

HISTORY™ CLASSROOM PRESENTS

THE CENTURY: AMERICA'S TIME CIVILIANS AT WAR

Reporter Peter Jennings hosts this important series that chronicles the events and experiences of America in the twentieth century, the century that Henry Luce dubbed "The American Century." Using archival footage and interviews with historians, veterans, activists and every-day people, this documentary explores the social, political, cultural, and economic changes that have transformed this nation from a burgeoning, isolationist economic power to one of the world's leaders. *The Century: America's Time* would be useful for classes on American History, American Culture, Women's History, Political Science, Civics, Science and Technology, Military History and Ethics. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college.

CIVILIANS AT WAR

World War II was a total global conflict that affected and changed not only the lives of soldiers fighting the war but also those of non-combatants living in war zones. The scale of the war encompassed three continents and millions of people. This episode analyzes the human costs of total warfare from the barbarity of Hitler's "Final Solution," to the atrocities committed by the Japanese against the Chinese people, to the devastation wreaked by the atomic bomb. At the end of the war, for the first time in history, the Axis leaders were held accountable for their "crimes against humanity," but the allied leaders were hailed as heroes whose atrocities were viewed as unfortunate but necessary.

OBJECTIVES

Students will analyze the effects of the twentieth century on American life, political institutions, economics, foreign policy and culture. They will also investigate how events in the twentieth century influenced America's position as a world leader, and how global and domestic events created change, and sometimes turmoil, in America itself.

NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Civilians at War fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5-12: Chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, historical issues-analysis and decision-making for Era 8.

VOCABULARY

atrocities	recounts	excruciating	pseudo
annihilate	sporadic	bedraggled	typhus
exploit	sublime	rampant	parameter
converge	deity	incendiary	excrement
confiscate	nondescript	barbarism	pulverize

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why were there so many civilian casualties in World War II?
2. It can be argued that Adolph Hitler has had the most impact of any one person in the twentieth century. Discuss some of the goals and plans of Adolph Hitler to dominate the world. How might the world be different today if Germany had won World War II?
3. Why did Hitler attempt to eliminate all the Jews of the world?
4. The atrocities committed against the Jewish people in World War II are among the most horrific ever imagined. Why were German soldiers willing to commit these atrocities for their country and their leader?
5. Why did Heinrich Himmler, chief of Hitler's Gestapo, search for a more efficient method of killing Jews instead of continuing to shoot them?
6. What was the "final solution?"
7. How could the Holocaust have happened?
8. Although the odds were against survival in the death camps, some managed to live. How could these people survive against such overwhelming odds?
9. Compare Japanese and German racial ideology.
10. How were Japanese soldiers acculturated to being killing machines? How do states remove the burden of murder from the shoulders of its soldiers?
11. Who were the "Kamikaze" pilots? Why would anyone choose to go on a kamikaze mission?
12. Compare and discuss the immorality of all the participants of World War II.
13. Should the United States have dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?
14. What did the Nuremberg Trials accomplish?

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Create a timeline of the events of World War II.
2. Create a poster that illustrates the conditions of the Jewish ghettos.