



TOPIC: World War II

SUBJECT: History

LEVEL/AGE: Secondary Education - 15/16 years old

FOREKNOWLEDGE: World War II, geography, alliances

LENGTH: 6 PAGES (DURATION: 60 MINUTES)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, the pupils will know about the most important events of the Second World War, as well as the organisation of the sides and the daily life of the soldiers at the front.



RESOURCES

Maps, video projector
and screen

TEACHING METHODS

Explanatory videos
Repetition of exercises
Maps
Roleplay

ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Show an iconic image from the war, such as the Normandy landings or the flag on Iwo Jima. Ask students if they recognise the image and if they know what event it represents. This will generate curiosity and allow for a brief discussion before moving on.



You can also start the lesson with a 1-2 minute video showing powerful images of the Second World War, such as soldiers in combat, historical leaders and key moments of the era; this will capture the students' attention (a couple of videos are included in the references).

THEORY PART (15-20 minutes)

World War II, a conflict that changed the course of history, took place between 1939 and 1945. It was a global confrontation that involved the world's major powers and had lasting political, social and economic consequences.

The conflict had its roots in dissatisfaction with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War. Tensions grew due to the territorial expansion of authoritarian regimes such as Germany's Third Reich, Fascist Italy and Japanese expansion in Asia.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland, which provoked a response from France and the United Kingdom. Thus began the war in Europe. Soon, the conflict spread to other regions, involving countries such as the Soviet Union, the United States and Japan.

The war was marked by decisive events such as the Battle of Stalingrad, the Normandy Landings (D-Day) and the surrender of Germany in 1945. In the Pacific, the Battle of Midway and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki led to the end of the war with Japan.

World War II left a toll of devastation and loss of life. It also led to the rise of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and the beginning of the Cold War. It also marked the establishment of the United Nations in an effort to prevent future large-scale conflicts.

HANDS-ON PART (15-20 minutes)

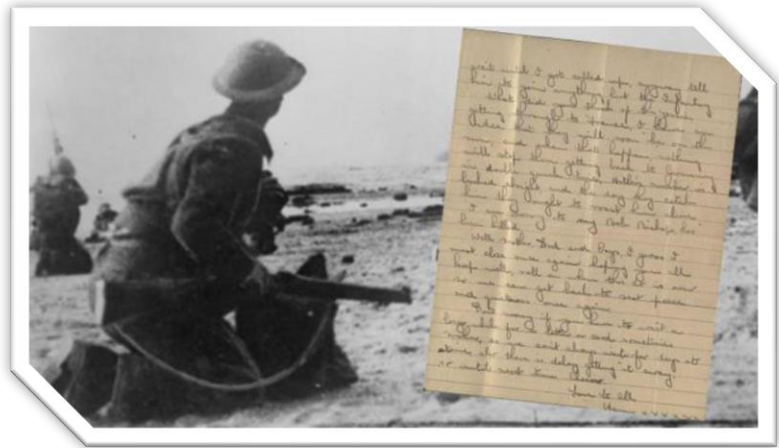
To give them a better understanding of day-to-day life in the war, students can read some of the letters sent from the front and reflect on them; they can also discuss in small groups how the war affected people on a personal and emotional level.

As example, here is a transcript of the last letter written by Harry Cole (30), a young British soldier, three days before he died at the end of May 1940:

"My dear mother, at last I can write you a few lines in all the hustle and bustle of this life. I was so happy to receive your letter and to hear that you are well. You sent it on the 12th and I did not receive it until yesterday, so that you have an idea of how long it has taken to reach me. The reason is that we don't stay many days in the same place, but I was very happy to receive your letter, as we don't get much news here. Funny... it's not much fun to be at war and not know what's going on. Please don't worry about me. I'll get through it all right.

So Stan's thinking of joining up? I wouldn't bother if I were him. He should wait until he's called up. Anyway, you can tell him he'll join anything but Infantry.

What did you think about the Germans getting to France? I think they will soon be on the run from there and, when that happens, nothing will stop them from getting back to



ABC / Suffolk Archives

Germany quickly. Hitler's number is already booked and I think the day they get him they should roast him alive.

I am sorry to say that Bob Bishop has been killed.

Well, Mummy, Daddy and children, I think I must stop writing once more. I hope you are all still well and will be able to get on when all this is over. I hope we can rest again. May peace and quiet return again.

Don't worry if you sometimes have to wait a long time to receive a letter from me, as we often can't write for days. There are also delays in dropping off mail, so, until next time, Cheerio. Much love to all,

Harry."

EXERCISE PART (10 minutes)

Below is a map of Europe during the Second World War. It is a great resource for practising and reviewing content with students. For example, they can sort the countries according to whether they were Allied, Axis or neutral, and the year can also be changed, as some countries changed sides as the war progressed.

World War II Map of Europe



CONCLUSION (2 minutes)

In short, World War II was a global conflict that changed the world. Its impact continues to influence our understanding of history and the way we address international challenges today. This conflict underscores the importance of diplomacy, international cooperation and conflict prevention. It also reminds us of the tragic consequences of intolerance and extremism.

SYNTHESIS/SUMMARY (3 minutes)

1. Start and Causes: Triggered by tensions after World War I and expansionism of nations.
2. Invasion of Poland: Action by Germany in 1939 that triggered the conflict.
3. Alliances: Formation of the Allies (US, UK, USSR) and Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan).
4. Coventry bombing: Devastating German air raid on England.
5. Normandy Landings: Key military operation in 1944 to liberate Europe.
6. Key Battles: Events such as Stalingrad, Pearl Harbor and D-Day marked critical points.
7. Liberation of Paris: In 1944, Allied forces liberated the French capital.
8. Holocaust: Nazi genocide that cost millions of Jewish lives.
9. Yalta Conference: In 1945, leaders agreed on post-war divisions and end of the Axis.
10. End and Legacy: Surrender of Germany in 1945, establishment of UN and beginning of Cold War.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES

- Buyout Footage Historical Film Archive (July 16, 2014): [Historic Archival Stock Footage WWII - Americans Take Aachen](#) (YouTube)
- HistoryAtWar (August 19, 2021): [WW2: Battle Of France \(Invasion of France\) \(Intense Footage\)](#) (YouTube)