

## World War II and The United States of America

**WebQuest Description:** This is a five day WebQuest that is designed to take 5th grade students through World War II (WWII) from the perspective of the United States. Students will Learn about the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Axis and Allied Powers, the American home front, the geography of WWII, and the effects WWII had on the U.S. economy.

**Grade Level:** 3-5

**Curriculum:** Social Studies

**Keywords:** World War II, Pearl Harbor, Axis and Allied Powers, American home front, WWII geography, WWII economy

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### Introduction

Imagine being 10 years old in 1941 and living in the United States of America. World War II was underway in Europe and Asia. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the U.S. had a neutral position in the war until Japan attacked the U.S. at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. This event forced the U.S. to declare war on Japan and enter World War II. The war affected more than just soldiers. Not everyone went to fight, but everyone helped in the "war effort" in some way.

### Tasks

Many countries were involved in World War II, including Germany, Italy, Japan, Great Britain, Russia, the United States, China, and many others. By the end of this WebQuest you will have learned about why the U.S. entered the war, the difference between the Allied and Axis Powers, the home front in America, the location of countries involved in the war, and the affects that World War II had on the U.S. economy. This unit lesson on World War II will take five class periods in which we will progress through the WebQuest completing one topic per day. You will have a chance to research each topic, navigate various websites, listen to an audio speech, and view videos that are relevant to each topic. This lesson should give you a thorough understanding of how World War II affected the United States as well as the World.

### Process

**Lesson 1: Pearl Harbor: December 7, 1941**  
**Vocabulary:** bomber, destroyer, dispatch, embargo, evacuate, raid, radar, sabotage, treaty, torpedo  
**Materials:** computer, World War II Timeline, notebook paper, video, websites, journal  
**What Happened?** On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the naval and army bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. It began with a surprise air attack very early in the morning. Many Japanese fighter planes dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor in an attempt to harm the U.S. Navy. The Japanese destroyed or disabled most of the United States' Pacific fleet. However, the U.S. aircraft carriers were at sea during the attack and escaped destruction. Thousands of American lives were lost as the attack took place.  
**The U.S. Responds...** On December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on the Japanese. His address was broadcast by radio around the nation.  
**Activities:**  
a) Read and listen to President Roosevelt's speech to Congress and be prepared to discuss your thoughts with the class.  
b) Visit the attached website to learn more about World War II history and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Make sure you take notes and are able to discuss the event in class.  
c) In your journal write an essay as if you were a soldier or nurse stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. What did you do? How did you feel? What were you thinking?  
**Lesson 2: World War II: Axis and Allied Powers**  
**Vocabulary:** Allied Powers, appeasement, Axis Powers, concentration camp, D-Day, fascism, Gestapo, Holocaust, Nazi, Pact of Steel  
**Materials:** computer, notebook paper, websites, poster board, markers/pens  
**World Powers:** World War II was fought by two major groups of nations. They became known as the Allied and Axis Powers.  
**Who Were the Allied Powers?** The Allied Powers came together in order to defend against the attacks of the Axis Powers. The Allied Powers were originally made up of four countries: Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. Each country also had its own leaders, who consisted of Winston Churchill (Great Britain), Charles de Gaulle (France), Joseph Stalin (Russia), and Franklin D. Roosevelt (United States).  
**Who Were the Axis Powers?** The Axis Powers were made up of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Their alliance began with the friendship treaty between Germany and Italy that formed the Rome-German Axis. In 1939 Germany and Italy strengthened that treaty by signing the Pact of Steel. Japan joined the alliance in 1940 that created the three main Axis Powers in World War II. The Axis Powers also had their own leaders, who consisted of Adolph Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy), and Emperor Hirohito (Japan).  
**Activity:** Who were the world leaders in World War II? You will be divided into groups of 2-3 students. Each group will be assigned a leader of a country (Axis or Allied Powers). You must create a poster about your assigned leader that states his name, country, politics, and positive or negative influences on the world. Use the attached website as well as two others of your choosing to develop your poster. Posters will be presented to the class and hung on the wall for future reference.  
**Lesson 3: The American Home Front**  
**Vocabulary:** Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP's), Propaganda  
**Materials:** computer, video: Women and Minorities at Home, video: Propaganda in the U.S., markers, crayons, pens  
**Women's Role During WWII:** When the United States entered the war in 1941 many more men were sent to fight, which left women to do their part on the home front. Although women did not become combat soldiers they did help by serving in the armed forces as nurses and pilots. Everyone had to do their part. Women were especially important. They played a very important role of keeping the country together on the home front. Women took over the jobs of 10 million men and went off to work in the factories, which produced ships, tanks, munitions, and other much needed materials for the war.  
**Propaganda:** In order to give Americans a better feeling about the war the U.S. Government used propaganda to keep

them united in the war effort. Various posters were made that showed patriotism and ways people could help with the war effort from home. Propaganda also encouraged women to serve in the armed forces and work in factories. Movies were also made that showed brave soldiers fighting the enemy. The U.S. Government did what they could to unite America around the war effort. Activities: a). Watch the videos attached to this WebQuest and take notes. b). Propaganda Poster - use the attached websites to learn more about propaganda and women's roles during World War II. Create a propaganda poster that you might see in America during WWII. Make sure that the poster includes illustrations as well as print media. Lesson 4: World War II Geography Vocabulary: Allied Powers, Axis Powers, Internment Camps, neutrality Materials: computer, world map, assigned country, poster board, markers, crayons, pens Activities: a). Use the provided world map to designate the location of Allied and Axis Powers. Color the members of the Allied Powers blue and the Axis Powers red. b). WWII Geography Poster - you will be divided into groups of 2 students. Each group will be assigned a country. Create a poster of your assigned country that shows the 5 themes of geography: location, place, region, movement, human environment. Use the attached website and at least two others of your choosing to complete the assignment. You will present your poster and research to the class at the end of the unit lesson on World War II. Lesson 5: The U.S. Economy During WWII Vocabulary: ration books, victory gardens, junk rallies Materials: computer, websites, video: All Together, journal Rationing: What & Why? During WWII many products were in short supply. Metal was used to make tanks and battleships, medicine was needed on the battlefield, and rubber was mostly imported from Southeast Asia. This made goods and materials hard to get. By the end of the war, many products were rationed. Families would receive ration stamps that allowed them to buy a certain amount of goods. The U.S. rationed products such as tires, automobiles, sugar, gas, meat, butter, and coal. This made times difficult for Americans. Activities: a). Visit the attached website and watch the video, All Together. b). Think about how your life would be different if you were only allowed to have certain amounts of food and supplies. Write an essay in your journal about what life might be like, today, if we had to ration food and supplies.

## Evaluation

World War II Unit Test (You will be given a paper copy of this unit test to complete and submit to the teacher). Select the best answer below for each question.

- 1). What day was Pearl Harbor attacked by the Japanese?
  - September 1, 1939
  - December 7, 1941
  - July 4, 1942
  - June 6, 1944
- 2). Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?
  - Because they wanted to prevent the U.S. from attacking Japan
  - Because they wanted to continue to take over countries
  - Because they wanted to cripple the U.S. Navy
  - All of the above
- 3). What was the reaction of the United States to the attack?
  - They fled back to the U.S. coast and let Japan have Southeast Asia
  - They asked Great Britain for help
  - They waited several months to see what would happen next
  - They declared war on Japan the next day
- 4). True or False: The Japanese achieved their objective of crippling the U.S. Navy and keeping the U.S. from helping other countries in Southeast Asia.
  - True
  - False
- 5). Which nation below was NOT a member of the Allied Powers?
  - Great Britain
  - France
  - Russia
  - Germany
- 6). What was the group of nations called that fought against the Allied Powers?
  - The Nazis
  - The Axis Powers
  - The Big Three
  - The European Alliance
- 7). Which of the following countries was NOT a member of the Axis Powers?
  - France
  - Germany
  - Japan
  - Italy
- 8). What was the document that all three Axis Powers signed in 1940?
  - The Pact of Blood
  - The Axis Agreement
  - The Pact of Steel
  - The Tripartite Pact
- 9). What important role did women play on the U.S. home front?
  - They stayed at home
  - They worked in factories making weapons and ammunition
  - They made baked goods to send to the troops
  - They taught young boys how to fight and shoot a gun
- 10). Which of the following was NOT an area where women served in the U.S. armed forces?
  - Nurses in army hospitals
  - Repair mechanics for various vehicles
  - Fighter pilots running bombing raids in Germany
  - Pilots of cargo planes
- 11). True or False: Women played a large role in World War II, both in the armed forces and at the home front.
  - True
  - False
- 12). How did the United States Government try to keep moral up at home during the war?
  - With posters showing patriotism
  - With movies about heroic soldiers
  - With posters showing how people could help the war effort
  - All of the above
- 13). How many American men were members of the armed forces by the time World War II ended in 1945?
  - Ten million
  - 150,000
  - 500,000
  - Three million
- 14). What did rationing stamps do?
  - Let you send items to soldiers at war
  - Allowed people to buy only a limited amount of a product
  - Forced people to buy certain products
  - Generals gave them to soldiers as a reward for bravery
- 15). What items were rationed in the U.S. during World War II?
  - Butter and sugar
  - Cars and gasoline
  - Coal and meat
  - All of the above

Category and Score					Score
				Total Score	

## Conclusion

As you all know, World War II began in 1939 and ended in 1945. However, the United States did not enter the war until 1941. The war was fought between two major groups of nations, the Allied and Axis Powers. We have learned about how the U.S. entered the war, the major leaders in the war, how WWII affected the U.S. home front, the role women played in the war, the locations of the countries that participated, and the affects that the war had on the U.S. economy. You have also completed several projects and activities that helped you learn more about World War II. I hope that you enjoyed this lesson and retain this knowledge as we move on to future lessons in Social Studies.

# Teacher Page

Welcome! This WebQuest was developed as a five day unit lesson on World War II, including lessons on Pearl Harbor, the Allied and Axis Powers, women's role at the home front, and the effects of the war on the U.S. economy. The unit lesson involves students in active learning through group activities, individual work, and the use of technology. There are several resources included in this unit such as YouTube videos, web searches, etc.&nbsp;

## **Standards**

AZ Social Studies Standards:

American History- Concept 1: Research Skills for History

Students examine topics questions related to historical studies and/or current events by using primary and secondary sources.

World History- Concept 8: World at War

Civics/Government- Concept 3: Functions of Government

Geography- Concept 1: The World in Spacial Terms; Concept 2: Places and Regions

Economics- Concept 1: Foundations of Economics

\*Understanding the scarcity and the different methods of allocating goods and services

## **Credits**

## **Other**

Thank you for viewing this WebQuest. It was developed as an assignment for a Masters course in Social Studies: Curriculum, Assessment, and Methods.

This WebQuest gives students a variety of learning opportunities and adapts instruction for the visual, audio, and tactile learners. &nbsp;The multiple video and audio recordings adapt instruction for English Language Learners. Students are also divided into groups so that peer learning can occur.