

Summary: World War II

The Road to War

After the Great Depression, millions of people were unemployed all around the world. They wanted strong leaders. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became the dictator of Germany. Hitler blamed Jews for Germany's problems. Nazi soldiers arrested many Jews and sent them to prison.

Mussolini was Italy's dictator. Italy was Germany's ally. They were the Axis Powers. Poland, Britain, and France formed the Allied Powers. In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland. The Allies declared war on Germany. World War II began. At the beginning of the war most Americans did not want to fight in Europe again.

America Goes to War

In 1940, Japan joined the Axis. Japan wanted to expand its empire in Asia. In 1941, Japan destroyed U.S. Navy ships at Pearl Harbor. Thousands of Americans died. The United States declared war on Japan.

The United States joined the Allied Powers. The Axis Powers declared war on the United States. Many Americans joined the military. Americans supported the war. They bought war bonds. Women worked in factories. Americans collected metal to make war supplies.

Some Americans feared Japanese Americans would help Japan. The government forced thousands of Japanese Americans to live in internment camps.

Fighting the War

The war was fought in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific. In May 1945, Germany surrendered. In August, Americans dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 100,000 people. Japan surrendered. World War II ended.

As the war ended, Allied troops found out that Nazis had forced millions of Jews and other people into concentration camps. Over 12 million people died in the camps. About six million of those people were Jews. This mass murder is known as the Holocaust.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

dictator *noun*, a ruler who has total power over a country and its people

war bonds *noun*, a loan from the American people to the federal government

internment camp *noun*, a place where prisoners are held during wartime

atomic bomb *noun*, a powerful bomb that can destroy an entire city

concentration camp *noun*, a place where large numbers of people are held prisoner and forced to work



After You Read

REVIEW **Why didn't the United States join the Allies in 1939?** Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW **What action did the United States take after the attack on Pearl Harbor?** Highlight the sentence about the United States going to war.

REVIEW **What did the United States military do to force Japan to surrender?** Highlight the names of the Japanese cities bombed by the United States.