



INTRODUCTION

Time lines are a useful tool for understanding series of related historical events. In this activity, students match a series of photos with their corresponding descriptions and arrange them in chronological order. This process allows students to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the war and to think critically about causal relationships between events. Students will also explore the process by which historians select ideas and evidence to create a historical narrative.

GRADE LEVEL

7–12

TIME REQUIREMENT

1–2 class periods

OBJECTIVE

Students will construct a time line in order to identify, discuss, and analyze the major events of World War II in Europe. They will also be able to identify the temporal structure of a time line, assessing the degree to which some events are caused by others. Finally, students will reproduce the process by which historians select and prioritize events for inclusion in their narratives.

MATERIALS

- The photographs, date strips, and caption strips are included as inserts in the published curriculum kit. These can also be printed from **ww2classroom.org**
- You may also need string and clothespins for this lesson

ONLINE RESOURCES

ww2classroom.org



The photographs, dates, and captions used in this lesson are available as printable cards online

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7](#)

Integrate visual information (for example, in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4](#)

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5](#)

Make strategic use of digital media (for example, textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

[HISTORICAL CONTENT ERA 8, STANDARD 3B](#)

The student understands the causes and course of World War II.

[HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 1](#)

Students are able to identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story, to establish temporal order in constructing their own historical narratives, and to interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.

[HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 2](#)

The student is able to draw upon visual sources, including photographs, to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

[HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARD 3](#)

The student is able to consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears, and is able to analyze cause-and-effect relationships.

PROCEDURES

1. There are several ways to implement this lesson, all of which involve various methods of matching photos, captions, and dates. Choose the method that works best with your students based on their skill and knowledge levels, or make up your own way. Regardless of which option you choose, start by having students write down everything they can about their photographs using the **Student Worksheet**. Make sure students indicate whether their descriptions come from what they can see or from what they previously knew about World War II. Inform students that the captions do not always describe exactly what is happening in the actual photographs, but refer to a historic event from the war in Europe.

2. Choose from one of the options below:

Option 1: Give each student or pair of students a random photograph to study. Next, in chronological order read aloud each caption and have the student with the matching photograph bring it to the front of the class and tape it to the wall or clip it to a string with a clothespin. You can then affix the dates and captions to each picture for the class to review.

Option 2: With groups of five students, randomly divide the photos, captions, and dates among the groups. Have each group match their photos, captions, and dates. Then have all the groups work together to create the full time line of photos. Each group can explain how they were able to match their photos to captions and dates.

Option 3: Give each student one photo, one date, and one caption that do not match. Then let them try to find their matching partners in order to complete the full time line as a class. This exercise will require good teamwork and communication

3. Once students have completed their time lines using the full set of photos, dates, and captions, review the events of the war from beginning to end on the time line, allowing students to explain each event and the corresponding photo.
4. Explain that historians cannot possibly capture every relevant event or perspective when writing about a broad subject like World War II. Instead, they must select the evidence, perspectives, and events that they believe will provide the reader with the best possible understanding of their topic. You might point out, for example, that the students' textbook does not include every single event from history, but rather a strategic selection of events. Inform students that they, too, must now be selective in crafting their own narrative about World War II using their time lines. Have each student (or group) select 10 events from the time line with which to tell the story of World War II in Europe. Have students reflect briefly (orally or in writing) about which events they selected and why. If time permits, you may want to repeat this step with five events, or even three.
5. Have students share their reflections in order to spark a discussion about the challenges historians face when deciding which facts to include and/or emphasize when crafting historical narratives.

ASSESSMENT

You will be able to assess students based on the accuracy of their photo matching and the quality of their written descriptions. You can also quiz them on the chronology following the activity.

EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT

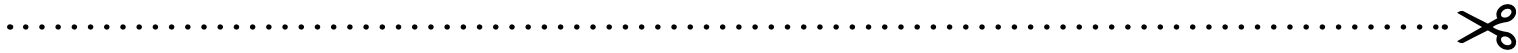
- Have students write alternate, longer captions for each photo.
- Have students brainstorm individually or as a class the 5, 10, or 20 additional dates/events from the war in Europe they would add to the time line, and have them conduct research to locate appropriate photos to match.
- Have students research one event in greater depth in order to either write a research paper or create a class presentation.
- Have students create a time line about one topic within the war in Europe, for example, the Normandy invasion or the Battle of the Bulge.

NAME:

DATE:

PICTURING THE WAR IN EUROPE

DIRECTIONS: Take a close look at your photograph. Pay attention to details. Write down what you see. Indicate if what you write about your photograph comes from what you see, what you already know about World War II, or both.



NAME:

DATE:

PICTURING THE WAR IN EUROPE

DIRECTIONS: Take a close look at your photograph. Pay attention to details. Write down what you see. Indicate if what you write about your photograph comes from what you see, what you already know about World War II, or both.



JANUARY 30, 1933

German President Paul von Hindenburg names Adolf Hitler chancellor of Germany. A series of previous governing coalitions had failed because they lacked the support of Hitler's Nazi Party, the largest political party in the German *Reichstag*.

(Image: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-S38324.)



SEPTEMBER 30, 1938

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returns from Munich after signing a pact with Adolf Hitler agreeing to German annexation of the Sudetenland in exchange for the dictator's promise not to seek further territorial expansion. Chamberlain tells the British people the agreement means "peace for our time."

(Image: Imperial War Museums, D 2239.)



NOVEMBER 9–10, 1938

Following the assassination of a minor official in the German embassy in Paris by a young Jewish radical, violence against Jews erupts across Germany. Thousands of Jewish businesses, homes, and institutions, including at least 267 synagogues, are vandalized or demolished. The event becomes known as *Kristallnacht* (Night of the Broken Glass).

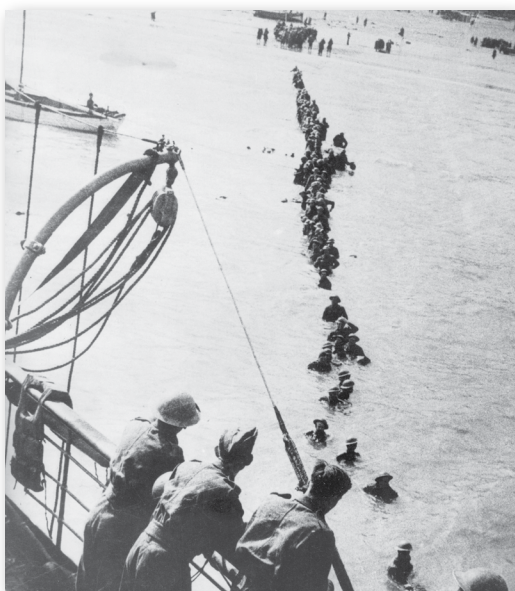
(Image: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 86838.)



SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

Adolf Hitler launches a *blitzkrieg* attack against Poland, prompting both France and Great Britain to declare war against Germany.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, SFF-SFF-52.)



MAY 26, 1940

A hastily organized fleet of British naval, merchant, and private ships evacuate about 340,000 British and French soldiers from the piers and beaches near Dunkirk. France is occupied by the Germans.

(Image: Imperial War Museums, HU 41240.)



SEPTEMBER 7, 1940

The German *Luftwaffe* begins a three-week bombing campaign against London, the climax of the Battle of Britain.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 306-NT-2743V)



MARCH 11, 1941

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act, permitting his administration to lend munitions, food, and other supplies to the Allies without technically violating American neutrality.

(Image: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum, 65694(13).)



JUNE 22, 1941

German forces attack the Soviet Union in a three-pronged offensive involving over three million troops, code-named Operation Barbarossa.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-331A-14.)



AUGUST 14, 1941

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill announce the Atlantic Charter, an agreement concerning their mutual war aims and vision for the postwar world. They reached this agreement while aboard ships off the coast of Newfoundland.

(Image: US Naval History and Heritage Command, NH 67209.)



DECEMBER 7, 1941

Imperial Japanese forces attack the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, prompting the United States to declare war against Japan. Germany and Italy declare war against the United States four days later.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, NLR-PHOCO-A-8150(29).)



NOVEMBER 8, 1942

United States and British forces invade North Africa in Operation Torch.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-170121.)



JANUARY 14–24, 1943

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill meet at the Casablanca Conference to discuss the next Allied moves after the North Africa campaign.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, NLR-PHOCO-A-48223628(32).)



JULY 9–10, 1943

Some 160,000 Allied troops land in Sicily to begin Operation Husky, successfully driving the enemy off the island in a little over a month.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-183898.)



SEPTEMBER 8, 1943

General Dwight D. Eisenhower announces that Italy has signed an unconditional armistice with the Allies, knocking out the first of the three major Axis powers.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-179743.)



NOVEMBER 28, 1943

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin—the “Big Three”—meet in Tehran to discuss the details for launching Operation Overlord the following year.

(Image: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-32833.)



FEBRUARY 15–18, 1944

Convinced that German troops are using an ancient hilltop monastery at Monte Cassino as an artillery observation post and headquarters, Allied bombers reduce it to rubble. It turns out the monastery’s only occupants at the time were civilians.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 239-RC-14-55-28_17.)



JUNE 6, 1944

Some 175,000 Allied soldiers storm the beaches of Normandy in the largest amphibious invasion in military history, opening up a campaign to retake western Europe from the Nazi occupiers.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 26-G-2517.)



JUNE 26, 1944

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all-Japanese American unit, sees its first combat at Belvedere, Italy. It would go on to become the most decorated unit in the US Army.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-16Y-20.)



AUGUST 25, 1944

Allied forces led by General Charles de Gaulle and the French 2nd Armored Division march into Paris, expelling the city's Nazi occupiers.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-27-GGG1.)



AUGUST 25, 1944

The Red Ball Express, a truck convoy system carrying hundreds of thousands of tons of supplies and equipment from the Normandy coast to the Allied lines, begins operation.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-32P-3.)



SEPTEMBER 17, 1944

Allied forces initiate Operation Market Garden, landing paratroopers behind the Siegfried Line to gain control of a series of bridges over the Rhine River and open a pathway for the Allies to invade Germany's industrial Ruhr region. The operation was ultimately unsuccessful.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, WC 1066.)



DECEMBER 16–JANUARY 25, 1945

Adolf Hitler's forces suddenly attack a weakly defended section of the Allied line in the Ardennes Forest, instigating the Battle of the Bulge. This would be the last major German offensive of the war.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, WC 1077.)



FEBRUARY 13–14, 1945

Allied planes bombard the German city of Dresden, causing a firestorm that kills some 35,000 people.

(Image: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-Z0309-310.)



APRIL 6, 1945

US troops liberate the Ohrdruf concentration camp. General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrives several days later and orders all Allied units in the vicinity to tour the camp to better understand what the Allies had been fighting against.

(Image: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 77811.)



APRIL 12, 1945

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies of a stroke at Warm Springs, Georgia, leaving Vice President Harry S. Truman to assume the presidency and leadership of the American war effort.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, NLT-AVC-PHT-73(1909).)



MAY 7, 1945

General Alfred Jodl travels to Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters at Reims, France, and certifies the unconditional surrender of Nazi German forces, ending the war in Europe.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-206292.)

	DATE	EVENT
1	Jan. 30, 1933	Adolf Hitler appointed chancellor of Germany.
2	Sept. 30, 1938	British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returns from signing Munich Pact.
3	Nov. 9–10, 1938	<i>Kristallnacht</i>
4	Sept. 1, 1939	Germany invades Poland.
5	May 26, 1940	Evacuation at Dunkirk
6	Sept. 7, 1940	Battle of Britain begins.
7	March 11, 1941	President Roosevelt signs Lend-Lease Act.
8	June 22, 1941	Germans launch Operation Barbarossa.
9	Aug. 14, 1941	Atlantic Charter is signed.
10	Dec. 7, 1941	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
11	Nov. 8, 1942	Operation Torch begins.
12	Jan. 14–24, 1943	Casablanca Conference
13	July 9–10, 1943	Allies invade Sicily in Operation Husky.
14	Sept. 8, 1943	Italian surrender announced.
15	Nov. 28, 1943	Tehran Conference
16	Feb. 15–18, 1944	Allies bomb monastery at Monte Cassino.
17	June 6, 1944	Allied invasion of Normandy, France.
18	June 26, 1944	442nd Regimental Combat Team sees first action.
19	Aug. 25, 1944	Liberation of Paris
20	Aug. 25, 1944	Red Ball Express begins operation.
21	Sept. 17, 1944	Operation Market Garden
22	Dec. 16, 1944– Jan. 25, 1945	Battle of the Bulge
23	Feb. 13–14, 1945	Allied bombing of Dresden.
24	April 6, 1945	US troops liberate concentration camp at Ohrdruf.
25	April 12, 1945	Roosevelt dies; Truman becomes US president.
26	May 7, 1945	Germans surrender unconditionally.