America at War 1941-1945
• 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?
Wartime strategies reflect the political and military goals of alliances, resources on hand, and the geographical extent of the conflict.

"Fuhrer und Duce in Munchen.” Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, Germany, ca. June 1940.

Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill (THE BIG THREE) on portico of Russian Embassy in Teheran, during conference--Nov. 28 -Dec. 1, 1943.
Allied strategy in Europe

- 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.
Axis strategy in Europe

- 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.
MAJOR BATTLES AND MILITARY TURNING POINTS

- D-Day June 25, 1944
- Normandy
- Paris liberated Aug. 25, 1944
- Rome liberated June 4, 1944
- Kasserine Pass Feb. 14–22, 1943
- El Alamein Oct. 23–Nov. 5, 1942
- Leningrad besieged Sept. 1941–Jan. 1944
- Moscow Germans repulsed Dec. 1941
- Stalingrad Aug. 21, 1942–Jan. 31, 1943

Legend:
- Axis Powers and their allies
- Neutral nations
- Axis-held, early Nov. 1942
- Allied Powers and their allies
- Major battles
- Allied advances
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.

23 October - 5 November, 1942

"Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat". Winston Churchill

Photo credit www.diggerhistory.info
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.

Soviet forces stopped the German blitzkrieg at Stalingrad during the winter of 1941-1942. (National Archives Photo)
**Europe: 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.**

*D-DAY was the turning point on the Western Front as American and British forces gained a foothold on the continent!* (National Archives Photo)
V-E Day: May 8, 1945

- Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered.
- The United States now looked to utilize its power to defeat Japan!
Allied strategy in Asia

- 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 in Asia

- 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
Pacific Battles: 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.
Pacific Battles: Midway

- 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.
Pacific Battles: 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.


(Photo: National Archives)
Pacific Battles:
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.

Code named “The Manhattan Project”, the U.S. developed the most powerful bomb in the world. This atomic blast destroyed Nagasaki on Aug. 8, 1945.

(Photo: National Archives)
Pacific Battles: Use of the atomic bomb

- 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.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur signs as Supreme Allied Commander during formal surrender ceremonies on the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay.

Aftermath of the bombing in Nagasaki.
Why did Truman drop the bomb?

- Most importantly, it shortened the war and saved American lives.
- Truman also wanted to show off our power to the Soviet Union, who we perceived would become our next enemy.
- What good is spending billion$ on a bomb if you don’t use it?

"New York City celebrating the surrender of Japan. They threw anything and kissed anybody in Times Square. August 14, 1945." Lt. Victor Jorgensen
(National Archives)