INTRODUCTION

An assassination in Sarajevo in 1914 sparks a global conflict. Over the course of the next thirty years, enormous bloodshed and destruction engulfs the world. Roosevelt. Hitler. Patton. Stalin. Mussolini. Churchill. Tojo. De Gaulle. MacArthur. The World Wars™ shows how the experiences of these men during the World War I era shaped them as they rose to power as world leaders. While some harnessed their power in the name of democracy in World War II, others emerged as the most infamous villains the world has seen. This character-based series looks at this tumultuous period of warfare through the actions of these iconic leaders.

The series examines the two wars along one timeline starting in 1914 and continuing to 1945, covering key turning points along the way. Narrated by two-time Oscar® nominee Jeremy Renner, this series offers a compelling way for students to learn about these pivotal decades in world history, featuring stunning CGI visuals and gripping dramatic scenes. Interviews with leading historians and contributors like General Colin Powell, former Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, Senator John McCain and former British Prime Minister John Major shed light on this transformative era.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The World Wars would be useful for History, Politics and Global Studies courses. Note: this series is recommended for high school and college students. Due to sensitive content it is not recommended for younger students. Note to teachers: this series is not a comprehensive examination of World War I and World War II. It is a character-based approach to these conflicts. It will be useful for students to gain insights into key leaders and events and a big picture understanding of the time period between 1914 and 1945. This guide uses programming photography from The World Wars series. Ask students to discuss these depictions and compare them with historical photos.
NIGHT ONE: TRIAL BY FIRE

International conflict erupts in the wake of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire, in June 1914. A complex web of alliances among nations is triggered and a war of unprecedented scale breaks out a month later. Over the course of the next four years, an entire generation is shaped by this war. World War I eventually involves dozens of countries, introduces new technologies of war, and leaves behind millions of casualties. George Patton, Charles De Gaulle, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Douglas MacArthur, Benito Mussolini, Hideki Tojo, Franklin Delanor Roosevelt and Adolph Hitler are men who come of age during these years. In this episode viewers learn about the experiences of these men, the costs and consequences of warfare, and the ways World War I set the stage for on-going world conflict.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which nations made up the Central Powers and the Allies during World War I? (Create a chart of these nations to refer back to as you study WWI and WWII.)

2. What was George Patton’s innovation in the battle against Pancho Villa in Mexico? Why was this invention such a big turning point in modern warfare?

3. What were some of the characteristics of trench warfare? Why do you think the “stalemate” continued for so long?

4. When did the United States enter World War I? What was the significance of the entry of the U.S. into the war?

5. What was the Gallipoli campaign and why was it so important? What role did Churchill play and how do you think it affected his life and career?

6. What role did Russia play during World War I? How do you think Stalin was shaped by the Russian Revolution?

7. What is a “war of attrition” and how does this phrase apply to WWI?

8. What were some of the leadership characteristics of George Patton and Douglas MacArthur? Do you think they had characteristics common in many leaders? Discuss.

9. How did World War I finally end? What were the major outcomes of the war?

10. How do you think Hitler’s experiences in WWI shaped him as a person and a leader? What ideological philosophies did he develop after the war?

ACTIVITY

Ask students to write an essay responding to one of the questions above.
PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITY: THE ZIMMERMANN TELEGRAM

One of the motivators for the U.S. to enter World War I was a secret telegram from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German Minister to Mexico. This telegram was intercepted and deciphered by the British in January 1917. The following month, the British released the telegram to President Woodrow Wilson, and the contents were published widely in newspapers. Americans were shocked to learn that Zimmermann had tried to convince Mexico to join Germany in the war effort in return for U.S. territory Germany believed Mexico could seize from the U.S.

TRANSCRIPT OF ZIMMERMANN TELEGRAM (1917)

(Decoded message text of the Zimmermann Telegram)
From 2nd from London # 5747.
“We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal or alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President’s attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.”
Signed, ZIMMERMANN.

Citation: Zimmermann Telegram, 1917; Decimal File, 1910-1929, 862.20212/82A (1910-1929), and Decoded Zimmermann Telegram, 1917; Decimal File, 1910-1929, 862.20212/69, General Records of the Department of State; Record Group 59; National Archives. To view the telegram in digital format visit: www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=60

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS
1. What does the telegram reveal about Germany’s plans regarding submarine warfare?
2. What role does Zimmermann want Mexico to play in World War I?
   Do you think Mexico would have agreed to this plan if given the opportunity?
3. Why do you think the Zimmermann telegram provoked the U.S. to enter World War I?
   What were some of the other factors that contributed to the U.S. declaring war against Germany in April 1917?

ACTIVITY
After analyzing the telegram as a class or in small groups, ask students to respond to question #3 in essay format.
NIGHT TWO: A RISING THREAT

Emboldened by his experiences in battle, Adolf Hitler mobilizes membership in the Nazi Party and formulates his plan for a nationalist Germany to regain power. Benito Mussolini rises to the helm in Italy, leading the National Fascist Party. Meanwhile, Franklin Delano Roosevelt ushers the U.S. through the crisis of the Great Depression. In Japan, the quest for expansion and international power leads to increased militarization. Hideki Tojo rises up the ranks. Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany in 1933 and by 1939 the world explodes into war. After forming a Nonagression Pact with Russia, Hitler attempts to conquer Europe, with Japan and Italy as allies. Churchill, now British Prime Minister, does his best to keep Britain from total collapse while the U.S. weighs the consequences of entering the war.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who were the Axis and Allied powers during World War II? Create a chart of these alliances to refer back to as you study this period.

2. Why do you think Hitler was so successful in mobilizing others to follow him? What were his main goals and how did he plan to achieve them?

3. Why did FDR choose to curb military funding during the New Deal? Do you think this was the correct decision at the time? Discuss.

4. Why did Mussolini decide to invade Ethiopia? How did this decision tie in with his larger plans for Italy?

5. Why do you think Stalin decided to form a pact with Hitler in August 1939?

6. What was the political strategy known as "appeasement"? Do you think it was effective during World War II? Discuss.

7. How would you describe the differences between Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill in their approach to leadership during the early years of World War II?

8. Why do you think Roosevelt did not push to involve the U.S. in World War II right away? Do you think this was the right decision? Discuss.

9. What were some of the main goals of Japan in the years before and during World War II? Who was Hideki Tojo and how did he help achieve these goals during this era?

10. This episode ends right before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. At this moment in the war, what would you predict as the outcomes of the conflict? Discuss.

ACTIVITY

Ask students to write an essay responding to one of the questions above.
PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: FDR’S “FOUR FREEDOMS SPEECH”

On January 6, 1941 President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his Annual Message to Congress which later became known as his “Four Freedoms Speech.” In this address, Roosevelt outlined the critical importance of American support to Britain during World War II. Below is an excerpt from his address.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT’S ANNUAL MESSAGE (FOUR FREEDOMS) TO CONGRESS (1941): EXCERPT

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception—the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Citation: Franklin D. Roosevelt Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941; Records of the United States Senate; SEN 77A-H1; Record Group 46; National Archives. To view the telegram in digital format visit: www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=70

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

1. What are the four freedoms Roosevelt describes in this speech? Why were these freedoms at risk at the time he delivered his speech?

2. Roosevelt describes the “new order of tyranny.” What do you think this phrase refers to and what does Roosevelt see as the alternative?

3. Which of the “four freedoms” do you think are most important, and why?

ACTIVITY

After discussing question 3, have students write a short essay or response paper exploring the “four freedoms.”
NIGHT THREE: NEVER SURRENDER

Shockwaves reverberate throughout the U.S. after the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The U.S. officially enters the war. The Allies must stop both Japan and Germany. Mussolini is overthrown and the Allies win a few key victories including the Battle of Midway. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin meet in Tehran late in 1943 to strategize. The Allies wrest control of Western Europe back from Hitler in June 1944 through one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history: D-Day. Patton drives his army toward Berlin. His troops make a gruesome discovery, locating concentration camps and revealing the horrific crimes of the Nazis. Tragically, FDR dies as the nation’s future hangs in the balance. Harry S. Truman becomes president. After the Allies resist his final onslaught, Hitler commits suicide and Germany exits the war. In August 1945 Truman does the unthinkable in an effort to end the conflict—he orders atomic bombs to be dropped on Japan. The war has finally ended. But how will the world rebuild, and will a lasting peace be possible?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When and why did the United States enter World War II?

2. How would you describe the relationship between FDR and Churchill? What were some of the important decisions they made together during World War II?

3. Why do you think Mussolini failed to maintain power in Italy?

4. What do you think were Stalin’s major goals during World War II? How did he work with Roosevelt and Churchill to achieve these goals?

5. Why was the D-Day plan so risky? Why do you think the Allies were able to achieve success?

6. Patton is remembered as one of the greatest generals in U.S. history. Based on what you learned in this episode, do you agree with this assessment of Patton? Discuss.

7. What was Hitler’s “Final Solution”? What role did the Germany military and citizenry play in helping achieve this plan? When and how was it thwarted?

8. What was the state of the world at the end of World War II? What plans were put in place to help rebuild?

9. At the end of this episode, the war has ended but peace is not a given. Imagine you do not know what happened after 1945. Would you predict that peace was possible? Discuss.
In this speech to Congress, delivered the day after the Pearl Harbor bombing, President Roosevelt describes the attack and asks for a declaration of war against Japan.

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

But always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounding determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Transcription courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Citation: “Day of Infamy” Speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 8, 1941; SEN 77A-H1, Records of the United States Senate; Record Group 46, National Archives. To view the document in digital format visit:


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In this address President Roosevelt describes the Pearl Harbor bombing as a “date which will live in infamy.” What do you think he means by this phrase? Do you agree with his assessment?

2. What does Roosevelt say about the status of diplomatic negotiations with Japan at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack? Do you think diplomatic solutions might have still been possible if the attack had not taken place?

3. What does Roosevelt say about the possibility of American victory in World War II? Why do you think he included these words of encouragement in his speech?
ACTIVITIES

1. **14 Points.** Woodrow Wilson developed his “14 Points” which he believed would help achieve world peace after World War I. In small groups or individually, students can read Wilson’s 14 Point plan and write a summary of his proposals. View this document online at [www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62](www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62)

2. **Treaty of Versailles.** In this series, we learn about some of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the influence of the treaty on the post-World War I world. Working in small groups, have students read sections of the treaty and report on their findings in visual or oral presentations. Students can also write an essay responding to this question: How did the Treaty of Versailles shape world politics? View the treaty online at [avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/versailles_menu.asp](avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/versailles_menu.asp)

3. **Biography of a Leader.** This series focuses on several key leaders who shaped the era between World War I and World War II. Choose one of these leaders and write a newspaper article or encyclopedia entry about the leader you chose. Alternately, students can create a short documentary video about their chosen leader. (Note: the National History Day theme in 2015 pertains to leadership. Visit [www.nhd.org](www.nhd.org) to learn more.)

4. **30 Years’ War.** A quote from Winston Churchill opens this series. In February 1945 he made a statement to the House of Commons in which he said, “One must regard these 30 years or more of strife, turmoil and suffering in Europe as part of one story ... one story of a 30 years’ war.” Churchill was reporting on the status of Poland in his speech, but this quote suggests the connections between World War I and World War II. Do you agree with the view that the two wars were connected? Write a short essay arguing for or against this viewpoint, with specific examples from the series as well as your own research.

5. **The Holocaust.** Episode 3 of The World Wars explores the discovery of concentration camps and the Holocaust. There are extensive resources for studying the Holocaust including the USC Shoah Foundation IWitness site which includes first-person testimonies from Holocaust survivors. Visit [iwitness.usc.edu/SFI](iwitness.usc.edu/SFI) to learn more and to incorporate these resources into your classroom.

6. **The United Nations Charter.** In the wake of World War II, the United Nations was established as a way to achieve and maintain peace, security and cooperation among nations. A precursor to the United Nations was the League of Nations, formed after World War I. As a class or in small groups, students can review the United Nations charter and discuss the outcomes of World War II. View this document online at: [www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=7](www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=7)
Which were the main countries that made up the Central Powers and the Allies during World War I?

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<tr>
<th>Central Powers</th>
<th>Allied Powers (Allies)</th>
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1. When did World War I officially start? ______________
2. This complex system of long, narrow ditches was used extensively in World War I. ______________
3. What was Winston Churchill’s prominent role in World War I? ______________
4. Which failed campaign caused Churchill to lose his position? ______________
5. When did the U.S. enter World War I? ______________
6. What was the name of Woodrow Wilson’s plan for peace following World War I? ______________
7. Which event caused Russia to exit World War I? ______________
8. What day is known as Armistice Day, marking the end of World War I? ______________
9. What was the name of Hitler’s failed attempt to seize power in March 1923? ______________

10. The German attack on the Lusitania passenger ship was an example of which of the following?
    A. Trench warfare
    B. Unrestricted submarine warfare
    C. Total warfare
    D. Biological warfare

11. What was the final period of World War I during which the Allies launched massive attacks against the Central Powers?
    A. Gallipoli campaign
    B. Battle of Verdun
    C. 100 Days’ Offensive
    D. D-Day

12. What was the term used to describe Germany’s payments to other nation’s after World War I as punishment for its actions?
    A. Reparations
    B. War Bonds
    C. Debts
    D. Armistice Dues
World War I in Europe

QUESTIONS
1. Which countries remained neutral in World War I?
2. How far east did the Germans advance in World War I?
Which were the main countries that made up the Axis and Allied Powers during World War II?

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<th>Axis Powers</th>
<th>Allied Powers (Allies)</th>
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1. Which part of China did Japan invade in 1931? ____________________
2. What was the full name of the Nazi Party in Germany? ____________________
3. What was the name of FDR’s plan to help restore the American economy during the Great Depression? ____________________
4. What was the name of the agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union signed shortly before World War II started? ____________________
5. What was the name of the German approach to warfare known for speed and surprise movements? ____________________
6. When did Winston Churchill become prime minister of Britain? ____________________
7. Which leader was prime minister of Japan from 1941 to 1944? ____________________
8. The U.S. issued an embargo against Japan in 1941, cutting off Japanese access to which important resource? ____________________

9. What term describes the policy of trying to pacify a nation through negotiation in order to prevent war, used by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in response to Germany before Britain entered World War II?
   A. Nationalism
   B. Appeasement
   C. Militarization
   D. Attrition
10. Joseph Stalin sent millions of people to work camps in which area of the Soviet Union?
    A. St. Petersburg
    B. Moscow
    C. Siberia
    D. Murmansk
11. What is the name of the air campaign launched by the Germans against Britain during the summer and fall of 1940?
    A. Battle of Midway
    B. Battle of Luftwaffe
    C. Battle of Britain
    D. Battle of Stalingrad
12. Which military leader commanded the U.S. military in the Pacific right before and during World War II?
    A. George S. Patton
    B. Douglas MacArthur
    C. George Marshall
    D. Dwight Eisenhower
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When did the attack on Pearl Harbor take place? Based on this map, why do you think the attack was strategically important for the Japanese?

2. Where are the Aleutian Islands located? Did you know there were battles that took place on U.S. soil during World War II?
REVIEW OF WW II LEADERS

Who are some of the major world leaders featured in this episode?
On a separate sheet of paper write a few sentences describing these leaders and their key roles.

1. When did the United States declare war on Japan? ____________________
2. Hitler was defeated in an epic battle against the Soviets which took place in 1942-43, which is considered a major World War II turning point. What is the name of this battle? ____________________
3. After the defeat of Italy during World War II, who ordered the arrest of Mussolini? ____________________
4. What is a term to describe hatred or discrimination against Jews, which was a major part of Nazi ideology? ____________________
5. Which general led U.S. forces in the D-Day invasion? ____________________
6. Who was welcomed back to France as a hero after his country was liberated from the Germans? ____________________
7. After FDR passed away, who became president of the United States? ____________________
8. The United States dropped atomic bombs on these two Japanese cities in 1945. ________ and ________

9. Which battle was a major victory for the U.S. in the Pacific in June 1942?
   A. Battle of Stalingrad
   B. Battle of Midway
   C. Battle of the Bulge
   D. Battle of Britain

10. Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill met in which city late in 1943?
    A. Paris
    B. Washington, D.C.
    C. Moscow
    D. Tehran

11. When did German forces surrender in World War II?
    A. August 1945
    B. June 1945
    C. May 1945
    D. April 1944

12. When did Japan surrender, ending World War II?
    A. August 1945
    B. May 1945
    C. September 1945
    D. September 1944
1. Where did the D-Day invasion take place? Based on this map, why was this such an important strategic victory for the Allies?

2. Based on the distances of some of the Allied advances, why do you think motorized vehicles were so important in World War II?
NIGHT ONE: TRIAL BY FIRE

1. July 28, 1914
2. Trenches
3. First Lord of the Admiralty
4. Gallipoli
5. April 6, 1917
6. Fourteen Points
7. Russian/Bolshevik Revolution
8. November 11, 1918
9. Beer Hall or Munich Putsch
10. B
11. C
12. A

Note: Visit www.history.com/topics/world-war-i for names of the Central and Allied forces.

NIGHT TWO: A RISING THREAT

1. Manchuria
2. National Socialist German Workers’ Party
3. The New Deal
4. Nonagression Pact
5. Blitzkrieg
6. May 1940
7. Hideki Tojo
8. Oil
9. B
10. C
11. A
12. B

Note: Visit www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii for names of the Allied and Axis powers.

NIGHT THREE: NEVER SURRENDER

1. December 8, 1941
2. Battle of Stalingrad
3. King Emmanuel/King Victor
   Emmanuel III/King of Italy
4. Anti-Semitism
5. Dwight Eisenhower
6. DeGaulle
7. Harry S. Truman
8. Hiroshima and Nagasaki
9. B
10. D
11. C
12. C

Note: Visit www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii for names of the Allied and Axis powers.