

Name: _____

Date: _____

Global Conflict

America tried to avoid becoming part of World War II, but it clearly had a preference. President Franklin Roosevelt convinced Congress to lend warships and other weapons to Great Britain. Many Americans opposed the President. These “isolationists” believed that Americans should not be involved in a war fought in Europe. This attitude changed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

The Japanese and the Germans underestimated the determination of the American people. Factories began operating like never before. Americans worked double-shifts to create war materials. Movies and popular music focused the American people on the war effort. The American people were able to out-produce the combined German and Japanese war industries.

The war had many unexpected consequences. Virtually every young man was fighting overseas, and factories needed workers to supply the soldiers. Women left their homes and joined the workforce for the first time. The military remained segregated during the war, but black soldiers served the nation with bravery and courage. The valor and heroism of these patriots were a factor in the eventual desegregation of the armed forces

after the war, and played a key role in the beginning of the American Civil Rights movement. Finally, the government provided low cost loans to the soldiers when they returned home from the war. Many impoverished Americans had the opportunity to attend college and start businesses. The war offered new opportunities for many Americans for the first time in history.

Once America joined the war, it truly became a global conflict, with participants from every populated continent. The United States, along with Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union became known as the Allied Forces, while Germany, Japan, and Italy were the Axis Powers.

America decided first to focus on the threat from Hitler. 1942 marked the turning point in the war. American soldiers and military might of the factory workers joined the effort while Germany was forced to fight enemies on all sides.

By 1945, Germany was in ruin. Allied bombers destroyed cities from the air, while their armies marched across Germany. The nation was completely devastated. When Hitler learned the enemy was within thirty miles of his underground bunker, he shot himself to death. The Nazi terror was over.

Answer in complete sentences

*1. Why do you think many Americans opposed the United States' entry into World War II before the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?

*2. Write a paragraph that describes how World War II shaped American society in the twenty-first century.

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Answer in complete sentences

*3. What effect did World War II have on racial and gender equality? Defend your answer.

*4. Why do you think the American focused on Germany rather than Japan upon entering World War II?

*5. Why was 1942 a crucial year for the Allied Forces?

*6. In a 1980 poll of German teenagers, Adolph Hitler was described as the most despised man in history. Describe how you would have felt as a German in 1945.

Japanese Internment Camps

The American government responded to the mass hysteria that followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor by ordering more than 110,000 Japanese Americans forcibly relocated to “internment camps” in California, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and Arkansas. Many of the Japanese-Americans were born in America; their only connection to Japan was their ancestry. America was also at war with Germany and Italy, but there were no restrictions on Americans of German or Italian descent.

In 1988, the U.S. Congress apologized for the imprisonment of Japanese-Americans and provided monetary payments to the approximately 60,000 surviving Japanese-Americans who had been incarcerated during World War II.

Answer in complete sentences

*7. Do you think the American Congress made the right decision when they provided monetary payments to the Japanese-American interred during World War II? Defend your answer.
