War's Turning Points

Leaders, battles, and lives changed by World War II

SS24.WH.10 "Evaluate the economic, global, political, and social consequences of World War II. 10a Analyze the role of major Axis and Allied leaders during World War II, including both political and military leaders..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two leader decisions, circle the locations of three turning points, and number two contrasting civilian experiences. Use your marks to trace how choices and battles changed the war and people's lives.

Decisions Beyond the Battlefield

1. In 1941, German dictator Adolf Hitler ordered an invasion of the Soviet Union, seeking land and resources. Soviet general Georgy Zhukov helped plan the counterattack around Stalingrad, a city on the Volga River. The Soviet victory there in 1943 destroyed a large German army and shifted momentum in Europe toward the Allies. Britain's prime minister Winston Churchill had refused to make peace after France fell in 1940, keeping Britain in the fight as a base for later Allied attacks. These leaders made different choices: Hitler widened the war, while Churchill kept an alliance alive and Zhukov helped reverse a battlefield advance.

2. In North Africa, German field marshal Erwin Rommel led Axis forces toward Egypt, threatening the Suez Canal, a vital shipping route. British general Bernard Montgomery stopped Rommel's advance at El Alamein, Egypt, in 1942. That Allied victory helped protect the canal and opened the way for an Axis retreat. Across the Pacific, Japanese admiral Isoroku Yamamoto planned an attack on the U.S. fleet near Midway Atoll in 1942. U.S. admiral Chester Nimitz used intelligence about Japan's plans to prepare a defense. The U.S. victory at Midway sank four Japanese aircraft carriers, limiting Japan's ability to launch major offensives.

3. For civilians, these shifts had costs far beyond the front lines. In Britain, German air raids killed civilians and damaged homes, while rationing limited food and clothing. In Japan, U.S. firebombing destroyed urban neighborhoods, and shortages grew as shipping collapsed. Nazi Germany's murder of six million Jews showed that persecution was also a central part of the war, not simply a side effect of combat. After the war, rebuilding cities strained national budgets, and millions of people needed new homes. Defeated Germany and Japan lost their wartime governments; the United States and Soviet Union emerged as rival powers, reshaping global politics.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Hitler's and Churchill's political choices affect the course of the war in Europe?

2. How did Montgomery's action at El Alamein and Nimitz's action at Midway help make those battles turning points?

3. How were civilians in Britain and Japan affected in similar and different ways?

4. How did damage to cities create both an economic and a social problem after the war?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of 65 to 85 words that links one leader's action to a turning point, compares civilians in two countries, and judges which postwar consequence mattered most. Name at least two places and explain your judgment.

ANSWER KEY

War's Turning Points

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two leader decisions, circle the locations of three turning points, and number two contrasting civilian experiences. Use your marks to trace how choices and battles changed the war and people's lives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Hitler's and Churchill's political choices affect the course of the war in Europe?	**Hitler widened the war by invading the Soviet Union. Churchill kept Britain fighting, providing a base for later Allied attacks.**
2	How did Montgomery's action at El Alamein and Nimitz's action at Midway help make those battles turning points?	**Montgomery stopped the Axis advance toward the Suez Canal, helping force a retreat. Nimitz prepared a defense that helped sink four Japanese carriers, limiting Japan's ability to launch major offensives.**
3	How were civilians in Britain and Japan affected in similar and different ways?	**Both faced deadly bombing and shortages. British civilians also lived with rationing of food and clothing; in Japan, shipping losses worsened shortages and firebombing destroyed urban neighborhoods.**
4	How did damage to cities create both an economic and a social problem after the war?	**Rebuilding cities strained national budgets, while millions of people needed new homes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union widened the war in Europe. At Stalingrad, Zhukov helped plan a counterattack that destroyed a German army and shifted momentum toward the Allies. British civilians faced bombing and rationing, while Japanese civilians faced firebombing and shortages as shipping collapsed. The most lasting consequence was the rise of the United States and Soviet Union as rivals. Their new power changed global politics after Germany and Japan lost their wartime governments.

Accept other accurate leader and turning-point links supported by the passage. For the museum label, look for a clear comparison and a reasoned judgment, not one particular choice of consequence.