Internet Project Answer Key:

Contributions to America’s World War II Effort

Name ________________________________________ Date ____________________

Objective

- Learner will be able to identify and evaluate the contributions that different groups of Americans made to the overall war effort during World War II, and the obstacles these groups had to overcome in order to make their contributions.

Background

The United States’s post-World War I isolationist policy was shattered within the first moments of the Japanese air strike on Pearl Harbor. Everything changed the moment the United States was attacked. Not only did public opinion immediately shift in terms of U.S. foreign policy, but the country, including many poorly assimilated racial and ethnic groups, united in the fight against the Axis powers.

Ironically, some of the most valuable contributors to the American war effort were the Native Americans, a group victimized by American culture since the arrival of the Europeans centuries ago. Nevertheless, in 1942, Native Americans soared to the cause. For many tribes, the impulse to take up arms and fight had been present for years. The Iroquois Confederacy, which had declared war against Germany in 1917 and never recognized a treaty, regarded the U.S. entry into the Second World War as a great opportunity to return to battle. Other tribes were so eager to defend the United States that they stood in line for hours, combating terrible weather, just to sign their draft cards. Some brought their own rifles hoping they could immediately jump into battle. According to the 1942 Selective Service, 99% of all eligible Indians, healthy males aged 21 to 44, had registered for the draft; 40% more Native Americans voluntarily enlisted than had been drafted. 44,500 individuals—a full third of all able-bodied men 18 to 50 and more than 10% of the entire Native American population—served in World War II. If the entire population had enlisted in the same proportion as the Native Americans, a mandatory draft would not have been necessary.

The Native Americans made many significant contributions to the war effort, the most notable being the Navajo Code. The code, which was never broken, was credited with saving numerous lives on the Pacific front and facilitated the capture of Iwo Jima, as well as other strategic locations. Besides the Navajo code talkers, the Native Americans proved to be exemplary soldiers. They excelled in marksmanship and endurance. They displayed loyalty, courage, and enthusiasm. Many were naturally gifted trackers and commando fighters. During the war, Native Americans won 71 Air Medals, 51 Silver Stars, 47 Bronze Stars, 34 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and two Medals of Honor.

By the time World War II ended, the white American and Native American cultures had become increasingly interconnected, yielding both positive and negative results. Despite the honors bestowed to them, many Native Americans found racism was still a problem and to some extent felt victimized. The fighting separated tribes and took the men away from their families. When the war ended, some
veterans opted never to return, instead settling in the cities and assimilating into the prevalent culture. Also, while the war effort gave many Native Americans important superior-paying jobs and increased their standard of living, the war effort also appropriated many natural resources from tribal land. The government seized oil, coal, minerals, timber, helium (used to make the atomic bomb), and other raw materials from reservations. The Blackfeet tribe, for instance, found their fuel reserves completely depleted by the end of the war. For all the mixed results, the years of World War II did serve to unite the country. Most importantly, it gave the “First Americans” an opportunity to use their strength, language, wisdom, and unique talents to change the course of global history.

Native Americans were not the only group to contribute to the war effort. In the following sections, you will learn more about two other groups that also made substantial contributions to the Allied victory: the Tuskegee Airmen (African Americans) and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (Japanese Americans). The roles they played, and the heroism they displayed, were instrumental in compelling the predominant culture of the U.S. to accept them as Americans.

**Internet Research Primer**

**Alternate Search Engines**

Although Google is currently the most popular search engine, many other search engines exist. It is important that you become familiar with more than one search engine so that you can be sure you are accessing as much information, in as convenient a fashion as possible. Explore some of the search engines described below to determine how they might be useful in your research.

In addition to the main search engine, Google also provides specialty search engines for specific content.

- **Google Scholar** – Searches peer reviewed scholarly publications.
- **Google News** – Searches hundreds of newspapers from around the world.
- **Google Images** – Searches image files.
- **Google Books** – The most unique of these search options is the ability to search inside printed books. Google has digitized millions of books so far and allows you to search for words or phrases inside these books, and in some cases even see the page on which the words occur. This is a very useful tool for finding offline material for your research project.

**Bing**

Bing (Bing) is Microsoft’s latest search engine. Previous search engines by Microsoft included Live Search and MSN Search. In addition to the Internet search, Bing includes image, video, shopping, news, local, and even a twitter search engine. Like Google, Bing has support for Boolean operators. Some Internet privacy experts have lauded Microsoft for Bing’s privacy policy, which they consider more protective of user’s privacy than Google’s.
AltaVista

AltaVista, one of the Web’s oldest search engines, is unique because of its Babel Fish translation engine, usable from inside search results or standalone at Babelfish. (AltaVista is now owned by Yahoo.) Babel Fish is an automatic language translator that will translate a Web page or entered text to and from almost a dozen languages.

Ask.com

Ask.com (Ask), formerly known as Ask Jeeves, strives to be more intuitive and user-friendly than the other search engines. Users may conduct their searches by posing questions in “plain English,” such as the query Who shot Abraham Lincoln? It also supports the traditional keyword searches.

Dogpile

Dogpile (Dogpile) is a meta-search engine. This means that rather than maintaining its own database, Dogpile submits your queries to other popular search engines and returns a combined and re-ranked list of sites.

Commercial Services

Your school or local public library may have access to extensive online databases such as Lexis-Nexis, Factiva, JSTOR (short for Journal Storage), or ProQuest-CSA, which contain extensive newspaper, periodical, and journal archives. Ask your librarian what is available and for assistance in using these online resources.

Activities

1. Go to Tuskegee Airmen. Click on “Tuskegee Airmen (1941-1946).” In addition to pilots, what other occupations did the Tuskegee Airmen include?

The name “Tuskegee Airmen” refers to everyone who was involved in the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft: pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and so on.

2. Read Airmen History. Where did the Tuskegee Airmen serve?

“Four hundred and fifty of the pilots who were trained at TAAF served overseas in either the 99th Pursuit Squadron (later the 99th Fighter Squadron) or the 332nd Fighter Group. The 99th Fighter Squadron trained in and flew P-40 Warhawk aircraft in combat in North Africa, Sicily and Italy from April 1943 until July 1944 when they were transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group in the 15th Air Force.”
3. Go to Tuskegee History. What did President Truman do in 1948?

President Truman issued Executive Order Number 9981 which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces. This order, in time, led to the end of racial segregation in the military forces, and was the first step toward racial integration in the U.S.

4. Go to Navajo. Click on “The Call.” Who first had the idea of using Navajo as a military code? What was his background?

The man who had the idea of using Navajo as a military code was Philip Johnston. A veteran of World War I, he not only knew of other Native American languages that had been used by the military previously, but he also knew Navajo very well, having learned the language as a child on the reservation.

5. Read Code Talkers. What kind of discrimination did the codetalkers face during their Marine Corps training?

According to Sam Billison, “taking orders often included discrimination beyond being labeled “chief” or standard Marine Corps training. “In Boot Camp, I had a lot of fights and soldiers calling me ‘you damned Indian.’”
6. Read “The Navajo Code Talkers” Web site at Navajo Code Talker. Click “Original Code” in the left-hand frame. What is the Navajo word for Fighter Plane? What is the literal meaning of the Navajo word?

The Navajo word for Fighter Plane is Da-he-tih-hi, which literally means “Hummingbird” in English.

7. Read San Francisco Museum. Where did the members of the 442nd come from? Why did this cause discipline problems in the unit?

The members of the 442nd for the most part came from the second generation of Japanese-Americans, or Nisei. However, two-thirds came from Hawaii and about one-third from the mainland of the United States. The men from Hawaii thought that the mainlanders were too quiet and stuck up, so there were many fights between the two groups until the commanding officer decided to show them an internment camp. They then realized that the mainlanders’ backgrounds included forced evacuation.

8. Go to Higuchi Papers Finding Aid at Higuchi Papers. Click “Hiro Higuchi Papers” for biographical information. As an army chaplain, what were Rev. Higuchi’s duties?

He “provided comfort and solace to the troops, held religious services on the front lines, transported the wounded and dead from the battlefield, comforted injured soldiers at first aid stations, wrote letters to the families of those killed in action, held memorial services, and performed various administrative duties.”

9. Read the biography of Daniel K. Inouye on his Web site: Daniel Inouye. How was Sen. Inouye wounded? What did he feel was the most important ‘lesson’ to be learned from his service?
Sen. Inouye’s right arm was shattered by a grenade on April 21, 1945, near San Terenzo, Italy, as he led his platoon through enemy resistance to capture a key ridge. He wrote that the most important thing to remember about his service and that of others in segregated groups is that the values of patriotism and love of country are not limited to any one group—and that “wartime hysteria must never again lead us to trample on our democratic principles.”

**Project**

Research the role of one ethnic group in America, focusing if possible on one particular individual. Then prepare and present a 5-10 minute skit to the class explaining his or her character’s contribution to the American World War II effort. Have other characters represent people with whom he or she would have interacted. Students should also be prepared to answer questions from the class while in character. [See for an example: “A People at War” from the National Archives and Records Administration (A People At war)]