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WORLD WAR II

World War II, which lasted from 1939 until 1945, took more lives, cost more money, and destroyed more property than any other war in history. An estimated 16 million men died on the battlefields of Europe, North Africa, and Asia, and in the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Mediterranean Sea. More than 50 countries were involved at a cost in excess of 1 trillion dollars. A new era in warfare was ushered in by huge tanks, fast-moving armies, massive air strikes, large-scale sea battles, missiles, and atomic bombs.



Directions Here is an opportunity to compare your decision-making skills with those of some of the people who influenced the course of World War II. Decide what you would have done given the circumstances described in the background information for questions 1-5. Then circle either a, b, or c. Afterwards, you will be told which choices were actually made during the war.

Background for Question 1

During 1938 and the first part of 1939, Germany seized two neighboring countries, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Germany also stood behind Italy's invasion of Albania. Next, the Germans advanced into Poland. Great Britain and France, fearing that Adolf Hitler might be trying to conquer all of Europe, decided it was time to take a stand, and so they declared war.

Question 1

In a time of crisis, such as existed in September 1939, the United States Congress can pass legislation that sets a course of action. If you were a Congressman when Great Britain and France declared war on Germany, which of the following would you vote to do?

- (a) Declare war on Germany and send troops to help the British and French.
- (b) Send supplies, but no military forces, to Great Britain and France.
- (c) Remain totally neutral.

Background for Question 2

Despite the fact that the United States and Japan were not at war, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on December 7, 1941. They struck American air and naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Several hundred enemy planes took part in the one hour and forty-five minute raid. The result was the destruction of many American planes and ships, and the killing of more than two thousand men. Japan emerged with an overwhelming military advantage in the Pacific region.

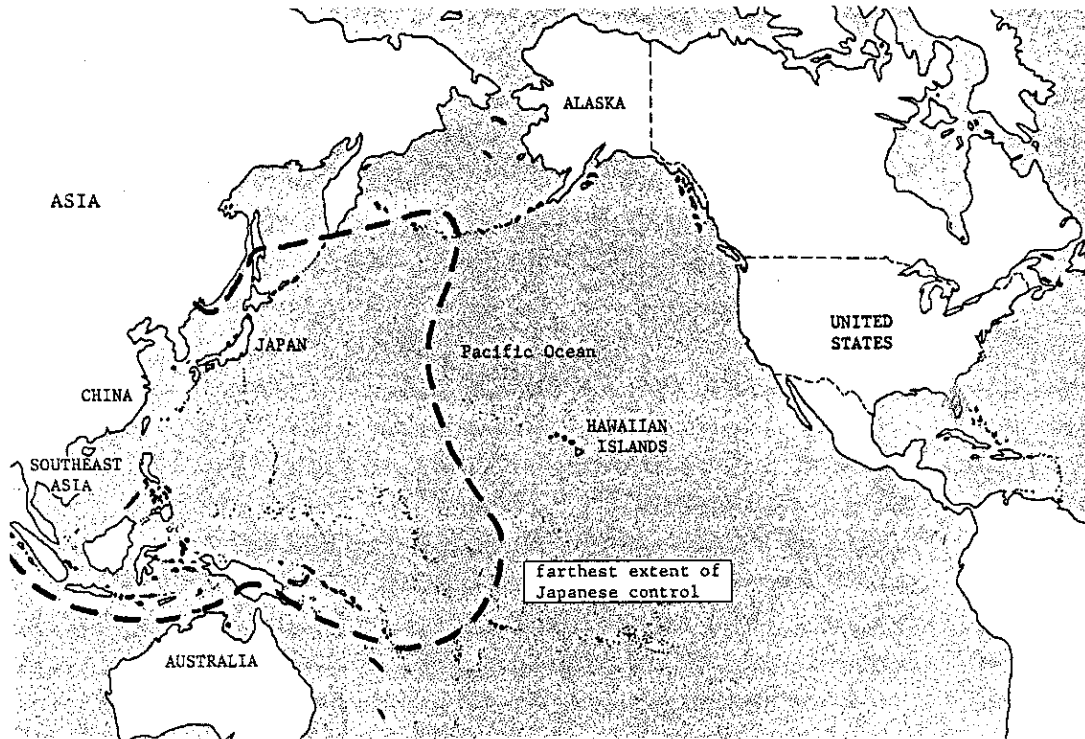
Question 2

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress approved President Franklin D. Roosevelt's request for a declaration of war against Japan. The United States had to quickly raise a large military force. If you were a Congressman, which of the following would you do to provide the necessary manpower for the army, navy, air force, and marines?

- (a) Vote for a Selective Service Act calling for the drafting of men between the ages of 18 and 45.
- (b) Support a Selective Service Act providing for the drafting of both men and women.
- (c) Ask for volunteers instead of using a draft.

Background for Question 4

While the Allies were trying to push back the German and Italian armies in Europe, another struggle was taking place in the Pacific. The fighting there involved the United States and Japan. Japan had conquered parts of Asia and a large number of Pacific islands. It was left mainly to the United States to recapture the lost territory and force the Japanese to surrender.



Question 4

What strategy would you use to defeat Japan if you were General Douglas MacArthur, chief of Allied forces in the Pacific?

- (a) Attack Japan by crossing the North Pacific from Alaska.
- (b) Starting from the Hawaiian Islands, drive back the Japanese by recapturing the islands now under their control. Continue taking these islands until close enough to attack Japan itself.
- (c) Send nearly all American forces in the Hawaiian Islands around the southern end of Australia to Southeast Asia. Move north into China, then launch a direct assault on Japan.

Background for Question 5

After several years of hard fighting, the Americans drove the enemy to within a few hundred miles of Japan. This brought Japanese cities and military targets within range of U.S. bombers. Meanwhile, in the United States, Allied scientists completed work on the world's first atomic bomb. President Roosevelt died soon after starting his fourth term, and Harry S. Truman succeeded him.

Question 5

If you were President Truman, which action would you take to bring about the final defeat of Japan?

- (a) Drop the atomic bomb on Japan.
- (b) Keep forcing the enemy to retreat until it is possible to invade Japan itself.
- (c) Blockade Japan to prevent the importation of needed supplies.

QUIZ: WORLD WAR II

Multiple-Choice

- (1) ___ The immediate cause of World War II was Germany's invasion of: (a) Poland (b) Czechoslovakia (c) Austria
- (2) ___ With the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, the United States sent food and war materials to: (a) the Allies (b) the Axis Powers (c) any country that had the money to buy them
- (3) ___ World War II lasted from: (a) 1933 to 1939 (b) 1939 to 1942 (c) 1939 to 1945
- (4) ___ The United States entered the war when: (a) the Luftwaffe attacked Great Britain (b) the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor (c) U-boats sank unarmed American merchant ships
- (5) ___ In order to raise a large military force, Congress: (a) approved a Selective Service Act calling for the drafting of men between 18 and 45 (b) passed a law that provided for the drafting of both men and women (c) asked for volunteers for the army, navy, air force, and marines

Matching

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| (6) ___ Dwight D. Eisenhower | (a) prime minister of Great Britain who vowed never to surrender to the Germans |
| (7) ___ Winston Churchill | (b) president of the United States who made the decision to drop the atomic bomb |
| (8) ___ Harry S. Truman | (c) president of the United States who called December 7 "a date which will live in infamy" |
| (9) ___ Franklin D. Roosevelt | (d) general who led American forces to victory in the Pacific region |
| (10) ___ Douglas MacArthur | (e) commander of Allied forces in Great Britain who ordered the D-Day invasion of northern France |

Completion

- (11) Germany, _____, and Japan were the chief Axis Powers.
- (12) Germany's " _____," or lightning war, skillfully combined air power, tanks, and artillery.
- (13) The _____ (RAF) successfully defended Great Britain against the German Luftwaffe.
- (14) _____ was the wartime leader of Germany who wanted to conquer all of Europe.
- (15) The war in the Pacific was fought mainly between the United States and _____.

True-False

- (16) _____ The British and French defeated the Axis Powers in most of the battles during the first two years of the war.
- (17) _____ The United States fought on the side of the Allies.
- (18) _____ The "Big Four" -- the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China -- directed Allied strategy during the war.
- (19) _____ The Germans attacked Russia on the eastern front, but after a bitter campaign were driven back by the Red Army.
- (20) _____ The Allies defeated the Axis Powers in World War II.