



America and World War II

Lesson 4 The European Theater of War

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why does conflict develop?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What strategies allowed for a successful campaign against the Axis powers in North Africa?*
2. *How did the two-front war fought by the Allies lead to the defeat of the Axis powers?*
3. *What is the Holocaust, and how did it begin?*

Terms to Know

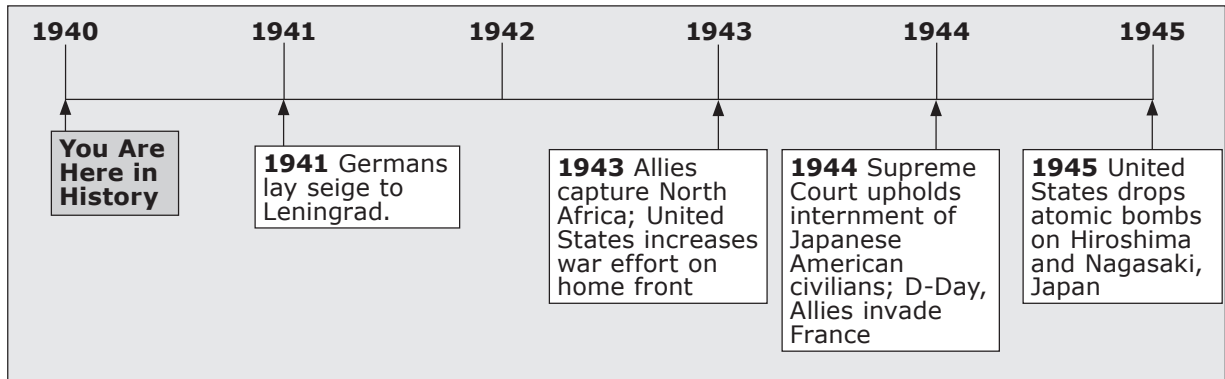
siege military blockade

genocide killing an entire ethnic group

Holocaust the mass slaughter of Jews by Nazis during World War II

concentration camp large prison camp used to hold people for political reasons

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	Why did the Allies invade North Africa first?	
	What was Operation Overlord?	

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Focusing on the Nazi Threat

When the United States joined the war, the Axis armies already controlled most of Europe. They also controlled much of North Africa. They were trying to control the Soviet Union. There was a possibility that Germany could win the war.

Stalin wanted the Allies to attack Europe. That would force Hitler to pull soldiers out of the Soviet Union. Churchill and Roosevelt wanted something else. They wanted to attack the edges of German-controlled lands. They decided to invade North Africa. This would give U.S. soldiers time to get used to fighting. It would also help the British, who were already fighting in Egypt against the Axis.

German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was nicknamed "Desert Fox." He led Axis forces in North Africa. He had success fighting in the desert. Then, in November 1942, British forces defeated Rommel's troops at El Alamein (ehl al-luh-MAYN) in Egypt. The British victory stopped the Germans from capturing the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal was important for shipping supplies.

American General Dwight D. Eisenhower was the commander of the American and British forces. The Allied soldiers landed in Morocco and Algeria. The soldiers went east and met up with British soldiers who were moving west from Egypt. In May 1943, the Allies closed in on Rommel. They drove the Germans out of North Africa.

Allied soldiers then went to southern Europe. First they took the island of Sicily, which is part of Italy. In September 1943, they landed on the mainland of Italy. Eisenhower planned this invasion too. Under Eisenhower was U.S. General George Patton and British General Bernard Montgomery. These two generals led the troops.

The Allies moved forward. The Italians overthrew Mussolini. There was a new government, and it surrendered to the Allies. German soldiers who were in Italy kept fighting, but in the end, they lost. In June 1944, the Allies captured Rome, Italy's capital.

The Allies Take Control in Europe

The war was fought on two fronts. Allied soldiers fought German troops in North Africa. Germans were also fighting in the Soviet Union. In June 1941, the Germans began a **siege** (SEEJ) of Leningrad. During a siege, nothing can go in or out of a city.



Mark the Text

- Underline the name of the general who led the German forces in North Africa. Circle the name of the general who led the Allies.



Critical Thinking

- What happened in Italy after the Allies invaded?



Reading Check

- Why did the Allies invade North Africa first instead of Europe?



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 **Reading Check**

4. Why was the Battle of the Bulge an important Allied victory?

FOLDABLES

 **Describing**

5. Place a one-tab Foldable under the heading *The Holocaust*. Write *Escalation of Violence Against Jews* on the anchor tab. In your own words, describe how the Jews were treated after Hitler became leader. Draw an arrow from the Bottom of the tab pointing up. Begin your list at the bottom of the Foldable and go up to show the escalation of violence.

The siege of Leningrad lasted almost 900 days. Food ran out, and hundreds of thousands of Soviets died. Even so, they did not surrender. In early 1944, Soviet soldiers were able to end the siege.

The Germans tried to take other cities in the Soviet Union. In 1941, they tried to take the capital city, Moscow. It was slow going. Many Germans died. When the Germans finally reached Moscow, the Soviets fought hard. The Germans had to leave. In 1942, the Germans attacked and captured Stalingrad. After they went into the city, Soviet soldiers surrounded it. The Soviets cut off German supplies. The soldiers inside Stalingrad began to starve. They finally surrendered in February 1943. This was a big turning point in the war. The Soviets started attacking. The German army pulled back.

The Allies planned an attack. The attack was called Operation Overlord. The Allies would invade Western Europe. On June 6, 1944, soldiers landed on the beaches of Normandy, France. Within a few weeks, a million Allied soldiers were there. June 6, 1944 is known as "D-Day."

The Germans could not stop the Allies. The Allies moved across France. They pushed the Germans back. On August 25, French and American soldiers freed the city of Paris.

In the fall of 1944, Germany was fighting to survive. Then they attacked in Belgium. They pushed the Allies back. The German line had a bulge in it. This became known as the Battle of the Bulge. After weeks of fighting, the Allies pushed back the Germans and headed into Germany. The Soviets reached Berlin in February 1945. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide. Germany surrendered on May 7. The next day became V-E Day which stands for "Victory in Europe."

President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. He did not live to see the end of the war. Harry S. Truman had been vice president. He became president.

The Holocaust

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As Allied troops freed German-held areas, they discovered proof of Nazi cruelty. After Hitler came to power, the Nazis began to carry out the "final solution," or **genocide** (JEH-nuh-syd). Genocide is to wipe out an entire group of people. Two-thirds of Europe's Jews were killed in the **Holocaust** (HAH-luh-kawst). The total number of Jews the Nazis killed was six million. The Nazis killed millions of

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others, too. They killed communists, Roma (Gypsies), disabled people, and others.

Beginning in 1942, the Nazis built death camps and sent the Jews there. It was a crime to be Jewish. Two such camps were Auschwitz (OWSH-vitz) and Treblinka. Jews were killed with poison gas. Many died of starvation. Many others were victims of cruel medical experiments.

Healthy prisoners were forced to do slave labor. Anyone who was sick or weak was sent to gas chambers and killed with poison gas. Then their bodies were burnt in furnaces.

Allied governments knew about death camps as early as 1942. Today, historians wonder how something so horrible could have happened and why so little was done to stop it.

The United States Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C., honors the victims. The World War II Memorial honors those who served in the military. It is dedicated to those who served their country in the military, those who died, and those who served on the home front.

Check for Understanding

Explain why fighting a war on two fronts led to the defeat of the Axis Powers.

Why was Operation Overlord a success?

✓ Reading Check

6. What groups did the Nazi government victimize?

? Critical Thinking

7. Why are the Holocaust Memorial and the World War II Memorial important?



8. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write *Two-Front War* on the anchor tab. Label the top tab *West: Europe and North Africa* and the bottom tab *East: Russia*. On the front and back of each tab, list what you remember about the war on each front. Use your Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.

Glue Foldable here