War and Turning Points

Read how choices and actions shaped World War II.

SS24.5.9 "Describe the reasons for the United States' entry into World War II and identify its contributions toward the defeat of the Axis powers..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the reason the United States entered the war, circle two American military contributions, and number the two days that marked victories. Use your marks to connect actions with their results.

From Pearl Harbor to Victory

1 Before war began in Europe, the United States and Britain were democracies with elections. Nazi Germany's totalitarian rulers crushed opposition and controlled what people could say. Germany, Italy, and Japan became the Axis powers. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. The United States entered the war. Its government then forced many Japanese Americans into camps, even though they had done nothing wrong.

2 American forces fought on land, at sea, and in the air. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, U.S. troops and other Allied forces landed in France, opening a way to push German forces back. The Tuskegee Airmen, Black American pilots trained in Alabama, flew combat missions over Europe and protected bombers. Alabama native Henry E. Erwin earned the Medal of Honor after carrying a burning flare out of a bomber, saving its crew.

3 The Holocaust was Nazi Germany's murder of six million Jews and millions of others. Allied troops freed prisoners from Nazi camps. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, called Victory in Europe, or VE, Day. U.S. scientists developed atomic bombs, which the United States dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bombs killed civilians. Japan surrendered after the bombings and the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan. Victory over Japan, or VJ, Day marked the war's end.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How were the democracies of the United States and Britain different from Nazi Germany's totalitarian government?

2. How did Pearl Harbor change the United States' role in the war, and what unjust action followed at home?

3. How did the Tuskegee Airmen and Henry E. Erwin each help American forces?

4. Why do the Holocaust and VE Day represent very different events in Europe?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining how D-Day and the atomic bombings each changed the war's course. Include one sentence about a human cost or injustice, and end by naming the victory each action helped lead toward.

ANSWER KEY

War and Turning Points

GRADE 5 · SS24.5.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the reason the United States entered the war, circle two American military contributions, and number the two days that marked victories. Use your marks to connect actions with their results. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How were the democracies of the United States and Britain different from Nazi Germany's totalitarian government?	**The United States and Britain held elections. Nazi Germany's rulers crushed opposition and controlled what people could say.**
2	How did Pearl Harbor change the United States' role in the war, and what unjust action followed at home?	**The attack brought the United States into the war. Its government then forced many Japanese Americans into camps.**
3	How did the Tuskegee Airmen and Henry E. Erwin each help American forces?	**The Tuskegee Airmen flew combat missions and protected bombers. Erwin saved a bomber's crew by carrying a burning flare out of the plane.**
4	Why do the Holocaust and VE Day represent very different events in Europe?	**The Holocaust was Nazi Germany's murder of millions of people. VE Day marked Germany's surrender.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On D-Day, American troops and their allies landed in France and helped push German forces back. U.S. atomic bombs devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki and helped bring Japan closer to surrender. The bombs killed civilians, a terrible human cost. These actions helped lead toward VE Day in Europe and VJ Day in the Pacific.

Accept answers that distinguish the events and connect each action to its result. For the museum label, students need not suggest that the atomic bombings were the only reason Japan surrendered.