

# CH11 Study Guide

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## Section 1: The Allies Turn the Tide

The attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II. The Allies' ultimate goal was to fight and win a two-front war. Their first objective, however, was to defeat Hitler. The United States was producing millions of tons of guns, tanks, and other war supplies. German U-boats, however, had sunk over 3,500 merchant ships bound for Britain. By mid-1943, using radar, bombers, and underwater depth charges, Allied forces were sinking U-boats faster than Germany could manufacture them. The Allies had begun to win the war in the North Atlantic.

In 1941, Germany attacked Russia, and Stalin wanted Roosevelt and Churchill to open a second front in France. Instead, in early 1942, British planes began saturation bombing, dropping large numbers of bombs on German cities. American bombers used strategic bombing, targeting key political and industrial centers. The

Tuskegee Airmen, an African American fighter squadron, played a key role in the bombing campaign. In January 1943, after the long, bitter Battle of Stalingrad, the Russians turned back the German invasion of their country. During the same month, FDR announced that only the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers would end the war. That is, they had to give up completely.

To help pave the way for an invasion of Italy, the Allies decided to push the Germans out of North Africa, where they had been fighting British troops since 1940. In February 1942, American General Dwight Eisenhower commanded the Allied invasion. After difficult battles, General George S. Patton, Jr. took charge of American forces. In May 1943, German and Italian forces in North Africa surrendered. Two months later, Allied forces invaded Sicily, two miles off the mainland of Italy. From there, they launched their invasion of Italy, and in September, Italy surrendered.

In spite of its "Europe first" strategy, the United States did not ignore the Pacific where Japanese forces had continued to advance. In June 1942, the Japanese attacked Midway, a vital American naval base in the central Pacific. The American naval commander, Admiral Chester Nimitz, had learned of the Japanese plans, and the Battle of Midway was a decisive American victory. It ended Japanese expansion in the Pacific and put Japan on the defensive.

## Section 2: The Home Front

World War II fears and tensions tested civil liberties, but the war also provided new opportunities for women and minorities. Many women found jobs, especially in heavy industry. They gained confidence, knowledge, organizational experience, and a paycheck. However, few African Americans found meaningful employment with defense employers. In response, African American labor leader A. Philip Randolph planned a massive march on Washington, D.C., to protest employment discrimination. Under pressure, FDR issued Executive Order 8802. It assured fair hiring practices in any job funded with government money.

Wartime needs encouraged people to move to the South and Southwest to find jobs in defense industries. To alleviate the rural population drain, the United States initiated the bracero program. This program brought Mexican laborers to work on American farms. Although they often faced discrimination, braceros contributed greatly to the war effort.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the federal government moved 100,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast to camps in isolated locations under a policy of internment. There, they were held in

jail-like conditions for the duration of the war. Some Japanese Americans went to court to seek their rights. In the 1944

case of *Korematsu v. United States*, the Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime internment policy. When the government lifted a ban on Japanese Americans serving in the armed forces, many enlisted. The Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team fought in the Italian campaign and became the most decorated military unit in American history.

The war cost Americans \$330 billion. To help pay for it, Congress levied a tax on all working Americans. To ensure that there would be adequate raw materials, such as oil and rubber, for war production, rationing was instituted. The federal Office of War Information (OWI) worked with the media to encourage support of the war effort. Millions of Americans bought war bonds and contributed to the war effort in many other ways, large and small.

### Section 3: Victory in Europe and the Pacific

In 1943, the Allied leaders agreed to open a second front in France. On June 6, 1944, known as D-Day, British and American forces invaded France from the west, across the English Channel. More than 11,000 planes prepared the way, followed by more than 4,400 ships and landing crafts. By the end of the day, they had gained a toehold in France. By July 1, more than one million Allied troops had landed.

Germany now faced a hopeless two-front war, as the Soviets advanced from the east. In December 1944, Hitler ordered a counterattack, known as the Battle of the Bulge. Hitler's scenario called for German forces to capture communication and transportation hubs. The attack almost succeeded.

However, with help from

their bombers, the Allies managed to push the Germans out of France. By January 1945, the Soviet Army had reached the Oder River outside Berlin, and in April, the United States Army was just 50 miles west of Berlin. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, and on May 7, Germany surrendered.

American forces in the Pacific followed an island-hopping strategy in a steady path toward Japan. Japanese troops fought hard, and Japanese kamikaze pilots deliberately crashed their planes into American ships. By April 1945, American pilots finally made their way to Okinawa, 340 miles from Japan. From Okinawa, American pilots could bomb the Japanese home islands. American bombers hit factories, military bases, and cities.

Advances in technology helped determine the final outcome of the war. Albert Einstein, a famous scientist, had alerted FDR to the need to proceed with atomic development. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer was in charge of the scientific aspect of the program, known as the Manhattan Project. On the morning of July 16, 1945, the first atomic bomb was tested. In order to save American lives and to end the war, President Harry S. Truman decided to use the atomic bomb against Japan. On August 6, 1945, U.S. pilots dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Emperor Hirohito made the decision to surrender, and on August 15, the Allies celebrated V-J (Victory in Japan) Day. World War II had been the most costly war in history. As many as 60 million people—mostly civilians—had died in the conflict.

### Section 4: The Holocaust

In 1945, there was no word for the Holocaust, the most horrific event of World War II. It was the Nazi attempt to kill all Jews, as well as other "undesirables," under their control. This was part of a racist Nazi ideology that considered Aryans—white Northern European gentiles—superior to other people.

Hitler began to persecute the Jews as soon as he came to power. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws denied citizenship to Jews and segregated them at every level of society. Acts of violence against Jews were common. The most serious occurred on November 9, 1938, and is called Kristallnacht, the “Night of Broken Glass.” Secret police and military units destroyed more than 200 synagogues and 7,500 Jewish businesses, killed more than 200 Jews, and injured more than 600 others.

Hitler’s “Final Solution to the Jewish question” was genocide, the willful annihilation of all Jews living in regions under his control. Jews and other “undesirables” were confined in concentration camps. In theory, the camps were designed to turn prisoners into “useful members” of the Third Reich. There were, however, no restraints on guards, who tortured and killed prisoners without fear of reprisals. Doctors conducted bogus experiments that killed prisoners or left them deformed. Many concentration camps were death camps, where prisoners were systematically exterminated. The largest death camp was Auschwitz in southern Poland.

Before the war, the United States and other countries could have done more if they had relaxed immigration policies and accepted more Jewish refugees. Once the war started, news of the mass killings began to filter to the West. In early 1944, FDR began to respond and established the War Refugee Board, which worked with the Red Cross to save thousands of Eastern European Jews. The enormity of the Nazi crime became real for most Americans only when Allied soldiers began to liberate the concentration camps. The revelation of the Holocaust increased American support for a Jewish homeland. Therefore, when Jewish settlers in Palestine proclaimed the state of Israel, President Truman immediately recognized the new nation.

## **Section 5: Effects of the War**

As World War II drew to an end, Japan and Germany kept fighting long after their defeat was certain. The protracted fighting gave the Allies time to make plans for a postwar world. In February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Yalta on the Black Sea. At the Yalta Conference, they discussed final strategy and crucial questions concerning postwar Germany, Eastern Europe, and Asia. A few months later, the Big Three, now composed of Stalin, Truman, and Atlee, met at Potsdam to formalize the decision to divide Germany into four zones of occupation. The war ended Western European domination of the world. Two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—became the predominant nations of the postwar world.

Not all the changes that took place after the war ended were what the Allies had envisioned at Yalta and Potsdam. Communist and noncommunist interests clashed in Eastern Europe. Civil war resumed in China. Under American military occupation, Japan gained a new constitution that abolished the armed forces and enacted democratic reforms.

The United States, where industry had boomed during the war, helped to shape the postwar world economy. The United States also led the charge to establish the United Nations (UN). While it was organized on the basis of the Great Powers, all member nations sat on the General Assembly. In 1948, the UN issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which condemns slavery and torture, upholds freedom of speech and religion, and affirms the right to an adequate standard of living.

During the war, the Axis Powers had repeatedly violated the Geneva Convention, which governs the humane treatment of wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. More than a thousand Japanese were tried for war crimes, and at the Nuremberg Trials key leaders of Nazi Germany were brought to justice for their crimes against humanity.

Americans had closely followed the war and learned to think in global terms. They defined themselves as democratic, tolerant, and peaceful. The war gave renewed vigor to the fight for civil rights at home. It also ushered in a period of economic growth and prosperity.