

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945
Topic 4 Content: Turning Points in Europe Notes

Introduction

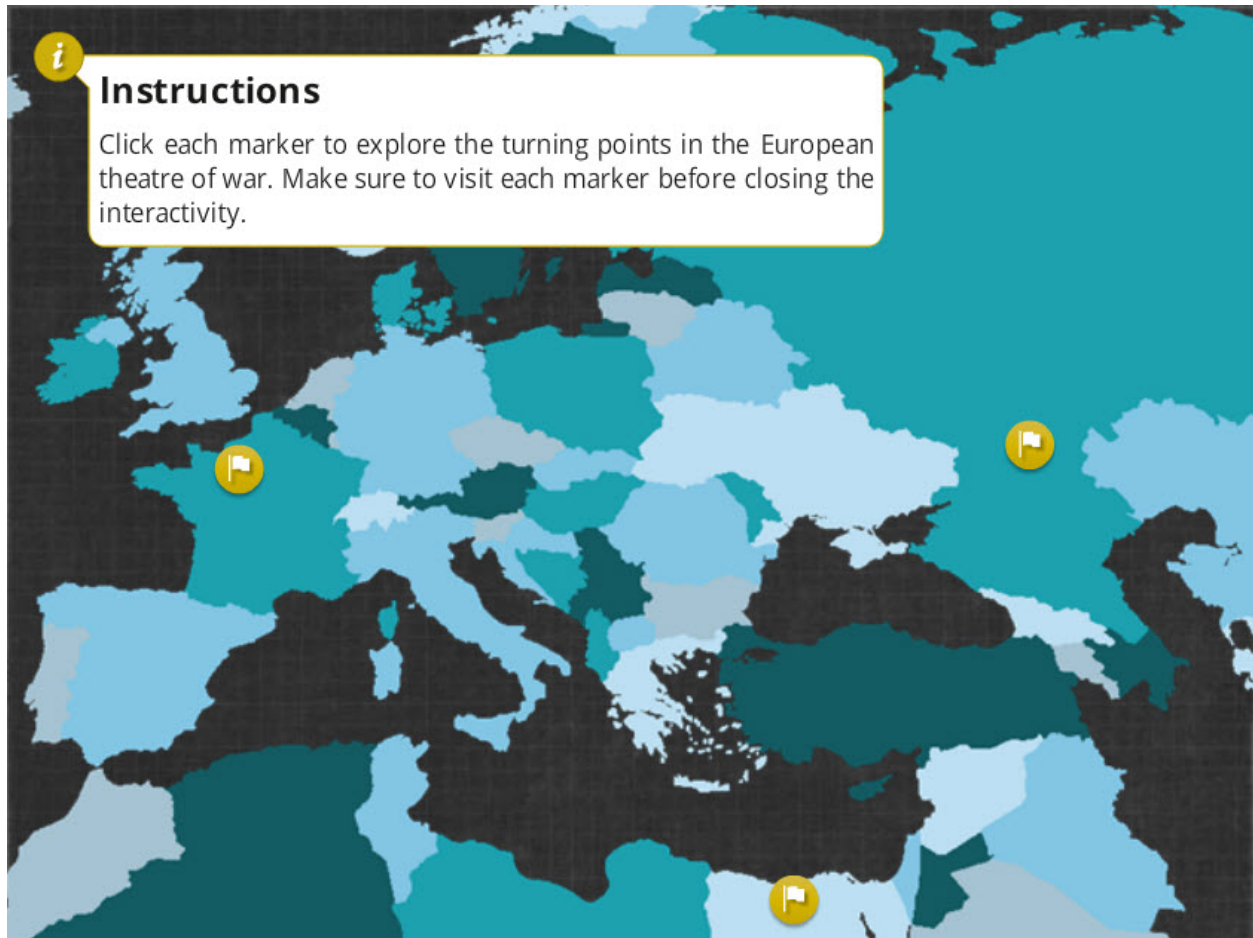


Since the beginning of the War in 1941, the Allied Powers failed to deal with the German military. Nazi Germany had a strong control over Europe and was moving into North Africa to take control of the supply of oil. The Allied Powers would finally achieve huge victories in Stalingrad, Russia, Normandy, France, and Ardennes, Belgium. Click **Next** to learn about these three turning points in the European theatre of war.

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Instructions



Click each marker to explore the turning points in the European theatre of war. Make sure to visit each marker before closing the interactivity.

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Battle of the Bulge



The image shows an interactive map of Europe with a callout box titled "The Battle of the Bulge". The map highlights the Ardennes region in southeast Belgium. The callout box contains the following text:

The Battle of the Bulge

After D-Day, the Allied forces slowly pushed the Germans out of Western Europe and back towards Germany. Many in the Allied command thought the German military was spent, and did not have the ability to attack. On December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a surprise attack through the heavily forested area of Ardennes, in southeast Belgium, catching the Allies completely unaware. This area of the front line was thinly defended by American soldiers, and as the Germans pushed forward, the American soldiers shifted positions, forming a bulge-shape in the lines between the two sides. Thus, the fight became known as the Battle of the Bulge. The heroic efforts of the 101st airborne division in



A black and white photograph showing soldiers in a snowy, wooded area. One soldier in the foreground is carrying a large pack on his back. The scene is set in a winter landscape with snow-covered ground and trees.

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Stalingrad, Russia



The Siege of Stalingrad, Russia

In the fall of 1942 and early winter of 1943, hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were killed or captured in a long siege of the Russian city of Stalingrad. This marked the second significant turning point of the European portion of World War II. The Germans wanted to capture Stalingrad so they could gain access to Soviet oil fields. This great defeat changed the momentum of the German attacks against the Soviet Union; and from that point forward roles reversed, and Germans had to go on the defensive.



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Normandy, France



Invasion of Normandy

On June 6, 1944, more than 150,000 allied soldiers invaded the beaches of Normandy, France on D-Day. It was the largest amphibious operation of its time. More than 5,000 ships and 11,000 aircrafts took part in the landings. Led by the allied supreme commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower, the soldiers succeeded in capturing the beaches, despite strong German opposition and heavy American casualties. Some of the worst fighting occurred at Omaha Beach. The allied forces continued pushing back the German army until they had successfully liberated Western Europe from Hitler's control.



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