

Name _____

World War II

America joined the Allied Powers of Europe to fight against the countries of Germany, Italy, and Japan in World War II. Despite the war already raging in Europe, America attempted to stay neutral. However, on December 7, 1941, that position was no longer possible. Pearl Harbor, Hawaii—which housed a United States naval base—was attacked by the Empire of Japan. America declared war against Japan and was brought into World War II.

During the war, Germany was controlled by the Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler. Italy was also ruled by a dictator, Benito Mussolini. Both leaders held order by using violent and brutal means. Hitler also hoped for a holocaust, or complete extermination, of the Jewish people. Despite their atrocities, many Americans wanted to stay isolated from European problems. President Roosevelt insisted, even before the bombing by Japan, that America could not remain isolated from the events in Europe. After a meeting with Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, Roosevelt

brought back the idea to the American people that we were fighting for “Four Freedoms,” which included freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from fear and want.

For America, World War II was fought on two fronts, both the Pacific and the Atlantic. Ironically, supplying materials for the war effort had one positive effect for the country. The nation was lifted out of the economic depression as jobs became readily available. Women filled in the gaps of workers left by men fighting on both fronts.

Victory in Europe happened before the Pacific front was won. President Truman was in office at the end of World War II and was faced with making the decision to use new atomic weapons on the Empire of Japan. With the support of Great Britain, America dropped two atomic bombs. The first was on the city of Hiroshima; the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, ending World War II for America.

Text Questions

1. Why did Americans want to remain isolated?
 - a. to stay out of the war
 - b. to keep all spending money inside the country
 - c. to stop the growth of factories
 - d. to support tourism in America
2. Why did Roosevelt use the idea of fighting for freedoms to convince Americans they could no longer remain isolated?
 - a. He wanted to convince America that those in Asia needed to be free.
 - b. He wanted to remind Americans how they fought against slavery.
 - c. He wanted to convince the American people that freedom was worth fighting for.
 - d. He knew that freedom was a gift from Great Britain that America could easily lose.
3. Which event forced America to join World War II?
 - a. bombing raids on Great Britain
 - b. the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan
 - c. the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
 - d. the continuation of the Great Depression
4. List three things in sequential order that happen in the passage.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. Based on the text, which statement is most likely true?
 - a. Dropping the atomic bombs led to the Japanese surrender.
 - b. Roosevelt's meeting with Churchill halted all threat of war.
 - c. If Truman had been president at the start of the war, the United States would not have gone to war.
 - d. Hitler ended the war after America dropped the atomic bombs.