

# The U.S. Role in the Allied Victory in Europe

by Georgeanne C. Hribar

**Subject(s):** U.S. History II

**Key Words:** World War II, Lend-Lease, D-Day, Europe, civilian jobs

**Time Allotted:** 60 minutes

<b>Lesson Overview</b>	In this lesson, the students will examine primary sources to explore how the United States participated in bringing about the Allied Victory in Europe. Key topics include identification of participants, the significance of the Lend-Lease program, support from the home front, the significance of D-Day, sources of enlistees, and eyewitness accounts from D-Day. The observe, reflect, and question framework is employed to scaffold the examination of the primary and secondary sources.
<b>Compelling Question</b>	How did the United States affect the outcome of World War II in Europe?
<b>Supporting Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why and when did European countries become involved in World War II?</li><li>• What types of aid were provided to the British under the Lend-Lease Act?</li><li>• How did the Americans at home participate in the war effort?</li><li>• What did Eisenhower “not know”?</li><li>• When, where, and why did the Allies land at Normandy?</li><li>• What did Eisenhower “not know”?</li><li>• Which actions of the United States were the most critical in the defeat of Axis forces in Europe?</li><li>• How did Americans react to the end of the war in Europe?</li></ul>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	After completing the story map journal exercise, the learner will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify and explain three ways the United States became involved in world War II</li><li>• analyze and question primary sources to determine their point of view and to build understanding of key events</li><li>• describe the extent of European territory conquered by the Nazis before D-Day</li><li>• describe the role of women in supporting the war effort at home and abroad</li><li>• interpret quotes from the men and women who served in the military and witnesses the D-Day operation</li><li>• explain the historical significance of D-Day and why it was a turning in the Allied victory in Europe</li><li>• primary sources from eyewitnesses to D-Day</li><li>• realize the human costs of World War II in Europe.</li></ul>
<b>C3 Standards &amp; Practices</b>	D2.His.9-12 Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changed over time. D2.His.9-12 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. D2.His.7.9-12 Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time. D.2.His.9.9-12 Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them. D.2.His.10.6.8 Detect possible limitations in the historical record based on evidence collected from different kinds of historical sources. D2.His.11.6-Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, data, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not

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	easily identified.
<b>Materials/ Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Story Map Link: <a href="https://arcg.is/1G4XLv">https://arcg.is/1G4XLv</a></li><li>• Student Guide Feel free to download it and select and modify the questions to best meet the needs of your students.</li><li>• Student Guide Key</li></ul>
<b>Modifications/ Extensions</b>	Have students examine eyewitness accounts from the Library of Congress at <a href="https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwiilist.html">https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwiilist.html</a> . The site includes images and audio recordings of the interviews. The Veteran’s History Project of the Library of Congress also provides accounts of VE Day, at <a href="https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ve-day.html">https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ve-day.html</a> Perhaps students could conduct similar interviews with military personnel who served in the recent wars against terror.

## Contextual Essay

World War I ended in 1919 and almost twenty years later another world-wide war broke out in Europe. Many reasons are given for the outbreak of war—the harsh terms of the treaty of Versailles that sought to punish Germany for her role in World War I, the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations as an international forum to resolve conflicts, a worldwide economic depression, runaway inflation in Germany, and heightened nationalistic aspirations. Was it the confluence of events and challenges that brought totalitarian dictators to power in Europe—Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Josef Stalin or their ability to rally people around a nationalist cause?

Hitler sought to expand Germany’s borders to reclaim territory lost in the previous war, expand to areas with German-speaking populations, and acquire resources for the German economic machine. Eager to avoid war, the Europeans, especially Neville Chamberlain, sought to appease Hitler by granting Germany rights in other territories. In 1938 Austria, under protest was united with and invaded by Germany, the ethnic German region of the Sudetenland within Czechoslovakia was ceded to Germany in the Munich Conference negotiated by France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. After Munich Conference, Chamberlain claimed “peace or our time.” Hitler occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939 and in August of 1939 signed a non-aggression pact with Stalin to prevent a two-front war.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler’s forces invaded neutral Poland and soon after France and the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. Germany continued its conquests within Europe bringing Norway and Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium under Nazi occupation. British forces were evacuated from Dunkirk in France by civilian water craft. Italy joined in the war on the side of the Axis Powers. The French signed an armistice, agreement to stop fighting, with Germany in June of 1940. German planes bombed the island of Great Britain in what became to be known as the Battle of Britain. Things were indeed looking dismal for the Europeans. With many parts of Europe under Axis control, what could the British do?

Churchill, the British Prime minister appealed to the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt for help. Although the United States was officially neutral, the Lend-Lease program was instituted in March of 1941 and a variety of goods were sent to Europe to support the war. In June of 1941 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union which then became part of the Allies. Before the United States was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, the U.S. provided support to the Allies with materiel and was aptly named by arsenal of democracy by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

After the U.S. was attacked by the Japanese, the United States declared war on Japan December 8, 1941 and declared war on Germany on December 11, 1941. U.S. forces were mobilized and fought in the European and Pacific theater. As the production of the American industrial complex shifted to the manufacture of war goods, women filled the ranks of the employed—working in munitions plants, sewing parachutes, welding

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airplanes and ships. Women also served as war correspondents and nurses within the combat zones. Posters and public service announcements encouraged support for the war. The civilian population supported the war effort by encouraging the buying of war bonds, admonitions against careless speech, need to conserve fuel, enlistment encouragement, food preservation by canning and more.

This Story Map Journal focuses on three aspects of American involvement in World War II in Europe: the Lend-Lease program, support from the home front, and the human and historical significance of D-Day. The story is told through images, primary, and secondary sources.

## Teacher Preparation Instructions

For best performance for the story maps and embedded apps use the Chrome Browser.

Consider chunking the information and return to the sources in the story map throughout your unit on World War II.

## Instructional Procedures/Process

Introduce the concept of story mapping by having students identify the link between the questions posed, the images, and the narrative. Tell students that the solid lines in the side panel link to other information or documents on the Internet, and the words underlined with dotted lines make the map window change.

Encourage students to be curious and pose additional questions as they examine the sources.

In addition to the questions posed in the story map, consider the following as opportunities for students to support their opinions with evidence as they frame answers to the suggested questions for each section of the story map journal.

### Section 1: Find Your War Job

- In addition to the questions posed in the story map journal have students consider whether a poster of this type would be published today.

### Section 2: Nazi Soviet Pact

- Encourage students to probe the images in the political cartoon even though they might not understand the words. Have students suggest reasons why Germany is acting subservient?

### Section 3: Lend Lease

- After the students understand the basic premise of the lend-lease program—ships for bases, ask students to consider why it was such a big deal and why some in Congress might have opposed it.

### Section 4: The Arsenal of Democracy

- After students have viewed the variety of goods sent, have them suggest some reasons why food was included.
- Ask students to identify which of the goods sent to Britain under lend-lease was the most valuable and support their choice with reasoning.

### Section 5: Lend-Lease Aid Recipients

- Have students consider why countries in Asia received so much aid. Remind students that the war in the Pacific with Japan was occurring at the same time.

### Section 6: Women at Home and Abroad

- The Story Map Tour featured in this section contains many images showing the variety of jobs women did during the war. Encourage students to explain how each of the jobs contributed to the war effort, both home and abroad.

### Section 7: Americans Ready for a Mission

- The pilots were being given cyanide packs before a mission. Ask students to consider the courage it took to go out on a mission knowing that you may never return.

### Section 8: Areas Occupied by Germany

- Have students click on the different countries in the map and determine how many of the Allied countries had been conquered by Germany.

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Geographically speaking, where are the countries not conquered located?

## Section 9: Dwight D. Eisenhower

- Have students examine the text of the Eisenhower letter on the eve of D-Day. Discuss why he was willing to assume the blame for failure.

## Section 10: The Landing at Normandy

- Have students contrast the neat looking map with the reality of the aerial photograph and in the next section the eyewitness accounts of the event.

## Section 11: Eyewitnesses to History

- The map shows the number of enlisted as a percentage of the state's total population in 1940. Ask students how the map might be different if only the 1940 male population were considered.
- Have students pick the quote that impressed them the most and explain the reason for their choices. Further details about the men and women features in the Map Notes are available at <https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwiilist.html>. The site included audio recordings of the interviews.

## Section 12: Allied Victory in Europe

- Have students explain why certain scenes were chosen for the documentary.

## Section 13: Costs of the War

- The WebApp Builder application focuses on the combat deaths in Europe after the war. Clicking on individual countries opens a pop-up with information on the military and civilian dead and a pie graph to aid in the visualization of the data. Have students identify the countries in which the civilian dead outnumbered the military dead. What other factors could account for high civilian deaths.
- The Query tool (looks like a magnifying glass provides students with the opportunity to search for a specific number of deaths. Currently it is set at one million. The number can be changed and the map responds with those countries meeting the criterion highlighted.
- View the infographic icon and expand the window to see the comparison among countries.

## Closure

Conduct a summative class discussion based on the question below. Encourage students to support their claims with evidence from class notes, the story map journal, and other resources used in the course of the unit.

*Which actions of the United States were the most critical in the defeat of the Axis forces in Europe?*