

Essay and Discussion Questions from [Contemporary History](#)  
Essay and Discussion Questions

# Contemporary History World at War High School Questions

Help students understand how events between 1900 and 1945 continue to shape today's world through these essay and discussion questions.

## Introduction

1. How and why did World War I shape women's roles in society?
2. During the United States' history, what factors have pushed the country toward global engagement? What factors have pushed it toward isolationism?
3. In what ways were the causes of World War I and World War II similar? How did they differ?
4. How did nationalism help cause World War I?
5. Why did appeasement in the late 1930s backfire?
6. What lessons does the failure of the Treaty of Versailles have for future diplomatic agreements?

## Fascism and Communism

1. How was a leader as radical as Adolf Hitler able to rise to power in Germany?
2. How did fascist regimes use existing institutions to gain power?
3. In what ways did the Soviet Union not live up to Karl Marx's vision of communism?
4. Is nationalism a positive or negative force in the world?
5. What is appealing about Marx's vision of communism?
6. What does the history of the Soviet Union suggest about the limitations of communism in practice?

## United States As a Global Power

1. Following World War II, what international organization did the United States help create to encourage cooperation and security?
2. Based on what you know of its rise, when would you argue the United States become a global power?
3. During the United States' history, what factors have pushed the country toward global engagement? What factors have pushed it toward isolationism?
4. In what two key ways did the United States seek to limit the influence of the Soviet Union in post-war Europe?