How Wars End

Trace surrender and accountability in World War II

SS24.WH.12 "Trace the events that led to Victory in Europe (VE) Day, and explain how the use of atomic bombs ended the war in the Pacific Theater. 12a Explain the origins, conduct, and outcomes of the Nuremberg Trials and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline events that pushed Germany or Japan toward surrender, circle the surrender dates, and write 1, 2, and 3 beside the trials' origin, conduct, and outcomes.

From Battlefields to Courtrooms

1 On June 6, 1944, Allied troops landed in Normandy, opening a major western front against Nazi Germany. As they pushed through France, Soviet forces advanced from the east. Germany's last major attack in the west, the Battle of the Bulge, failed in early 1945. Western Allies then crossed the Rhine, while Soviet troops fought into Berlin. Adolf Hitler died by suicide on April 30. With its armies defeated and its capital taken, Germany signed an unconditional surrender on May 7. The surrender took effect on May 8, 1945, celebrated as Victory in Europe, or VE, Day. The war against Japan continued.

2 In the Pacific, costly battles on Iwo Jima and Okinawa showed how fierce an invasion of Japan might be. Japan rejected an Allied demand to surrender in July 1945. On August 6, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing tens of thousands immediately. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, and a second U.S. atomic bomb struck Nagasaki on August 9. The bombs caused immense civilian suffering, and Soviet entry added military pressure. The bombings and Soviet entry intensified the crisis that led Japan's leaders to accept surrender. Japan announced its decision on August 15 and signed the surrender document on September 2.

3 Military surrender did not settle responsibility for wartime crimes. In 1945, the United States, Britain, France, and Soviet Union created the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to try major Nazi leaders. From 1945 to 1946, prosecutors presented documents and witnesses to support charges including crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Several defendants were executed or imprisoned, and some were acquitted. In Tokyo, an Allied tribunal established under U.S. occupation tried Japanese leaders from 1946 to 1948 on similar charges. Its verdicts also included executions and prison terms. The trials established that leaders could be held personally responsible under international law.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Allied advances from two directions and Germany's failed attack help bring about VE Day?

2. How did the atomic bombings and Soviet declaration of war put pressure on Japan? When did Japan announce and formally sign its surrender?

3. Why was the Nuremberg tribunal created, and how did prosecutors make their case?

4. How were the Tokyo tribunal's purpose and outcomes similar to Nuremberg's?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 105 word museum label explaining why VE Day, Japan's surrender, and the two tribunals were different kinds of endings. Include one cause-and-effect link for each theater and explain what both trials added after surrender.

ANSWER KEY

How Wars End

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.12

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline events that pushed Germany or Japan toward surrender, circle the surrender dates, and write 1, 2, and 3 beside the trials' origin, conduct, and outcomes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Allied advances from two directions and Germany's failed attack help bring about VE Day?	**After the Battle of the Bulge failed, Western Allies crossed the Rhine and Soviet forces took Berlin. With its armies defeated, Germany surrendered, and the surrender took effect on VE Day.**
2	How did the atomic bombings and Soviet declaration of war put pressure on Japan? When did Japan announce and formally sign its surrender?	**The bombs devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while Soviet entry added military pressure. Japan announced its surrender on August 15, 1945, and signed the document on September 2.**
3	Why was the Nuremberg tribunal created, and how did prosecutors make their case?	**The four Allied powers created it to try major Nazi leaders for crimes. Prosecutors used documents and witnesses to support the charges.**
4	How were the Tokyo tribunal's purpose and outcomes similar to Nuremberg's?	**Both tried wartime leaders on similar charges, and both issued verdicts that included executions and prison terms.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

VE Day marked the end of fighting against Germany in Europe, not the end of World War II. Allied forces closed in from west and east, and Germany surrendered after Berlin fell. In the Pacific, atomic bombings devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki while Soviet entry increased pressure on Japan; Japan announced surrender in August and signed it in September. Nuremberg and Tokyo were different endings: after the fighting, tribunals tried leaders for crimes. Their verdicts included prison terms and executions, showing that surrender did not erase a leader's responsibility.

Accept responses that distinguish the end of fighting from later legal accountability. Pacific responses should recognize both the atomic bombings and Soviet entry as pressures on Japan.