Alabama at War

Read and trace the state's many roles in World War II

SS24.US2.8a "Describe Alabama's participation in World War II, including the role of the Tuskegee Airmen, housing prisoner of war (POW) camps, growth of the Port of Mobile, production of steel in Birmingham, and the establishment of military bases."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase for each of Alabama's five wartime roles: the Tuskegee Airmen, POW camps, the Port of Mobile, Birmingham steel, and new military bases. Write 1 through 5 beside your marks in that order.

A War Reaches Alabama

1. During World War II, Alabama served as a place to train troops and aircrews, not just a place to send them overseas. Camp Rucker, established in 1942 near Ozark, trained soldiers for the Army. At Tuskegee Army Air Field, Black Americans trained as military pilots while the armed forces remained segregated. Some became members of the Tuskegee Airmen, including pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, who escorted bombers on missions over Europe. Their combat record challenged racist claims that Black pilots could not fly effectively. These bases made Alabama part of the war before many service members reached a battlefield.

2. In Mobile, wartime demand turned the waterfront into a busy industrial and shipping center. Shipyards, including Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company, built vessels for the war effort and hired thousands of workers. The Port of Mobile grew as ships, materials, and workers moved through the area. Farther inland, Birmingham's steel mills produced steel needed for ships and military equipment. Together, the port and steel industry linked Alabama's labor and raw materials to military supply needs. Growth also strained cities: new workers needed housing and services, and Black workers still faced discrimination in jobs and daily life.

3. Alabama also held enemy prisoners captured far from the state. Camp Aliceville, in western Alabama, housed German prisoners of war under U.S. guard. A POW camp had a different purpose from Camp Rucker or Tuskegee Army Air Field: it detained captured enemy personnel rather than training U.S. service members. These separate roles were connected by the same global conflict. Alabama trained people, held prisoners, built ships, moved supplies through Mobile, and produced steel in Birmingham. The war brought jobs and expanded facilities, but it did not erase segregation or the pressure rapid growth placed on local communities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Describe how Tuskegee Army Air Field and the Tuskegee Airmen connected Alabama to the fighting overseas.

2. Describe how the Port of Mobile and Birmingham's steel mills each supported the war effort.

3. What was Camp Aliceville's wartime role, and how did it differ from Camp Rucker's role?

4. Describe one way wartime work expanded Alabama's role in the war and one problem that continued or grew alongside it.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label describing at least four of Alabama's five wartime roles. Explain one connection between two roles and include one tension or cost described in the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Alabama at War

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.8a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase for each of Alabama's five wartime roles: the Tuskegee Airmen, POW camps, the Port of Mobile, Birmingham steel, and new military bases. Write 1 through 5 beside your marks in that order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Describe how Tuskegee Army Air Field and the Tuskegee Airmen connected Alabama to the fighting overseas.	**Black pilots trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field. Tuskegee Airmen, including pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, later escorted bombers over Europe.**
2	Describe how the Port of Mobile and Birmingham's steel mills each supported the war effort.	**The Port of Mobile handled growing wartime traffic, while Birmingham's mills produced steel needed for ships and military equipment.**
3	What was Camp Aliceville's wartime role, and how did it differ from Camp Rucker's role?	**Camp Aliceville held German prisoners of war. Camp Rucker trained U.S. Army soldiers.**
4	Describe one way wartime work expanded Alabama's role in the war and one problem that continued or grew alongside it.	**For example, Mobile shipyards built vessels for the war, but the arrival of workers increased demand for housing and services. Answers may instead cite continued discrimination.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Alabama's role in World War II reached beyond its soldiers overseas. At Tuskegee Army Air Field, Black pilots trained for combat despite segregation; some later escorted bombers over Europe. Camp Rucker prepared other Army troops, while Camp Aliceville held German prisoners. Birmingham mills made steel for military needs, and Mobile's expanding port and shipyards helped move supplies and build vessels. Inland steelmaking and coastal shipbuilding both supported military supply needs. These efforts created jobs, but rapid growth strained housing, and discrimination persisted.

Accept accurate paraphrases grounded in the passage. For the museum label, check for at least four distinct roles, a clear connection between two roles, a passage-based tension or cost, and 75 to 95 words.