

Annotated Timeline of World War II

European Theater 1939

- **September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland.**
- September 3, 1939 England and France declared war on Germany.
- September 17, 1939 the Soviet Union invaded the eastern sections of Poland.
- **Germany began to persecute Jews and other minorities in captured territories.**

Europe Theater 1940

- Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Spain remained neutral but under Francisco Franco supported the fascist ideas of Hitler and Mussolini.
- Germany invaded France and pushed French and English armies to the French coast at **Dunkirk** where a massive evacuation to England took place (in small boats across the English Channel).
- **June 22, 1940 France surrendered to Germany.**
- Germany began 11 month bombing campaign to prepare for the invasion of Britain by 250,000 German soldiers. Under the leadership of Winston Churchill, England survived the **Battle of Britain.**
- Germany and Italy opened multiple fronts across Europe and North Africa.

Europe Theater 1941

- April 1941, Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece, both countries surrendered by mid-May.
- **German SS squads began a systematic killing of Jews and other minorities as German armies advanced across Europe.**
- **June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union**, starting a two-year campaign to defeat the Soviet Army and capture Moscow. Hitler was unable to defeat the Soviets and was forced from the Soviet Union beginning in March of 1943.

Europe Theater 1942 - 1945

- Establishment of Nazi **Death Camps** across Poland. The **Holocaust**, in which over 10 million people were killed in German camps, began in earnest. Hitler's campaign to create a *master race* through the extermination of Jews, foreign nationals, gypsies, homosexuals, mentally/physically handicapped persons, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others continued until the last days of World War II. Over 6 million of those killed because of the Nazi racist policies were Jewish.
- **November of 1942** American and British Forces began the **North African campaign**. By **July of 1943** British and U.S. forces invade **Italian peninsula from N. Africa**. The Allied forces said that they were attacking the "soft underbelly" of the Axis. Italy surrendered in Sept. 1943.
- **June 6, 1944 D-Day invasion.** Allied armies, under the command of American General Dwight D. Eisenhower, invaded Europe across the English Channel, landing at the beaches of Normandy in northern France. This began the one-year push to force Germany to surrender. In **December 1944, The Battle of the Bulge** was the final attempt by Germany to attempt to defeat Allied forces and resist forced surrender. **By April of 1945**, Berlin was surrounded by British and American troops from the west and Soviet troops from the east. Hitler committed suicide rather than face punishment at the hands of Soviet army or other Allied troops. The Soviets wanted revenge for Hitler's destruction of Stalingrad and other Nazi atrocities during the war. **V-E Day - Germany officially surrendered in May of 1945**

Pacific Theater 1941 - 1942

- Japan extended its power across the region from 1935 – 1941. On **December 7, 1941**, Japanese planes attacked the U.S. Naval station at **Pearl Harbor in Hawaii**. The U.S. lost thousands of military and civilians and almost its entire Pacific Naval Fleet. President Roosevelt called this a "day that will live in infamy" and ask Congress for a declaration of war against Japan. This was followed by war declarations against Germany and Italy (the other Axis powers).
- **The Battle of Midway in 1942** was a critical turning point for U.S. forces in the Pacific. That naval battle began to turn the tide against Japanese successes and began the series of naval battles, island hopping/land conflicts and submarine warfare that led the U.S. nearer and nearer to the Japanese mainland.

Pacific Theater 1942 - 1945

- Between 1942 and 1945, the U.S. Navy, naval air, and Marines steadily defeated Japanese forces in the Pacific. With German surrender in May of 1945, Japan was fighting the war alone in the Pacific.
- President Roosevelt died in April 1945, just weeks before Allied victory in Europe and his successor, President Harry Truman found out about a secret military project (**The Manhattan Project**) to develop the **first atomic bomb**. Military planners projected the loss of millions of soldiers' lives if the Allies attempted to invade Japan, President Truman warned the Japanese of the destructiveness of this weapon and offered surrender, but the Japanese government refused. Therefore, Truman ordered the dropping of **atomic bombs** on the Japanese cities of **Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945**. More than 100,000 lives were lost because of these attacks. Japan surrendered three days after the second bomb was dropped and signed official surrender papers on **V-J Day in September 1945**, bringing World War II to an end.

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Directions: Listed below are key events and individuals that were important in the conduct and eventual conclusion of World War II. Using your text and notes from class, complete the timeline below by adding the information required. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

Date/Event	Brief summary of the event	Effect on the war effort
<p style="text-align: center;">Sept 1939 Invasion of Poland</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">1940 Surrender of France</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">1940 – 41 Battle of Britain</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">1942 Battle of Midway</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">1943 – Surrender of Italy</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">June 6, 1944 D-Day</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">May 1945 V-E Day</p>		

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August 1945 Dropping of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki		
September 1945 V-J Day		
1930s – 1945 Concentration Camps and the <i>Holocaust</i>		
Key People	Leader for which country	Impact on the war effort
Winston Churchill		
Emperor Hirohito		
Adolf Hitler		
Benito Mussolini		
Franklin Roosevelt		
Joseph Stalin		

Why did people in 1945 call World War II the “War to end all wars”?