Turning the Tide

Trace how wartime choices changed Allied options

9-12.US2.17 "Describe the strategies, events, and turning points that shaped the outcomes of World War Two."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Allied strategies, circle three turning points, and give each circled turning point and its consequence the same number (1, 2, or 3).

How the Allies Gained Ground

(1) In late 1942, German troops fought Soviet defenders for Stalingrad, a city on the Volga River. The Soviet victory in February 1943 destroyed a large German army and weakened Germany's ability to attack in the east. Meanwhile, the United States and Britain built up troops and supplies in Britain for an invasion of German-occupied France. On June 6, 1944, Allied forces landed in Normandy. This attack opened a major western front, forcing Germany to fight advancing Allied armies from both directions. The landings did not end the war, but they made Germany's defeat more likely.

(2) In the Pacific, Japan hoped to destroy American aircraft carriers and strengthen its control of the region. At Midway in June 1942, U.S. code breakers helped American commanders prepare for a Japanese attack. U.S. planes sank four Japanese aircraft carriers, while the United States lost one. Japan could no longer expand as easily across the Pacific. American forces then used island hopping, taking selected islands instead of attacking every Japanese position. Captured islands became airfields and naval bases for the next advance. The approach brought U.S. forces closer to Japan, although each landing could cost many lives.

(3) Allied leaders coordinated attacks while factories supplied ships, aircraft, and weapons on a vast scale. By 1945, Germany had surrendered, but Japan still fought. After devastating conventional bombing and a naval blockade, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. The Soviet Union also entered the war against Japan and attacked Japanese forces in Manchuria. Japan announced its surrender on August 15; the formal surrender followed on September 2. Historians debate how much each final blow influenced Japan's decision. Together, these actions show how military strategy, industrial power, and decisive events shaped the war's outcome.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the outcome at Stalingrad change Germany's ability to fight the war?

2. Why did the Normandy landings matter even though they did not end the war?

3. How did Midway and island hopping change the U.S. position in the Pacific in different ways?

4. Why does the passage avoid crediting one action alone for Japan's surrender?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one turning point in Europe and one in the Pacific from the passage. In one paragraph, argue which more directly changed Allied options, explain a consequence of each, and show why the other still mattered.

ANSWER KEY

Turning the Tide

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.17

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Allied strategies, circle three turning points, and give each circled turning point and its consequence the same number (1, 2, or 3). Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the outcome at Stalingrad change Germany's ability to fight the war?	**The Soviet victory destroyed a large German army and weakened Germany's ability to attack in the east.**
2	Why did the Normandy landings matter even though they did not end the war?	**They opened a major western front, forcing Germany to fight advancing Allied armies from both east and west.**
3	How did Midway and island hopping change the U.S. position in the Pacific in different ways?	**At Midway, U.S. forces sank four Japanese carriers, making Japanese expansion harder. Island hopping gave U.S. forces bases for further advances toward Japan.**
4	Why does the passage avoid crediting one action alone for Japan's surrender?	**Japan faced conventional bombing, a naval blockade, atomic bombs, and a Soviet attack on its forces in Manchuria. Historians debate how much each final blow influenced the decision to surrender.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Stalingrad and Midway both changed what the Allies could do next. At Stalingrad, the Soviet victory destroyed a large German army and weakened Germany's attacks in the east. At Midway, the United States sank four Japanese carriers, making further Japanese expansion harder. Midway more directly changed Allied options because American forces could advance across selected islands toward Japan. Still, Stalingrad mattered: weakening Germany in the east helped set the stage for a western front when Allied troops landed in France.

Accept other well-supported comparisons between a European and a Pacific turning point. The response should explain a consequence of each and defend its judgment without claiming the other event was unimportant.