D-Day: June 6, 1944

*Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!
You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward
which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world
are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people
everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies
and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the
destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of
Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security
for ourselves in a free world.*

*I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and
skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!*

*Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon
this great and noble undertaking.*

General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Supreme Allied Commander

Subjects:

Grade Level: 7-12
US History, World History

Introduction:

General Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote his "order of the day"
(above) on D-Day, the Allied invasion of France, which
spelled the beginning of the end of the Third Reich and Nazi
domination of Europe. These confident words were given to
every person involved in the operation. However, very few,
including Eisenhower himself, had absolute confidence in
the mission. In fact, unknown even to Eisenhower's inner
circle, he had already written an announcement stating that
if the invasion failed, he would accept the blame.

In this lesson, students will investigate the complex aspects of
Operation Overlord (the U.S. military's name for the D-Day
invasion), including the commanders, geography and history,
political, and technological challenges that made this one of
the most difficult military operations in history. They will
then develop a multimedia presentation or Web page in
which they argue for a specific plan to invade or otherwise
subdue the German stranglehold on the European mainland.

Objectives:

As a result of completing this lesson, students will:

- Investigate the preparations for the D-Day invasion
- Learn about the concerns and demands of the various
  military and political leaders involved in the preparation
  and execution of the invasion
- Understand the technological and geographical challenges
  of the invasion
- Appreciate the dangers of the invasion as well as the
  sacrifices of the thousands of military personnel who
  participated

Lesson Methodology:

Prior to the introducing the lesson, have the class view the
clip below. Make sure that the students understand the
major aspects of the invasion as well as the principal military
and political leaders from the Allied and Axis sides who were
involved in the invasion.

GO TO CLIP
(http://www.pbs.org/thewar/search_details.php?id=5360&type=3)

Students should also be aware that the success of the invasion
was far from certain and there was much in-fighting about
where the invasion should take place. British Prime Minister
Winston Churchill, for example, aware that the English
Channel invasion plan would be difficult, if not impossible,
proposed continually attacking the Nazis on their borders
and continual bombing of German targets. Even
Eisenhower, who strongly encouraged the cross-Channel
invasion, believed paratroop casualties alone would be more
than 75%.

Next, tell students that they will have a chance to experience
the same concerns, fears, and debates that Allied battle plan-
ners did in 1944. Divide the class into the following three
groups, each of which will investigate one of the following
invasion scenarios.

1. Pas de Calais: Most military planners believed the i
   nvading troops should depart Calais,located only 20 miles

from the British coast. However, Hitler anticipated an invasion from this location and placed a large percentage of his forces in the area.

2. Normandy: This area was less defended than Calais but was still heavily fortified. The defenses included pillboxes with German machineguns as well as "Rommel's Asparagus," jack-like beach obstacles designed to stop landing craft, gliders, and tanks. In addition, various canals and hedgerows would make advance into the French countryside extremely difficult.

3. Bypassing France and invading the European mainland via the Balkan states and Italy. This particular plan was championed by Churchill. Soviet Premier Josef Stalin, however, was strongly opposed to this idea.

Once groups have been set, students should begin researching their scenario, using the suggested resources as well as student-initiated research. Direct students to complete text-based research (periodicals, atlases, encyclopedias, and so forth) as well as online research.

Focus Questions:

The D-Day Invasion was the largest, most complex military operation in World History. The teacher should allow students to develop criteria in order to determine the best landing location, but should also guide students to consider the following questions in reaching their conclusions:

- What geographic features might make your assigned area attractive for the invasion site? What geographic features might make the other areas unattractive?

- Would the technology and tactics used in 1944 make an invasion from your assigned area possible?

- What military considerations make your area more attractive? (enemy troop strength, availability of supplies, etc.)

- What political considerations make your area more attractive? (acceptance of the plan by Allied leaders, more support from resistance groups, etc.)

- Does your invasion site provide the easiest, most logical opportunity to subdue Nazi Germany?

- Any other information your group feels important to strengthen your case for your location as a likely invasion location.

Once research is completed, students should synthesize their research into a multimedia presentation or web page designed to convince the class that their particular course of action is the one to follow. While one particular course WAS followed, remind students that the Allied leaders had to consider all possible courses of action to take in Operation Overlord. Therefore, they should consider each option as having had a realistic opportunity for success.

Assessment Strategies:

Assess student work based on historical accuracy, persuasiveness, and skill in integrating the information into the multimedia presentation or web page. Create a rubric to effectively score student work. A sample rubric, which may be adapted, can be found at (http://www.vcsc.k12.in.us/staff/mhutchison/civilwar/evaluation.htm).

Visit the "Search and Explore" (http://www.pbs.org/thewar/search_home.htm) section of THE WAR web site for more information about D-Day.

Resources

The Battle

PBS "The War" website (http://www.pbs.org/thewar)

PBS American Experience "D-Day" (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dday) includes maps, a guide to people and events, as well as excerpts from letters from soldiers who participated in the invasion.

Encyclopedia Britannica Guide to Normandy, 1944 (http://www.britannica.com/dday) includes various oral histories, photo galleries, and related information about the invasion.

The National World War II Museum (http://www.ddaymuseum.org) includes several links for the history of the invasion as well as exhibits located in the New Orleans museum

Untold Stories of D-Day (http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0206/feature1) includes maps, eyewitness accounts, bibliography, and features

D-Day (US Army website) (http://www.army.mil/d-day)

Eisenhower Presidential Library D-Day pages (http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/dl/DDay/ddaypage.html)

About.com D-Day photo Gallery (http://history1900s.about.com/library/photos/blyindexdday.htm)

Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection D-Day maps (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/dday.html)

BBC D-Day webpage (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwtwo/index_special.shtml)

D-Day Museum (United Kingdom) "Relevant Links" page (http://www.ddaymuseum.co.uk/links.htm)

PBS "Secrets of the Dead" (D-Day) (http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/case_dday/index.html)

Sigma-Alpha World War II page (includes various film and audio clips related to D-Day
(http://www.signalalpha.com/html/world_war_two.html)

World War II History Info D-Day page
(http://www.worldwar2history.info/D-Day/)

The Political Leaders

Franklin D. Roosevelt

FDR Presidential Library and Museum
(http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/)

American Experience (PBS) page on FDR
(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/32_f_roosevelt/index.html)

Internet Public Library POTUS (President of the United States) site on FDR
(http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/fdroosevelt.html)

Winston Churchill

The Churchill Centre
(http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1)

Churchill and the Great Republic (Library of Congress, Unity and Strategy pages)
(http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1)

BBC "Historic Figures" Page on Churchill
(http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/churchill_winston.shtml)

BBC "Churchill and Eisenhower's D-Day row (argument)"
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2142068.stm)

Josef Stalin

International Herald-Tribune opinion piece, "The Red Army's D-Day"
(http://www.iht.com/articles/1994/06/22/nujohn.php)

PBS "Red Files" biography page on Stalin
(http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/bios/all_bio_joseph_stalin.htm)

Adolf Hitler

World War II History Info site on Hitler's D-Day Mistakes
(http://www.worldwar2history.info/D-Day/Hitler.html)

BBC Historic Figures page on Hitler
(http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/hitler_adolf.shtml)

The Military Leaders

Dwight D. Eisenhower
Dwight David Eisenhower (US Army webpage)
(http://www.army.mil/cmh/brochures/Ike/ike.htm)

PBS American Presidents page on Eisenhower
(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/34_eisenhower/index.html)

General Erwin Rommel
BBC News D-Day Memories webpage on Rommel's defeat
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3714401.stm)

German War Machine Waffen SS Pre D-Day page
(http://www.germanwarmachine.com/waffenss/1944/predday.htm)

Sir Bernard Law Montgomery

"Patton Uncovered" webpage biography on Montgomery
(http://www.pattonuncovered.com/html/montgomery.html)

BBC "Historic Figures" page on Montgomery
(http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/montgomery_bernard.shtml)

Time Magazine obituary on Montgomery (April, 1976)
(http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,913983-1,00.html)

Technology, Strategy, and Intelligence

Military Intelligence Bulletin on "Fortitude South" (Deception During the D-Day Invasion)
(http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/mipb/1996-2/meeks.htm)

Higgins Memorial Webpage (Higgins Boats were used to take troops to the beach shores at Normandy)
(http://www.higginsmemorial.com/Default.asp)

Enigma Code Machine Applet
(http://russells.freeshell.org/enigma/)

PBS Nova Online Decoding Nazi Secrets "How The Enigma Works"
(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/decoding/enigma.html)

Standards
US History:
Benchmark 4. Understands military strategies used during World War II (e.g., the non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR in 1939; the "Battle for Britain"; Japanese strategy in East Asia and the Pacific; Roosevelt's strategy for an aggressive war against the Axis powers and a defensive war in Asia; the North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy invasions)

Benchmark 6. Understands the legacy of World War II (e.g., the decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan during World War II, how military experiences fostered American identity and cross-cultural interaction, the purpose and organization of the United Nations)

Benchmark 5. Understands characteristics of the end of World War II (e.g., why there was a delay in creating a second front in Europe, the Soviet Union's role in helping to defeat the Axis Powers and the reasons for the success of D-Day)

World History:
Benchmark 3. Understands the overall effect of World War II on various facets of society (e.g., the impact on industrial production, political goals, communication, national mobilization, technological innovations, and scientific research, and how these in turn made an impact upon war strategies, tactics, and levels of destruction; the consequences of World War II as a "total war")

Benchmark 4. Understands the impact of World War II on civilian populations and soldiers (e.g., the roles of women and children during the war and how they differed in Allied and Axis countries, the hardships of the war on soldiers from both sides)

Benchmark 8. Understands the climax and moral implications of World War II (e.g., the moral implications of military technologies and techniques used in the war, statistics of population displacement caused by the war, debates surrounding the use of the atomic bomb to end the war with Japan)

The Declaration of War Against Japan and Just War Theory National Standards for History, National Center for History in the School at (http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs)
Era 8 Standard 3A. The Students the international background of Warld War II. Analyze the reasons for the growing tenstions with Japan in East Asia culminating with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Center for Civic Education, National Standards for Civics and Government. (http://www.civiced.org)
II What are the foundations of the American political System. A1. The necessity for a written constitution to set forth the organization of government and to grant and distribute its powers, e.g., among different branches of the national government.

National Council for the Social Studies, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.
Standard VI C Power, Authority & Governance. Give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict. F. identify and describe factors that contribute to cooperation and cause disputes within and among groups and nations.

Standard IV Individual Development & Identity g. compare and evaluate the impact of stereotyping, conformity, acts of altruism, and other behaviors on individuals and groups.

Standard VI Power; Authority, & Governance b. explain the purpose of government and analyze how its powers are acquired, used and justified. F. analyze and evaluate conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.

Standard X Civic Ideals and Practices. H, evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government,

Language Arts, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) at http://www.mcrel.org/

Standard 1 The Writing Process
- Uses prewriting strategies
- Drafts and revises; redrafts for readability, style, content and linguistic structures.
- Edits own and others' writing
- Uses strategies to address different audiences
- Writes expository compositions; synthesizes information from different sources
- Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical and observational narrative compositions.
- Writes persuasive compositions; develops thesis statement; backs up assertions.
- Writes descriptive compositions; reflects on personal experience.
- Writes in response to literature; analyzes and interprets

Standard 2: Uses Sylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
- Uses precise and descriptive language
- Develops effective paragraphs in logical sequence; uses supporting detail
- Varies sentences structures
- Uses a variety of transitional devises
- Develops personal styles and voice

From McRel
(http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp)

Michael Hutchison teaches social studies at Lincoln High School in Vincennes, Indiana, and at Vincennes University. He is the 2007 "Distinguished Teacher" award winner for the Indiana Council for the Social Studies, as well as a member of the ICSS and Indiana Computer Educators Board of Directors.