

Unit 4

5th Grade Social Studies World War II Study Guide



**Updated to the new
Georgia Standards of
Excellence
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Unit 4—World War II Study Guide

Name: _____

SS5H4 Explain America’s involvement in World War II.

- a. Describe Germany’s aggression in Europe and Japanese aggression in Asia.
- b. Describe major events in the war in both Europe and the Pacific; include Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, D-Day, VE and VJ Days, and the Holocaust.
- c. Discuss President Truman’s decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- d. Identify Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Hirohito, Truman, Mussolini, and Hitler.
- e. Describe the effects of rationing and the changing role of women and African-Americans or blacks; include "Rosie the Riveter" and the Tuskegee Airmen.
- f. Explain the role of Eleanor Roosevelt and the U.S. in the formation of the United Nations.

SS5G1b Locate important man-made places: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

SS5E1a Describe opportunity costs and their relationship to decision-making across time (e.g., decisions by individuals in response to rationing during WWII).

| Vocabulary | |
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| Opportunity Cost | <i>An opportunity cost is when you give up one thing to accomplish or get something else. For example, in World War II Americans were rationed on many products including food, rubber and gasoline, so that the military would have all the supplies needed to win the war.</i> |
| Dictator | <i>A dictator is the ruler of a country who has complete authority. The U.S. has a president who most people see as in charge, but his power is shared with Congress and the Supreme Court. A dictator, such as Adolf Hitler, controls everything in their country.</i> |
| Blitzkrieg | <i>Blitzkrieg was Hitler’s plan for waging war. It was known as “lightning war.” His plan was to attack countries suddenly and take them over before they could defend themselves.</i> |
| Internment Camp | <i>In the U.S. during WWII, many Japanese Americans were forced to live in internment camps because the government was afraid some of them might be spies helping Japan. For several years they were forced to live in these camps.</i> |
| Allies | <i>Allies usually refers to “friends,” or countries that agree to help each other. In World War II one group of countries that agreed to help each other became known as the “Allied Powers,” while the other group of countries that agreed to help each other became known as the “Axis Powers.” The main Allied Powers were the USA, Great Britain, Russia and France (when they got free from Germany).</i> |
| Axis Powers | <i>The axis powers were considered the bad guys or the aggressors in World War II. They were the countries that allied together and tried to take over the world. The axis powers were Germany, Italy and Japan, who were led by Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito.</i> |
| Concentration Camp | <i>Adolf Hitler started concentration camps in the late 1930’s. This is where he sent everyone he disliked. Some of these camps required the prisoners sent there to work as slaves, while they were being starved. Other camps, such as Auschwitz became known as death camps. The prisoners were basically sent there to be killed.</i> |
| Nazi | <i>The Nazis were a political party in Germany. In the U.S. our main political parties are the democrats and the republicans. Adolf Hitler was actually a very good public speaker and became the popular leader of the Nazi political party in the early 1930’s. The Nazis became responsible for the killing of millions of people once they got in power.</i> |
| Aggression | <i>Aggression is a word that describes someone being aggressive and usually involves them attacking. For example, Germany showed aggression during WWII when they invaded and conquered several other countries. Japan also showed aggression by attacking China and islands in the Pacific.</i> |

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SS5H4 Explain the reasons for America’s involvement in World War II.

SS5H6a. Describe Germany’s aggression in Europe and Japanese aggression in Asia.

*This standard has two parts. First let’s look at **Germany**. Adolf Hitler, who took power in the early 1930’s, led Germany. He began discriminating against his own people and sent millions of Jews and other people he disliked to prison camps, called concentration camps. However it wasn’t until 1939 that the war started. Hitler began suddenly attacking countries that surrounded Germany and taking them over using a strategy called “Blitzkrieg,” which means “lightning war.” He took over Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark and eventually France, just to name a few. He was trying to take over the world, or at least all of Europe, and this made people very afraid, so World War II began.*

*On the other side of the world **Japan** had a similar mission. They wanted to take over Asia and the entire Pacific. They attacked and conquered Manchuria (part of China), the Philippines and most of the small islands in the Pacific. It wasn’t until they attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii that they ran into trouble. The US, who had tried to stay out of WWII stating that it wasn’t their problem, joined the war the very next day. Hitler, who was allied with Japan, then declared war on the U.S. The U.S. then declared war on Germany as well as Japan.*

SS5H4b. Describe major events in the war in both Europe and the Pacific; include Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, D-Day, VE and VJ Days and the Holocaust.

Pearl Harbor—*The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, while trying to take over all the pacific islands. The U.S., who owned Hawaii, was completely caught off guard, because it was a surprise attack and Japan had not declared war. The U.S. was furious and immediately joined World War II.*

Iwo Jima—*This small pacific island was very close to Japan and the U.S. wanted to gain control of it because they were planning an invasion of Japan. The island was also a refueling station for planes that were going on bombing missions over Japan. The fighting was horrendous, because the Japanese preferred to die with honor for their country rather than surrender. Of the 22,000 Japanese who were defending the island, more than 20,000 died. Many Americans died and were wounded trying to take this island. This battle was fresh in President Truman’s mind when he decided to drop the atomic bombs, rather than try to invade Japan. If it was that deadly to take over a tiny Pacific island, he was very worried about how deadly it would be to try to invade the mainland of Japan.*

D-Day—*This event took place on the other side of the world. Many battles actually were known as D-Day at the time and it simply meant, the day when things were going to happen. The name D-Day stuck with this battle because it was such a tremendous fight. Germany had taken over almost all of Europe except for Great Britain. Germany had been bombing Britain, but had not been able to get Britain to surrender. The British and American forces crossed the English Channel and invaded France, which was being held by the Nazi’s on June 6, 1944. It was a fierce battle, but the Allies were able to get a foothold and this was the turning point of the war in Europe. From D-Day on Hitler was being driven backwards, and he was losing ground, until the eventual surrender of Germany in May of 1945.*

VE Day—*VE day was the day that Germany surrendered, May 8, 1945. After D-Day the German army was being pushed back until they were in the capital and had no further to go. Just days before Germany had to surrender Hitler realized he was defeated and committed suicide. There was rejoicing all across the world when it was learned that Germany had surrendered and there was **V**ictory in **E**urope!*

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VJ Day-VJ day stands for Victory over Japan day. This happened August 15, 1945. The Americans dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6th. Then after the Japanese still refused to surrender, they dropped a second atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. Both cities were completely destroyed. The Japanese military generals still did not want to surrender, but Hirohito, the emperor, stepped in and made them surrender. The emperor of Japan was seen as a god and was not very involved in the decisions concerning the war, which was controlled by the country's military council.

Holocaust-The holocaust was a time period in history in which approximately 12 million people were killed just because Hitler did not believe they were worthwhile to have around. Hitler was incredibly racist and believed that the German (Aryan) race was the best race of people. He felt that inferior (not as good) races or groups of people should be eliminated. He started by just sending all the people he didn't like to concentration camps to work as slaves. Many people starved in these camps and many more were killed. The longer Hitler was in power the more cruel the camps became. Eventually, the Nazi's came up with the Final Solution, which was their name for simply killing everyone they believed was not worthwhile to society. Hitler especially hated Jews. Approximately 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, as well as millions more handicapped, gypsies and people who disagreed with Hitler.

SS5H4c. Discuss President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

At the end of World War II President Truman decided to drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 200,000 civilians (non-military people) died as a result of the bombs. Some people feel like it was not a good decision because so many innocent civilians died in the attack. On the other hand, many people feel like it was a good decision because it ended the war much sooner and so many soldiers and billions of dollars were spared. The Japanese believed it was cowardly to surrender and would rather die fighting than to surrender (see Iwo Jima above). The people of Japan were being trained to fight back if Japan was invaded. Truman felt that by ending the war sooner, even though many died, many more lives would be spared. He also felt that as president of the United States it was his duty to protect American lives, by making it so that American's would not have to invade Japan to end the war. Scientists had been trying to invent this powerful bomb for several years, but it was finally finished in July of 1945. Truman felt that it was his responsibility to end the war, which had been started by Japan, without losing thousands more American lives.

SS5H4d. Identify Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Hirohito, Truman, Mussolini and Hitler.

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| Franklin Roosevelt | <i>FDR was the President of the U.S before the war began and throughout most of the war. He died in April of 1945, just before the war ended. He did not want to join World War II, because he didn't want to risk American lives for something that was happening on the other side of the world. His isolationist view ended when Japan made a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in December of 1941. He immediately declared war, and the US joined World War II.</i> |
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| Joseph Stalin | <i>Stalin was quite possibly the worst good guy ever. He was the dictator of the Soviet Union (Russia) and originally made an alliance or agreement to help Hitler. However, Hitler broke the promise and tried to invade Russia. Stalin quickly joined the Allies (Britain and the U.S.) and was one of major forces that helped to stop Hitler. While the U.S. and British troops attacked Germany from the West, Stalin and the Russians were invading from the East, forcing Hitler to split his military. Stalin helped get rid of Hitler, but was a horrible man himself and actually was responsible for killing about 20 million of his own people during the 1940's and 1950's. Most of the people he had killed were political opponents or people who disagreed with his leadership and decisions.</i> |
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| Winston Churchill | <i>Churchill was the Prime Minister (leader) of Great Britain during World War II. Great Britain was the one country that Hitler couldn't defeat despite many efforts to do so. Churchill famously said, "We will never surrender." The U.S. joined with Churchill's British forces to invade the beaches of France on D-Day and eventually pushed Germany all the way back until they surrendered.</i> |
| Hirohito | <i>Hirohito was the emperor of Japan. He was viewed as a god by his people, but was not very involved in the decisions made by the country. The military council made most of the decisions for Japan. Hirohito, though, stepped in at the end of the war and insisted that the military council surrender after the atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hirohito was allowed to remain the emperor of Japan after the war, because he was more of a symbolic leader rather than the one making all the decisions. Many people felt like he should have been held responsible for war crimes because he ultimately had to approve his military's actions even if he wasn't the one making the plans. He remained emperor, however, until his death in 1986!</i> |
| Harry Truman | <i>Truman was FDR's vice president and became the president after FDR died in April 1945. He is most well known for being the president who decided to use the atomic bombs. The two atomic bombs dropped on Japan were the only atomic bombs ever used in war.</i> |
| Benito Mussolini | <i>Benito Mussolini was a leader of Italy during World War II. He allied with Hitler and became one of the leaders of the Axis powers. Italy tried to expand its territory during the war by invading northern Africa. The Italian people became angry with Mussolini as the war was coming to an end, and it was clear that they were on the losing side. Mussolini was killed by his own people in April of 1945.</i> |
| Adolf Hitler | <i>Hitler was the dictator of Germany and the leader of the Nazi political party from the early 1930's until the end of WWII. He was very popular when he first took power and was a very convincing public speaker. He was however, a horrible racist and was eventually responsible for the Holocaust (see above) in which he had about 12 million people killed.</i> |

SS5H4e. Describe the effects of rationing and the changing role of women and African-Americans; include "Rosie the Riveter" and the Tuskegee Airmen.

Rosie the Riveter—*Rosie the Riveter was a propaganda campaign designed to convince women to join the war effort. Women joined the war effort in mass numbers and worked in factories making war supplies while the men went off to war. Times were changing. After the war many women remained in the work force.*

Tuskegee Airmen—*The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American pilots to join the U.S. military. They had an incredible record of success as escorts for bombing missions. They flew small fighter planes, and their job was to protect the big slow bombers. Despite their heroic efforts and the fact that they all risked their lives (and some died) for their country, they still faced the Jim Crow Laws and discrimination at home.*

Rationing—*Rationing was common during World War II. Every person was given ration cards, which limited the amount of certain items that you could buy, so that the military would have enough of everything that they needed. When people went to the store they had to show their ration cards in order to buy certain items. If they had already used their ration that month, then they would not be allowed to buy more of that item. Many items were rationed from various food items, to things made of rubber and even gasoline. Rationing helped make sure the soldiers had enough supplies and was also necessary because some supplies were unavailable because of the war.*

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SS5H4f. Explain the role of Eleanor Roosevelt and the U.S. in the formation of the United Nations.

The United Nations is an organization that was created to try to help all nations join together and work out disagreements without fighting. After two world wars in 30 years, most countries were supportive of this effort and almost all the countries in the world joined the United Nations. It has not prevented all wars, but there have not been any more world wars. The UN also helps to solve some of the world's problems such helping with education, food for the starving and trying to provide clean water for all. President Woodrow Wilson had tried to create a similar organization called the League of Nations after World War I, but he couldn't convince congress that the U.S. should join. After World War II though, the U.S. quickly joined the United Nations. As of 2014, the UN has representatives from 193 countries.

Eleanor Roosevelt was the only woman representative to represent the United States at the first United Nations meeting. She served as a representative from 1945 until the early 1950's. During the first few years the representatives worked together to create a strong organization which would help prevent major wars. The U.N also came up with plans to deal with other world problems.

SS5E1a Describe opportunity costs and their relationship to decision-making across time (such as decisions by individuals in response to rationing during WWII).

Much of this standard has already been covered in the rationing section above. An opportunity cost is when you have to give up one thing to get something else that you want. For example, during World War II, individuals often had to give up certain items so the soldiers would be provided for. Individuals could only get a limited supply of many items such as coffee. If they did get some coffee, they would often use the coffee grounds over and over rather than throwing them out after one or two uses.

SS5G1b Locate important man-made places: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

(According to the state standards Pearl Harbor is the only location students need to be able to identify on a map, but to truly understand the battles and key events of World War II, I think it is important for them to be able to identify where each event took place.)

Be able to label each of the key World War II locations on the map below. The letter locations are not exact.

Pearl Harbor A

Iwo Jima B

D-Day Invasion C

Holocaust Concentration Camps D

Hiroshima & Nagasaki E

