1941-1945: Civilians at War Video Guide

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMWYblZ8gwQ

Name _____

World War II was a total global conflict that affected and changed not only the lives of soldiers fighting the war but also those of non-combatants living in war zones. The scale of the war encompassed three continents and millions of people. This episode analyzes the human costs of total warfare from the barbarity of Hitler's "Final Solution," to the atrocities committed by the Japanese against the Chinese people, to the devastation wreaked by the atomic bomb. At the end of the war, for the first time in history, the Axis leaders were held accountable for their "crimes against humanity," but the allied leaders were hailed as heroes whose atrocities were viewed as unfortunate but necessary.

1. Why were there so many civilian casualties in World War II?

2. It can be argued that Adolph Hitler has had the most impact of any one person in the twentieth century. Discuss some of the goals and plans of Adolph Hitler to dominate the world. How might the world be different today if Germany had won World War II?

3. Why did Hitler attempt to eliminate all the Jews of the world?

4. The atrocities committed against the Jewish people in World War II are among the most horrific ever imagined. Why were German soldiers willing to commit these atrocities for their country and their leader?

5. Why did Heinrich Himmler, chief of Hitler's Gestapo, search for a more efficient method of killing Jews instead of continuing to shoot them?

6. What was the "final solution?"

7. How could the Holocaust have happened?

8. Although the odds were against survival in the death camps, some managed to live. How could these people survive against such overwhelming odds?

9. Compare Japanese and German racial ideology.

10. How were Japanese soldiers acculturated to being killing machines? How do states remove the burden of murder from the shoulders of its soldiers?

11. Who were the "Kamikaze" pilots? Why would anyone choose to go on a kamikaze mission?

12. Compare and discuss the immorality of all the participants of World War II.

13. Should the United States have dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?

14. What did the Nuremberg Trials accomplish?