

**Focused Learning Lesson**  
**Analyzing the origins, course, and results of World War II**  
**American History**  
**Grade Level(s) 11th**  
**H-1B-H13**

**Overview:**

Considering the amount of information this benchmark covers, the lesson below is simply a quick overview of several selected events that encompass World War II. In the effort of student engagement, these lessons involve students analyzing primary documents and summarizing some of the major events of the World War II era. Students will complete an unfinished timeline using the documents in an effort to determine the actions and times of the selected events in regards to other listed events.

**Approximate Duration:**

45 Minutes

**Benchmarks with GLEs:**

H-1B-H13 – Analyzing the origins, course, and results of World War II

GLEs:

38. Describe the conditions that led to the outbreak of World War II.
39. Describe the events that led the United States into World War II.
40. Describe the course of World War II, including major turning points and key strategic decisions.
41. Describe the effects of World War II on the U.S. home front and Europe, including the Holocaust.
42. Explain the consequences and impact of World War II (e.g., Cold War, United Nations, Baby Boom).

**Objectives:**

1. Analyze primary documents from the World War II era
2. Complete a World War II timeline using given documents and references

**Teacher Preparation:**

- Read *Teacher Attachment 1* “Teacher Notes”
- Review *Teacher Attachment 2* “Teacher Resources”
- Make copies of *Student Attachment 1 and 2*

**Materials/Equipment/Resources:**

- Pen or pencils
- Copies of the attached students sheets for each student or group
- Optional – Computer or Textbook resources for additional research

**Activities and Handouts:**

- **Teacher Attachment 1** *Teacher Attachment and Answer Key* – Background information and detailed information about the lesson procedures.
- **Teacher Attachment 2** *Teacher Resources* – Additional resources that can be used by the teacher to gain background information or change the lesson.
- **Student Attachment 1** *World War II Timeline Activity* – Students will complete this timeline using the documents in Student Handout 2.
- **Student Attachment 2** *World War II Era Primary Documents*– Collection of ten primary documents from the World War II era that students will read and evaluate to determine what date they were written or announced.

**Lesson Procedures:****Set or Opener**

After a brief class discussion, the teacher should open this lesson with a brief description of the events and actions that led to World War II. The timeline provided as a student handout can be used to review with students their prior knowledge of World War II events. Be sure to include actions that took place during the years between World War I and World War II to ensure that students understand the in-depth problems that led to the war.

A good introduction to this lesson can be a simple “bell ringer” question such as, “Write down everything that you can remember about World War II.” Lead a class discussion on some of the points that students make. Use this time to assess prior knowledge of the subject.

**Body of the Lesson**

Give each student or group a copy of *Student Handouts 1 and 2*. Go over the instructions with the students and explain to them that they will be reading the 10 primary documents in *Student Handout 2* and once they have completed and / or discussed the documents, they will begin to decide what date each event took place. Tell students that clues in the documents and on the timeline will help them place the events in the correct order, Allow the students to begin and monitor their progress for 15-30 minutes.

Once students have complete the timeline have them compare their timeline with classmates or other groups, Once the students have shared their timeline, go over each answer and discuss with the students how they arrived at their answers. Be sure to take your time and question students on some of the major topics that are on the timeline.

**Closure**

Have students correct their answers and keep the handouts for future reference.

## TEACHER NOTES AND ANSWER KEY

### TEACHER NOTES:

- This lesson is intended to open up dialogue with students using primary documents. It is intended to allow students to use critical thinking skills to organize a timeline of events using prior knowledge, provided timeline prompts, and prompts in the document that they will read.
- This lesson should be used as a way to discuss some of the major points of World War II with students and evaluate what prior knowledge they have by assessing the success they have organizing events during World War II.
- It is highly encouraged to discuss other points on the timeline and allow students to ask questions not completely associated with the exact lesson in an attempt to encourage teachable moments.

### ANSWER KEY TO THE DOCUMENT ACTIVITY:

**Document 1** - Proclamation by Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Reich, to the German Army, September 1, 1939.

**Document 2** - Act of Military Surrender Signed at Berlin on the 8th day of May, 1945.

**Document 3** - Master Lend-Lease Agreement Preliminary Agreement Between the United States and the United Kingdom, February 23, 1942.

**Document 4** - *Wannsee Protocol, January 20, 1942.*

**Document 5** – The Tehran Conference, November 28-December 1, 1943.

**Document 6** - The Neutrality Act of 1937 May 1, 1937.

**Document 7** – *Franklin D. Roosevelt: "A date which will live in infamy" 8 December 1941.*

**Document 8** – Harry S. Truman's Announcement of the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima 6 Aug 1945.

**Document 9** - *D-Day Order* by Dwight D. Eisenhower - June 6, 1944.

**Document 10** - Three-Power Pact Between Germany, Italy, and Japan, signed at Berlin, September 27, 1940.

## TEACHER RESOURCES

### WEBSITE RESOURCES

<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/documents/misc/stcas.htm> - WWII casualties list  
<http://www.teacheroz.com/WWIIDocs.htm> - WWII era primary documents  
<http://members.aol.com/TeacherNet/WWII.html> - Miscellaneous WWII site list  
<http://killeenroos.com/link/war.htm> - Miscellaneous WWII site list  
<http://rs6.loc.gov/fsowhome.html> - Library of Congress site with thousands of photos  
<http://www.ushmm.org/> - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
<http://www.ddaymuseum.org/> - National D-Day Museum  
<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/collections/wwii-posters/>  
- World War II Poster Collection  
<http://www.academicinfo.net/histbomb.html> - Atomic Bomb History  
<http://www.onwar.com/maps/wwii/> - World War II Map Site  
<http://history.acusd.edu/gen/WW2Timeline/start.html> - World War II timelines

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Students who have internet access and teachers who have time could explore more primary documents during the World War II era by accessing the websites above.
- Have students create their own timeline using researched documents.
- Have students find a document during World War II and research the context in which the document was written. Using this research, have students create a presentation to explain their document and brief the class on the context of why it was written.
- Have students go on a virtual field trip using the above links such as the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

## WORLD WAR II TIMELINE ACTIVITY

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Below is an abbreviated timeline of World War II that has ten empty blanks with dates next to them. Read the documents excerpts on *Student Handout 2* and using the timeline below and information in the primary documents, decide when each event took place. Once you have read the documents begin matching them with the date that they were written or stated by writing the number of the document in the blank next to the date.

- 1919 June 28 Treaty of Versailles signed
- 1921 July 29 Adolf Hitler assumes control of National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party
- 1923 Nov. 8-9 Hitler's Munich Beer Hall Putsch fails
- 1925 Jan. 3 Mussolini dismisses Italian parliament, begins to assume dictatorial powers
- July 18 Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, is published
- 1929 Oct. 29 Wall Street Stock Market crashes
- 1931 Sept. 18 Japanese Army invades Manchuria
- 1932 Nov. 8 Franklin Delano Roosevelt elected President of the United States
- 1933 Jan. 30 Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg
- Feb. 27 German Reichstag burns down; communists blamed, arrested.
- Mar. 23 Enabling Act passed by Reichstag; Hitler assumes dictatorial power
- July 14 Nazi party declared official party of Germany; all other parties banned
- Oct. 14 Germany quits League of Nations
- 1934 June 30 Hitler orders murder of SA Chief Ernst Roehm in "Night of the Long Knives"
- Aug. 2 German President Paul von Hindenburg dies
- Aug. 19 Hitler combines the offices of president and chancellor; assumes the title of *Führer*
- 1935 Mar. 16 Military conscription introduced in Germany in violation of Versailles treaty

- Sept. 15 Nuremberg race laws promulgated
- Oct. 3 Italian Army invades Ethiopia
- 1936** Mar. 7 German troops remilitarize the Rhineland in violation of Versailles treaty
- May 9 Italian campaign in Ethiopia ends
- July 17 Spanish Civil War breaks out; Hitler and Mussolini send aid to Franco
- Oct. 1 Franco becomes dictator of Spain
- Oct. 25 Rome-Berlin "Axis" alliance formed
- 1937** **May 1** \_\_\_\_\_
- May 28 Neville Chamberlain becomes Prime Minister of England
- June 11 Josef Stalin begins purge of Red Army
- July 7 Full-scale war erupts between China and Japan
- 1938** Mar. 12 Germany invades Austria; *Anschluss* (union) proclaimed
- Sept. 30 Munich conference held to solve Sudeten question
- Oct. 15 German troops occupy Czech Sudetenland
- Nov. 9-10 Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass)
- 1939** Aug. 23 Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact signed
- Sept. 1** \_\_\_\_\_
- Sept. 3 Britain and France declare war on Germany
- 1940** June 14 Nazis take Paris
- June 22 France capitulates to Nazis
- July 10 Battle of Britain begins
- Sept. 27** \_\_\_\_\_
- Oct. 7 German troops occupy Romania
- Oct. 28 Italian Army attacks Greece
- Nov. 5 Roosevelt re-elected

- 1941** Mar. 11 Lend-Lease Act signed by Roosevelt  
 June 22 Hitler launches operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union  
 July 31 Planning begins for "Final Solution," the systematic destruction of the Jews  
 Aug. 12 Atlantic Charter signed by Roosevelt and Churchill  
 Aug. 20 German siege of Soviet city of Leningrad begins  
 Sept. 1 Jews ordered to wear yellow Star of David  
 Dec. 7 Japanese attack naval base at Pearl Harbor  
**Dec. 8** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1942** Jan. Mass gassing of Jews begins at Auschwitz  
**Jan. 20** \_\_\_\_\_
- Feb. 23** \_\_\_\_\_
- April American citizens of Japanese descent forced into "relocation centers"  
 Sept. 13 German attack on Stalingrad begins  
 Nov. 8 Allied invasion of North Africa begins in "Operation Torch"
- 1943** Jan. 14-23 Roosevelt and Churchill meet at Casablanca, issue unconditional surrender demand
- Apr. 19 S.S. begins "liquidation" of the Warsaw ghetto  
 July 9-10 Allied forces land on Sicily  
**Nov. 28** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1944** June 5 Allied forces enter Rome  
**June 6** \_\_\_\_\_
- July 20 Hitler survives assassination attempt  
 July 24 Soviet forces liberate concentration camp at Majdanek
- Dec. 16 German Army launches "Battle of the Bulge" offensive on the Western Front
- 1945** Jan. 9 American forces invade Philippine island of Luzon

- Jan. 16 Battle of the Bulge ends in German defeat
- Jan. 26 Soviets liberate Auschwitz
- Mar. 9 Tokyo firebombed
- Mar. 16 Japanese resistance on Iwo Jima ends
- Apr. 12 Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies of stroke; Harry Truman becomes President; Allies liberate Belsen and Buchenwald concentration camps
- Apr. 30 Adolf Hitler and wife Eva Braun commit suicide in Chancellery bunker
- May 2 All German forces in Italy surrender
- May 7 Unconditional surrender of all German forces
- May**
- 
- 8**
- July 16 First U.S. atomic bomb tested at Los Alamos, New Mexico; Potsdam Conference begins
- Aug.**
- 
- 6**
- Aug. 8 Soviet Union declares war on Japan; Soviet forces invade Manchuria
- Aug. 9 Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
- Aug. 14 Unconditional surrender of Japanese forces
- Aug. 15 Victory over Japan (VJ) Day

## WORLD WAR II ERA PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

### Document 1

#### *Proclamation by Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Reich, to the German Army,*

The Polish State has refused the peaceful settlement of relations, which I desired, and has appealed to arms. Germans in Poland are persecuted with bloody terror and driven from their houses. A series of violations of the frontier, intolerable to a great Power, prove that Poland is no longer willing to respect the frontier of the Reich.

In order to put an end to this lunacy, I have no other choice than to meet force with force from now on. The German Army will fight the battle for the honor and the vital rights of reborn Germany with hard determination. I expect that every soldier, mindful of the great traditions of eternal German soldiery, will ever remain conscious that he is a representative of the National-Socialist Greater Germany. Long live our people and our Reich!

### Document 2

#### *A. Act of Military Surrender Signed at Berlin*

#### **59 Stat. 1957; Executive Agreement Series 502**

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Supreme High Command of the Red Army all forces on land, at sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time .....remain in the positions occupied at that time and to disarm completely, handing over their weapons and equipment to the local Allied commanders or officers designated by Representatives of the Allied Supreme Commands. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment, and also to machines of all kinds, armament, apparatus, and all the technical means of prosecution of war in general....

### **Document 3**

#### **Master Lend-Lease Agreement Excerpt**

##### ***Preliminary Agreement Between the United States and the United Kingdom...***

##### ***ARTICLE I***

The Government of the United States of America will continue to supply the Government of the United Kingdom with such defense articles, defense services, and defense information as the President shall authorize to be transferred or provided.

##### ***ARTICLE II***

The Government of the United Kingdom will continue to contribute to the defense of the United States of America and the strengthening thereof and will provide such articles, services, facilities or information as it may be in a position to supply....

### **Document 4**

#### **Wannsee Protocol....**

The Reichsfuhrer-SS and the Chief of the German Police (Chief of the Security Police and the SD) was entrusted with the official central handling of the final solution of the Jewish question without regard to geographic borders.

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD then gave a short report of the struggle, which has been carried on thus far against this enemy, the essential points being the following:

- a) the expulsion of the Jews from every sphere of life of the German people,
- b) the expulsion of the Jews from the living space of the German people.

## Document 5

### THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE

#### (c) Military Conclusions of the Tehran Conference

The Conference:

(1) Agreed that the Partisans in Yugoslavia should be supported by supplies and equipment to the greatest possible extent, and also by commando operations:

(2) Agreed that, from the military point of view, it was most desirable that Turkey should come into the war on the side of the Allies before the end of the year:

(3) Took note of Marshal Stalin's statement that if Turkey found herself at war with Germany, and as a result Bulgaria declared war on Turkey or attacked her, the Soviet would immediately be at war with Bulgaria. The Conference further took note that this fact could be explicitly stated in the forthcoming negotiations to bring Turkey into the war:

(4) Took note that Operation OVERLORD would be launched during May 1944, in conjunction with an operation against Southern France. The latter operation would be undertaken in as great a strength as availability of landing craft permitted. The Conference further took note of Marshal Stalin's statement that the Soviet forces would launch an offensive at about the same time with the object of preventing the German forces from transferring from the Eastern to the Western Front:

(5) Agreed that the military staffs of the Three Powers should henceforward keep in close touch with each other in regard to the impending operations in Europe. In particular it was agreed that a cover plan to mystify and mislead the enemy as regards these operations should be concerted between the staffs concerned.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

JOSEPH V. STALIN

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

## Document 6

### THE NEUTRALITY ACT

Excerpt

#### Export of Arms, Ammunition, and Implements of War

Section 1. (a) Whenever the President shall find that there exists a state of war between, or among, two or more foreign states, the President shall proclaim such fact, and it shall thereafter be unlawful to export, or attempt to export, or cause to be exported, arms, ammunition, or implements of war from any place in the United States to any belligerent state named in such proclamation, or to any neutral state for transshipment to, or for the use of, any such belligerent state.

## Document 7

#### Franklin D. Roosevelt: "A date which will live in infamy"

Yesterday, ... - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday, the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island. This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

## **Document 8**

### **HARRY S. TRUMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DROPPING OF AN ATOMIC BOMB ON HIROSHIMA**

"Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It had more than 2,000 times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam," which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare. The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid manyfold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present form these bombs are now in production, and even more powerful forms are in development. It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

## **Document 9**

### **D-Day Order - by Dwight D. Eisenhower**

You will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world. Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped, and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely. But this is the year.... Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeat in open battle man to man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our home fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory. Good luck, and let us all beseech the blessings of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

## Document 10

### **B. Three-Power Pact Between Germany, Italy, and Japan, Signed at Berlin...Excerpt**

The governments of Germany, Italy and Japan, considering it as a condition precedent of any lasting peace that all nations of the world be given each its own proper place, have decided to stand by and co-operate with one another in regard to their efforts in greater East Asia and regions of Europe respectively wherein it is their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things calculated to promote the mutual prosperity and welfare of the peoples concerned.

Furthermore, it is the desire of the three governments to extend co-operation to such nations in other spheres of the world as may be inclined to put forth endeavors along lines similar to their own, in order that their ultimate aspirations for world peace may thus be realized.

Accordingly, the governments of Germany, Italy and Japan have agreed as follows:

#### **ARTICLE ONE**

Japan recognizes and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in establishment of a new order in Europe.

#### **ARTICLE TWO**

Germany and Italy recognize and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in greater East Asia.

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#### Document Sources:

1. Avalon Project at Yale Law School  
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/wwii.htm>
2. National Archives and Records Administration <http://www.archives.gov/>