germany. In Hamburg itself, anger at the Nazis' failure to defend the city led to crowds tearing party badges off officials' coats amid cries of "murderer!" The chief of staff of the German airforce committed suicide. German air defences were still able to inflict serious losses on allied bombing expeditions, but they were not strong enough to prevent the devastation continuing.

By the end of 1943, German forces were retreating all along the line in the east and in Italy. The spectacle of German defeat and the brutal requisitioning of millions of forced labourers from occupied countries fuelled the rise of resistance movements right across Europe. The Reich had lost command of the skies and the seas. Ever more devastating bombing raids on a growing range of towns and cities were making people's lives unbearable. Ordinary Germans knew by the end of 1943 that the war was lost. Terror began to replace commitment as a means of keeping people fighting on. More than 20,000 German troops were executed by courts-martial during the war for varieties of defeatism. At home, people faced a similar escalation of terror from the Nazi party and the SS. Retreating into their private and family worlds, they began to focus increasingly on simply staying alive and waiting for the end.

*Richard J Evans is Regius professor of modern history at Cambridge University. His trilogy on Nazi Germany, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, *The Third Reich in Power*, and *The Third Reich at War*, is published in paperback by Penguin*

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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source B: Author unknown, charts illustrating the number of lives lost by country, “WWII Deaths by Country,” *National WWII Museum*, no date

Country	Military Deaths	Total Civilian and Military Deaths
Albania	30,000	30,200
Australia	39,800	40,500
Austria	261,000	384,700
Belgium	12,100	86,100
Brazil	1,000	2,000
Bulgaria	22,000	25,000
Canada	45,400	45,400
China	3-4,000,000	20,000,000
Czechoslovakia	25,000	345,000
Denmark	2,100	3,200
Dutch East Indies	--	3-4,000,000
Estonia	--	51,000
Ethiopia	5,000	100,000
Finland	95,000	97,000
France	217,600	567,600



French Indochina	--	1-1,500,000
Germany	5,533,000	6,600,000-8,800,000
Greece	20,000-35,000	300,000-800,000
Hungary	300,000	580,000
India	87,000	1,500,000-2,500,000
Italy	301,400	457,000
Japan	2,120,000	2,600,000-3,100,000
Korea	--	378,000-473,000
Latvia	--	227,000
Lithuania	--	353,000
Luxembourg	--	2,000
Malaya	--	100,000
Netherlands	17,000	301,000
New Zealand	11,900	11,900
Norway	3,000	9,500
Papua New Guinea	--	15,000
Philippines	57,000	500,000-1,000,000
Poland	240,000	5,600,000
Rumania	300,000	833,000



Singapore	--	50,000
South Africa	11,900	11,900
Soviet Union	8,800,000-10,700,000	24,000,000
United Kingdom	383,600	450,700
United States	416,800	418,500
Yugoslavia	446,000	1,000,000

<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/world-wide-deaths.html>.



Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source C: Ken Burns, video clip describing the D-Day offensive, “D-Day,” *Ken Burn’s The War*, Public Broadcasting Station, 2007

NOTE: Teachers and their students can view footage of what many consider the most important World War II battle in the segment “D-Day” by clicking on this link: http://www.pbs.org/thewar/detail_5360.htm.



Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source A: Fred Charles Iklé, description of the lack of a Japanese victory plan after the Pearl Harbor attack, *Every War Must End* (excerpts), 1971 (revised 2005)

WAR PLANS WITHOUT AN ENDING

Three months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Emperor of Japan asked the Army Chief of Staff, Sugiyama, how long it would take the army to finish the job in the event of war with the United States. Sugiyama answered that operation in the South Pacific would be concluded in three months. The Emperor objected that when the war with China broke out Sugiyama had told him it would end in a month, yet after four years the fighting was still going on. Sugiyama's excuse was that the interior of China was huge; the Emperor replied in anger: "if the interior of China is huge, isn't the Pacific Ocean even bigger? How can you be sure the war will end in three months?"

By offering the excuse about the vastness of China, General Sugiyama could not have meant that the Japanese military were unaware of the size of China when they [went to] war with that country. The Japanese military leaders also knew the size of the Pacific before they attacked Pearl Harbor and they were, of course, fully aware of the industrial might of the United States. Since Japan became involved in a war with the United States neither gradually nor inadvertently, but by a considered clear-cut decision, one would expect the Japanese military to have had some ideas about how they reach a successful conclusion in the giant undertaking.

On September 6, 1941, after the above exchange between the Emperor and the Army Chief of Staff, the proposal for attacking the United States was discussed further in a conference among top military and civilian leaders. The Navy Chief of Staff [Admiral Osami Nagano] recognized that Japan would have to be prepared for a long war. "Even if our Empire should win a decisive naval victory," he said, "we will not thereby be able to bring the war to a conclusion. We can anticipate that America will attempt to prolong war, utilizing her easily defendable geographical position, her superior industrial power, and her abundant resources. Our Empire does not have the means to take the offensive, overcome the enemy, and make them give up their will to fight." The Navy Chief of Staff added that Japan would establish the basis for conducting a prolonged war by seizing strategic areas and resources at the outset. But "what happens thereafter," he went on, "will depend to a great extent on over all national power—including various elements, tangible and in-tangible—and on development in the world situation"....What an incredibly murky prospect for such a deep plunge.

It is not that the Japanese military had forgotten that the war they proposed must have an ending. The question was there, merely the answer was missing. A memorandum they had prepared for the conference of September 6 contained a long list of questions and proposed answers regarding the outlook for the German-Soviet war, the defense of the homeland and tactics for the ongoing negotiations in Washington, the strength of the United States army, and so forth. "What is the outlook in a war with Great Britain and the United States; particularly, how shall we end the war? The Japanese military answered their own question as follows: "A war with Great Britain and the United States will be long....It is very difficult to predict the termination of a war, and it would be almost impossible to expect the surrender of the United States. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the war may end because of a great change in American public opinion...At any rate, we should be able to establish an invincible position...Meanwhile, we may hope that we will be able to influence the trend of affairs and bring the war to an end."

Every War Must End. (2nd edition), by Ikle, F.C. (2005). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.



Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source B: Images detailing the Pacific theater of WWII, “World War II: The Pacific Islands,” *The Atlantic*, 2011

The photographic images are available online at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/09/world-war-ii-the-pacific-islands/100155/>



Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source C: Harry S. Truman, transcript of President Truman announcing the bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington, D.C.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam" which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare.

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present form these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

Before 1939, it was the accepted belief of scientists that it was theoretically possible to release atomic energy. But no one knew any practical method of doing it. By 1942, however, we knew that the Germans were working feverishly to find a way to add atomic energy to the other engines of war with which they hoped to enslave the world. But they failed. We may be grateful to Providence that the Germans got the V-1's and V-2's late and in limited quantities and even more grateful that they did not get the atomic bomb at all.

The battle of the laboratories held fateful risks for us as well as the battles of the air, land, and sea, and we have now won the battle of the laboratories as we have won the other battles.

Beginning in 1940, before Pearl Harbor, scientific knowledge useful in was pooled between the United States and Great Britain, and many priceless helps to our victories have come from that arrangement. Under that general policy the research on the atomic bomb was begun. With American and British scientists working together we entered the race of discovery against the Germans.

The United States had available the large number of scientists of distinction in the many needed areas of knowledge. It had the tremendous industrial and financial resources necessary for the project and they could be devoted to it without undue impairment of other vital war work. In the United States the laboratory work and the production plants, on which a substantial start had already been made, would be out of reach of enemy bombing, while at that time Britain was exposed to constant air attack and was still threatened with the possibility of invasion. For these reasons Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt agreed that it was wise to carry on the project here. We now have two great plants and many lesser works devoted to the production of atomic power. Employment during peak construction numbered 125,000 and over 65,000 individuals are even now engaged in operating the plants. Many have worked there for two and a half years. Few know what they have been producing. They see great quantities of material going in and they see nothing coming out of these plants, for the physical size of the explosive charge is exceedingly small. We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history -- and won.

But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy, nor its cost, but the achievement of scientific brains in putting together infinitely complex pieces of knowledge held by many men in different fields of science into a workable plan. And hardly less marvelous has been the capacity of industry to design and of labor to operate, the machines and methods to do things never done before so that the brainchild of many minds came forth in physical shape and performed as it was supposed to do. Both science and industry worked under the direction of the United States Army, which achieved a unique success in managing so diverse a problem in the advancement of knowledge in an amazingly short time. It is doubtful if such another combination could be got together in the world. What has been done is the greatest achievement of organized science in history. It was done under pressure and without failure.

We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.

It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth. Behind this air attack will follow sea and land forces in such number that and power as they have not yet seen and with the fighting skill of which they are already well aware.

The Secretary of War, who has kept in personal touch with all phases of the project, will immediately make public a statement giving further details.

His statement will give facts concerning the sites at Oak Ridge near Knoxville, Tennessee, and at Richland, near Pasco, Washington, and an installation near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Although the workers at the sites have been making materials to be used producing the greatest destructive force in history they have not themselves been in danger beyond that of many other occupations, for the utmost care has been taken of their safety.

The fact that we can release atomic energy ushers in a new era in man's understanding of nature's forces. Atomic energy may in the future supplement the power that now comes from coal, oil, and falling water, but at present it cannot be produced on a bases to compete with them commercially. Before that comes there must be a long period of intensive research. It has never been the habit of the scientists of this country or the policy of this government to withhold from the world scientific knowledge. Normally, therefore, everything about the work with atomic energy would be made public.

But under the present circumstances it is not intended to divulge the technical processes of production or all the military applications. Pending further examination of possible methods of protecting us and the rest of the world from the danger of sudden destruction.

I shall recommend that the Congress of the United States consider promptly the establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power within the United States. I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world peace.

Source: Harry S. Truman Library, "Army press notes," box 4, Papers of Eben A. Ayers.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-hiroshima/>

Appendix A:

Silent Conversation Guidelines

Rationale

This discussion strategy uses writing and silence as tools to help students explore a topic in-depth. Having a written conversation with peers slows down students' thinking process and gives them an opportunity to focus on the views of others. This strategy also creates a visual record of students' thoughts and questions that can be referred to later in a course. Using the Big Paper strategy can help engage shy students who are not as likely to participate in a verbal discussion. After using this strategy several times, students' comfort, confidence, and skill with this method increase.

Procedure

Step one: Preparation

First, you will need to select the "stimulus" – the material that students will respond to. As the stimulus for a Big Paper activity, teachers have used questions, quotations, historical documents, excerpts from novels, poetry, or images. Groups can be given the same stimulus for discussion, but more often they are given different texts related to the same theme. This activity works best when students are working in pairs or triads. Make sure that all students have a pen or marker. Some teachers have students use different colored markers to make it easier to see the back-and-forth flow of a conversation. Each group also needs a "big paper" (typically a sheet of poster paper) that can fit a written conversation and added comments. In the middle of the page, tape or write the "stimulus" (image, quotation, excerpt, etc.) that will be used to spark the students' discussion.

Step two: The Importance of Silence

Inform the class that this activity will be completed in silence. All communication is done in writing. Students should be told that they will have time to speak in pairs and in the large groups later. Go over all of the instructions at the beginning so that they do not ask questions during the activity. Also, before the activity starts, the teacher should ask students if they have questions, to minimize the chance that students will interrupt the silence once it has begun. You can also remind students of their task as they begin each new step.

Step three: Comment on Your Big Paper

Each group receives a Big Paper and each student a marker or pen. The groups read the text (or look at the image) in silence. After students have read, they are to comment on the text, and ask questions of each other in writing on the Big Paper. The written conversation must start on the text but can stray to wherever the students take it. If someone in the group writes a question, another member of the group should address the question by writing on the Big Paper. Students can draw lines connecting a comment to a particular question. Make sure students know that more than one of them can write on the Big Paper at the same time. The teacher can determine the length of this step, but it should be at least 15 minutes.

Step four: Comment on Other Big Papers

Still working in silence, the students leave their partner and walk around reading the other Big Papers. Students bring their marker or pen with them and can write comments or further questions for thought

on other Big Papers. Again, the teacher can determine the length of time for this step based on the number of Big Papers and his/her knowledge of the students.

Step five: Return to Your Own Big Paper

Silence is broken. The pairs rejoin back at their own Big Paper. They should look at any comments written by others. Now they can have a free, verbal conversation about the text, their own comments, what they read on other papers, and comments their fellow students wrote back to them. At this point, you might ask students to take out their journals and identify a question or comment that stands out to them at this moment.

Step six: Class Discussion

Finally, debrief the process with the large group. The conversation can begin with a simple prompt such as, “What did you learn from doing this activity?” This is the time to delve deeper into the content and use ideas on the Big Papers to bring out the students' thoughts. The discussion can also touch upon the importance and difficulty of staying silent and the level of comfort with this activity.

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Appendix B:

Found Poem Guidelines

Rationale

Found poems are created through the careful selection and organization of words and phrases from existing text. Writing found poems provides a structured way for students to review material and synthesize their learning.

Procedure

Step one: Create a List of Words, Phrases, and Quotations.

Ask students to review any text related to the unit of study, including work on the walls of the classroom, journal entries, primary source documents, and the text itself. As students look over these texts, have them record words, phrases, or quotations that are particularly interesting or meaningful. We recommend that they identify between 15-20 different words or phrases so that they have plenty of ideas from which to choose when composing their poem.

Step two: Determine a Theme and Message.

Now students identify a theme and message that represents some or all of the language they have selected. A theme is a broad concept such as *obedience* or *loyalty*. A message is a specific idea they would like to express about this theme. For example, “decision-making” is a theme. A message about decision-making expressed by humanitarian Carl Wilkens is, “Every situation is an opportunity and every opportunity demands a decision.” Often it is helpful for students to do this step with a partner. Students can trade lists and describe the themes or main ideas they see in their partner’s list.

Step three: Select Additional Language.

Found poems only use words that have been collected from other sources. So, once students have selected a theme and a message, they may need to review their materials again to collect additional language.

Step four: Compose your Poem.

Students are now ready to arrange the language they have selected to create their poems. One approach to this task is to have students write all of the words and phrases on slips of paper, so that they can move the slips around until they are satisfied with their poem. Let students know that they cannot add your own words when creating a found poem (not even articles or prepositions), but they can repeat words or phrases as often as they like. Also, when composing found poems, students do not need to use all of the words or phrases they have previously selected.

Step five: Share

Students can read their poems aloud to the class. Alternatively students can read the poems silently. First, have students pass their poems to the left once. Have students read the poem, write a comment (students should sign their name to their comment), and then pass the poem again to the left for another comment. Depending on how much time you have, you might allow for three or four passes, or you might have time for students to comment on all of the poems created by their classmates.

***Step six: Discuss***

This activity can end with a final discussion about what the prompts reveal about the material students have just studied. Prompts you might use to structure this discussion include: What strikes you about these poems? What do they have in common? How are they different? What surprised you when reading them?

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Appendix C

Fishbowl Guidelines

Rationale

The “fishbowl” is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the “fishbowl” circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when you want to make sure all students participate in the discussion, when you want to help students reflect on what a “good discussion” looks like, and when you need a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics. Fishbowls make excellent pre-writing activities, often unearthing questions or ideas that students can explore more deeply in an independent assignment.

Procedure

Step one: Selecting a topic for the fishbowl

Almost any topic is suitable for a fishbowl discussion. The most effective prompts (question or text) do not have one right answer, but rather allow for multiple perspectives and opinions. The fishbowl is an excellent strategy to use when discussing dilemmas, for example.

Step two: Setting up the room

A fishbowl requires a circle of chairs (“the fishbowl”) and enough room around the circle for the remaining students to observe what is happening in the “fishbowl.” Sometimes teachers place enough chairs for half of the students in the class to sit in the fishbowl, while other times teachers limit the chairs in the fishbowl. Typically six to twelve chairs allows for a range of perspectives while still allowing each student an opportunity to speak. The observing students often stand around the fishbowl.

Step three: Preparation

Like many structured conversations, fishbowl discussions are most effective when students have had a few minutes to prepare ideas and questions in advance.

Step four: Discussing norms and rules of the discussion

There are many ways to structure a fishbowl discussion. Sometimes teachers have half the class sit in the fishbowl for 10-15 minutes and then say “switch,” at which point the listeners enter the fishbowl and the speakers become the audience. Another common fishbowl format is the “tap” system, where students on the outside of the fishbowl gently tap a student on the inside, indicating that they should switch roles. See the variations section for more ideas about how to structure this activity.

Regardless of the particular rules you establish, you want to make sure these are explained to students beforehand. You also want to provide instructions for the students in the audience. What should they be listening for? Should they be taking notes? Before beginning the fishbowl, you may wish to review guidelines for having a respectful conversation. Sometimes teachers ask audience members to pay attention to how these norms are followed by recording specific aspects of the discussion process such as the number of interruptions, respectful or disrespectful language used, or speaking times (Who is speaking the most? The least?)

***Step five: Debriefing the fishbowl discussion***

After the discussion, you can ask students to reflect on how they think the discussion went and what they learned from it. Students can also evaluate their participation as listeners and as participants. They could also provide suggestions for how to improve the quality of discussion in the future. These reflections can be in writing, or can be structured as a small or large group conversation.

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