Decisions at War

How political and military leaders shaped World War II

SS24.WH.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 each leader's name, circle the action that leader took, and number the leaders 1 for political or 2 for military. Use your marks to compare how their decisions shaped the war.

Leaders and Their Choices

1 In 1941, Axis leaders sought to expand their control. Adolf Hitler, Germany's dictator, ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union despite an existing pact between the two countries. Japan's prime minister, Hideki Tojo, supported war against the United States after tensions over Japan's expansion in Asia. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto planned the attack on Pearl Harbor, hoping to cripple the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The attack brought the United States into the war, but it did not destroy American aircraft carriers.

2 On the Allied side, political leaders had to keep countries fighting together. British prime minister Winston Churchill refused to seek peace with Hitler when Britain faced German air attacks in 1940. U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt supplied the Allies before Pearl Harbor and later backed a major invasion of German-occupied France. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin demanded a second front in western Europe while Soviet forces fought Germany in the east. Their shared enemy did not erase disagreements about when and where to attack.

3 Military leaders turned those broad goals into operations. U.S. general Dwight D. Eisenhower coordinated Allied forces for the June 1944 landings in Normandy, France. Soviet general Georgy Zhukov helped plan the defense of Moscow in 1941 and later commanded Soviet forces in major offensives toward Germany. Eisenhower needed cooperation among troops from several countries; Zhukov directed vast forces on the eastern front. Political leaders decided national goals and resources, while commanders planned and led battles. Both kinds of decisions shaped whether the Allies could defeat the Axis.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Tojo's and Yamamoto's roles differ in Japan's conflict with the United States?

2. How did Churchill and Roosevelt each help the Allied war effort through political decisions?

3. How did Eisenhower's work in Normandy relate to Stalin's demand for a second front?

4. What different challenges did Eisenhower and Zhukov face as Allied military leaders?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum caption connecting Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union to Zhukov's actions. Explain how their different roles shaped the fighting, and include one specific event from the passage.

Decisions at War

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each leader's name, circle the action that leader took, and number the leaders 1 for political or 2 for military. Use your marks to compare how their decisions shaped the war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Tojo's and Yamamoto's roles differ in Japan's conflict with the United States?	**Tojo, a political leader, supported war against the United States. Yamamoto, a military leader, planned the attack on Pearl Harbor.**
2	How did Churchill and Roosevelt each help the Allied war effort through political decisions?	**Churchill refused to seek peace with Hitler. Roosevelt supplied the Allies before Pearl Harbor and later backed an invasion of German-occupied France.**
3	How did Eisenhower's work in Normandy relate to Stalin's demand for a second front?	**Stalin wanted fighting against Germany in western Europe while Soviet forces fought in the east. Eisenhower coordinated Allied landings in Normandy, opening that western front.**
4	What different challenges did Eisenhower and Zhukov face as Allied military leaders?	**Eisenhower had to coordinate troops from several countries for the Normandy landings. Zhukov directed large Soviet forces on the eastern front.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Hitler, a political leader, ordered Germany to invade the Soviet Union in 1941. Zhukov, a Soviet commander, helped plan Moscow's defense as Soviet forces resisted Germany. Hitler's decision brought the war to the Soviet Union, while Zhukov's military planning helped organize its defense.

Accept equivalent explanations grounded in the passage. For the caption, look for three sentences, an accurate event, and a clear connection between political and military roles.