Chapter 20

Section 1  Mobilizing for War

Click on a hyperlink to view the corresponding slides.
Chapter Objectives

Section 1: Mobilizing for War

• Explain how the United States mobilized its economy.
• Describe the issues involved in raising an American army.
Why It Matters

The United States entered World War II unwillingly and largely unprepared. The American people, however, quickly banded together to transform the American economy into the most productive and efficient war-making machine in the world. American forces turned the tide in Europe and the Pacific, and they played a crucial role in the defeat of Germany, Italy, and Japan.
The Impact Today

Many changes that began in World War II are still shaping our lives today.

• The United Nations was founded.
• Nuclear weapons were invented.
• The United States became the most powerful nation in the world.
1941
- President Roosevelt forbids racial discrimination in defense industries
- The United States enters World War II

1942
- Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps established
- Japanese American relocation ordered

1943
- Detroit race riots
- Zoot suit riots in Los Angeles

1941
- Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and the Philippines

1942
- Japan takes Philippines; MacArthur vows: “I shall return.”
- Americans turn the tide in the Pacific at the Battle of Midway

1943
- Battle of Tarawa
- Germans defeated at Stalingrad
- Allied forces land in Italy

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1944
- Supreme Court rules in *Korematsu v. the United States* that Japanese American relocation is constitutional
- Eisenhower leads D-Day invasion
- Battle of Leyte Gulf

1945
- Franklin Roosevelt dies in office; Harry S Truman becomes president
- United States drops atomic bomb on Japan
- World War II ends
Guide to Reading

Main Idea

The United States quickly mobilized its economy and armed forces to fight World War II.

Key Terms and Names

• cost-plus
• Reconstruction Finance Corporation
• Liberty ship
• War Production Board
• Selective Service and Training Act
• disfranchise
Converting the Economy

• The United States’s industrial output during World War II was twice as productive as Germany and five times that of Japan.

• This turned the tide in favor of an Allied victory.

• Part of the success of the United States was the result of the government mobilizing the economy before the U.S. entered the war.
Converting the Economy (cont.)

- Roosevelt and his advisers believed the best way to rapidly mobilize the economy was to give industry an incentive to move quickly.

- The government signed cost-plus contracts agreeing to pay a company whatever the manufacturing cost, plus a guaranteed percentage of the costs as profit.
Converting the Economy (cont.)

• The **Reconstruction Finance Corporation** (RFC), the government agency which had been set up during the Depression, made loans to companies to help them with the cost of converting to war production.
Converting the Economy (cont.)

Discussion Question

Why was the United States able to expand its war production so quickly after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

The United States could expand its production in part because the government had begun to mobilize the economy before it entered the war. The government signed cost-plus contracts, and the RFC made loans to help companies with the cost of converting to war production.
American Industry Gets the Job Done

• After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, almost all major American industries and 200,000 companies converted to war production.

• The automobile factories turned to the production of trucks, jeeps, and tanks.
American Industry Gets the Job Done (cont.)

- They also built artillery, rifles, mines, helmets, pontoon bridges, cooking pots, and other military supplies, producing nearly one-third of the military equipment that was manufactured during the war.

- Henry Ford created an assembly line for B-24 bombers.
American Industry Gets the Job Done (cont.)

- Henry Kaiser’s shipyards built many ships but were best known for the **Liberty ship**, a basic cargo ship used during the war.

- These ships were welded instead of riveted, making them cheaper and easier to build and difficult to fall apart and sink.
American Industry Gets the Job Done (cont.)

• Roosevelt created the War Production Board (WPB) to set priorities and production goals and to control the distribution of raw materials and supplies.

• He set up the Office of War Mobilization (OWM) to settle arguments between the different agencies.
American Industry Gets the Job Done (cont.)

**Discussion Question**

Why was the production of trucks, jeeps, and tanks so critical to the war?

This was critical because the country that could move its troops and supplies the quickest usually won the battle.
Building an Army

• In order to win the war, it was vital that the United States build up its armed forces.

• After the defeat of France by the Germans, Congress was no longer opposed to the idea of a peacetime draft.

• The Selective Service and Training Act was a plan for the first peacetime draft in American history.
Building an Army (cont.)

• At first, the numbers of draftees was overwhelming.

• The GIs, named after the initials on their uniforms meaning “Government Issue,” went through basic training for eight weeks.

• Although some complained after the war that the training was too short to be of any good, most soldiers gained a sense of camaraderie that made them a more effective unit.
Building an Army (cont.)

- At the beginning of the war, the United States military was completely segregated.

- African Americans were organized into their own military units with white officers in command.

- African Americans were *disfranchised*, meaning they were often denied the right to vote.
Building an Army (cont.)

- An African American newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, launched the “Double V” campaign stating that African Americans should join the war because a win would be a double victory over racism abroad and at home.

- Roosevelt, knowing that the African American vote had helped him win, ordered the U.S. military to recruit and send African Americans into combat.
Building an Army (cont.)

- The army air force created the 99th Pursuit Squadron, an African American unit.
- The African American pilots became known as the **Tuskegee Airmen**.
- They played an important role in the Battle of Anzio in Italy.
Building an Army (cont.)

• In the army, African Americans also performed well, receiving various awards for distinguished service.

• Segregation did not end during the war, but led to full military integration in 1948.
Building an Army (cont.)

- Congress established the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in May 1942.
- This was the first time women were allowed in the military.
- By 1943 women became a part of regular war operations.
- The army, Coast Guard, the navy, and the marines all set up their own women’s organizations.
Building an Army (cont.)

- In 1941 the American troops were untrained and had little military experience.
- They did, however, get the job done and suffered the fewest casualties in combat of all the major powers in the war.
Building an Army (cont.)

Discussion Question

Who made up the American armed forces in World War II?

The American armed forces were made up of recruits who had almost no military experience and were given little training. African Americans were segregated from white troops and were rarely allowed in combat. President Roosevelt directed the army to put African Americans into combat. Some African Americans, such as the Tuskegee Airmen and tank battalions, participated in combat. At first, women were allowed to join the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, which was not part of the regular army. By 1943 women became part of the regular army, but were not allowed in combat.
Checking for Understanding

**Define** Match the terms on the right with their definition on the left.

1. **C** to deprive of the right to vote  
   **A** a government contract to pay a manufacturer the cost to produce an item plus a guaranteed percentage  
   **B** basic cargo ship used by the United States during World War II

   **A.** cost-plus  
   **B.** Liberty ship  
   **C.** disfranchise
Describe the role of the OWM in the war production effort.

The OWM resolved conflicts among mobilization agencies.
Reviewing Themes

Individual Action  Why do you think African Americans were willing to fight in the war even though they suffered discrimination in American society?

They opposed Hitler’s ethnic theories, believed America should wage this war, and demonstrated their support for democracy and equality at home and overseas.
Critical Thinking

Q  Evaluating  How effectively did American industry rally behind the war effort? Give examples to support your opinion.

A  By 1942, almost all major industries were producing trucks, jeeps, and tanks.
Analyzing Visuals

Analyzing Graphs  Study the graphs of automobile and tank production on pages 614 and 615 of your textbook. Why did automobile production decrease while tank production increased?

Auto manufacturers were producing tanks rather than cars.
Reviewing Key Facts

Q

What was the “Double V” campaign?

A

It was a campaign to enlist support in the African American community for the war effort. Double V stood for double victory—victory over Hitler’s racism and victory over racism in the United States.
Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.

Why did Britain and France finally declare war in 1939?

A Because Germany annexed part of Czechoslovakia.
B Because Germany invaded Poland.
C Because Italy invaded France.
D Because of the non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany.

Test-Taking Tip Use the process of elimination to rule out answers you know are wrong. For example, it is unlikely that a non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany would cause Britain and France to declare war.
LIBERTY SHIPS

The Jeremiah O'Brien was built in South Portland, Maine, and launched in June 1943 as a cheap and expendable cargo ship called a Liberty ship. Liberty ships were actually hard to sink and easy to repair because their hulls were welded together instead of riveted.

**Directions:** Answer the following question based on the information at left.

What made Liberty ships important contributors to American success in World War II?

- **F** Liberty ships were small and maneuverable.
- **G** Liberty ships were built to last a long time.
- **H** Liberty ships were cheap to build and easy to repair.
- **J** Liberty ships were not built until after the end of World War II.