

Reader's Guide

- 1. What were the causes of World War II?
- **2.** Why did the Soviet Union join the Axis powers and later switch to the Allies?
- **3.** Describe how the home front played an important role in the war.
- **4.** What were some positive effects of the war?
- **5.** How did World War II affect women and racial minorities?
- **6.** Create an illustrated time line of World War II in Europe.

World War II in Europe



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Publishing Credits

Rachelle Cracchiolo, M.S.Ed., Publisher Conni Medina, M.A.Ed., Managing Editor Emily R. Smith, M.A.Ed., Content Director Véronique Bos, Creative Director Robin Erickson, Art Director Michelle Jovin, M.A., Associate Editor Fabiola Sepulveda, Graphic Designer

Image Credits: front cover, p.1, p.7 (bottom), p.10, p.17 (bottom) Everett Historical/
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LOC [LC-DIG-fsa-8d29109]; p.19 (top) San Jose State University Department of Special Collections and Archive; p.19 (bottom) Everett Collection Historical/Alamy; pp.20–21
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Rodgers, Kelly, author.

Title: World War II in Europe / Kelly Rodgers.

Other titles: World War 2 in Europe

Description: Huntington Beach, CA: Teacher Created Materials, [2020] | Summary: "World War II was the bloodiest, most destructive war in history. The European Theater played host to some of the most significant events of the war. When the war drew to a close in 1945, more than 40 million people were dead. Cities lay in ruins. Millions of people were homeless. It would take decades for Europe to recover from the devastation." -- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019024372 (print) | LCCN 2019024373 (ebook) | ISBN 9781425850708 (paperback) | ISBN 9781425850708 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: World War, 1939-1945--Europe--Juvenile literature. | World War, 1939-1945--United States--Juvenile literature. | Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC D756.3 .R63 2020 (print) | LCC D756.3 (ebook) | DDC 940.53/4--dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019024372

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5301 Oceanus Drive Huntington Beach, CA 92649-1030 www.tcmpub.com

ISBN 978-1-0876-5489-8

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Table of Contents

The World at War 4
An Uneasy Peace 6
Europe Ignites
America Enters the War14
On to Victory
The Holocaust
Legacy of Hope
Stage It!
Glossary
Index31
Your Turn!

The World at War

World War II was one of the most important and devastating events of the twentieth century. More than 40 million people lost their lives. The war cost over \$1 trillion. Cities were ruined. People around the world were affected.

At the same time, great progress was made. New technologies were invented. Medicines were created. Discoveries changed the lives of people all over the world. Important social changes arose during the war. Women, African Americans, and others were encouraged to join the work force—many for the first time. The Great Depression came to an end in most countries.

How could such a destructive event bring about so much good? What was it about the war that showcased the worst and the best in humanity?

World War II was a global war; nearly every country took part in it in some way. The war was fought between the Axis powers and the Allied forces. The Axis side included Germany, Italy, and Japan. The countries leading the Allies were Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. After six long years of fighting, the Allies won. When the war ended, people everywhere hoped peace would last.



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