Turning Points, Lasting Choices

Trace how military victories changed territory and postwar policy.

SS24.US2.7 "Analyze how United States military involvement shaped major events of World War II. 7a Develop an argument supporting the thesis that major battles of World War II in which the United States was involved were turning points of the war and..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where an Allied advance became possible or Axis control weakened. Circle the military action that caused each change, then number the two changes.

From Battlefields to Policy

1. At Midway in June 1942, U.S. codebreakers helped Admiral Chester Nimitz position carriers to ambush a Japanese attack. U.S. pilots sank four Japanese carriers, while Japan sank one U.S. carrier. Japan retained its occupied islands, but its navy could no longer expand across the Pacific as easily. The United States gained room to begin offensives against Japanese-held territory. Midway was a turning point because it shifted the initiative, not because it instantly freed the islands Japan occupied.

2. In June 1944, General Dwight Eisenhower commanded the Allied invasion of German-occupied France at Normandy. Unlike Nimitz's carrier ambush, Eisenhower coordinated land, sea, and air forces from several nations. The Allies gained a foothold, then liberated Paris in August. That winter, Germany's last major offensive in the west, the Battle of the Bulge, failed. Allied forces then pushed into Germany. These battles mattered because Germany lost occupied ground and could no longer stop the Allied advance from the west.

3. In 1945, U.S. troops liberated camps, including Buchenwald, and documented Nazi crimes. U.S. prosecutors later helped try Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg Trials. In the Pacific, U.S. island campaigns moved forces closer to Japan; President Harry Truman ordered atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bombings killed many civilians; Japan surrendered after the attacks and Soviet entry into the war. Historians debate whether the attacks were necessary. The war's destruction and genocide helped drive U.S. support for the United Nations and lasting alliances to deter future wars.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was Midway a turning point even though Japan still occupied its islands?

2. How did Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge together change Axis control in Europe?

3. How did Nimitz's and Eisenhower's methods differ, and what goal did they share?

4. What makes the effectiveness of Truman's atomic decision difficult to judge from the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short 1946 policy memo arguing whether the United States should build lasting overseas alliances. Use two battlefield changes and one other wartime consequence from the passage to support your position.

ANSWER KEY

Turning Points, Lasting Choices

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places where an Allied advance became possible or Axis control weakened. Circle the military action that caused each change, then number the two changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was Midway a turning point even though Japan still occupied its islands?	**The loss of four carriers made Japanese expansion harder and gave the United States room to begin offensives.**
2	How did Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge together change Axis control in Europe?	**The Normandy invasion gave the Allies a foothold in occupied France. After Germany's offensive at the Bulge failed, Allied forces pushed into Germany.**
3	How did Nimitz's and Eisenhower's methods differ, and what goal did they share?	**Nimitz positioned carriers for an ambush; Eisenhower coordinated a multinational invasion by land, sea, and air. Both sought to halt Axis advances and enable Allied offensives.**
4	What makes the effectiveness of Truman's atomic decision difficult to judge from the passage?	**Japan surrendered after the attacks, but Soviet entry also preceded surrender. The attacks killed many civilians, and historians debate whether they were necessary.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The United States should build lasting overseas alliances. At Midway, U.S. forces gained the chance to challenge Japan's hold on Pacific territory, but one battle did not free the occupied islands. At Normandy, Allied nations worked together to enter occupied France and eventually push into Germany. Those victories show the value of coordinating forces across borders. U.S. troops also found evidence of Nazi crimes when they liberated camps. Alliances could help nations respond together to future threats rather than wait until another war spreads.

Accept other defensible policy positions in the memo if they use two accurate battlefield changes, one additional wartime consequence, and a clear link to the proposed policy.