

World War Two

Part Two



Part One

Part Two

Part Three

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.



War in Europe, 1939-1940



After the devastation of World War I, Americans were eager to avoid involvement in foreign conflicts.

Although the U.S. relied heavily on the global economy, its foreign policy was generally **isolationist**.

In response to events in Europe, Congress passed the **Neutrality Acts** in 1935, which banned the sale of arms to warring nations.



Although Roosevelt wanted to avoid war, he also believed that nations must protect each others' freedom.

When Japan launched new attacks against China in 1937, Roosevelt continued to send arms to China.

As the situation in Europe worsened, Americans found it difficult to remain neutral. By June of 1941, 76% of Americans supported sending aid to Britain.



Why was sending arms to China problematic?



Many Americans believed that the U.S. should not get involved in foreign wars. They felt their freedoms were best served by creating and protecting a strong democracy at home.

Others, like Roosevelt, believed the wellbeing of the U.S. was linked to that of other nations. They argued that the only way to protect American freedom was to ensure the freedom of others.



Does the U.S. have the right, or the responsibility, to get involved in foreign conflicts?



In the 1930s, Japan was a fully industrialized world power. However, its culture was still largely traditional.



Japanese society was semi-feudal. The emperor was seen as divine, and warriors were exalted.

Japan was highly nationalistic and suspicious of western influences.

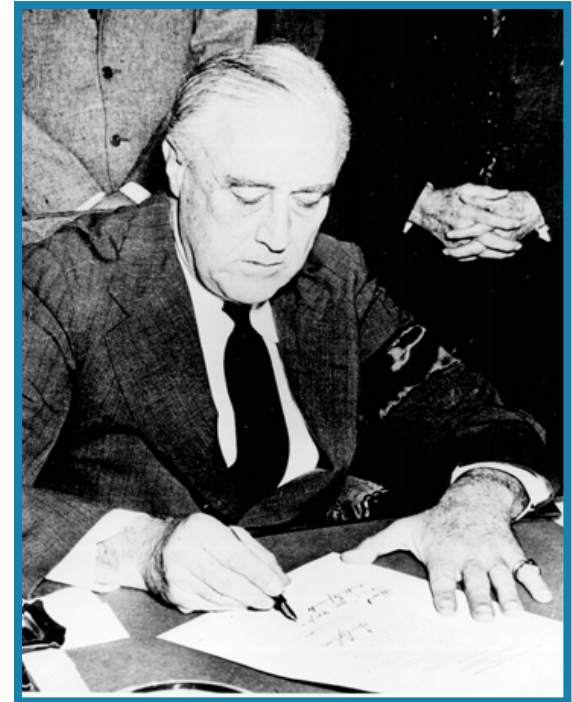
By the 1930s, the military was essentially in control of Japanese foreign policy.



In 1941, Japan occupied French Indochina. In response, the U.S. placed an embargo on shipments of oil to Japan. This worried Japan. Without imported oil, Japan's industrial and military infrastructure would collapse.

Prime Minister Hideki Tojo promised Emperor **Hirohito** he would attempt to make peace with the U.S.

Instead, he ordered an attack on the U.S. military base at Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii.



Why do you think Tojo attacked the United States?



America joins the war

On December 7, 1941, 180 Japanese planes bombed **Pearl Harbor** for almost two hours.

The attack resulted in over 3,000 American casualties and the destruction of nearly the entire Pacific Fleet. Roosevelt called it “a date which will live in infamy.”

The United States declared war on Japan the next day. Italy and Germany then declared war on the United States.



With conflicts on every continent, the war had become global.



War in Europe, 1941-1944



In desperation, Hitler ordered his army to take the offensive, hoping to divide and conquer the Allies as they pushed east.

On December 16, 1944, eight German tanks broke through the American line. This created a bulge in the line across Belgium, France and Luxembourg, giving the month-long battle its name: the **Battle of the Bulge**.

When the Germans were pushed back, they had lost 120,000 men, 600 tanks and 1,600 planes, none of which could be replaced.





By April 25, 1945, Soviet troops had reached Berlin. In an underground bunker, Hitler wrote his final address, blaming the Jews for the war.

He married his mistress, Eva Braun and the couple committed suicide on April 30.

On May 8, 1945, Germany offered its unconditional surrender. Allies around the world celebrated **V-E Day**: Victory in Europe.





Sadly, Roosevelt did not live to see the victory. He died of a stroke on April 12, 1945, during his fourth term in office.

Roosevelt was succeeded by his vice president, **Harry S. Truman**.

War in Europe had ended. Truman was left to finish the war still raging in the Pacific.

In order to secure Japanese surrender and to end the war, Truman gave the order to drop the two atomic bombs on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**.



War in the Pacific, 1942–1945

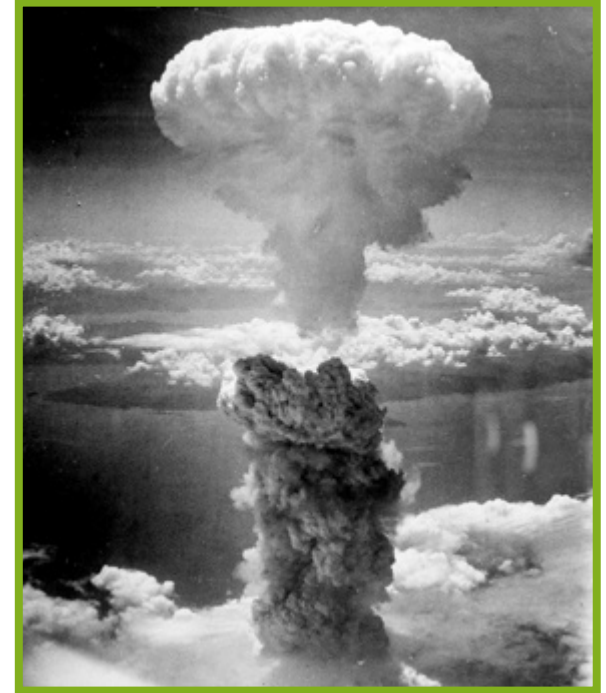




During the War, the renowned physicist **Albert Einstein** alerted the Allies to Germany's advancement in nuclear science.

Therefore, American scientists quickly began working in secret on the creation of an atomic bomb.

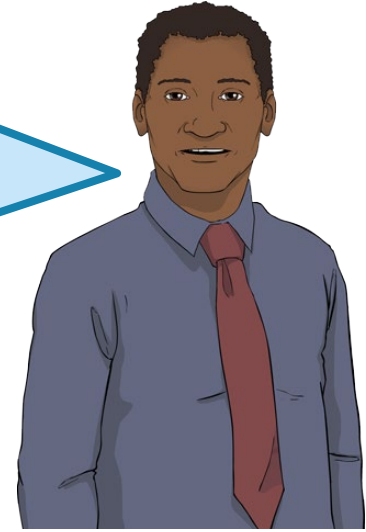
Led by **J. Robert Oppenheimer**, the **Manhattan Project** was so top secret that Truman only learned of its existence when he became president.



When the first atomic bomb was tested in New Mexico in July, 1945, the flash was visible 180 miles away.



Many felt use of the bomb was necessary to end the war and save American lives. They also wanted to prove that the U.S. was the dominant power in the post-war world.



Others believed Japan was ready to surrender anyway. They argued that simply demonstrating the bomb's power would be as effective in ending the war and establishing U.S. supremacy.



Truman's decision is one of the most controversial in modern history. Do you think it was justified?

