



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT  
STANDARD 10.8.3**

## *The Course of World War II*

**Specific Objective:** Identify and locate the Allied and Axis powers on a map; Discuss turning points of the war, theaters of conflict, key strategic decisions, and resulting war conferences and political resolutions, with an emphasis on geographic factors.

**Read the summary to answer questions on the next page.**

**World War II was fought between:**

- the **Axis powers** of Germany, Italy, and Japan  
*and*
- the **Allied powers** of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and other nations that came together to fight the Axis powers.

### **Major Turning Points in World War II**

**1940–1941** Germany invades Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and much of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In Europe, only Great Britain remains free of German control.

**Dec. 7, 1941** Japan bombs Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the United States enters the war.

**Oct. 1942–May 1943** The Allies drive the Axis powers out of North Africa.

**Feb. 1943** German forces, weakened by winter Battle of Stalingrad, surrender to the Russians.

**June 4, 1944** The Allies claim victory over Italy.

**June 6, 1944** On D-Day, the Allies launch a massive land and sea attack at Normandy in northern France; by August, France and neighboring areas are free of Axis control.

**Apr. 1945** Germany faces attacks from Allied forces (west) and Soviets (east).

**May 7, 1945** Germany surrenders to the Allies.

**Aug. 14, 1945** Japan surrenders to the Allies.

### **A Continent Divided**

The end of World War II brought peace to Europe, but the continent was left divided. In 1945, even before the war ended, the Allied leaders met at the **Yalta Conference** to plan for dividing Germany into two halves—west and east—in order to weaken it. But the rest of Europe was left divided into (generally) democratic western nations and communist eastern nations. The boundary of this divide was called the **iron curtain**.

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Directions: Choose the letter of the *best* answer.

- 1 What was the *immediate* cause of U.S. entry into World War II?
  - A Germany invaded Poland.
  - B Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.
  - C Germany invaded the Netherlands.
  - D Great Britain sought to mobilize the Allies against Hitler.
  
- 2 In what order were the Axis powers defeated in World War II?
  - A Italy, Germany, Japan
  - B Japan, Germany, Italy
  - C Germany, Italy, Japan
  - D Germany, Japan, Italy
  
- 3 What was a *decisive* factor in the German defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad?
  - A superior Russian technology
  - B United States intervention
  - C Russian attack by land and sea
  - D a prolonged harsh winter
  
- 4 In April, 1945, Germany was attacked from the
  - A east and west.
  - B north and south.
  - C east and south.
  - D north and west.
  
- 5 Why was Germany divided into two parts following World War II?
  - A the Allies wanted to weaken it
  - B to protect its ethnic minorities
  - C to give the Soviet Union control of some of its natural resources
  - D the Germans could not agree on whether to accept communism
  
- 6 The term “iron curtain” refers to the division between
  - A Axis and Allied powers.
  - B democratic and communist nations in Europe.
  - C engaged and neutral nations in World War II.
  - D the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.