


Unit Resources - Glossary Terms from "World War II"

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Glossary Terms from: 

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“Europe First” strategy

World War II plan to have the United States concentrate the majority of its resources and energies to achieve a victory over Germany first and then focus on defeating Japan

“final solution”

Nazi policy of exterminating European Jews during World War II

“Four Freedoms” speech

a speech delivered by U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt on January 6, 1941, stating four fundamental freedoms that he believed all the world’s people were entitled to: freedom of speech and expression, freedom to worship God in one’s own way, freedom from want, and freedom from fear

101st Airborne Division

American infantry division important for its actions on D-Day and in the Battle of the Bulge

Adolf Hitler

chancellor and führer (leader) of Germany from 1933 to 1945

Allies

Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, and other countries that allied with one another to oppose the Axis in World War II; also known as the Allied powers

amphibious landing

coordination of land, sea, and air forces for an invasion from the sea

appeasement

the act of granting favors or agreeing to unwelcome terms for an aggressor or critic, often against one’s own principles

Atlantic Charter

a 1941 joint declaration by British prime minister Winston Churchill and U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt of common war aims of Britain and the United States

Axis

the alliance formed through treaties among Germany, Italy, and Japan leading up to World War II; this alliance was known as the Axis throughout the war

Bataan Death March

the forced march of American and Filipino prisoners of war by the Japanese in World War II

Battle of Britain

months-long battle in which the German air force carried out devastating bombing raids on Britain but was ultimately defeated by Britain's Royal Air Force

Battle of the Bulge

the last major German offensive on the western front during World War II

Benito Mussolini

fascist dictator who ruled Italy from 1922 to 1943

Bernard Montgomery

British field marshal and commander of the British army in North Africa and western Europe

blitzkrieg

(German: "lightning war") a German military strategy of quick, forceful, surprise attacks aimed at overwhelming and disorienting the enemy; often shortened to "the Blitz" in reference to the Battle of Britain

D-Day

June 6, 1944; the date of the invasion of Normandy, France, by Allied forces, which opened a second front in Europe

Double V campaign

a campaign led by African American newspapers aimed at achieving victory overseas and in the fight against racism and inequality in the United States

Dwight D. Eisenhower

American general who planned the D-Day invasion and later became the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe

Eleanor Roosevelt

First Lady of the United States (1933–1945) during the presidency of her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt; also an activist for rights of women and African Americans

Emperor Hirohito

emperor of Japan from 1926 to 1989

Erwin Rommel

German field marshal and commander of the German army in North Africa, also known as the "Desert Fox"

evacuation of Dunkirk

evacuation by sea of more than 300,000 Allied soldiers who were trapped by German forces in the harbor city of Dunkirk, France, in 1940

Executive Order 9066

an order enacted by Franklin Roosevelt in February 1942 that required the internment of Japanese Americans during the course of World War II

George S. Patton

American general and commander of the United States Army in North Africa and western Europe

German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact

a 1939 pact in which the Soviet Union and Germany agreed to divide Poland between them and not go to war with each other

Holocaust

the systematic murder of Jewish people and others in Europe perceived as undesirable by the Nazis

internment camp

one of a number of "relocation" facilities around the American West and South where Japanese Americans were confined according to the requirements of Executive Order 9066

intervention

a policy of becoming involved in the affairs of other countries

invasion of Poland

Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, which led Britain and France to declare war on Germany

island hopping

series of amphibious landings during World War II that bypassed strongest-held islands to strike at the weakest-held islands

isolationism

a policy of avoiding alliances and not becoming involved in the affairs of other countries

Joseph Stalin

secretary general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1953; premier of the Soviet Union from 1941 to 1953

League of Nations

an international organization established in 1920 to resolve disputes between countries; precursor to the United Nations

lend-lease program

a program that provides military supplies, such as tanks, airplanes, and ammunition, to an ally during wartime, but with the expectation of return of supplies or some type of repayment when the war is done

Maginot Line

a nearly 200-mile-long line of defensive fortifications built by France in the 1930s to protect the country's northeastern border

Manhattan Project

research and development operation during World War II that produced the atomic bomb for the United States

militarization

the process of building an army or other military force, including recruiting, arming, and training

Munich Pact

a 1938 agreement in which Great Britain and France allowed Germany to annex part of Czechoslovakia

Nanjing Massacre

in 1937, Chinese resistance to Japanese control led to war and a brutal massacre in the city of Nanjing in which Japanese forces killed thousands of Chinese civilians

Neutrality Acts

a series of laws passed in the 1930s aimed at keeping the United States from becoming involved in a foreign war

Normandy

Coastal region of northern France that was the location of the D-Day invasion

Pacific Theater

the region of the southern Pacific Ocean where a series of battles took place during World War II

Pearl Harbor

a Pacific inlet on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, just west of the city of Honolulu; site of the U.S. naval base that Japan attacked on December 7, 1941, bringing the United States into World War II

propaganda

information, ideas, or allegations that are often biased, misleading, or false, spread with the aim of influencing public opinion

rationing

restricting the amount of food or other provisions that people are allowed to have, especially during wartime

rearmament

the process of restoring weapons and the machinery of war to a nation

Rosie the Riveter

a symbol of female workers in the defense industries

Tojo Hideki

military leader who served as Japan's prime minister from 1941 to 1945 and was later executed for war crimes

totalitarian

relating to a central government controlled by a dictator or authoritarian leader

Treaty of Versailles

the treaty signed by the Allied powers and Germany in 1919 that formally ended World War I

Winston Churchill

prime minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955