

SSUSH19- Identify the origins, major developments, and the domestic impact of World War II, especially the growth of the federal government

This standard measures your knowledge of the causes of World War II, its course from start to finish, and its consequences. World War II was the culminating event in the U.S. rise to the level of a superpower. Though initially reluctant to become involved in the fighting, once attacked, the United States responded with military and economic contributions that led to an Allied victory. Responding to its need to fight the war, the federal government grew larger.

a. Explain A. Philip Randolph's proposed march on Washington, D.C., and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response.

Protesting Discrimination

In 1941, A. Philip Randolph, the founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, proposed a march on Washington, D.C., to protest discrimination in the military and in industry. He called on African Americans from all over the United States to come to Washington and join him. President Roosevelt, afraid the march might cause unrest among whites, summoned Randolph to the White House and asked him to call off the march. When Randolph refused, Roosevelt issued an executive order calling on employers and labor unions to cease discrimination in hiring practices in industries related to defense. As a result of Roosevelt's actions, the march was cancelled.

b. Explain the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the internment of Japanese-Americans, German-Americans, and Italian-Americans.

Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the navy of the Empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Over 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 more were wounded, 21 ships were damaged, and 300 aircraft were destroyed. The Japanese attack took the United States officially into World War II. One effect of America's entry into the war was alarm about the loyalty of Japanese Americans: 120,000 Japanese Americans lived in the United States, most of them on the West Coast. Fears of spies and sabotage led to prejudice and sometimes violence against Japanese Americans. In the name of national security, Roosevelt ordered all people of Japanese ancestry be moved from California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona to rural prison camps. Although most of the people imprisoned in these internment camps were Japanese Americans, there were also small numbers of German Americans and Italian Americans imprisoned under the same law, as well as hundreds of Native Americans from Alaska.

c. Explain major events; include the lend-lease program, the Battle of Midway, D-Day, and the fall of Berlin.

Major Events of World War II

Many battles were fought between the Allied nations and the Axis powers from 1939 to 1945. World War II was truly a world war, with the entire Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans as battlefields, and combat taking place on nearly every continent. This changed the way the whole world looked at war. Review the following details of four major World War II events.

Δ Lend-Lease—March, 11, 1941—Nine months before Pearl Harbor, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act and amended the Neutrality Acts so the United States could lend military equipment and supplies to any nation the president said was vital to the defense of the United States. Roosevelt approved one billion dollars in Lend-Lease aid to Great Britain in October 1941. When the United States entered World War II, fifty billion dollars' worth of equipment and supplies had already been sent to Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China.

Δ Battle of Midway —June 4-7, 1942 —Six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy won a sea battle against the Japanese Navy that was a turning point in World War II. The Japanese tried to trap and sink America's remaining aircraft carriers and then take the Midway Atoll, an American refueling station for ships and airplanes, but the United States destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers while only losing one American carrier. This kept the Japanese from capturing Midway. This victory is regarded as the most important naval engagement of the Pacific Campaign of the war and, at the time, was a huge morale boost for America. The Japanese Navy never recovered from this defeat, enabling the United States to take the war to Japan.

Δ D-Day—June 6, 1944—D-Day was the code name for the first day of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France, on June 6, 1944. It remains the largest seaborne invasion in history with over 156,000 men crossing the English Channel in 6,939 vessels. The German troops occupying France were caught almost completely by surprise and, although the Allies met heavy resistance in small areas, the invasion went almost exactly according to plan. From the French beaches, American and British forces pushed east to Germany. This marked the beginning of victory for the Allies in Europe.

Δ The fall of Berlin—April-May 1945—The fall of Berlin was one of the final battles of the European Theater during World War II. Two Soviet Army groups attacked Berlin from the east and south, while a third attacked German forces north of Berlin. The Soviets lost 81,116 men taking the city, while the Germans lost 458,080 trying to defend it. It was one of the bloodiest battles in history. Adolf Hitler was in Berlin during the battle and, before it ended, he and many of his followers committed suicide. The city's defenders surrendered on May 2, but fighting continued outside the city until the war ended on May 8. Much of the continued fighting was due to the Germans trying to move westward so they could surrender to the Americans or British instead of to the Soviets.

d. Describe war mobilization, as indicated by rationing, war-time conversion, and the role of women in war industries.

Mobilization

After Pearl Harbor, five million men volunteered for military service but more were needed to fight a total war. The Selective Service System expanded the draft, and ten million more men joined the ranks of the American Armed Forces. So great was the need of the military, a Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was formed to fill noncombat positions otherwise filled by men, freeing up the men for frontline duty. The men needed tanks, planes, ships, guns, bullets, and boots. To equip the troops, the whole American industry was dedicated to supplying the military. More than six million workers in these plants, factories, and shipyards were women. With the men who once did these jobs now fighting overseas, women filled the void. Women volunteered for this work even though they were only paid on average 60% as much as men doing the same jobs. It was the hard work of people and the industrial might of the United States that helped America win World War II. As time went on, the war industry needed more raw materials. One way

average Americans helped the war effort was through wartime conservation. Workers would carpool to work or ride bicycles to save gasoline and rubber. People participated in nationwide drives to collect scrap iron, tin cans, newspaper, rags, and even cooking grease to recycle and use in war production. Another way Americans conserved on the home front was through the mandatory government rationing system. Under this system, each household received a “c book” with coupons to be used when buying scarce items such as meat, sugar, and coffee. Gas rationing was also used to help save gasoline for military use.

e. Describe Los Alamos and the scientific, economic, and military implications of developing the atomic bomb.

Atom Bomb

Allied leaders planning the war against Japan knew that once they had defeated the Japanese Navy in the Pacific Ocean they would still have to invade Japan itself to end the war. They knew Japan still had a huge army that would defend every inch of the homeland, and both sides could possibly lose millions of people in the process. President Truman decided there was only one way to avoid an invasion of Japan and still defeat them. He would use a brand new weapon that no one had ever seen before, the atomic bomb. The American government had developed two atomic bombs in a secret laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico. The bombs were dropped on Japan in early August 1945. On September 2, 1945, the Japanese surrendered, and World War II was finally over. The project’s code name was “The Manhattan Project.” The implications of developing and using atomic bombs in World War II were enormous. From a military standpoint, it was clear that, not only did the United States have a powerful weapon that no other country had, but the American government was not afraid to use it. The Soviet Union quickly began developing an atomic bomb of its own, an act that helped begin the Cold War. Also, nuclear power would soon be used to power aircraft carriers and submarines. Scientifically and economically, the atomic bomb led to nuclear power for civilian use, such as generating electricity for homes and businesses. Nuclear power is also used in technologies such as positron emission tomography (PET) scans, used by physicians to study the workings of the human body, including brain functions.

Review Suggestions

To prepare for questions on Standard 19, you should use your textbook to review

- A. Philip Randolph
- Pearl Harbor
- Internment
- Mobilization
- Wartime Conservation
- Rationing
- Lend-Lease
- Battle of Midway
- D-Day
- Battle of Berlin
- Atom Bomb
- Los Alamos