



Operation Freedom

15



Operation Freedom

A History of World War II

Topic: History

Level: Secondary education (15 years old)

Concepts: World War II, alliances, geography

Time required: +/- 40 min

Summary of the activity: A young British soldier is given a mission that will change the course of history. In the midst of the spread of totalitarianism in Europe, Daniel and his comrades will face fear and danger to bring freedom and peace back to the European continent.

Material needed: Knowledge about history and... motivation!

1

Daniel is a young British soldier who is in a military training camp. The last few years have been very difficult for his country; the bombing raids on London have been continuous, and the war has caused much damage and destruction. Everyone hopes that peace will come soon, but no one knows when it will happen.



One day, while the young soldier is practising at the shooting range, his commander approaches him and tells him that he has been selected to join a dangerous mission. The mission is to liberate a country occupied by the Axis. The young soldier feels a knot in his stomach upon hearing the words of his commander. He knows that this mission could change his life forever.

Daniel is strong and brave, but he is also nervous about what lies ahead. He has heard stories about the war and knows that it will not be easy.

 **Go to paragraph 2.**

2




Young Daniel is in a room with another twenty colleagues, listening to his commander's speech with the details of the operation. The information is scarce; his superiors are afraid that he will reach the enemy spies and endanger the operation.

All they know is that the ultimate goal is to liberate one of the Nazi-occupied countries, but Hitler's army already controls half of Europe, so it's hard to say which of the occupied nations will be targeted.

 **Go to paragraph 13.**



3

Daniel is completely absorbed until one of his companions brings him out of his reverie. Without really knowing how, they are already in a boat in the middle of the English Channel, about to reach the French coast. The young Briton knows that the enemy is not going to receive them very kindly. He is trying to remember the name of that French region where they are going, but he is completely blocked. Where was the most important landing of World War II made?

- Calais  **Go to paragraph 5.**
- Normandy  **Go to paragraph 21.**
- Corsica  **Go to paragraph 14.**

4

Oops, that's incorrect! While Dresden was probably the most destroyed city during all of World War II, it is located in Germany and not in the UK. Dresden did not suffer a devastating bombardment until the last months of the war, in February 1945, by the British and Americans. Try again!



- Coventry  **Go to paragraph 9.**
- Oxford  **Go to paragraph 20.**



City of Dresden after the bombing of 1945 (Deutsche Fotothek)

5

Misinformation! The landing did not take place at Calais, but it is true that British intelligence misled Hitler into believing that the operation would take place there. Try again!

- Normandy  **Go to paragraph 21.**
- Corsica  **Go to paragraph 14.**


6



That's right! France was occupied by the Nazis in 1940, and the country ended up being divided in two: the north (including Paris), occupied by the Germans, and the south, known as the "free zone", although it continued to serve German interests. Finally, in 1942, the Nazis would end up conquering the entire country.

 **Go to paragraph 7.**

7

After learning that France will be his destination country, Daniel returns with his companions to the barracks to rest. The sun disappeared from the camp hours ago and the next few days or weeks will be complicated, so the best thing they can do is take advantage of what seems to be the last peaceful night in which they can sleep soundly.  **Go to paragraph 30.**

8

He finishes eating and gets up. It is time to go to the briefing. Together with the others, he goes to a room where the head of the unit in the area is waiting for them. He is a tough-looking but charismatic young man. He waves at them and begins to speak.

The chief begins to provide them with details of the mission and the tasks for which each soldier is responsible. Behind him could be seen a map of France where he is pointing out the key points. The Gallic country is divided in two: the north is controlled by the Germans, while the south is considered a "free zone". Some of his teammates who are sitting in front of him are blocking Daniel's view, and he can't quite see the map. By what name is the French free zone known?



- Maginot >>> → **Go to paragraph 22.**
- Gaul >>> → **Go to paragraph 15.**
- Vichy France >>> → **Go to paragraph 27.**

9

Correct! Coventry was practically destroyed on the night of November 14, 1940, being the first city to suffer such a massive bombardment, creating the term 'coventrize' to describe this type of attack.



 **Go to paragraph 12.**



City of Coventry after the bombing of 1940 (United Kingdom Government)

10



The Tehran Conference was the first at which Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt were present, having been held in Iran at the end of 1943. The main debate centred on opening a second front in Western Europe. Try again!

- Yalta Conference  **Go to paragraph 31.**
- Potsdam Conference  **Go to paragraph 28.**

11



No, Italy was not invaded by the Nazis! Although Benito Mussolini's Italy was an ally of Hitler at the start of the war, in 1943, the south of the country switched sides and declared war on Germany, while the north of the country remained a puppet state of Germany, known as the Republic of Saló. You have another option! Try again!

- Spain  **Go to paragraph 33.**
- France  **Go to paragraph 6.**

12

The young soldier is startled awake by the sound of the siren. It is the signal that he should get up and prepare for the day. He rubs his eyes and looks around. The bunkhouse is full of metal beds with thin mattresses and threadbare blankets. Some of his teammates are already dressed and ready, others are rushing into their uniforms and gear. The soldier gets up and looks for his clothes.

He dresses quickly and grabs his rifle and backpack. He leaves the hut and goes to the dining room, where a frugal breakfast awaits him: stale bread, cheese, watery coffee. He sits next to his friends and starts eating while he chats with them. They talk about their families, their memories, their hopes.

 **Go to paragraph 8.**

13

After the commander's talk, Daniel and some of his colleagues are left debating about which country they will be assigned to and propose various options. They only know that it is a country that was invaded by the Nazis after the start of the war, but which one could it be? After ruling out several possibilities, the group is left with three countries. Which country will they be sent to free it?



- Spain ➡➡➡ → **Go to paragraph 33.**
- Italy ➡➡➡ → **Go to paragraph 11.**
- France ➡➡➡ → **Go to paragraph 6.**

Map of Europe in
November 1942





14

Oops, that's incorrect! Corsica is an island located in the Mediterranean, without much strategic importance, and without the possibility of being able to advance through the rest of the continent. Choose another option!

- Calais  **Go to paragraph 5.**
- Normandy  **Go to paragraph 21.**

15

Oops, you got the wrong historical period! Gaul was the name given by the Roman Empire to what we know today mainly as France, although it also included part of other countries such as Belgium or the Netherlands. Try again!

- Maginot  **Go to paragraph 22.**
- Vichy France  **Go to paragraph 27.**

16

That's right! The Battle of Stalingrad lasted from August 1942 to February 1943, and was Hitler's first major defeat, with more than two million casualties, including soldiers and civilians.

 **Go to paragraph 29.**

17

After the meeting, they are taken directly to the jetty. Along with the others, he heads to an area where dozens of landing craft are waiting for them. There they are received by an officer who gives them the last instructions.

“Good morning, soldiers. You are about to embark on what will be the most important day of your life. Today you will be part of history. Today you are going to liberate Europe from the Nazi control. Today you are going to fight for freedom.”



Go to paragraph 18.

18

The officer shows them a map where he points out the objectives:

“Here we have this French region, where we are going to land thousands of Allied soldiers by sea and by air. Our objective is to establish a position that allows us to advance towards the interior of the country. You are going to land on this beach, called Omaha. Your mission is to capture this town, where there is an artificial port that will serve us to receive supplies”.

The young soldier feels a chill run through his body. He is ready to do his duty. He knows that the operation is risky, and he will have to face a well-entrenched enemy ready for anything.






Go to paragraph 3.

19

Daniel decides to accompany the Spanish, who are already on the outskirts of Paris, preparing to enter the French capital to free it. While they wait for the right moment to arrive, they entertain themselves however they can: Playing cards, cleaning their weapons or reading a newspaper. In one of them, with his poor understanding of the French language, he tries to learn about the situation on the Eastern Front.



Now that the Germans are under attack in the east of France, the Soviets took the opportunity to recapture lost ground and attack from the west. The Nazis have invaded the USSR but have not yet been able to control Moscow, their capital. In part, because of one of the longest and deadliest battles of the entire war, which marked Hitler's first defeat and a turning point in the conflict. Daniel had read about that battle when he was in England, but exhaustion prevents him from remembering where it happened.

Which city was it?

- El Alamein  **Go to paragraph 26.**
- Stalingrad  **Go to paragraph 16.**
- Iwo Jima  **Go to paragraph 32.**

20

Oops, that's incorrect! To tell the truth, Oxford was one of the few British cities that did not suffer any bombing during the war, although the reason is not very well known. Try again!

- Coventry  **Go to paragraph 9.**
- Dresden  **Go to paragraph 4.**



21

Very good! The most famous landing took place on June 6, 1944, on the beaches of Normandy, when 160,000 soldiers crossed the English Channel from England to France. This battle would be vital to the final course of the war.

 **Go to paragraph 23.**

22

Oops, you got the wrong answer! Maginot is a fortified defence wall built by France along its border with Germany and Italy after World War I. Try again!

- Gaul  **Go to paragraph 15.**
- Vichy France  **Go to paragraph 27.**

23

The sound of the waves crashing against the ship's hull and the nervous muttering of the soldiers around them are all that can be heard.

Daniel feels a knot in his stomach and tries to calm down, remembering his training.

Finally, the ship reaches the beach and the doors open. The young soldier and his companions run towards the beach under enemy fire. Chaos and confusion reign as the soldiers advance towards the enemy lines. He sees his companions fall around him, but presses on, determined to accomplish his mission.

With skill and bravery, the young soldier manages to cross enemy lines and into occupied territory. From that moment, each step is a danger and each decision can be the difference between life and death. But the young soldier doesn't give up and keeps going, fighting for his country and for freedom.



➡➡➡ ➔ **Go to paragraph 24.**

24

A few weeks have already passed since the landing, which was a total success, despite the high number of casualties. One day, while on a mission to sabotage a major bridge, Daniel comes across a group of Spanish Republicans who are also fighting German forces.

The Republicans tell him about their fight against fascism in Spain, but how after Franco came to power, they had to go into exile in France... only to have to fight against totalitarianism again.

→ **Go to paragraph 19.**

25

*From left to right, Churchill,
Roosevelt and Stalin*

Six months after liberating Paris, the war is raging. Berlin is under siege and the Americans are advancing in the Pacific. Daniel





has returned home, but he is following the news non-stop for the latest happenings. In February 1945, the Allied leaders met once more (Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin), this time to decide what Europe would be like after the conflict. At this meeting, it was decided to disarm Germany and divide the country among the allies. What meeting is it about?

- Yalta Conference → **Go to paragraph 31.**
- Potsdam Conference → **Go to paragraph 28.**
- Tehran Conference → **Go to paragraph 10.**

26

Oops, that's incorrect! The Battle of El Alamein pitted the British against the Germans in North Africa in 1942. Try again!

- Stalingrad  **Go to paragraph 16.**
- Iwo Jima  **Go to paragraph 32.**



27

That's right! Vichy France is the name given to what was left of the French Republic after the defeat to the Axis in 1940, with its capital in the city of Vichy. It ended up being an authoritarian state, a puppet of Nazi Germany until it was completely occupied by German troops in November 1942.

 **Go to paragraph 17.**

28

Oops, that's incorrect! The Potsdam Conference was held in Germany in the summer of 1945, after the surrender of the Nazis. The USA was represented by President Truman, after the death of Roosevelt. Try again.

- Yalta Conference  **Go to paragraph 31.**
- Tehran Conference  **Go to paragraph 10.**

29

The entry into Paris is an exciting and triumphant moment for the young soldier, his companions and the Spanish republicans. After weeks of fighting and sacrifices, they have finally reached the city and are ready to liberate it from German occupation.

The emotion is indescribable as the citizens of Paris take to the streets to celebrate their liberation. The young soldier and his companions are greeted as heroes and thanked for their bravery and sacrifice. Although the war is not over yet, this is a moment of victory that they will never forget.

 **Go to paragraph 25.**

A group of Spanish Republicans parading in Paris after its liberation



30

Daniel spends the night between visions and memories of the past. Sounds of sirens and screams. A moonlit sky and explosions. He sees himself with his family running in their pyjamas towards the shelter.



The streets are littered with rubble and fire. That was how many nights were in his hometown, bombed over and over again by the Luftwaffe, the German aviation.

At the beginning of the war, the bombardments had not been so intense and were mainly focused on military objectives, but everything changed one night in November 1940, when the Germans completely levelled a large city from the sky, leaving it burning for days. The destruction was so great that that city ended up giving its name to the action of razing a city with massive and repeated bombardments. What British city is it?

- Coventry ➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 9.**
- Dresden ➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 4.**
- Oxford ➤➤➤ ➔ **Go to paragraph 20.**



31

That's right! The Yalta conference took place in this Soviet city at the beginning of February 1945, and it was decided what the future would be like after the war.

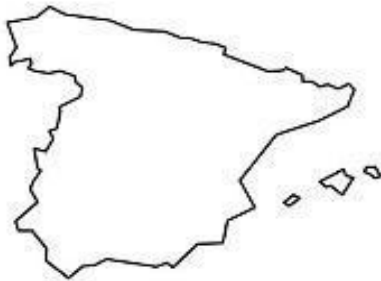
 **Go to paragraph 34.**

32



Although it was one of the most important battles of the war, it took place between the Americans and the Japanese on the Pacific front. Try again!

- El Alamein  **Go to paragraph 26.**
- Stalingrad  **Go to paragraph 16.**

33



Close, but Spain is not the chosen country! Although Spain was under a fascist dictatorship during World War II, the country remained a 'non-belligerent' throughout the war and never became a party to the conflict, at least not directly. Try again!

- Italy  **Go to paragraph 11.**
- France  **Go to paragraph 6.**

34

After years of enduring the relentless chaos and devastation of war, the world finally found itself at peace once again. As Daniel wandered through the familiar streets of his hometown, he couldn't shake the haunting memories of battle that lingered in his mind.

The war had taken its toll, leaving behind scars both seen and unseen. Yet, amidst the rubble and ruins, Daniel found solace in the bonds he had forged with his fellow soldiers, the ones who had become his family in the darkest of times.

As he sat alone in the quiet of a park, Daniel couldn't help but feel a sense of bittersweet relief wash over him. Yes, the war was over, but it had come at a great cost: About 50 million human lives. He couldn't forget the faces of those who had fallen, the lives lost to the merciless tide of conflict.

But even in the midst of sorrow, Daniel found hope. Hope for a future where the lessons learned from the horrors of war would guide humanity towards a path of compassion and understanding. Hope for a world where the sacrifices made by so many would never be in vain.

And as he looked up at the endless expanse of the sky above, Daniel made a silent vow to honour the memory of those who had fought and died beside him. For their bravery, their resilience, and their unwavering determination to never give up hope, even in the darkest of times.

The End



Designed by 6 European organisations, the project intends to create efficient, engaging pedagogical materials and tools for teachers in order to implement an innovative gamified Homework methodology with pupils. In doing so, we wish to contribute to boosting their efficiency and engagement rate in remote work and, more specifically, in Homework.

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