

U.S. History: 1865 to the Present

Study Guide

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2008 (NEW)
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STANDARD USII.7A

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major causes and effects of American involvement in World War II by

a) identifying the causes and events that led to American involvement in the war, including the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Political and economic conditions in Europe following World War I led to the rise of fascism and to World War II.

The rise of fascism threatened peace in Europe and Asia.

As conflict grew in Europe and Asia, American foreign policy evolved from neutrality to direct involvement.

How did post-World War I Europe set the stage for World War II?

Causes of World War II

- Political instability and economic devastation in Europe resulting from World War I:
 - Worldwide depression
 - High war debt owed by Germany
 - High inflation
 - Massive unemployment

How did the rise of fascism affect world events following World War I?

- Rise of Fascism:
 - **Fascism** is political philosophy in which total power is given to a dictator and individual freedoms are denied and nationalism and, often, racism are emphasized.
 - **Fascist dictators** included Adolf **Hitler** (Germany), Benito **Mussolini** (Italy), and Hideki **Tojo** (Japan).
 - These dictators led the countries that became known as the **Axis Powers**.



The Allies

- Democratic nations (the United States, Great Britain, Canada) were known as the Allies. The Soviet Union joined the Allies after being invaded by Germany.
- **Allied leaders** included Franklin D. **Roosevelt** and, later, Harry S. **Truman** (United States), Winston



Churchill (Great Britain), and Joseph Stalin (Soviet Union).

How did American policy toward events in Europe and Asia change over time?

Gradual change in American policy from neutrality to direct involvement

- **Isolationism** (Great Depression, legacy of World War I)
- **Economic aid** to Allies
- Direct involvement in the war

War in the Pacific

- Rising tension developed between the United States



and Japan because of Japanese aggression in East Asia.

- On **December 7, 1941**, Japan attacked the United States at **Pearl Harbor** without warning.
- The United States declared war on Japan.
- Germany declared war on the United States.

STANDARD USII.7B

b) Major events and turning points of the war in Europe and the Pacific.

Despite initial Axis success in both Europe and the Pacific, the Allies persevered and ultimately defeated Germany and Japan.

The Holocaust is an example of prejudice and discrimination taken to the extreme.

What were the major events and turning points of World War II?

Major events and turning points of World War II

- **Germany invaded Poland**, setting off war in Europe. The Soviet Union also invaded Poland and the Baltic nations.
- **Germany invaded France** and captured Paris.
- **Germany bombed London**, and the **Battle of Britain** began.
- The United States gave Britain **war supplies and old naval warships** in return for military bases in Bermuda and the Caribbean (Lend Lease).
- Japan bombed **Pearl Harbor**.
- After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, **Germany declared war** on the United States.
- The United States **declared war on Japan** and Germany.
- The United States was **victorious** over Japan in the **Battle of Midway**. This victory was the **turning point** of the war in the Pacific.
- Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union defeated Germany at **Stalingrad**, marking the **turning point** of the war in Eastern Europe.
- American and other Allied troops landed in Normandy, France, on **D-Day** to begin the liberation of Western Europe.
- The United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan (**Hiroshima and Nagasaki**) in 1945, forcing Japan to surrender and ending World War II.



The Holocaust

- Anti-Semitism
 - Aryan supremacy
 - Systematic attempt to rid Europe of all Jews
 - Tactics:
 - Boycott of Jewish stores
 - Threats
 - Segregation
 - Imprisonment and killing of Jews and others in concentration camps and death camps
 - Liberation by Allied forces of Jews and others who survived in concentration camps
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