

World War II: Causes, Course, Characteristics, and Consequences

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to analyze the causes, course, characteristics, and consequences of World War II, including the emergence of the United States and Soviet Union as global superpowers.

ASSESSMENTS:

Students will write an analytical essay that discusses the rise of the Nazi Party in 1930s Germany, the implications of the Holocaust, and the global shift in power dynamics post-World War II.

KEY POINTS:

- The rise of the Nazi Party and the socio-political context of 1930s Germany.
- The process and consequences of the Holocaust, including the role of complicity and indifference.
- The transformation of the United States and Soviet Union into global superpowers post-war.
- The major battles and events that characterized World War II.
- The long-term effects of World War II on global politics and society.

OPENING:

- Begin with a thought-provoking question: "What responsibility do individuals have in the face of injustice?"
- Show a brief video clip depicting the rise of the Nazi Party and the initial reactions of the public.
- Facilitate a brief discussion on students' initial thoughts and feelings after viewing the clip.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW MATERIAL:

- Present a timeline of key events in the rise of the Nazi Party and World War II.
- Use primary source documents (e.g., speeches, propaganda) to illustrate the rhetoric used by the Nazis.
- Discuss the concept of complicity and the role of bystanders during the Holocaust.
- **Common misconception to anticipate:** Some students may believe that all Germans supported the Nazi Party, overlooking the complexities of public opinion and dissent.

GUIDED PRACTICE:

- Break students into small groups to analyze primary source documents related to Nazi propaganda.

- Provide guiding questions to scaffold their analysis, starting with: "What message is the propaganda conveying?" and progressing to: "How did this propaganda contribute to societal attitudes toward Jews?"
- Circulate among groups to monitor discussions and provide support as needed.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE:

- Assign students to write a 2-3 page analytical essay addressing the rise of the Nazi Party and the implications of the Holocaust, using evidence from class discussions and primary sources.
- Set clear behavioral expectations: students should work independently, utilizing their notes and any provided resources.

CLOSING:

- Conduct a brief class discussion to reflect on the key points learned during the lesson.
- Ask students to share one insight gained about the responsibility of individuals during times of injustice.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- For students who finish early, provide a research assignment on a lesser-known event or figure from World War II that relates to the main topic, encouraging them to present their findings to the class.

HOMEWORK:

- Assign students to read a chapter from a textbook or an article about the aftermath of World War II and write a one-page reflection on how the war reshaped global power dynamics.

STANDARDS ALIGNED:

- Michigan K-12 Standards for Social Studies:
 - D2.His.13.9-12: Analyze how the rise of the Nazi Party and other totalitarian regimes contributed to the onset of World War II.
 - D2.His.14.9-12: Evaluate the impact of World War II on the emergence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union as global superpowers.
 - D2.Civ.7.9-12: Examine the role of citizens in a democratic society in the context of historical events.