

Chapter Summary

America and World War II, 1941–1945

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What kinds of sacrifices does war require?

This chapter examines how the United States financed and prepared for war and the effects of the war on women and minorities, as well as military strategies to end the war including the use of the atomic bomb on Japan.

Wartime America

- Congress funded a two-ocean navy.
- The cost-plus system prepared government and business for war.
- U.S. industry was well prepared, building tanks, jeeps, trucks, airplanes, and ships.
- The Selective Service brought the first peacetime draft, segregating African American recruits.
- Women and minorities often took jobs in factories, while many Hispanics harvested crops.
- Rationing began and many Americans planted victory gardens.
- The government raised taxes and issued war bonds to fund the war.
- After Pearl Harbor, there was violence and discrimination against Japanese Americans.
- The West Coast was declared a military zone.
- People of Japanese, German and Italian descent were relocated to internment camps.

The War in the Pacific

- Nimitz and MacArthur commanded troops in the Pacific.
- The Bataan Death March killed 10,000 U.S. troops.
- Lieutenant Doolittle bombed Tokyo.
- The Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway helped stop Japanese advancement in the Pacific.

- Island-hopping helped the U.S. Navy get closer to Japan.
- Japan could not decipher Navajo code-talker messages.
- The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle in history.
- MacArthur recaptured the Philippines.

The War in Europe

- Eisenhower and Patton pushed the Germans out of North Africa, protecting the Suez Canal.
- Russia beat back Hitler in Stalingrad.
- Allied bombing in Germany destroyed railroads and factories.
- After extensive planning, 1.5 million U.S. soldiers enacted Operation Overlord on France's Normandy Beach.
- Eisenhower, Patton, Marshall, and Bradley led pivotal battles in Africa and Europe.

The War Ends

- The Battle of the Bulge enabled the Allies to invade Germany.
- Americans invaded Iwo Jima and Okinawa, enabling them to bomb Japan.
- Firebombs weakened Japan but the Japanese would not surrender.
- The atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and Japan surrendered unconditionally.
- The United Nations was founded.