
Chapter 25

The World at War

1939–1945

Teaching Resources

Chapter Instructional Objectives

After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What were the key elements of American foreign policy prior to World War II?
2. How and why did America edge closer to war between 1939 and 1941?
3. How did mobilization and war affect American society?
4. How did the Allies fight and win World War II?
5. How did American war aims affect plans for post-war settlement?

Chapter Annotated Outline

I. The Road to War

A. The Rise of Fascism

1. The nation's neutrality was challenged by the aggressive actions of Germany, Italy, and Japan, all determined to expand their borders and their influence.
2. In 1931 Japan occupied Manchuria; then in 1937 it launched a full-scale invasion of China. The League of Nations condemned the aggression, and Japan withdrew from the League.
3. In 1935 Italy invaded Ethiopia, and by 1936 the Italian subjugation of Ethiopia was complete.
4. Germany presented the gravest threat to the world order in the 1930s. There, huge World War I reparations payments, economic depression, fear of communism, labor unrest, and rising unemployment fueled the rise of Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) party.

5. Hitler became chancellor in 1933, assumed dictatorial powers, and, as he made clear in his book *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*), sought to overturn the territorial settlements of the Versailles treaty, to “restore” all of the Germans of Central and Eastern Europe to a single German fatherland, and to annex large areas of Eastern Europe.
 6. Part of Hitler's vision was that “inferior races” and other “undesirables” had to make way for the “master race”; in 1933 Hitler established the first concentration camp at Dachau.
 7. Wanting to avoid a war with Germany, Britain and France were proponents of what became known as “appeasement.”
 8. Germany withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933, and Hitler's 1935 announcement of plans to rearm Germany—in violation of the Versailles treaty—met with no resistance.
 9. Germany reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, and later that year Hitler and Italy's Benito Mussolini joined forces in the Rome-Berlin Axis.
 10. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, Germany and Italy armed the Spanish Fascists.
 11. Also in 1936, Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, a precursor to the military alliance between Japan and the Axis that was formalized in 1940.
- ###### B. Isolationists vs. Interventionists
1. During the early years of the New Deal, America limited its involvement in international affairs.
 2. One of Franklin D. Roosevelt's few diplomatic initiatives was the formal recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933.
 3. A second significant initiative was the Good Neighbor Policy, under which the United States voluntarily renounced the

- use of military intervention in the Western Hemisphere and recognized that the friendship of Latin American countries was essential to U.S. security.
4. Although Congress repealed the Platt Amendment, which asserted the United States' right to intervene in Cuba's affairs, the Good Neighbor Policy had its limits—the U.S. Navy kept a base at Cuba's Guantanamo Bay and continued to meddle in Cuban politics, and it also used economic pressure to influence other Latin American nations.
 5. Partly owing to disillusionment with American participation in World War I, isolationism built in Congress and the nation throughout the 1920s.
 6. Gerald P. Nye, a senator from North Dakota, headed a congressional investigation into the profits of munitions makers during World War I; his committee concluded that war profiteers, whom it called “merchants of death,” had maneuvered the nation into World War I for financial gain.
 7. Although most of the committee's charges were dubious or simplistic, they gave momentum to the isolationist movement, contributing to the passage of the Neutrality Act of 1935.
 8. The Neutrality Act imposed an embargo on arms trading with countries at war and declared that American citizens traveled on the ships of belligerent nations at their own risk; in 1936 the Neutrality Act was expanded to ban loans to belligerents, and in 1937 it adopted a “cash-and-carry” provision.
 9. Despite their Loyalist sympathies, the neutral stance of the United States, Great Britain, and France virtually assured a fascist victory in the 1936 Spanish Civil War.
 10. In 1938 Hitler sent troops to annex Austria, while simultaneously scheming to seize part of Czechoslovakia.
 11. At the Munich Conference in September 1938, Britain and France capitulated to Germany's aggression, agreeing to let Germany annex the Sudetenland—the German-speaking border areas of Czechoslovakia—in return for Hitler's pledge to seek no more territory.
 12. Within six months, Hitler's forces had overrun the rest of Czechoslovakia and were threatening to march into Poland.
 13. In August 1939 Hitler signed the Nonaggression Pact with the Soviet Union, which assured Germany it would not have to wage war on two fronts at once.
 14. On September 1, 1939, German troops attacked Poland; two days later Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.
- C. Retreat from Isolationism
1. President Roosevelt, with the support of most Americans, sought to keep the United States neutral.
 2. By mid-1940, Germany had overrun Western Europe, leaving Great Britain as the only power in Europe fighting Hitler.
 3. In America, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies led the interventionists, while the isolationists formed the America First Committee, which had the support of the conservative press, to keep America out of the war.
 4. The National Defense Advisory Commission and the Council of National Defense were created in 1940 to put America's economy and government on a defense footing.
 5. Also in 1940, the United States instituted a peacetime draft registration and conscription and made a deal with Britain in which destroyers were traded for the right to build military bases on British possessions.
 6. After winning an unprecedented third term as president in 1940, Roosevelt concentrated on persuading the American people to increase aid to Britain.
 7. In 1939 Congress amended the Neutrality Act of 1937 to allow the Allies to buy weapons from the United States—but only on the cash-and-carry basis.
 8. In March 1941, Roosevelt convinced Congress to pass the Lend-Lease Act, to “lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of” arms and other equipment to any country whose defense was considered vital to the security of the United States.
 9. The “lend-lease” was extended to the Soviet Union, which became part of the Allied coalition after it was invaded by Germany; the full implementation of lend-lease marked the unofficial entrance of the United States into the European war.
 10. The United States and Britain's Atlantic Charter called for economic collaboration

between the two countries and for guarantees of political stability after the end of the war and also supported free trade, national self-determination, and the principle of collective security.

11. By September 1941, Nazi submarines and American vessels were fighting an undeclared naval war in the Atlantic, unknown to the American public; without a dramatic enemy attack, Roosevelt hesitated to ask Congress for a declaration of war.
- D. The Attack on Pearl Harbor
1. The final provocation came not from Germany but from Japan.
 2. Throughout the 1930s, Japanese military advances in China had upset the balance of political and economic power in the Pacific; Roosevelt suggested that aggressors such as Japan be “quarantined” by peace-loving nations, but the United States avoided taking a strong stand.
 3. During the sack of Nanking in 1937, the Japanese sunk the American gunboat *Panay*; the United States accepted Japan’s apology and more than \$2 million in damages.
 4. Japan craved the conquest of more territory and signed the Tri-Partite Act with Germany and Italy in 1940.
 5. After Japan occupied part of French Indochina, Roosevelt retaliated with trade restrictions and embargoes on aviation fuel and scrap metal.
 6. When Japanese troops occupied the rest of Indochina, Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States and instituted an embargo on trade with Japan, including oil shipments.
 7. The United States knew that Japan was planning an attack but did not know when or where; on December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbor.
 8. On December 8, Congress voted to declare war on Japan; three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, and the United States in turn declared war on them.
- II. Organizing for Victory
- A. Financing the War
1. Presidential power expanded dramatically when Congress passed the War Powers Act of December 18, 1941. The act gave Roosevelt unprecedented authority over all aspects of the war.
 2. Defense mobilization definitively ended the Great Depression. In 1940 the Gross National Product stood at \$99.7 billion; in 1945 it reached \$211 billion. The national debt grew steadily, topping out at \$258.6 billion in 1945.
 3. The Revenue Act of 1942 taxed not only the wealthy and corporations but also, for the first time, average citizens. Tax collections rose to \$35.1 billion and the system was sold to the taxpayers as a way to express their patriotism.
 4. The number of civilians employed by the government increased almost fourfold; leadership of federal agencies was turned over to volunteer business executives, so-called “dollar-a-year men,” such as Henry J. Kaiser, a contractor who had built the monumental Hoover Dam.
 5. Many wartime agencies extended the power of the federal government, one of the most important of which was the War Production Board (WPB), which awarded defense contracts, evaluated military and civilian requests for scarce resources, and oversaw the conversion of industry to military production.
 6. The WPB preferred to deal with major corporations; these very large businesses would later form the core of the military-industrial complex of the postwar years.
 7. Working together, American business and government turned out a prodigious supply of military hardware: 86,000 tanks, 296,000 airplanes, 15 million rifles and machine guns, 64,000 landing craft, and 6,500 cargo ships and naval vessels.
- B. Mobilizing the American Fighting Force
1. An expanded state presence was also evident in the government’s mobilization of a fighting force; by the end of World War II, the armed forces of the United States numbered 15 million.
 2. More than half of the 31 million men registered failed to meet military physical standards, due primarily to defective teeth or poor vision.
 3. The military also tried to screen out homosexuals, but its attempts were ineffectual; in the service homosexuals could participate in a gay subculture more extensive than that in civilian life.
 4. The military segregated the 700,000 African Americans who fought in all branches

of the armed forces and assigned them the most menial jobs; Mexican Americans and Native Americans were never officially segregated.

5. 350,000 American women enlisted in the armed services and achieved a permanent status in the military. The armed forces limited the types of duty assigned to women; they were barred from combat, and most were assigned to jobs reflecting stereotypes of women's roles in civilian life.

C. Workers and the War Effort

1. Government and corporate recruiters sought to remedy the war-induced labor shortage and drew on patriotism to urge women into the workforce.
2. Women made up 36 percent of the labor force in 1945, compared with 24 percent at the beginning of the war, though they faced much discrimination, sexual harassment, and inequitable pay.
3. Women's participation in the labor force dropped temporarily when the war ended, but it rebounded steadily for the rest of the 1940s.
4. Organized labor responded to the war with an initial burst of patriotic unity; on December 23, 1941, representatives of the major unions made a nonbinding "no-strike" pledge for the duration of the war.
5. In January 1942, Roosevelt set up the National War Labor Board (NWLB), which established wages, hours, and working conditions and had the authority to seize plants that did not comply; forty plants were seized during the war.
6. Although incomes jumped 70 percent for workers during the war because workers earned overtime pay, they felt cheated as they watched corporate profits soar in relation to wages.
7. Dissatisfaction peaked in 1943, a year in which a nationwide railroad strike was narrowly averted and John L. Lewis led the United Mine Workers on a strike; Lewis won wage concessions, but he alienated Congress and the public.
8. Congress passed the anti-union Smith-Connally Labor Act over Roosevelt's veto, and strikes were entirely prohibited in defense industries.
9. Just as labor sought to benefit from the war, African Americans manifested a new mood of militancy.

10. African American leaders pointed out parallels between anti-Semitism in Germany and racial discrimination in America; they pledged themselves to a "Double V" campaign: victory over Nazism abroad and victory over racism and inequality at home.

11. In response to the threat of a black "March on Washington," Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, declaring "that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin," and established the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC).

12. The FEPC did not affect segregation in the armed forces, and the committee only resolved about a third of the complaints it received.

13. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) built on their communities' patriotic contributions to the defense industry and the armed services to challenge discrimination and exclusion.

14. African American groups flourished; the NAACP grew to 450,000 by 1945, and the Congress of Racial Equality was founded and became known nationwide for its demonstrations and sit-ins.

D. Politics in Wartime

1. Roosevelt began to drop New Deal programs once mobilization began to bring full employment.
2. Later into the war, Roosevelt called for a second bill of rights, yet his commitment to it remained largely rhetorical since it received no congressional support.
3. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944), known as the GI Bill, provided education, job training, medical care, pensions, and mortgage loans for those who had served during the war.
4. Roosevelt's call for social legislation was part of a plan to woo Democratic voters; the 1942 elections saw Republicans gain seats in both houses and increase their share of governorships.
5. In 1944 Roosevelt sought a fourth term because of the war; Democrats dropped Henry Wallace as vice president, as his views were seen as too extreme, and teamed Roosevelt with Harry S. Truman to run against Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York.

6. In the closest election since 1916, Roosevelt received only 53.5 percent of the popular vote; the party's margin of victory came from the cities, and a significant segment of this urban support came from organized labor.

III. Life on the Home Front

A. "For the Duration"

1. People on the home front worked on civilian defense committees, collected old newspapers and scrap material, served on local rationing and draft boards, and planted "victory gardens" that produced 40 percent of the nation's vegetables.
2. The Office of War Information (OWI) strove to disseminate information and promote patriotism; the OWI urged advertising agencies to link their clients' products to the "four freedoms."
3. Popular culture reflected America's new international involvement and built morale on the home front; many movies had patriotic themes, demonstrated heroism of ordinary citizens, or warned of the dangers of fascism, while newsreels and on-the-spot radio broadcasts kept the public up-to-date on the war.
4. Perhaps the major source of Americans' high morale was wartime prosperity as federal defense spending had ended the depression: unemployment had disappeared, and per capita income had risen from \$595 in 1939 to \$1,237 in 1945.
5. The major inconveniences of the war were the limitations placed on consumption: almost everything Americans ate, wore, or used during the war was subjected to rationing or regulation by the Office of Price Administration.

B. Migration and Social Conflict

1. The war affected where people lived; families followed service members to training bases or points of debarkation, and the lure of high-paying defense jobs encouraged others to move.
2. As a center of defense production, California was affected by the wartime migration more than any other state, experiencing a 53 percent growth in population.
3. As more than a million African Americans migrated to defense centers in California, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, racial conflicts arose over jobs and housing.
4. In Los Angeles male Latinos who belonged to *pachuco* (youth) gangs dressed in "zoot

suits"; blacks and some working-class white teenagers also wore zoot suits as a symbol of alienation and self-assertion, but to adults and Anglos, the attire symbolized wartime juvenile delinquency.

5. In Los Angeles zoot-suiters became the target of white hostility toward Mexican Americans; in July 1943 rumors that a *pachuco* gang had beaten a white sailor set off a four-day riot.

C. Civil Rights during Wartime

1. Despite some racial tension, the home front was generally calm in the 1940s; German and Italian Americans usually did not experience intense prejudice, and leftists and Communists faced little repression after the Soviet Union became an ally.
2. The internment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast was a glaring exception to racial tolerance, a reminder of the fragility of civil liberties in wartime.
3. In early 1942 Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which gave the War Department the authority it needed for its plan to evacuate Japanese Americans from the West Coast and intern them in relocation camps for the rest of the war.
4. Despite the lack of any evidence of Nisei or Issei disloyalty or sedition, few public figures opposed the plan.
5. The War Relocation Authority rounded up 112,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were citizens, and sent them to internment camps in California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Arkansas.
6. The Japanese Americans who made up one-third of the population of Hawaii were not interned; the Hawaiian economy could not function without them.
7. Furloughs for seasonal workers, attendance at a college, and enlistment in the armed services were some routes out of the internment camps.
8. Nisei Gordon Hirabayashi was among the few Japanese Americans who actively resisted incarceration. A student at the University of Washington, Hirabayashi was a religious pacifist who had registered with his draft board as a conscientious objector. He challenged internment by refusing to register for evacuation; instead, he turned himself in to the FBI.
9. Tried and convicted in 1942, he appealed his case to Supreme Court in *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943). In that case, and

also in *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), the court allowed the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast on the basis of “military necessity” but avoided ruling on the constitutionality of the internment program.

10. But in *Ex Parte Endo* (1944), the court held that American citizens of undoubted loyalty could not be confined by government authorities.

IV. Fighting and Winning the War

A. Wartime Aims and Tensions

1. The Allied coalition was composed mainly of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, and its leaders (Winston Churchill, Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin) set overall strategy.
2. Churchill and Roosevelt’s Atlantic Charter formed the basis of the Allies’ vision of the postwar international order, but Stalin had not been part of that agreement, a fact that would later cause disagreements over its goals.
3. The Russians argued for opening a second front in Europe—preferably in France—because it would draw German troops away from Russian soil.
4. In November 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to open a second front in return for Stalin’s promise to fight against Japan when the war in Europe ended.
5. The delay in creating the second front meant that the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the land battle against Germany; Stalin’s mistrust of the United States and Great Britain carried over into the Cold War.

B. The War in Europe

1. During the first seven months of the war, the Allies suffered severe defeats on land and sea in both Europe and Asia.
2. The turning point in the war came when the Soviets halted the German advance in the Battle of Stalingrad; by 1944, Stalin’s forces had driven the Germans out of the Soviet Union.
3. In North Africa, Allied troops, under the leadership of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and General George S. Patton, defeated Germany’s *Afrika Korps* led by General Erwin Rommel.
4. The Allied command moved to attack the Axis through Sicily and the Italian peninsula; in July 1943, Mussolini’s fascist regime fell, and Italy’s new government joined the Allies.

5. The Allied forces finally entered Rome in June 1944, although the last German forces in Italy did not surrender until May 1945.

6. The invasion of France came on D-Day, June 6, 1944; under General Eisenhower’s command, more than 1.5 million American, British, and Canadian troops crossed the English Channel.

7. In August 1944, Allied troops helped to liberate Paris; by September, they had driven the Germans out of most of France and Belgium.

8. In December 1944, after ten days of fighting, the Allies pushed the Germans back across the Rhine River in the Battle of the Bulge, the final German offensive.

9. As American, British, and Soviet troops advanced toward Berlin, Hitler committed suicide in his bunker on April 30; Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945.

10. As Allied troops advanced into Germany, they came upon the extermination camps where 6 million Jews, along with 6 million other people, were put to death.

11. The Roosevelt administration had information about the camps as early as 1942, but so few Jews escaped the Holocaust because the United States and the rest of the world would not take in the Jews.

12. The War Refugee Board, established in 1944, eventually helped to save about 200,000 Jews who were placed in refugee camps in various countries.

13. Factors combining to inhibit U.S. action were anti-Semitism, fears of economic competition from a flood of immigrant refugees to a country just recovering from the depression, failure of the media to grasp the magnitude of the story and to publicize it accordingly, and the failure of religious and political leaders to speak out.

C. The War in the Pacific

1. After Pearl Harbor, Japan continued its conquests in the Far East and began to threaten Australia and India.

2. In May 1942, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, American naval forces halted the Japanese offensive against Australia, and in June, Americans inflicted crucial damage on the Japanese fleet at Midway.

3. Over the next eighteen months, General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz led the offensive in the Pacific, advancing from one island to the next.

4. The reconquest of the Philippines began with a victory in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, in which the Japanese lost practically their entire fleet; by early 1945, triumph over Japan was in sight, with costly American victories at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.
 5. The use of kamikaze missions, combined with the Japanese refusal to surrender, suggested to American military strategists that Japan would continue to fight despite overwhelming losses.
 6. Based on the fighting at Okinawa and Iwo Jima, American military commanders predicted millions of casualties in an invasion of Japan.
- D. Planning the Postwar World
1. When Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Yalta in February 1945, victory in Europe and the Pacific was in sight, but no agreement had been reached on the peace to come.
 2. One source of conflict was Stalin's desire for a band of Soviet-controlled satellite states to protect the Soviet Union's western border.
 3. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed in principle on the idea of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt pressed for an agreement that guaranteed self-determination and democratic elections in Poland and neighboring countries but, given the presence there of Soviet troops, had to accept a pledge from Stalin to hold "free and unfettered elections" at a future time.
 4. Germany was to be divided into four zones to be controlled by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union; Berlin would be partitioned among the four.
 5. The Big Four made progress toward the establishment of the United Nations; its Security Council would include the five major Allied powers, plus six other nations participating on a rotating basis, and permanent members of the Security Council would have veto power over decisions of the General Assembly.
 6. The United Nations was to convene in San Francisco on April 25, 1945; Roosevelt suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died on April 12, 1945.
 7. When Harry Truman took over the presidency, he learned of the top-secret Manhattan Project, charged with developing the atomic bomb. It cost more than \$2 billion and employed 120,000 people.
 8. Truman ordered the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima, on August 6, and Nagasaki, on August 9.
 9. At the time, the belief that Japan's military leaders would never surrender unless their country was utterly devastated convinced policymakers that they had to deploy the atomic bomb.
 10. One hundred thousand people died at Hiroshima and sixty thousand at Nagasaki; tens of thousands more died slowly of radiation poisoning.
 11. Japan offered to surrender on August 10 and signed a formal treaty of surrender on September 2, 1945.
 12. Fascism had been defeated, thanks to a strange alliance between the capitalist nations of the West and the Communist government of the Soviet Union. The coming of peace would strain, and then destroy, the victorious coalition.

Key Term

national debt The financial obligations of the U.S. government for money borrowed from its citizens and foreign investors. Alexander Hamilton wanted wealthy Americans to invest in the national debt so that they would support the new national government. In recent decades, that same thinking has led the United States to encourage individuals and institutions in crucial foreign nations—Saudi Arabia and Japan, for example—to invest billions of dollars in the American national debt. (774)

Lecture Strategies

1. Write a lecture tracing the evolution of American foreign policy from 1939 to 1941. This focus provides an interesting case study of American politics: President Roosevelt used every tool at his disposal—all within his constitutional powers—to move the country in a direction decidedly different from what the people and Congress seemed to want. The United States evolved from neutral to nonbelligerent to belligerent in only two years, after a decade or more of isolationism. How did Roosevelt pull this off?
2. Over the past half century, historians have discussed and debated this intriguing question: Did Roosevelt take the "back door" to war—that is, get

into the war in Europe through the Pacific “door”? On one side, proponents of the “warmonger” thesis suggest that Roosevelt wanted to join Great Britain in fighting Germany early on but could not provoke Hitler into declaring war. The president’s defenders counter that Roosevelt was too wise to risk the loss of American possessions in the Pacific in the opening moments of a war and that he could not depend on Hitler to join his Axis partner, Japan, in a war against the United States. Present both sides of this issue and then ask students to choose one side or the other in a class discussion, a small-group activity, or a writing assignment.

3. Write a lecture focusing on the contributions of minorities to the war effort. World War II provided opportunities for women and African Americans that might not have been available in peacetime. The Great Depression had forced women out of the workplace and shut the door of opportunity to all people of color. Mobilization for war reversed that trend. Developing this topic not only allows you to explore issues of gender and race during the war but also can provide a springboard into discussions of the widespread support for the war among the American people.
4. Life on the home front in World War II offers a good contrast to discussions of the military conduct of the war. Write a lecture examining how American society at home changed to support wartime demands. You might present World War II recruiting posters, ration books, war bonds, and other artifacts. Time spent showing World War II films, or snippets of several films, will explain better than lectures alone how Hollywood contributed to the war effort at home.
5. Write a lecture exploring the contradictions between the fight for freedom abroad and the internment of Japanese Americans within the United States. Students may find a discussion of the suppression of civil liberties during wartime particularly relevant. Emphasize the personal experiences of Japanese Americans through autobiography. Memoirs and oral histories are readily available as primary sources.
6. The outcome of World War II—an Allied victory—is a firm part of most students’ knowledge of the war. They might assume that the Allied victory was inevitable, but of course it was not. Write a lecture discussing how the American armed forces rapidly changed their training and doctrine to defeat the Axis powers. Describe the close working relationship among Allied leaders, especially between Roosevelt and Churchill. Contrast this

with the lack of communication on the Axis side. Tell students about the superior industrial capacity of the United States and the fact that American factories never suffered the destruction from bombing that weakened the other belligerents. The commitment of the American people to a total war—rationing of goods, popular culture focusing on the war, and so forth—is another part of this story.

7. A nation’s successes and failures are often bound up with the personalities and characteristics of its leaders. Write a lecture comparing and contrasting Franklin Roosevelt in the United States and Adolf Hitler in Germany. These were two of the great players of World War II, who dominated their own countries’ and the Western world’s fate. Although they came from quite different backgrounds, both began to rise to power in the 1920s and then took command of their countries in 1933; both wrestled with troubles caused by economic turmoil but chose different paths to solve the problems of the depression; both commanded great military machines; and both died in April 1945, within days of each other.
8. The story of the Manhattan Project offers a great mixture of high drama—science and technology at the cutting edge, intrigue and secrecy, and decision making in a high-stakes setting. This lecture can be structured in various ways. You can run through the story from Albert Einstein’s famous letter to Roosevelt to the bomb runs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Or you can focus on personalities such as President Roosevelt, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and General Leslie Groves. Or you can compare the race between the United States and Germany to build the bomb first. This topic also has the advantage of providing a bridge between World War II and the cold war—the atomic bomb ended one era and opened another. Be sure to comment on how the bombing affected the Japanese people.

Reviewing the Text

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

The Road to War (pp. 768–773)

1. Compare the impact of the depression on the politics and political institutions of the United States, Italy, and Germany. What are the similarities and differences?

- *United States*: Depression encouraged expansion of presidential powers under Roosevelt, who increased size of government and its control over industry and economy, but not to the extent of Germany and Italy due to the tradition of individualism and unfettered capitalism in U.S. history. In response to the increasing scope of government, the American people increased calls for democratic rights in labor disputes, the court system, and race relations.
 - *Italy*: Depression in Italy led to fascism, which produced Benito Mussolini, who also hated the Versailles treaty for not awarding Italy any of Germany's colonies.
 - *Germany*: War reparations from World War I made Depression worse in Germany, leading to rise of unemployment, fascism as mode of government, lessening of democratic rights, enabling a Hitler-style dictator to rise to power.
2. As the world edged toward war in the late 1930s, many Americans were committed to political isolationism. What were the sources of this isolationism, and how was it manifest?
 - Sources of isolation included the need to restore the American economy, anti-immigrant sentiment, the need to consolidate American influence in the Western Hemisphere, and disillusionment in American participation in World War I.
 - Isolation was manifested by U.S. policies, such as the Good Neighbor policy with Latin America, the repeal of the Platt amendment, legislation passed to place the economy on a more sound footing, the use of Congress to investigate the war profiteering industry of World War I, and passage of the Neutrality act of 1935.
 3. Why did the United States join the fight in World War II? What are the key events leading to America's involvement?
 - The United States joined the war effort because of several factors and key events, including the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, German bombing of British people, the efforts of writers, intellectual, and progressive social activists who wanted to reform Europe by intervening in the war, U.S. cultural and economic connections to Great Britain, a bi-partisan defense effort known as "Lend-Lease" with the British as a key to American security, the historical tradition of national values of democracy and freedom for all nations, and the creation of the Atlantic Charter with Winston Churchill in 1941.

Organizing for Victory (pp. 774–781)

1. In what ways did World War II contribute to the growth of the federal government? How did it foster what historians now call the "military-industrial complex"?
 - The war enabled the federal government to increase powers exponentially in terms of control over the nation's resources, economy, industry, and civil liberties.
 - Federal laws, rules, and practices created during the war remained in place after the war. Other new developments remained in place, such as universal taxation of incomes, nationwide anti-discrimination employment standards, a huge military establishment, and multibillion dollar budgets.
 - Partnership of industry and government increased during the war, creating a dangerous balance of power in which future presidential administrations utilized corporate managers and sought new wars to enrich corporations that made the weapons to fight the war.
2. What impact did war mobilization have on women, racial minorities, and organized labor? What legislation or government rules affected their lives as workers, and what effect did it have on their political allegiance?
 - All three groups felt more greatly empowered by the idea that fighting and working for the war effort. Many felt that sacrificing men, labor, and children for the war effort meant that government owed women, labor, and racial minorities equality and fair play in U.S. society. Many viewed discrimination in government employment as no longer tolerable in a nation fighting for democracy abroad.
 - The National Labor Relations Board established uniform wages, hours, and working conditions during the war, the Smith-Connally Labor Act of 1943 prohibited strikes in defense industries, the Fair Employment Practices Commission and Executive Order 8802 of 1941 ensured equality in war-related employment.
 - These actions strengthened the patriotism of American women, workers, and racial minorities, though government attempts to limit strikes alienated many labor groups.

Life on the Home Front (pp. 782–787)

1. What impact did World War II have on everyday life for the majority of Americans?

- Draft of young men meant many female-headed households, decrease in birthrate, increase in male death rate, war rationing, increase in government police powers and surveillance over citizenry, increase of union and labor activity, increase of racial conflict in urban America, increase of geographical mobility, increase of equality for women and minorities, and an expansion in the size of government and the economy.
2. What distinguished the internal migration of Americans during World War II from that of the World War I era? Who moved and why?
 - During World War I, many blacks moved to the western United States, whereas most went to the northeastern states during World War I. Families followed soldier husbands to military bases in different states, Japanese Americans were forced to move from the West Coast to the greater West and Midwest. Rural Native Americans, Appalachian whites, and farmers living on margin land also moved to work in defense industries. In all, 15 million Americans changed residences during the war, half of them moving to another state.
 - California was a major source of new workers due to its location near the Pacific and its increase of defense industries, attracting thousands of new residents, in particular to the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego.
 3. How do you explain the decision to intern Americans of Japanese birth or ancestry?
 - Several reasons, including racism, xenophobia, war hysteria, and incompetent political leadership.

Fighting and Winning the War (pp. 787–796)

1. Describe the course of the war in Europe and the Pacific. What factors led to the Allied victory in World War II?
 - The war began with Germany and Japan achieving strong victories and advancing rapidly toward national war goals with the British and Soviets suffering massive casualties in bombing raids.
 - But after the United States increased its domestic output of a wide array of war materials to unprecedented levels, cracked the Japanese military secret code, expanded a ruthless military bombing campaign over the cities of Japan and German, and received a lucky break when Hitler opened a two-front war against the Soviets and the U.S., the Allies achieved victory.
2. Explain why the United States used atomic weapons in Japan. Why was the Americans' use of these weapons controversial?
 - The atomic bomb was dropped on Japan for a variety of reasons, including racism against a perceived inhuman and treacherous foe, to increase U.S. power over the Soviet Union in the postwar race for control of Europe and Asia, prevent Soviet takeover of Japan, ensure Japanese surrender, save American lives in an invasion of Japan, and test the workability and technology of a nuclear bomb on human beings for the first time in world history.
 - The controversial part of the bombing stems from the idea that Japan wanted to surrender before the war was over and hundreds of thousands of Japanese were poisoned and killed with radiation that continues to impact survivors to this very day.

Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 25 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

1. According to the oral historian Studs Terkel, World War II was a “good war.” Do you agree with this assessment?
 - Terkel argues that the war was a “good war” because the nation was united behind a patriotic effort to defeat the Axis powers with little internal dissension as compared to the later Vietnam conflict.
 - Terkel is accurate in the larger sense of a united nation, but racial conflicts, war resistance, labor agitation, and war profiteering took place on a widespread scale during the war.
2. Overall, what sort of impact—positive or negative—did World War II have on women and minority groups in the United States?
 - The war had a very positive impact on women and minority groups: higher paid employment, better geographical mobility, increasing equality with men/whites, and increasing experience with labor unions made life better after the war.

3. Why was there tension among the Allies during the war, and what long-term impact did it have?
- Tensions grew as the war came to an end, giving rise to a postwar world of Cold War nuclear aggression between the United States and the Soviet Union.
 - Tensions grew over the shape of the postwar political configuration and ownership of former colonies, the independence movement in India led by Gandhi, the treatment of Jews during the war, the growing power of the Soviet Union and its influence in Europe, and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan.

Class Discussion Starters

1. In a climate of isolationism, President Roosevelt provided a strong voice for internationalism. How did the president show his preference for American involvement abroad before Pearl Harbor?

Possible answers

- a. American recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933 was a sign that under Roosevelt the country would have a wider world vision than it had during the Republican presidencies of the 1920s.
- b. The Good Neighbor Policy ensured that the United States would pursue an activist approach in the Western Hemisphere but was willing to moderate the gunboat diplomacy practiced earlier.
- c. In 1937, in the face of Japanese expansionism in Asia, Roosevelt proposed that the United States join with other nations to “quarantine” aggressor states. The public forced him to back down, but the speech gave evidence of his attitude.
- d. From the start of the war in Asia in 1937 and in Europe in 1939, Roosevelt showed determination to assist friendly countries—especially Great Britain—in their wars against aggressors that threatened American interests.
- e. Roosevelt used his personal popularity to set up justification for war by making his sympathies known, denouncing Japan as “the present reign of terror and international lawlessness” and saying that he could not ask Americans to remain neutral in their thoughts about Hitler’s aggression. His four freedoms of speech defined America’s ideological difference from its future enemies.

2. What steps did the United States take between March and December of 1941 to mark out a path toward war?

Possible answers

- a. Approval of the Lend-Lease Act in March.
 - b. Extension of lend-lease to the Soviet Union in June, after the Germans invaded.
 - c. Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States and initiated a trade embargo against Japanese goods in July.
 - d. Roosevelt and Churchill announced the Atlantic Charter in August.
 - e. The U.S. Navy began fighting an undeclared war against Nazi naval forces in September.
3. What sorts of roles did American women play during World War II to support the nation’s war effort?

Possible answers

- a. Although their numbers were relatively low, some women volunteered for military duty during the war. Under law, women could not be involved in combat. Still, some were near the front lines as nurses, and others played active roles as WACS, WAVES, SPARS (of the Coast Guard Women’s Reserve), and WASPS.
 - b. Women played a critical role in war industries, and their work proved indispensable in providing arms, munitions, aircraft, and other commodities that were vital in the war.
 - c. Seeing their husbands off to war, many women became, in effect, single parents. They stayed home to raise children and continued in relatively domestic roles, but they were imbued with a sense of contributing to the larger cause.
4. What roles did minority group members play in the conduct of World War II? How did the war change the lives of American minorities?

Possible answers

- a. Although the war did little to bring lasting change for Mexican Americans, economic expansion in western states, especially California, provided job opportunities in the defense industry.

- b. African Americans played an important role in defense industries during the war. Many blacks migrated from the South and from rural areas into industrial cities in the North and West to work in war industries. The results were mixed: economic opportunities were often countered by racial violence. Although the armed forces were segregated, some African Americans volunteered for military service and served with distinction. The war years also inspired a new mood of militancy among black Americans; membership in the NAACP increased dramatically, and new organizations such as CORE joined in efforts to promote civil rights.
- c. Although their native countries were engaged in war against the United States, German and Italian Americans did not come under extensive suspicion during the war. Japanese Americans, on the other hand, were subjected to abuse, discrimination, and internment because they were perceived as threats to public safety and national security. More than 100,000 Japanese and Americans of Japanese ancestry were relocated from their homes along the Pacific coast to internment camps in the interior. In the late 1980s the U.S. Congress approved the payment of indemnities to the survivors of internment but could not erase the memory of this shameful episode.
5. **Why do historians consider 1942 to be a pivotal year for the outcome of the war?**

Possible answers

- a. In the Pacific war, the Allies—led by the United States—reclaimed the initiative from Japan. Victory in the Coral Sea guaranteed that Australia would remain free of Japanese control. The Battle of Midway, sometimes called “the turning point in the Pacific war,” cost Japan naval control of the Pacific (with the loss of four aircraft carriers). In late summer, American marines began the arduous task of moving the Japanese out of the Pacific island groups between Hawaii and the mainland of Asia.
- b. At the Battle of Stalingrad in the fall of 1942, Russian forces turned back Hitler’s advance into the Soviet Union. After Stalingrad, German armies were in retreat back toward their homeland, with Russian forces in pursuit from the East.

- c. In late 1942, American forces cooperated with British troops in advances across North Africa that exposed the “soft underbelly” of Europe. The American army gained valuable lessons that they applied successfully during their invasion of Italy in 1943 and France in 1944.

Classroom Activities

1. World War II was the most-filmed event in U.S. history up to that time. The federal government utilized films made by Hollywood to showcase the U.S. war effort. Show selected segments from a World War II–era film such as *Wake Island* (see below). Ask students to identify stereotypes that are used in the film to characterize American fighting men as well as the Japanese enemy. Ask them why stereotyping an enemy can make a war easier to define and an enemy easier to kill.
2. Compare Hollywood’s portrayal of World War II with the way the war was really fought. Select a film about World War II to show to the class. Selections include *Wake Island* (1942), *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *So Proudly We Hail* (1943), *Lifeboat* (1944), *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* (1945), and *Keep Your Powder Dry* (1945). Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight* series and John Huston’s *Battle of San Pietro* (1944) are powerful documentaries. The best home-front film is probably *Since You Went Away* (1943). After showing the film in class, have students discuss how its images relate to the textbook’s description of U.S. propaganda efforts during the war.

Oral History Exercise

- Create an oral history assignment (to be done in or out of class) based on the stories left by Americans who experienced World War II. If your classroom is equipped with Internet access, pull up the Web site from the Rutgers Oral History Archive of World War II at <http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu>. This site offers multiple oral histories of the war and of civilian life in New Jersey. If your classroom cannot accommodate the Internet, print out a selection of stories before class and bring them for the students to read and analyze. Other sources of oral history are the fifty-three personal stories of war that appear in *War Stories: Remembering World War II*, edited by Elizabeth Mullener (2002). Or you can select

oral stories from Sherna B. Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited* (1988), a compelling series of accounts by women war workers. Another source to consider is Studs Terkel's *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II*. Ask students to compare and contrast the stories with the idea of creating a complex portrait of the impact of World War II on the United States. This assignment also works well as a research paper. One question to start a class discussion might be: How do oral history accounts add to the information provided in the textbook and lecture?

Working with Documents

COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES

Women in the Wartime Workplace (p. 778)

1. What common themes appear in the working lives of these three women? For example, how do labor unions affect their conditions of employment?
 - Common themes include working new male jobs at long hours, experiencing ethnic diversity in the workplace, speaking out for working conditions, utilizing unions to assist themselves and other workers, feeling exploited by private industry, and earning higher income while husbands fought in the war effort.
 - Labor unions protected defense workers in receiving higher wages, safer working conditions, and jobs that met personal needs.
2. How did the war change the lives of these women?
 - The war changed their lives by providing more income after years of depression, more exposure to traditional male roles of employment, more experience with union activity, increased geographical mobility, increased exposure to ethnic diversity, more equality with whites in the case of black women, and giving the women the opportunity to join the patriotic war effort.
3. These interviews occurred long after the events they describe. How might that long interval have affected the women's account of those years?
 - The passage of time and the aging process may have led these women to forget or remember inaccurately events of the past. Present-day problems and other issues may shape their interpretation of those experiences during the interview session.

VOICES FROM ABROAD

Monica Itoi Sone: Japanese Relocation (p. 786)

1. What was the difference between Sone's legal status and that of her parents? Why were they treated the same, given their different legal statuses?
 - She had U.S. citizenship because she was born in America, but her parents were alien residents considered by government authorities to be Japanese nationals with more loyalty to Japan than the United States.
 - They were treated the same due to racism, war hysteria, and the federal exclusion order guidelines to remove all persons of Japanese ancestry.
2. Based on the information in the text, what answer would the Supreme Court have given to Sone's claim that she deserved a "fair trial" before being imprisoned "like a criminal"?
 - Based on actual court cases, the Supreme Court would have ruled that military necessity justified her arrest and removal. She may have been given a trial as other Japanese Americans successfully achieved, but not until the *Ex Parte Endo* case of 1944 did the court rule that American citizens of undoubted loyalty could not be confined by government authorities.

Reading American Pictures

U.S. Political Propaganda on the Home Front during World War II (p. 776)

1. What kind of message does each image convey? Are these messages consistent with each other? Can you combine the messages into a larger statement explaining the U.S. perspective on fighting the war?
 - "This is the Enemy" portrays the image of the German enemy, a Nazi whose monocle reflects the genocidal and ruthless nature of German people.
 - "Is your trip necessary?" focuses on the domestic population of the United States in the form of a bus of people whose travel needs work against the united effort necessary to conserve resources and win the war.
 - Together, these images convey a use of domestic propaganda to unite the American people in a common and negative view of the German enemy and the need to pull together and put

aside personal needs for the collective necessity of winning the war.

- How might these images affect a viewer? What visual cues or elements do the imagemakers employ to create an impact? List some of the items and compare them across the two images. Is one image more convincing than the other? Why?
 - “This is the Enemy” frightens the viewer into thinking that the Germans are ruthless and bent on the annihilation of their foes. The Nazi swastika and hanging images, as well as the distortion of the German face, contribute to the image’s persuasive power.
 - “Is your trip necessary?” utilizes a typical bus scene, a cross section of the American people to provide an image that many Americans can easily identify with, and therefore comply with government calls to conserve national resources.
 - “This is the Enemy” is more powerful owing to the use of fear to motivate Americans to form a common feeling about the German enemy.

Electronic Media

Web Sites

- Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers, and Broadcasters during World War II*
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0001.html>
This Library of Congress site focuses on media makers during the conflict.
- Rosie Pictures: Select Images Relating to American Women Workers*
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/126_rosi.html
This fascinating Library of Congress site records the contributions of American women during World War II.
- Suffering Under a Great Injustice*
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aam.html>
This site presents a haunting exhibit of Ansel Adams’s photographs of the Manzanar internment camp. See also *The Japanese American Internment*, a documentary film site at <http://www.children-of-the-camps.org>, with extensive links to other resources.
- The Enola Gay Controversy: How Do We Remember a War That We Won?*
www.lehigh.edu/~ineng/enola
This site examines the controversial issue of the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan and the morality of commemorating the end of the war in modern times.

Films

- Saving Private Ryan* (1998, 170 min)
Directed by Steven Spielberg, this engrossing Hollywood take on the D-Day invasion makes a great comparison to the actual event.
- The Thin Red Line* (1998, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 170 min)
Directed by Terrence Malick, this Hollywood film portrays the Japanese theater of operations in an emotional and passionate rendition of a 1964 film of the same title.
- Band of Brothers* (2001, HBO miniseries)
Directed by David Frankel, this award-winning HBO dramatic series provides the most realistic portrayal of the European theater of fighting ever produced on film.
- The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It* (1991, Independent Television Service, 57 min)
Directed by David Tejada-Flores, this documentary traces the unique experiences of conscientious objectors during World War II.

Literature

- Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II* (New York: The New Press, 1997)
Perhaps the best oral history collection of Americans who experienced World War II in a variety of ways.
- Monica Itoi Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979)
An emotional biography that tells the story of the relocation and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Additional Bedford/St. Martin’s Resources for Chapter 25

FOR INSTRUCTORS

Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 25 are available as full-color acetates:

- One City (and Island) at a Time
- Map 25.1 World War II in the North Atlantic, 1939–1943
- Why We Fight
- Please Stay Home
- Map 25.2 Japanese Relocation Camps
- Map 25.3 World War II in Europe, 1941–1943

- Map 25.4 World War II in Europe, 1944–1945
- Map 25.5 World War II in the Pacific, 1941–1943
- Map 25.6 World War II in the Pacific, 1943–1945

Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 25, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

- Map 25.1 World War II in the North Atlantic, 1939–1943
- Map 25.2 Japanese Relocation Camps
- Map 25.3 World War II in Europe, 1941–1943
- Map 25.4 World War II in Europe, 1944–1945
- Map 25.5 World War II in the Pacific, 1941–1943
- Map 25.6 World War II in the Pacific, 1943–1945
- Figure 25.1 Government Military and Civilian Spending as a Percentage of GDP, 1920–1980
- One City (and Island) at a Time
- Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941
- Why We Fight
- Please Stay Home
- A “Real” Rosie at Work
- Fighting for Freedom at Home and Abroad, 1941
- Zoot Suit Youth in Los Angeles
- Hitting the Beach in Normandy
- The Living Dead
- The Big Three at Yalta
- Hiroshima

Using the Bedford Series with *America’s History*, Sixth Edition

Available online at bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries, this guide offers practical suggestions for incorporating volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture into the U.S. History Survey. Relevant titles for Chapter 25 include:

- *America Views the Holocaust, 1933–1945: A Brief Documentary History*, by Robert H. Abzug, *University of Texas at Austin*
- *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays*, by Akira Iriye, *Harvard University*
- *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, 1945–1946: A Documentary History*, by Michael R. Marrus, *University of Toronto*
- *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933–1945: A Brief History with Documents*, by Richard Polenberg, *Cornell University*

FOR STUDENTS

Documents to Accompany *America’s History*

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 25 of the companion reader by Kevin J. Fernlund, *University of Missouri–St. Louis*:

1. Gerald P. Nye, *The Profits of War and Preparedness* (1934)
2. C. D. Batchelor, *The Reluctance to Go to War* (1936)
3. Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Fireside Chat on the Great Arsenal of Democracy* (1940)
4. Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Four Freedoms Speech* (1941)
5. *Billion-Dollar Watch Dog* (1943)
6. Norma Yerger Queen, *Women Working at the Home Front* (1944)
7. *Mother, When Will You Stay Home Again?* (1944)
8. *Wartime Posters: The Japanese and Venereal Disease as Enemies* (c. 1944)
9. *Remembering the War Years on the Home Front* (1984)
10. *Executive Order 9066 to Prescribe Military Areas* (1942)
11. Ernie Pyle, *Street Fighting* (1944)
12. William McConahey and Dorothy Wahlstrom, *Remembering the Holocaust* (1945)
13. Albert Einstein, *Letter to Roosevelt* (1939)
14. Henry L. Stimson, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* (1945)

Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/henretta

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following map, visual, and documents activities are available for Chapter 25:

Map Activity

- Map 25.3 World War II in Europe, 1941–1943
- Map 25.4 World War II in Europe, 1944–1945

Visual Activity

- *Reading American Pictures: U.S. Political Propaganda on the Home Front during World War II*

Reading Historical Documents Activities

- Comparing American Voices: *Women in the Wartime Workplace*
- Voices from Abroad: *Monica Itoi Sone: Japanese Relocation*

Critical Thinking Modules at bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules

These online modules invite students to interpret maps and audio, visual, and textual sources centered on events covered in the U.S. History Survey. The relevant module for Chapter 25 is:

- Visual Persuasion: Mobilization Via Government Posters during World War II