The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by analyzing the causes and events that led to American involvement in the war, including military assistance to Britain and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor:

**Essential Understandings**
- The United States gradually abandoned neutrality as events in Europe and Asia pulled the nations toward war.

**Essential Questions**
- How did the United States respond to increasing totalitarian aggression in Europe and Asia?
- What caused America's gradual abandonment of its policy of neutrality?

**Essential Knowledge**

**The war in Europe**
- World War II began with Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, followed shortly after by the Soviet Union's invasion of Poland from the east and the Baltic countries.
- During the first two years of the war, the United States stayed officially neutral as Germany overran France, most of Europe, and pounded Britain from the air (the Battle of Britain). In mid-1941, Hitler turned on his former partner and invaded the Soviet Union.
- Despite strong isolationist sentiment at home, the United States increasingly helped Britain. It gave Britain war supplies and old naval warships in return for military bases in Bermuda and the Caribbean. Soon after, the Lend-Lease Act gave the President authority to sell or lend equipment to countries to defend themselves against the Axis powers. Franklin Roosevelt compared it to "lending a garden hose to a next-door neighbor whose house is on fire."

**The war in Asia**
- During the 1930s a militaristic Japan invaded and brutalized Manchuria and China as it sought military and economic domination over Asia. The United States refused to recognize Japanese conquests in Asia and imposed an embargo on exports of oil and steel to Japan. Tensions rose but both countries negotiated to avoid war.
- While negotiating with the U.S. and without any warning, Japan carried out an air attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The attack destroyed much of the American Pacific fleet and killed several thousand Americans. Roosevelt called it "a date that will live in infamy" as he asked Congress to declare war on Japan.
- After Pearl Harbor, Hitler honored a pact with Japan and declared war on the United States. The debates over isolationism in the United States were over. World War II was now a true world war and the United States was fully involved.

The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by describing and locating the major battles and turning points of the war in North Africa, Europe, and the Pacific, including Midway, Stalingrad, the Normandy landing (D-Day), and Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb to force the surrender of Japan:

**Essential Understandings**
- Wartime strategies reflect the political and military goals of alliances, resources on hand, and the geographical extent of the conflict.

**Essential Questions**
- What was the overall strategy of America and its allies in World War II?
- How did America's strategy during World War II reflect available resources and the geographical scope of the conflict?
- Why were some battles of World War II considered turning points of the war?

### Essential Knowledge

#### Allied strategy
- America and its allies (Britain and the Soviet Union, after being invaded by Germany), followed a "Defeat Hitler First" strategy. Most American military resources were targeted for Europe.
- In the Pacific, American military strategy called for an "island hopping" campaign, seizing islands closer and closer to Japan and using them as bases for air attacks on Japan, and cutting off Japanese supplies through submarine warfare against Japanese shipping.

#### Axis strategy
- Germany hoped to defeat the Soviet Union quickly, gain control of Soviet oil fields, and force Britain out of the war through a bombing campaign and submarine warfare before America's industrial and military strength could turn the tide.
- Following Pearl Harbor, Japan invaded the Philippines and Indonesia and planned to invade both Australia and Hawaii. Its leaders hoped that America would then accept Japanese predominance in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, rather than conduct a bloody and costly war to reverse Japanese gains.

#### Major battles and military turning points

##### North Africa
- **El Alamein**—German forces threatening to seize Egypt and the Suez Canal were defeated by the British. This defeat prevented Hitler from gaining access to Middle Eastern oil supplies and potentially attacking the Soviet Union from the south.

##### Europe
- **Stalingrad**—Hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were killed or captured in a months-long siege of the Russian city of Stalingrad. This defeat prevented Germany from seizing the Soviet oil fields and turned the tide against Germany in the east.
- **Normandy landings (D-Day)**—American and Allied troops under Eisenhower landed in German-occupied France on June 6, 1944. Despite intense German opposition and heavy American casualties, the landings succeeded and the liberation of western Europe from Hitler had begun.

#### Major battles and military turning points (continued)

##### Pacific
- **Midway**—In the "Miracle of Midway," American naval forces defeated a much larger Japanese force as it prepared to seize Midway Island. Coming only a few months after Pearl Harbor, a Japanese victory at Midway would have enabled Japan to invade Hawaii. The American victory ended the Japanese threat to Hawaii and began a series of American victories in the "island hopping" campaign that carried the war closer and closer to Japan.
- **Iwo Jima and Okinawa**—The American invasions of the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa brought American forces closer than ever to Japan, but both invasions cost thousands of American lives and even more Japanese lives, as Japanese soldiers fought fiercely over every square inch of the islands and Japanese soldiers and civilians committed suicide rather than surrender.
- **Use of the atomic bomb**—Facing the prospect of horrendous casualties among both Americans and Japanese if American forces had to invade Japan itself, President Harry Truman ordered the use of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to force the Japanese to surrender. Tens of thousands of people were killed in both cities. Shortly after the bombs were used, the Japanese leaders surrendered, avoiding the need for American forces to invade Japan.
The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by describing the role of all-minority military units, including the Tuskegee Airmen and Nisei regiments;

**Essential Understandings**
- World War II solidified the nation’s role as a global power and ushered in social changes and established reform agendas that would preoccupy public discourse in the United States for the remainder of the 20th century. Women entered into previously male job roles as African Americans and others struggled to obtain desegregation of the armed forces and end discriminatory hiring practices.

**Essential Questions**
- How did minority participation in World War II reflect social conditions in the United States?
- How did minorities contribute to Allied victory?

**Essential Knowledge**
- Minority participation
  - African Americans generally served in segregated military units and were assigned to non-combat roles but demanded the right to serve in combat rather than support roles.
- All-Minority military units
  - Tuskegee Airmen (African American) served in Europe with distinction.
  - Nisei regiments (Asian American) earned a high number of decorations.
- Additional contributions of minorities
  - Communication codes of the Navajo were used (oral, not written language; impossible for the Japanese to break).
  - Mexican Americans also fought, but in units not segregated.
  - Minority units suffered high casualties and won numerous unit citations and individual medals for bravery in action.

The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by examining the Geneva Convention and the treatment of prisoners of war during World War II;

**Essential Understandings**
- The conduct of war often reflects social and moral codes of a nation.
- The treatment of prisoners of war often reflected the savage nature of conflict and the cultural norms of the nation.

**Essential Questions**
- What was the purpose of the Geneva Convention?
- How did the treatment of prisoners differ?

**Essential Knowledge**
- The Geneva Convention attempted to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners of war by establishing rules to be followed by all nations.
- The treatment of prisoners in the Pacific Theater often reflected the savagery of the fighting there.
  - In the Bataan Death March, American POWs suffered brutal treatment by Japanese after surrender of the Philippines.
  - Japanese soldiers often committed suicide rather than surrender.
- The treatment of prisoners in Europe more closely followed the ideas of the Geneva Convention.
The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by analyzing the Holocaust (Hitler’s “final solution”), its impact on Jews and other groups, and postwar trials of war criminals.

**Essential Understandings**
- Specific groups, often the object of hatred and prejudice, face increased risk of discrimination during wartime.

**Essential Questions**
- What was the Holocaust and who were its victims?
- What was the short-term and long-term significance of the Holocaust?

**Essential Knowledge**

**Terms to know**
- Genocide: The systematic and purposeful destruction of a racial, political, religious, or cultural group
- Final solution: Germany’s decision to exterminate all Jews

**Affected groups**
- Jews
- Poles
- Slavs
- Gypsies
- “Undesirables” (homosexuals, mentally ill, political dissidents)

**Significance**
- In the Nuremberg trials, Nazi leaders and others were convicted of war crimes.
- The Nuremberg trials emphasized individual responsibility for actions during a war, regardless of orders received.
- The trials led to increased demand for a Jewish homeland.