

DUNKESWELL WAR STORIES



Session One Introduction to the War

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To give children an overview of the main players and movements of World War II, with an emphasis on the Battle of the Atlantic.

LESSON PLAN

Section	Summary of Activities	Resources/ Materials	Time
Introduction	<i>Activity 1</i> Find out how much children already know about WWII	Paper Pencils or pens Whiteboard and markers OR interactive whiteboard	10
WWII: Overview – Part 1	<i>Activity 2</i> Show the children the short film about the key events of WWII and ask them how much	FILM: Broadhembury News Sketch (1.1)	10
WWII: Overview – Part 2	<i>Activity 3</i> Divide the children into 3 equal teams and assemble around a map of the Atlantic to play through the main movements in WWII	Map of Europe and the Atlantic Ocean (1.2) Counters for each side (1.3) 4 scripts (1.4) Scissors	35
Conclusion	<i>Activity 4</i> Recap activities 2 and 3 to see how much the children have learned about the war	Paper Pencils or pens	5

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Introduction

- Hand out paper and pens/ pencils to the class, and ask them to write down in 2-3 minutes as many things as they already know about World War II.

- Ask the class to share their knowledge, and write the answers on a whiteboard.

Activity 2 – Overview Part 1

- Show the pupils the short film provided ([The War in 4](#)), which presents the history of WWII as a series of news reports.
- Ask them which of the events reported they remember and why they were important. Say that we will now be going through these events in more detail as competing teams.

Activity 3 – Overview Part 2

- Divide the class into 3 equal teams – Britain, Germany and the USA. Have each time nominate a leader or team captain, who will fulfil the roles of Churchill, Hitler and Roosevelt respectively.
- Hand out the sheets with military counters on them, and instruct the children to cut them out (N.B. this can be done before the lesson to save time, or if there are not enough scissors available).
- Assemble the children with the counters around the map, which can be laid across the floor or on a table.
- Give each team leader a copy of the script and work through it, covering the following events:
 - Germany invading Poland
 - Britain and France declaring war
 - Dunkirk
 - The Battle of Britain
 - The Battle of the Atlantic
 - Pearl Harbour and the USA's entrance into the war
 - American support for Britain against the U-Boats
 - D-Day
 - Victory

Activity 4 – Conclusion

- EITHER recap with the children about the key events of WWII from both activities.
- OR hold a quick quiz along these lines.

WORKSHEETS

None required for this session

RESOURCES

1.1 FILM: [The War in 4](#)

1.2 Map of Europe and the Atlantic Ocean

1.3 Counters for British, American and Nazi troops – tanks, aeroplanes, u-boats, surface vessels

1.4 Script for map movements

Resource 1.4: WWII Map Script

The students should be split into three groups, with each group nominating a leader to play CHURCHILL, HITLER and ROOSEVELT respectively. The Teacher takes the role of the NARRATOR. Each group should have one copy of the script. Each side should be dealt out their tokens before play can start.

NARRATOR It's the end of 1939, and there are three big personalities running three very big countries.

Narrator points to CHURCHILL.

Britain is even more powerful than America: it rules the waves and more than a quarter of the globe.

CHURCHILL grins.

But... as an island, Britain has one big weakness: it always needs food and supplies to reach them by sea.

CHURCHILL: *(slightly downcast)* We're still great though, I assure you.

NARRATOR: Germany had a bad time of it between the world wars -

HITLER looks grumpy.

When Hitler surprisingly came to power, he had a plan to put Germany back on the map.

HITLER: *(grinning)* A lot of zie map!

NARRATOR: The United States were not quite the superpower they are now -

ROOSEVELT looks sad.

- but they knew they were heading that way.

ROOSEVELT smiles.

They were not part of Europe, and so they felt the war was none of their business. They didn't like what Hitler was doing, but unless he attacked them they weren't getting involved.

ROOSEVELT: Makes sense to me.

NARRATOR: Now we're going to put you into three teams, so you can learn exactly what happened during World War II.

Divide into 3 teams - each leader picks different children, like a football game.

OK. We're now going to play through the main movements during the war. With each turn you'll have the chance to talk to your team leaders and decide what you should do.

So, let's get started...

With each round, the NARRATOR lays out what will happen with each country. The different leaders address their lines to their teams - if they disagree, overrule them with something like "I'm in charge!"

----- ROUND ONE: War is Declared, September 1939 -----

GERMAN troops are placed in Poland.

NARRATOR: Hitler has invaded Poland. What do the British do?

CHURCHILL: We can't just keep giving in to Hitler. I think we should declare war.

BRITISH troops in Britain.

NARRATOR: Okay Germany - Britain is now at war with you. Will you give Poland back?

HITLER: NEIN! IT'S OURS! But in order to fight Britain, we will have to go through France. I think we should invade.

GERMAN troops in France.

NARRATOR: This is already a big war. Is it going to be a world war? America, are you going to come help your friends in Britain and France?

ROOSEVELT: Guys, I really appreciate you're in a spot of bother - but this is nothing to do with us. Just take a few ships and leave us alone!

BRITISH troops in France.

NARRATOR: Britain now has a lot of its army in France. But now Hitler's in France, with an *awful* lot of *his* army. And unlike Britain, he doesn't have to use boats to bring in new supplies. Britain is soon forced to retreat.

GERMANY moves BRITISH troops back to Dunkirk.

----- ROUND TWO: Dunkirk, June 1940 -----

NARRATOR: Britain has been pushed back to the sea. What do you do?

CHURCHILL: We can't surrender - but we need to get our troops home.

NARRATOR: Let's send every little ship we can to pick them up. America, will you send ships to help?

ROOSEVELT: We just gave you ships! Go away!

BRITAIN moves troops back to Britain.

----- **ROUND THREE: The Battle of Britain, July - October 1940** -----

NARRATOR: Germany now has mainland Europe to itself. What do you do next?

HITLER: Guys, we took France in 6 weeks. We could have the whole world by Christmas. Let's keep going - send our bombers to London!

GERMANY moves bombers to Britain.

NARRATOR: Germany has sent its bombers to London. Britain, what's your response?

CHURCHILL: *(understated)* We should probably fight back. Send in the RAF! Let's see how good these spitfires are!

BRITAIN moves planes to Britain.

NARRATOR: Britain is fighting hard against the German bombers, but they could really use some help. America?

ROOSEVELT: Kind of busy over here. We don't want this to be a world war.

----- **ROUND FOUR: The Battle of the Atlantic, 1940 - 1945** -----

NARRATOR: Britain has managed to withstand the German attack.

CHURCHILL: *(leading his team)* Hooray!

HITLER: *(angry)* Got in Himmel! Well, if we can't beat their planes, maybe we can cut off their supplies by sinking their boats...

GERMANY moves U-boats to Atlantic.

NARRATOR: Germany have sent their U-Boats into the Atlantic to stop Britain's supplies from getting through. Britain, what do you do?

CHURCHILL: If we don't fight those U-boats, we won't have any food. We have to fight. Send in the Navy!

BRITAIN moves Navy boats to Atlantic.

NARRATOR: This war is really heating up. You know America, your supplies would stand more chance of getting through if you joined in.

ROOSEVELT: We would if we could but -

NARRATOR hands ROOSEVELT a piece of paper.

(deeply concerned) One of Germany's allies has attacked us at Pearl Harbour. *(beat - angry)* OK - IT'S WAR!

AMERICA moves ships to Atlantic.

----- ROUND FIVE: The USA come to Britain, 1941-45 -----

NARRATOR: So, America is now in the war. Germany?

HITLER: We're not worried. We'll just do what we always do and keep on attacking.

NARRATOR: Britain?

CHURCHILL: We're having some success, but what we could really use is more planes to attack the U-boats. Bombers aren't cheap, you know.

NARRATOR: America?

ROOSEVELT: We should send our forces to Europe, so we can beat the U-boats and invade Germany. Send as many as possible - and send some of those special planes to protect the convoys & fight the U-boats.

AMERICA moves planes and troops to Britain.

----- Round Six: U-Boats defeated, 1944-45 -----

NARRATOR: So, America has sent lots of troops to the UK. Britain and America are now part of one big group.

ROOSEVELT and his team cross over to the other side of the map. He goes to hug CHURCHILL, but CHURCHILL offers to shake his hand instead; ROOSEVELT obliges and encourages his team to do the same thing.

So, now that you're both in the war, what do you do first?

ROOSEVELT: Well, our first job is to defeat the U-Boats. Otherwise none of our supplies will reach Britain.

CHURCHILL: I agree.

NARRATOR: Germany, what's your response?

HITLER: I really want to keep fighting - but maybe we should pull back and fight them on the land instead. Send the U-boats back to base.

GERMANY takes the U-boats off the map.

----- Round Seven: The Invasion of Europe, June 1944 -----

NARRATOR: With the U-boats defeated, Britain and America can now think about retaking Europe.

ROOSEVELT: It's time to invade Europe. We'll call it D-Day!

CHURCHILL: What does the D stand for?

ROOSEVELT: I don't know, but it sounds good. Can we invade already?

CHURCHILL: Sure.

BRITAIN and AMERICA move troops into France.

NARRATOR: Britain and America have invaded Europe. It looks like they might retake France. Germany, what's your plan?

HITLER: Um... fight?!

BRITAIN: He's not going to give up, is he?

AMERICA: No. Let's get him.

ROOSEVELT and CHURCHILL cross the map and stand over HITLER and his team.

CHURCHILL: Still want to fight?

HITLER: *(pitifully)* Nein.

ROOSEVELT: Ok. We win!

CHURCHILL and ROOSEVELT high five and encourage their sides to cheer.

NARRATOR: The allies had to fight all the way into Hitler's secret bunker in Berlin. Without the US Navy planes helping defeat the U-boats, none of this would be possible.

That's the end of the war. Give yourselves a big clap.

END

This teachers' pack was created as part of the *Dunkeswell War Stories* project in conjunction with staff and pupils at Broadhembury Primary School. *Dunkeswell War Stories* is an interactive online resource featuring first hand memories of the American airbase and village life during the Second World War. It was developed by the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership and produced by Dream Machine Media Ltd.

Find *Dunkeswell War Stories* at www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk

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