



# Curriculum Guide

*Franklin D. Roosevelt and WWII*

## Vocabulary

**Allied Powers** - The twenty-six nations fighting together against the Axis powers in WW II. The Allied powers were led by the US, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.

**America First Committee** - A powerful isolationist group opposed to American involvement in WW II. It was disbanded following the Pearl Harbor attack.

**Anti-Comintern Pact** - An agreement originally signed by Germany and Japan in November, 1936 and later signed by Italy in 1937 agreeing to cooperation against communism among the members

**Appeasement** - A policy of preventing conflict by giving in to hostile nations' demands. It is often used in referring to European concessions to Hitler in the 1930s, eg. at Munich in 1938.

**Arsenal of Democracy** - A term referring to the United States' ability to provide arms and materiel before and during WW II.

**Atlantic Charter** - A document drafted in August, 1941 by FDR and Winston Churchill which contained basic principles of their hopes for a better world. It became the inspiration for the United Nations and was signed by twenty-six nations.

**Axis Powers** - The nations fighting together against the Allies in WW II. The Axis consisted of Germany, Italy, Japan, and some of their satellites.

**Bataan Death March** - A forced march that US prisoners of war endured following the fall of the Philippines to Japan.

**Battle of Britain** - The defense of England against the Luftwaffe (Nazi air force) by the RAF (Royal Air Force) and anti-aircraft forces in 1940-41.

**Battle of Midway** - A June, 1942 air/sea battle in the mid-Pacific during which the Japanese lost four aircraft carriers as well as numerous other fighting and transport ships.

**Battle of the Bulge** - The final German counterattack of WW II. Taking place in December, 1944, it involved over one million troops and temporarily slowed the allied advance.

**Big Three** - A term referring to Churchill, FDR, and Stalin, leaders of the UK, USA, and USSR during WW II.

**Blitzkrieg** - "Lightning warfare" the German term referring to fast and sudden mechanized attack meant to ensure a quick victory.

**C & K Rations** - Ready-to-eat packaged food issued to our armed forces in the field, precursors to today's "MREs" (Meals Ready to Eat).

**Cash and Carry** - Compromise between FDR and Congress allowing the sale of arms to the allies so long as payment was in cash and transport of materiel was by the buyer's shipping.

**Code Talkers** - Navajo Indians recruited to send messages in their native tongue in order that Japanese could not decode sensitive messages.



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**Concentration Camp** - Detention and extermination camps set up by the Nazi government to eliminate what were thought to be “undesirable elements” such as Jews, gypsies, political dissidents, etc.

**Day of Infamy** - The phrase used by FDR in his speech to Congress referring to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

**D-DAY** - June 6, 1944. The Allied invasion of Europe known officially as Operation Overlord. It was launched against Hitler’s “Atlantic Wall” on the Normandy coast of France.

**Declaration of war (WW II)** - On December 8, 1941, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, in the famous “Day of Infamy” speech, FDR asked Congress to recognize that a state of war existed between the United States and Japan. Three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the US

**Executive Order 9066** - Presidential order which called for the internment of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast beginning in early 1942.

**Fascism** - A system of government run by a dictator, characterized by governmental control of all private industry and belligerent nationalism.

**Fireside chats** - National radio reports by Franklin D. Roosevelt, broadcast from either the White House or the FDR Library study in Hyde Park.

**Four Freedoms** - Outlined by FDR in his 6 January, 1941 State of the Union message, the freedoms were Freedom of Speech and Worship, Freedom from Fear and Want.

**Gas mask** - A face mask designed to filter out poison gases.

**Germany First** – FDR’s strategy that Germany presented the greatest threat, it referred to his belief that we should work on the defeat of Germany first.

**G. I. Bill of Rights** - Enacted in 1944, it provided veterans with health care, loans, and scholarships.

**Good Neighbor Policy** - US/Latin America policy as announced by FDR in his inaugural address of 4 March, 1933. It was characterized by US intentions to be respectful and friendly in US/Latin America dealings.

**Home front** - Term relating defense and production here in the US as opposed to the European or Pacific fronts of WW II.

**Holocaust** - Reference to the Nazi plan to rid the world of those people they felt were undesirable. Chief among them were all Jews, as well as many Eastern Europeans, dissidents, the handicapped, and other “undesirables.”

**Infamy** - An extreme evil act.

**Island hopping** - American WW II strategy designed to reduce battles and bring WW II to an earlier end by invading only select Japanese held islands, while advancing toward Japan.

**Kamikaze** – “Divine wind.” A Japanese plan which called for aerial suicide attacks on Allied warships late in WW II.



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**Kristallnacht** - 1938 attack on Jews and their property throughout Germany by proponents of Nazism.

**Lend-Lease** - A program begun in 1941 to aid the British without breaking neutrality laws, it allowed the U. S. to loan Britain strategic military goods before the US entered WW II.

**Manhattan Project/atomic bomb** – Code name for America’s atomic bomb project.

**Map room** - Top secret White House wartime communications room open to so few that even the Secret Service was barred.

**Munich Agreement** - Accord reached in September, 1938 at which Britain and France agreed to Hitler’s demand to annex Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland.

**Nazi** - German political party of the 1930s and '40s which promoted extreme nationalism, aggression, and racism.

**Nazi-Soviet Mutual Non Aggression Pact (August, 1939)** - Treaty in which Germany and the Soviet Union agreed that neither side would declare war on the other.

**Neutrality Acts** - Acts beginning in 1935 designed to keep the US from foreign involvement.

**Nuremberg Laws** - 1935 laws depriving Jews of citizenship and protecting the so-called Aryan race.

**Operation Torch** - Code name for the Allied invasion of North Africa in 1943.

**OSS (Office of Strategic Services)** - Forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency, the OSS oversaw US espionage in WW II.

**Pact of Steel** - A May 1939 alliance between Germany and Italy.

**Pearl Harbor** - Hawaiian harbor and home of US Pacific fleet, scene of December 7, 1941 surprise attack on US forces resulting in our entrance into WW II.

**Phony War (Sitzkrieg)** - Time following Germany’s invasion of Poland in September, 1939 until April, 1940 and the German invasion of Norway and Denmark.

**Potsdam Declaration** - US declaration warning the Japanese that they faced destruction unless they surrendered unconditionally. Their refusal to heed its warning resulted in the atomic bomb attacks of August, 1945.

**Propaganda** – Facts or allegations spread deliberately to promote or injure ones cause, group or nation.

**Rationing** – US system during WW II fixing civilian allowances of important resources. Citizens were assigned ration books without which they could not purchase certain goods as gasoline, meats, etc.

**Rosie the Riveter** - Personification of women defense workers during WW II.

**Scrap Drive** - Campaign to collect and recycle a variety of materials, such as metal, rubber and lard for the war effort.

**Selective Service** - System put in place to draft young men into the armed forces.



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**Sudetenland** - Area of Eastern Czechoslovakia annexed by Germany in September, 1938 and allowed by Britain and France as part of their policy of appeasement.

**Theater of Operations** - Term referring to areas of conflict during WW II. They were most commonly divided into European and Pacific theaters.

**Totalitarian State** - A government that controls all political, social, and economic aspects of a nation with little or no regard for individual rights, generally headed by a dictator.

**Tripartite Pact** - A September 1940 defense agreement between Germany, Italy, and Japan.

**Tube Alloys** - The British code name for the atomic bomb project.

**Tuskegee Airmen** - A WW II Army Air Corps squadron made up of the first African Americans to serve in the Army Air Corps. The US armed forces were segregated at that time.

**Unconditional Surrender** - Terms of surrender without allowances; complete surrender.

**United Nations** - Term by which FDR referred to the twenty-six nations joined in wartime coalition. The term was later used by the international organization devoted to human rights and world peace.

**USO** - Abbreviation for United Service Organization, which provided entertainment, community information, and family services for members of our armed forces.

**V-E Day** - Declared May 8, 1945, Germany signs an unconditional surrender thus ending WW II in the European theater.

**Victory Garden** - Small gardens grown during WW II to relieve wartime food shortages at home.

**V -J Day** - Declared August 15, 1945, The day following Japan's unconditional surrender thus ending WW II.

**V - Mail** - Service used during WW II which transmitted letters to and from servicemen using microfilm.

**War Bonds** - Government offered bonds to help finance the war effort.

**War Production Board** - Office created by FDR on 16 January, 1942 to coordinate the changeover to a wartime economy.