

Topic/Objective:  Military History of World War II (1939-1945)	Name:
	Class/Period:
	Date:

Essential Question:

1. Explain HOW the Allied powers defeated Nazi Germany. What were the significant moments that led to the Nazi's defeat?
2. Why did President Truman drop the atomic bomb on Japan? Was the use of such a weapon justified?

Process your notes  
(create questions or  
visuals)

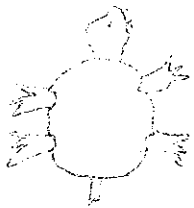
Notes:

- ★ 1939: Hitler's invasion of Poland officially begins World War II by prompting a declaration of war from France and Great Britain
  - Nazi forces effectively use a new tactic: Blitzkrieg (or "lightning war")
- ★ Spring 1940: Hitler launches an invasion of France.
- ★ Fall 1940: the Battle of Britain begins as Hitler's air force (the Luftwaffe) begins attacking Royal Air Force bases hoping to give Germany control of the skies as part of an ultimate plan to invade England.
  - Hitler makes the mistake of bombing London in what's known as "The Blitz", uniting Britons and giving the Royal Air Force time to recover.
  - Due to heavy losses to the Luftwaffe, Hitler ultimately abandons his plan to invade England and turns his attention to the east.
- ★ June 1941: Hitler launches a surprise attack on <sup>(the Soviet Union)</sup> Russia, despite having signed a non-aggression pact earlier in the war with Stalin.
  - Why invade Russia?
    - ★ Hitler HATED Communism, viewing it as a Jewish conspiracy and a threat to the Nazi regime.
    - ★ Acquire Russia's rich natural resources (ex: Oil)
    - ★ Eliminate the 3 million Jews who lived in Russia.
    - ★ Create Lebensraum (or "living space") for the Aryan race
  - Hitler's forces are unable to reach Moscow before winter, trapping the army deep in enemy territory.
  - Interesting fact: 90% of German soldiers killed in World War II are killed in the war with the Soviet Union.

- ★ December 7, 1941: the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into the war against the Axis powers
  - America will fight a two-front war: in the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters
  - In January 1942, the Axis Powers are clearly winning the war
    - ★ Great Britain is severely weakened
    - ★ The Soviet Union is on the brink of defeat
    - ★ Japan controls much of Asia
    - ★ America lacks the military and industrial capacity to make an immediate impact
  
- ★ The Big Three: FDR, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin coordinate a plan to win the war
  - Conclusions: Nazi's must be defeated first due to the threat Germany poses to the Soviet Union and the possibility of a German atomic bomb
  - Stalin begs FDR and Churchill to launch an invasion of western Europe to force Hitler to fight a two-front war
    - ★ Problem: We do not have the resources necessary to launch such an invasion
    - ★ Solution: target Germany in a limited way while planning for an invasion of Western Europe.
      - ★ Strategic Bombing Campaign
        - ★ launch daytime and night time air raids against German factories and cities
      - ★ Invasion of North Africa and Italy
        - ★ force Hitler to fight to defend his ally, Benito Mussolini
  
  - Turning point of the war: Battle of Stalingrad (July 1942 - February 1943)
    - ★ Despite losing nearly one million people, the Soviet Union holds the city of Stalingrad and captures one of four German armies on the Eastern front.
    - ★ Due to heavy losses, German forces now retreat and the Soviet Union goes on the offensive
  
  - June 6, 1944: D-Day
    - ★ Allies launch an invasion of Western Europe against Hitler's Atlantic Wall
    - ★ Two-Pronged attack: paratroopers drop in the night before to capture German guns, ground forces land in force in the morning on the beaches of Normandy
    - ★ With control of Normandy, the liberation of Nazi occupied France and Holland began.
      - ★ Hitler is now fighting a two-front war
  
  - December, 24, 1944: Battle of the Bulge
    - ★ As the Allies pushed west towards the German border, Hitler took one last gamble to avoid an invasion of Germany.
    - ★ Result: Battle of the Bulge (Hitler's forces launch a concentrated attack and created a "bulge" in the Allied lines)

- April 30, 1945: Hitler commits suicide
  - ★ With Soviet Union approaching from the east and American and British forces from the west, Hitler kills himself in a bunker in Berlin
  - ★ The Red Army takes Berlin days later.
  - ★ Germany officially surrenders on May 8

- ★ The Nuremberg Trials
  - Allies brought remaining Nazi leadership to justice for their crimes against humanity (ex: exploitation of slave labor, the Holocaust)
  - An international criminal court was created in Nuremberg, Germany
  - Significance: atrocities during wartime will be prosecuted and people will be held accountable
- ★ The United Nations
  - U.S. leads the charge in creating the U.N., an international security organization modeled after the League of Nations
  - US is one of five major powers on the security council
  - Compare how America's actions after World War I with what we did after World War II. What's different?
    - ★ New policy: internationalism!  
(Turtle stays out of the shell)
- ★ Relationship with the Soviet Union
  - With Germany defeated, the alliance between the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union begins to fray due to tension and suspicion between the communist world and the free world.
  - Within 2 years, a new war will begin: the Cold War



What did you learn about the war against Japan from this video?

### Anatomy of the Pacific War (from HBO's *The Pacific*)

- Japanese fighting technique: kamikaze pilots
- "Asian before dishonor", Emperor = God!!
- Japanese spirit: all Japanese are one unit, fight to death to defend family & emperor - no surrender
- No mercy, no compassion = leads US to respond in same way

### Timeline of Events in the War in the Pacific

- ★ 1931-1937: Japanese imperialism throughout Asia leads to shocking brutality towards civilian populations
- ★ 1939: Albert Einstein writes letter to FDR about new technology: the splitting of an atom and its potential as a weapon
- ★ 1941: President FDR launches the Manhattan Project (top-secret, \$2 billion project to develop atomic bomb)
- ★ Dec. 1941: Japanese launch surprise attack on Pearl Harbor WITHOUT declaring war
- ★ 1942-1943: U.S. and Great Britain begin massive bombing campaigns of German cities and industrial sites

- ★ 1943: At Casablanca Conference, the Allies demand the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers (losing powers have no rights or protections)
- ★ 1942-1944: Island Hopping campaign: American forces destroy Japanese forces occupying islands throughout the Pacific
  - ★ Banzai charges and mass suicides: Japanese refuse to surrender for fear of violating bushido code
  - ★ Bataan Death March (Philippines); torture and execution and forced labor of American POWs
- ★ Feb-Mar 1945: Battle of Iwo Jima
  - ★ Japanese implement Kamikaze attacks and "fight to the last man" tactics. (19,000 Japanese casualties; 26,000 American)
- ★ February 1945: U.S. firebombs Dresden, Germany (a non-military target) and kills 100,000 civilians
- ★ March 1945: Firebombing raids against Japanese cities begin

What did you learn about the firebombing of Japan from Robert McNamara's account?

Video:

- killed Japanese civilians - men, women & children - by the thousands - goal was to weaken Japanese defense - lower altitude (B-29s) to increase destruction of Tokyo

- ★ April 1945: FDR dies in office; VP Truman becomes President and finds out about Manhattan Project
- ★ April-June 1945: Battle of Okinawa
  - ★ Japanese continue to "fight to the last man" (over 100,000 Japanese casualties; 50,000 American)
- ★ May 1945: Germany surrenders, War in Europe is over
- ★ May 1945: US plans ground invasion of Japan - set for Nov. 1
  - ★ American casualty estimates range from 50,000 to 500,000
- ★ June 1945: Soviet Union fulfills earlier promise to enter the war against Japan
  - ★ Truman informs Stalin of the atomic bomb at Potsdam Conference
- ★ July 1945: Successful test of one of three atomic bombs in New Mexico
- ★ Late July 1945: US demands unconditional surrender of Japanese armed forces. Warns Japan that they face "prompt and utter destruction" if they continue fighting
- ★ August 6, 1945: A single B-29 Bomber (Enola Gay) drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima



