##### Unit 13: World War II (1939-1945) Overview

In 1938, Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of Germany annexed Austria. Britain and France first responded through **appeasement** by letting Hitler take the country in order to prevent war. In 1939, Hitler continued to try to take over Europe by invading Poland. Fearing that Hitler intended to dominate all of Europe and maybe the world, Britain and France declared war on Germany officially beginning World War II.

In the early 1930s, after the end of World War I, the American public wanted to remain **isolationist** and out of world problems. Many Americans believed that Europe and the newly formed **League Of Nations** should attempt to bring about a peaceful solution to this European conflict. This didn’t work.

The American government first **foreign policy** was to pass **Neutrality Acts**, which prevented Americans from selling weapons to countries at war. America would only sell non-military weapons on a **cash and carry** basis. By 1940, France was conquered by Germany and the US feared that without arming Great Britain all of Europe could be under Hitler’s control. Roosevelt proposed the **Lend Lease Act** to lend war materials to any country fighting Germany. The US also refused to sell weapons and materials to Japan, an ally of Germany.

On the morning of December 7, 1941 Japanese airplanes sneak attacked the US navy in **Pearl Harbor, Hawaii**. The day after the attack, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan making the US officially part of WWII. The attack on Pearl Harbor made Americans fearful of Japanese immigrants living in America. Many Americans thought Americans of Japanese heritage might be spies or loyal to the Japanese Emperor. In the Supreme Court Case **Korematsu v. US** (1944), the court agreed to relocate Japanese Americans to prison like areas called **Internment Camps**.

America fought both against Germany in Africa and Europe and Japan in the Atlantic, but new Hitler was the toughest enemy and we sent most of our army against Germany and Italy. The war against Germany was difficult, but slowly America invaded Italy and then France (D-Day invasion). By May 1945, Allied Forces (America, England and Russia) were outside of Berlin. Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered. After Hitler was defeated, the leaders of the **Allied Powers,** new President Harry Truman, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Secretary General Joseph Stalin (known as “the Big Three”), met at the **Potsdam Conference**. This conference determined how Germany and Europe would be divided after the war – Berlin would be split into sections – America, France and England controlling the West and the Soviet Union the East. The Soviet Union would also be given control of Eastern Europe to use as future protection. This agreement helped to set up **The Cold War** where Germany and Europe would be divided into a free and capitalist West and a communist controlled East. After the war, Nazi **war criminals** who were responsible for **The Holocaust** were put to trial at **The Nuremburg Trials.**

The war in the Pacific was equally difficult. General Douglas MacArthur developed the strategy of **“Island Hopping” –** moving from one island to the next, getting closer and closer to Japan. However, each battle had many casualties – the Japanese usually always fought to the last man. In **the Battle of Midway**, we destroyed most of the Japanese ready and by 1945, we were ready to invade Japan. However, FDR died in 1945 and the new American **President Harry Truman** believed that an invasion of Japan could take a long time and lead to millions of American deaths. In August 1945, the American military dropped two **atomic bombs** on the cities of **Hiroshima and Nagasaki** in Japan. Japan surrendered shortly after the second explosion. This action possibly saved the lives of millions of American soldiers but resulted in the deaths of over hundreds of thousands of Japanese.

World War II had many positive effects for America on **the home front.** US entry into World War II helped the US economy out of **The Great Depression**, expanded women’s rights as women were encouraged to work in factories and improved relations between blacks and whites that fought in integrated units in the army. The saving and **rationing** that took place at home for the war set up a culture that was ready to buy after the war. The US attack on **Hiroshima and Nagasaki** has been the only time in history to date that atom bombs have been used in war and changed war forever. The war also stressed the need for a better peace-keeping organization than the League of Nations which clearly failed. During the **Yalta Conference** (February 1945), the leaders of the Allied Powersdecided a new organization had to be made, which would become the **United Nations.** However, World War II, the Yalta Conference and the Potsdam Conference set up the **Cold War** between the only two superpowers remaining –America and the U.S.S.R vying for control over a divided capitalist and communist Europe.

**Part I. Write these key words and their definitions: Vocabulary Words**

**1) Appeasement** – the idea to let Hitler take land that didn’t belong to Germany so Europe could avoid war before WWII

**2) Isolationism**  - the US foreign policy of not getting involved in European problems at the beginning on WWII.

**3) League Of Nations** - an organization that promoted world and peace. However, since the U.S. did not join, the League had less power to prevent World War II.

**4) United Nations** – the new “League of Nations” which was created after WWII ended. Its headquarters is in NYC.

**5) Neutrality Acts** – US isolationist policies, which prevented Americans from selling weapons to countries at the beginning of WWII.

**6) Lend Lease Act/ cash and carry** – US policies which allowed the US to sell weapons to Britain, France and Russia at the middle of the war.

**7) Pearl Harbor Attack** - December 7, 1941, when Japanese airplanes sneak attacked the US navy in Hawaii

**8) Korematsu v. US** – Supreme Court case that required Japanese Americans being relocated to restricted prison like areas called **Internment Camps**.

**9) The Draft/Selective Service** – lotteries that selected US men to register for the army to fight in WWII

**10) The Manhattan Project** – secret US programs to help build the atomic bomb used on Japan to end the war.

**11) President Harry Truman** – US President after FDR died. Made the decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan.

**12) Nuremberg Trials** – Nazi war crimes trials that took place after WWII. Nazi leaders convicted of killing innocent people were imprisoned or executed.

**13) Rosie The Riveter** - cultural symbol representing the American women who worked in factories during WWII

**14) GI Bill** – US law that gave all US soldiers involved in WWII a way to buy a home and attend college after the war

**15) Ration Cards –** coupons that were needed to buy goods during WWII in order to save materials for war

**16) War/Victory Bonds** – money given to the government as an investment so the US could pay for war

**17) Potsdam Conference –** Conference in which Truman, Churchill and Stalin **(Big Three – leaders of Allied Powers)** met to decide how to divide up Germany and Europe after the war. Helps set up Cold War.

**18) Hiroshima and Nagasaki**: The two cities that America dropped the Atomic bomb on to end the war in the Pacific against Japan.

**19) End of Great Depression –** the massive spending on military items, employment of people in the army and at home and the saving and rationing done by people at home helped lead to the end of the depression.

**20) Propaganda –** when different forms of media are used to influence people. This was done in the U.S. to recruit people to fight, buy war bonds and ration.

**21) Yalta Conference –** Conference in which Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin (also known as **Big Three – leaders of Allied Powers)** set up idea for United Nations and how to divide up Europe after the war.

**22) Homefront –** Everything that takes place back in the United States.

**23)** **Women and WWII** – Women once again worked in wartime factories and industries to support the men fighting the war. Propaganda like **Rosie the Riveter** motivated many.

**24)** **Integration of the Army** – When the U.S. army allowed all races to serve together and not in separate units. This is done by President Harry Truman after the war.

**25)** **Holocaust –** The systematic elimination of Jews and other races by the Nazis. Many German officers were convicted at the Nuremberg Trials of war crimes.

**26) DDay –** The invasion of France by the Allied powers and turning point in the war against Germany.

**27) Island Hopping –** Strategy of slowly conquering islands to get closer to Japan.

**28) Allied vs. Axis Powers** – The Allied Powers were America, England and the Soviet Union vs. the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan.

**Part II. Study Questions:**

**Instructions: Read and analyze the following documents, follow the prompts and answer each of the Homework Questions in one full T.E.A.L. paragraph (5-7 sentences) each, using and analyzing at least two documents in each paragraph.**

1. **Describe the historical circumstances that led to President Franklin Roosevelt issuing Executive Order 9066.**
2. ***Compare and Contrast the differing points of view on Japanese Internment and then EVALUATE* whether or not President Roosevelt was justified to order Executive Order 9066.**

**Document #1:**

On February 19, President Roosevelt signed **Executive Order 9066** authorizing:

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| “…*the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate such actions necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places from which any or all persons may be excluded, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion*…” |

**Document #2:**

**The following excerpt by Henry Murakami describes how World War II affected Japanese Americans:**

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| “*On this flatland a vast area had been enclosed by a barbed wire fence. The barracks were partitioned into four sections, each occupied by a family or group. The living quarters, measured 25 x 25 feet, were uniformly drab, furnished only by a straw mattress; accessories such as shelves, chairs, tables and bookcases had to be built by the occupants themselves. Surrounding the camp were lookout posts with armed guards holding rifles and machine guns. To classify these quarters as relocation centers was plainly inaccurate. Internment camps are more accurate or concentration camp or prisoner of war camp came closer to capturing the essence of where Japanese Americans were forced to live*.” |

**Document #3: Justice Hugo Black for the majority (6-3) in Korematsu v. United States (1944)**

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|  *“He was excluded because we are at war with the Japanese Empire because the proper military authorities feared an invasion of our West Coast and felt it necessary to take proper security measures. They decided that the military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily. We must give our military leaders the power to do this to keep the country safe and calm. At this time these actions were justified*.” |

**Document #4: The Civil Liberties Act of 1988**

On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act. The Act granted redress [tax free apology payment] of $20,000 and a formal presidential apology to every surviving U.S. citizen or legal resident immigrant of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during World War II.

Excerpt: *"Congress recognizes that. . . . a grave injustice was done to both citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry by the evacuation, relocation, and internment of civilians during World War II…these actions were carried out without adequate security reasons and without any acts of espionage or sabotage, and were motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."*