

Learning Guide



World War II

We hope you found it valuable learning about one the biggest conflicts in human history, WWII. Extend your learning with this print-ready Learning Guide.



What's in this Learning Guide?

Get Set to Listen:

Check your knowledge before and after listening to the episode by determining if statements are TRUE or FALSE.

Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.3

Writing Prompts and Extension Projects

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.8

Helping Strangers

CCSS: RI.5.1, RI.5.3, RI.5.6; CCSS: W.5.1, W.5.2, W.5.3; CCSS: SL.5.1; NCSS: D2.His.1-4.5-6; NCSS: D2.His.14.3-5; NCSS: D2.Civ.2-3.5-6; NCSS: D4.1-6.5-6

Navajo Code Talker: Resources & Lesson Plans & Activities

Women in WWII: Resources & Lesson Plans & Activities

Holocaust: Resources & Lesson Plans & Activities

Japanese Internment: Resources & Lesson Plans & Activities

Additional Resources



The Children's Hour
kids public radio



Get Set to Listen

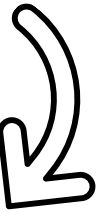
1. Before listening!

Read each statement and write TRUE or FALSE based on what you already know.



2. After listening!

Based on what the experts said in the episode, write TRUE or FALSE.



Before Listening	TRUE or FALSE?	After Listening
	1. Every continent was involved in the WWII conflict.	
	2. About 56 million people died in WWII, making it the deadliest war in history.	
	3. Anyone who wanted to leave countries invaded by the Nazis was allowed to do so.	
	4. The US used a code based on the Navajo language to keep communication between Allied Powers secret.	
	5. The US was part of WWII from the very beginning of the war.	
	6. German, Japanese, and Italian citizens living in the US were held as political prisoners during WWII.	
	7. Women helped the US win the war by working in factories to replace the men who went to fight in the war, planting “victory gardens” to save money, and repairing airplanes.	

What did you learn?



Get Set to Listen

Answer key

1. FALSE. Not every continent was involved in active fighting, but the only continent not directly involved in land battles was Antarctica. Warfare took place in Europe, Asia, and Africa, with significant naval battles occurring in other areas, and nearly every continent was affected to some degree by the global conflict.
 - *Antarctica*: Was not a site of land battles.
 - *Europe*: The war began here and saw major fighting throughout the continent.
 - *Asia*: Was a major battleground, with extensive fighting in China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.
 - *Africa*: Significant campaigns took place in North Africa, with soldiers from across the continent fighting on behalf of their empires.
 - *North America*: Was not a theater of war but was involved through battles in Alaska and through the participation of its nations.
 - *South America*: Avoided land combat, but a naval battle occurred off its coast, and its nations also participated.
 - *Australia*: While not a major battleground, it was directly involved and a key part of the Allied efforts.
2. TRUE. In addition to the soldiers who died in combat and the civilians who died in bombings, the Nazis targeted and killed millions of people—especially Jews, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people, and other groups they viewed as “inferior”—through unfair laws, violence, and deadly camps, leading to one of the worst genocides in history. ([More information here](#))
3. FALSE. Nearly 140,000 people in Germany and Austria alone were on the waiting list to receive US visas to escape to the US. Much like today, It wasn’t easy to get the paperwork needed to come to a safe country.
4. TRUE
5. FALSE. The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii led to the US joining WWII.
6. TRUE
7. TRUE



Vocabulary

Allied Powers	The countries that worked together to fight against Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II, including the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.
Axis Powers	The countries that fought against the Allied Powers in World War II, including Germany, Italy, and Japan.
Nazis	Members of a political party in Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, who believed in extreme ideas like racism and hatred, and who caused World War II and the Holocaust.
Jews	People who follow Judaism, a religion with its own traditions, holidays, and beliefs, and who share a cultural and historical heritage.
Holocaust	The time during World War II when millions of Jews and other groups were unfairly treated, imprisoned, and killed by the Nazis in Germany and the countries they controlled.
concentration camps	A place where the Nazis forced Jews and other people to live during World War II, often in very harsh and dangerous conditions.
internment camps	Places where the U.S. government forced Japanese Americans to live during World War II, often far from their homes, because they were considered a security risk.
Navajo Code Talkers	Native American soldiers who used the Navajo language to send secret messages during World War II, helping the U.S. military win battles.



Discussion Questions

1. How did WWII change perceptions of women in society?
2. What can we learn from personal stories or survivor testimonies that is hard to understand from just statistics?
3. Why is remembering the Holocaust important today?
4. Reflect on a time you or someone you know acted courageously to help others.
5. Discuss why small acts of kindness can have a big impact in times of crisis.
6. Reflect on Japanese internment camps in the United States. Discuss how prejudice can influence government decisions.
7. What does the story of the Navajo Code Talkers teach you about the roles and impact of diverse communities in shaping and supporting the nation?
8. Reflect on the importance of cultural knowledge in problem-solving and teamwork.

Group Discussion Strategies

Think Pair Share:

1. Individually, student writes down their answer to a question.
2. Students pair up and tell each other their answers.
3. Teacher calls for volunteers to share with the whole class their answer (and/or their partner's answer). Teacher notes key words/phrases on board.

Round Robin:

1. Teacher poses one question (written on top of a large page) to students, who are assembled into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Students take turns brainstorming the answers. The recorder of the group writes down all answers.
3. The leader reads the group's ideas to the entire class. Teacher moderates.



Writing Prompts

Narrative Prompts

1. Write a day-in-the-life story of a woman working in a WWII factory, serving in the military, or volunteering on the home front.

Extension: *Incorporate letters, diary entries, or propaganda posters as sources to add historical detail.*

2. Imagine you are a child hiding from Nazi persecution. Write a personal diary entry describing your experiences and emotions.

Extension: *Research a real survivor's story, like Anne Frank's, and integrate authentic details.*

3. Narrate a week in the life of a Japanese American child in an internment camp.

Extension: *Include research about daily routines, restrictions, and coping strategies.*

4. Tell a story from the perspective of a Navajo Code Talker transmitting messages during battle.

Extension: *Include historical context and details about how their language helped the U.S. military.*

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. Explain how women's contributions during WWII transformed the workforce and society.

Extension: *Use statistics, photos, or propaganda posters to support your explanation.*

2. Explain the role of Navajo Code Talkers in WWII and why their contributions were critical to military success.

Extension: *Include information about how their cultural knowledge and language were uniquely valuable.*

Opinion/Persuasive Prompts

1. Argue whether the internment of Japanese Americans was justified or a violation of civil rights.

Extension: *Explore parallels with other historical or modern examples of civil liberties under threat.*

2. Persuade your audience why it is important to teach and remember the Holocaust.

Extension: *Suggest ways schools or communities can honor survivors and educate future generations.*



Helping Strangers

During and leading up to WWII, Jews were subjected to many restrictions in daily life, including public humiliation. Many people saw this, but ignored it out of disbelief, apathy, or fear. But many others risked their lives to help others, sometimes strangers they had never even met.

Listen

to Jane and Marianne's story on [The Children's Hour episode "WWII"](#) (segment 13:59-18:21)
Or watch [this video from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#).

Reflect & Compare

Explain how ordinary people acted with courage and empathy to save lives during WWII.

Extension: Research [multiple examples](#) and compare motivations and risks.

Write a story about someone risking everything to help a neighbor, friend, or stranger during WWII.

Extension: Compare your story to real-life examples, such as those honored as ["Righteous Among the Nations."](#)

Take a position on whether people today are likely to act with the same courage and empathy shown during WWII.

Extension: Include [contemporary examples](#) of humanitarian efforts.

What can you do to help others in need?

Share your ideas with us at The Children's Hour.



Upload your ideas to our Instagram [@tchradio](#), TikTok [@thechildrenshourradio](#), and [Facebook page](#), and check out what others have observed!

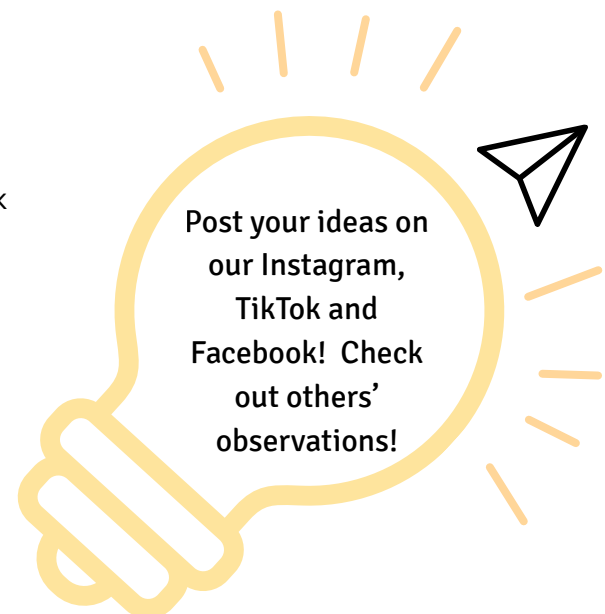


Mail your ideas to:
The Children's Hour
PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197



Record a Voice Message

This might be used on The Children's Hour!





Navajo Code Talker Resources

Kids can explore Navajo Code Talkers by creating and decoding messages with a Navajo terms chart, researching their history, completing timelines or scavenger hunts, and even designing their own secret codes. These activities also highlight the importance of preserving traditional languages.

Lesson Plans and Activities

[Navajo Code Talkers Lesson Plan](#)

Designed for 6th graders by Wreaths Across America, this comprehensive lesson plan includes reading passages, the Navajo Code Talkers dictionary, and more.

[Navajo Code Talker Decoding Activities](#)

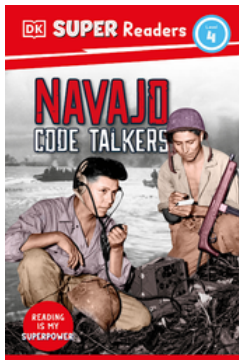
A collection of activities from Teachers Pay Teachers, including a decoding activity, a make-your-own-code activity, and more.

Videos

[Secrets of the Code Talkers: The Warrior Tradition](#) from PBS Learning Media

This video accompanies a lesson plan that teaches how code talkers used a Native language as an unbreakable secret code and vital weapon during World War II.

Books



Navajo Code Talkers

by Danielle C. Burbank

Written by a Diné author, this nonfiction book weaves together Diné culture, language, and traditions.

ages 8-14



Tales of the Mighty Code Talkers, Vol. 1

by Lee Francis IV and Roy Boney Jr.

Created by Native writers and artists, these graphic novels explore the emotions of leaving home to serve in war, the connection of shared language, and the pride of honoring one's people. They highlight the significant contributions of Native service members, including the famed World War I code talkers.

ages 8-14



Women in WWII Resources

During World War II, American women stepped into roles once reserved for men—working in factories, serving in military auxiliary units, volunteering with the Red Cross, and caring for wounded soldiers—playing a crucial part in the nation’s war effort far beyond the iconic image of Rosie the Riveter. Use the resources below to learn more.

Lesson Plans and Activities

[Beyond Rosie the Riveter: Women’s Contributions During WWII](#)

This lesson explores the many roles American women played during World War II and helps students understand their impact through research, primary sources, and a culminating character project.

Videos & Primary Sources

[Women in Defense, 1941](#)

From the US National Archives, this film from 1941 describes how women helped during WWII.

[The Women of WWII: Georgie Stories](#) from PBS Learning Media

[Experiences of a Female Nurse: Iowa’s WWII Stories](#) from PBS Learning Media

[National Archives WWII Teaching Resources](#)

A collection of primary documents about women in WWII.

[Rosie the Riveter Field Trip Enhancement Guide](#) from the Eisenhower Foundation

Provides an overview of Rosie the Riveter and primary source photos and propaganda posters.

Books



The Girl Who Could Fix Anything: Beatrice Shilling, WWII Engineer

by Mara Rockliff, illustrated by Daniel Duncan

A true story about engineer Beatrice Shilling, whose clever invention helped British pilots in World War II and proved her remarkable skill and determination.
ages 5-9



Agent Most Wanted: The Never-Before-Told Story of the Most Dangerous Spy of WWII

by Sonia Purnell

The true story of Virginia Hall—an unassuming American spy with a prosthetic leg who became one of the most dangerous Allied agents behind Nazi lines in WWII. This is the young readers’ adapted edition of *A Woman of No Importance*.
ages 10-13



Holocaust Resources

Lesson Plans & Activities

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

Articles, resources for educators, and museum educators on hand to help you get started. Their database includes over 270,000 records, featuring photos, personal stories, and films documenting life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

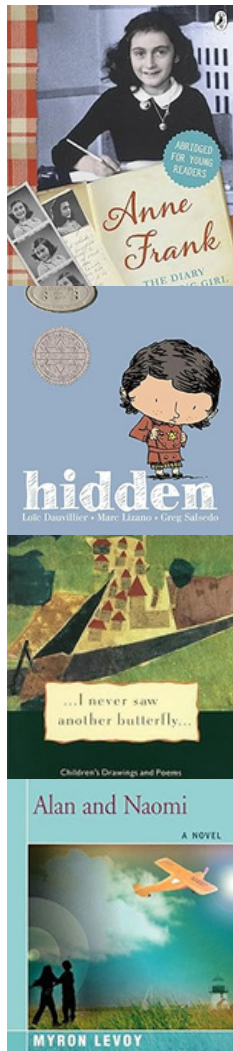
[Montreal Holocaust Museum](#)

5 activities for learning about the Holocaust at home (ages 7-18).

[Student Learning Activities about the Holocaust](#)

Inquiry-driven, student-directed activities help learners explore Holocaust history, antisemitism, and related issues while promoting critical thinking, reflection, and awareness of their contemporary relevance.

Books



Diary of Anne Frank: Young Reader Edition

by Anne Frank, edited by Mirjam Pressler

This abridged edition of *The Diary of Anne Frank* introduces younger readers to the remarkable diary of an ordinary girl who became a household name.

Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust

by Loic Dauvillier and Marc Lizano

In this gentle graphic novel, a grandmother shares with her granddaughter how, as a Jewish girl in Paris, she was hidden from the Nazis by courageous neighbors after her parents were taken to camps.
ages 6-10

I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944

edited by Hana Volavkova and Marc Lizano

115,000 children passed through Terezin; fewer than 100 survived. Their poems and drawings reveal their daily hardship, hopes, fears, and courage.
ages 10-13

Alan and Naomi

by Myron Levoy

A 1944-set novel about the friendship between a 12-year-old Jewish boy in New York and Naomi, a French Holocaust survivor coping with trauma, loss, and antisemitism.
ages 10-13



Japanese Internment Resources

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which signaled the entry of the US into WWII, 120,000 people of Japanese descent, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, were rounded up and put into internment camps. Use the resources below to learn more.

Listen

to [The Children's Hour's "WWII" episode](#) (segment 28:10-35:45)

Lesson Plans & Activities

[Japanese American Incarceration and the US Constitution](#)

A complete standards-aligned unit from The Asian American Education Project, including essay, vocabulary, discussion questions, activities, and further resources.

Videos

[Internment: US History for Teens](#)

A video lesson on the injustices of Japanese internment camps during WWII, including guiding questions.

[Life Changed for Japanese Americans: Japanese Internment in Wyoming](#)

Examine how Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants were treated after Pearl Harbor, including their forced relocation to government-run camps.

[Heart Mountain: Outside Pressures: Japanese Internment in Wyoming](#)

Learn about the pressures Japanese Americans faced from both their own community and non-Japanese Americans when deciding whether to serve in the U.S. military during World War II.

[Internment of Japanese Americans in the Inland Northwest](#)

The Hifumi En Society and KSPS created videos and discussion questions documenting Spokane's Japanese American history, including WWII and internment experiences.

Other Ideas

- **Compare and contrast** the Japanese American internment with other historical events, such as current immigration detention centers, to draw connections and understand its significance.
- **Imagine** you are living in an internment camp and write a letter to a friend, teacher, or someone you were forced to leave behind.
- **Analyze primary sources**, including photographs, letters, and oral histories, from the time period to understand the experiences of Japanese Americans.
- Look at a [map of the internment camps](#) and identify their locations, and research the number of Japanese Americans imprisoned in each.



Additional Resources

[The National WWII Museum of New Orleans](#)

A collection of free, primary-source-based lesson plans, image galleries, and other classroom resources to help you teach World War II in a more engaging, interactive way.

[7 Best World War II Activities for Secondary](#)

This collection of resources for middle and high school students from Students of History includes several pop-up notes templates and interactive digital notebook pages.

[Education Resources for D-Day](#)

D-Day and WWII activities and lesson plans, including a timeline of events, G.I. jargon, comparing and contrasting D-Day equipment, Comanche Code Talkers activity packet, rationing activity, and propaganda examples.

[National Archives WWII Teaching Resources](#)

Hundreds of primary resources and teaching activities for WWII.

[Kids Discover Unit of WWII](#)

A seven-part unit offering a balanced look at WWII, from the political tensions that sparked the conflict to its key battles and the path to peace.

[The War Through Everyday Objects: WWII Artifact Gallery](#) from PBS Learning Media

[You Decide: Should Truman Have Used Atomic Weapons?](#)

Interactive lesson from PBS Learning Media.

[Toys & Games During World War II](#)

1940s games: Learn about the games children played during the war, such as hopscotch, jacks, or marbles.

Videos

[PBS Learning Media WWII Resource Collection](#)

A collection of videos, media galleries, and interactive lessons about Japanese internment, Pearl Harbor, women in WWII, economic impacts, war stories, and more.

[WWII for Kids: A WWII Crash Course for Kids](#)

A kind of cheesy, kid-friendly overview of the causes of, important battles, and leaders of the two sides for students in K-6.

[WWII for Kids: Learn the Causes, Events, and Facts about WWII](#) from Lesson Boosters

A short overview perfect for introducing or reviewing WWII.