

PROJECT TITLE:	
Why Did the Germans Lose at D-Day? Evaluating Operation Overlord and the Axis Response	
AUTHOR: Melisa C. Larson	SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL US History, World History II High School

CLASSROOM PRACTICE (DOCUMENT #1)

1. HI OVERVIEW & TEACHING THESIS:

Students often struggle with understanding the concept of contingency in history. Frequently our study of “turning points” presents information about the event as a fait accompli and we brush over the fact that maybe not everything went as well as it could have. The Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944 is the decisive event in the European Theater and students often take the Allied victory for granted. The purpose of this instructional project is to have students answer the question “Why did the Germans lose at D-Day?” Students will examine the invasion from five different perspectives (Allied Strategy, Allied Cooperation/Coordination, Axis Defenses, Axis Response, and Diversion Tactics) and then develop their own conclusions about the extent of success experienced at Normandy.

2. SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL AND LENGTH OF ACTIVITIES:

High School grades 10 & 11

2 – 90 minute class periods, can be shortened if some activities are assigned as homework

3. SIGNIFICANCE & RELEVANCE:

- Students crave opportunities to “do” history. State standards like the VA SOLs are often made up of simple facts/events and lack unifying concepts that help students tie information together. By asking students to wrestle with essential questions and support their opinions with facts, they have a chance to be historians. This project is designed to give students an opportunity to examine one of the most important events of WWII and construct their own conclusions about the military strategies employed by both the Allied and Axis Powers.
- From the earliest point of U.S. involvement in WWII, it was understood by both military and civilian leaders that a defeat of Germany would entail an Allied invasion of Western Europe. Planning for the eventual D-Day invasion began in 1942, lasted almost two and half years, and involved an unprecedented coordination and cooperation between the Allied Powers. The ultimate result of the battle was the end of German domination over Western Europe and the eventual rise of the United States as a global superpower. Students deserve a chance to spend time analyzing the strategies and events that led to Allied success in the battle so they can better understand the concept of historic turning points and the contingencies that lead to them.

SELECTED STATE & NATIONAL STANDARDS

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

VUS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to:

- a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
- b) evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;
- i) identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives.

VUS.11b

The student will demonstrate knowledge of World War II by describing and locating the major battles and turning points of the war in North Africa, Europe, and the Pacific, including Midway, Stalingrad, the Normandy landing (D-Day), and Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb to force the surrender of Japan.

LIFELONG LEARNER STANDARDS

- Gather, organize, and analyze data, evaluate processes and products; and draw conclusions.
- Think analytically, critically, and creatively to pursue new ideas, acquire new knowledge, and make decisions.
- Understand and apply principles of logic and reasoning; develop, evaluate, and defend arguments.
- Seek, recognize and understand systems, patterns, themes, and interactions.

CORE NATIONAL STANDARDS FROM GEOGRAPHY FOR LIFE

Standard 1

Students will understand the world in spatial terms.

- Interpret geographic data using maps, charts, population pyramids, cartograms, remote sensing, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Standard 4

Students will understand how human activities shape the earth's surface.

- Describe how physical environments provide geographic advantage or disadvantage.

Standard 5

Students will understand the interaction of physical and human systems.

- Assess the importance of natural and human resources.

Standard 6

Students will use geographic knowledge to connect to today's world.

- Apply geographic concepts to interpret the past.
- Recognize that both human choices and natural events have consequences.

OAH HISTORICAL INQUIRY SKILLS –

Standard 3 – Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- Identify the author or source of the historic document or narrative and assess its credibility
- Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations, but acknowledge also that the two are related: that the facts the historian reports are selected and reflect therefore the historian's judgment of what is most significant about the past.
- Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating examples of historical contingency, of how different choices could have led to different consequences.

Standard 5 – Historical Issue-Analysis and Decision-Making

- Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.
- Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.

4. TECHNOLOGY

- ★ The Document Lists for each of the five stations are hyperlinked so students can use computers/internet to easily access digital versions of each primary source.
- ★ At each focus station students can also use Google Earth to locate geographic sites described in the primary source documents and then record those places on their own maps.
- ★ If time permits, the students can use the computers to briefly research any questions they have after examining and analyzing the primary sources at each station.
- ★ **Extension:** Include film footage and audio files as sources for consideration at each station

5. MODIFICATIONS, DIFFERENTIATION, AND EXTENSIONS

- ★ For struggling readers - the *Ike at D-Day* article can be read in class as a teacher directed activity. Use a document camera or projector to model note taking on the student handout.
- ★ To save time or to differentiate: for struggling learners: Limit the number of primary resources for students to evaluate in each of the five areas of investigation: Allied Strategy, Allied Cooperation, Axis Defenses, Axis Response, and Diversion Tactics.
- ★ Modification if computers are not available
- ★ For extension activities:
 - Additional key players could be added to the Stats cards: Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Air Chief Marshall Arthur W. Tedder, General Walter Bedell Smith, General George S. Patton, Field Marshal Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt, General Charles de Gaulle
 - Have students use the website www.historypin.com to upload documents, photographs and their analysis on an interactive world map.
 - Students can research the American soldier experience using the Library of Congress Veterans History Project website. (<http://www.loc.gov/vets/>) The site is a database of veteran stories and is searchable by war, battle, hometown, name, etc. The students can also participate in collecting veteran stories and uploading them to the site. The various stories will give teachers a chance to discuss some of the advantages and pitfalls of personal narrative as a research tool.

6. LESSON OVERVIEW

Guiding Questions	Objectives	Assessment	Activities to support objectives and assessment
Day One: Landing on the Beaches: D-Day Logistics and Leaders Guiding Questions: ★ Who was involved in the Normandy invasions? ★ What happened before, during, and after the invasion? ★ Why did the invasion take place? ★ How did the invasion affect the war? ★ What advantages did the Allies and Axis Powers each have? ★ What obstacles/mistakes did the Allies and Axis Powers face/make?	1. Students will recognize the order of significant events before, during, and after the D-Day invasion. 2. Students will be able to identify the major military and civilian leaders involved in the Normandy invasion. 3.) Students will locate significant geographic places on a map of Europe. 4.) Students will compare and contrast the advantages and obstacles/mistakes of the Allies and Axis Powers before and during the D-Day invasion.	Assessment: 1.) Note taking chart to accompany PowerPoint on D-Day 2.) Student researched & created stats cards for each leader. 3.) Map of Europe 4.) Graphic organizer to accompany student created notes for <i>Ike at D-Day</i> article.	• Do Now: Eisenhower speech analysis • D-Day PowerPoint interactive lecture with student chart • Students research military and civilian leaders and create “stats cards” for each leader. • Students identify and label significant locations on a map of Europe. • Homework: students will read the article <i>Ike at D-Day</i> and complete the graphic organizer.
Day Two: D-Day Strategy Stations Guiding Questions: ★ How effective was the Allied military strategy at D-Day? ★ How effective was the coordination/cooperation between the Allied Powers? ★ How effective were the Axis defenses? Could they have been improved? ★ How effective was the Axis response to the invasion? ★ How effective were the Allied diversion tactics employed before and during the invasion?	1. Students will evaluate the Allied military strategy, cooperation between the Allied Powers, the Axis defenses in France, the Axis response to the invasion, and the Allied diversion tactics before and during the invasion. 2. Students will construct a point-of-view essay that uses primary source material to defend their thesis.	Assessment: 1.) Completed charts for each station 2.) Student maps of Europe with significant locations indicated 3.) Student essays	• Primary source stations for: Allied Strategy, Allied Cooperation, Axis Defenses, Axis Response, and Diversion Tactics. • Students analyze primary sources at each station, use Google Earth to identify locations mentioned in the documents, and map those locations on the Europe map from the previous day. • Homework: Essay – Why did the Germans lose at D-Day?

7. RELATED MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

Lesson Plans with Teacher Notes

Supplemental Materials:

- ★ Student Handouts Day 1 (includes Do Now: What if D-Day Failed?, PowerPoint graphic organizer, Stats Cards for military/civilian leaders, graphic organizer for *Ike at D-Day* article.)
- ★ Article *Ike at D-Day* (available from e-library database) citation:
Anonymous. "IKE AT D-DAY." *Smithsonian*. 01 Dec. 2007: 48.
- ★ "D-Day" PowerPoint of basic information
- ★ Outline map of Europe - pdf also available from
http://www.phschool.com/curriculum_support/map_bank/
- ★ Document Lists of primary source links for each station topic
- ★ Document Analysis Form
- ★ Vocabulary Terms of Engagement
- ★ Eisenhower draft speech in the event of invasion failure

Grading Assessment (Formative or Summative) with answer keys and/or rubric

- ★ Teacher Key for Day 1 Handouts
- ★ Sample Document Analysis Form
- ★ Essay rubric

8. ANNOTATED INSTRUCTIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ONLINE RESOURCES

Docs Teach

<http://docsteach.org/>

This website was created by the US National Archives to provide teachers and students with lesson activities and direct access to significant primary sources from their extensive collections. Teachers can use the prepackaged lessons or create their own using the digitized collections of the archives. Students and teachers can also use the search engine to locate specific resources including photographs, film, documents, letters, etc.

Dwight D Eisenhower Presidential Library & Museum

<http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/index.html>

Under the research tab there is a page of digitized primary resources about D-Day including the "In Case of Failure" message, summaries from each of the significant Allied planning conferences (Trident, Sextant, Quadrant, and Eureka), diary entries, maps, and photographs. Under the Education tab, teachers will find a WWII Spy Kit simulation that includes primary source analysis of Operation Overlord secret documents.

Library of Congress Veterans History Project

<http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

This outreach project of the Library of Congress seeks to collect and preserve the personal accounts of American war veterans for future generations. Both amateurs and professionals can collect and upload stories, so the quality of the interviews can vary. Students will find it to be a very powerful and engaging resource to learn about the real life experiences of soldiers from every war of the 20th century. Students can also participate in creating the database by interviewing veterans and recording their stories. The website is fully searchable by name, war, battle, hometown, etc.

PBS WWII: Behind Closed Doors

<http://www.pbs.org/behindcloseddoors/>

This companion website showcases information from the PBS series Behind Closed Doors: Stalin, the Nazis, and the West. There are clips from the video series, interactive maps, timelines, biographies, secondary source articles, primary sources, and teacher lesson plans all related to the diplomatic situation between the Allied Powers in WWII.

UK National Archives: Second World War 1939-1945

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/world-war-two.htm>

The UK archives has an amazing collection of educational lessons, activities, and sources on its webpage. Under Topics - World War II students can complete several interactive guided primary source investigation activities in each of the different theaters of the war. Each lesson is focused around a guiding question such as “Was Hitler a passionate lunatic?” or “Why didn’t Britain bomb the death camps?”

US National Archives: The Great Depression and WWII

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/depression-wwii.html>

The main US archives website has a series of lessons created around different topics from WWII including D-Day, Churchill and FDR, Japanese-American Internment Camps, and WWII Posters. The lessons all include primary sources (documents, letters, photos, film, etc.) and wonderful analysis forms specifically created for each type of document. The analysis forms can be downloaded and used with any primary sources teachers incorporate in their curriculum throughout the year.

U.S. Army D-Day

<http://www.army.mil/d-day/index.html>

This website contains a collection of primary resources and secondary source analysis on the history of the U.S. army’s role in the Normandy invasion. The opening page does have a large movie file embedded on it so it may take the page a few minutes to fully open. Sources include photos, maps, documents, film, and posters.

WWII Database

<http://ww2db.com/index.php>

Although this is not a scholarly website and should not be used for academic research, it does contain a wonderful collection of photographs from WWII. Many of the images come from the archives of the U.S., U.K. and Germany. The search engine is somewhat cumbersome but the collection of photographs is worth a little bit of hassle.