

6th Grade Lesson Plan

Topic

D-Day, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and World War II

Time

50–60 Minutes

Grade Level

6th Grade Social Studies / U.S. History

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Explain why D-Day was important in World War II.
2. Identify Dwight D. Eisenhower and describe his leadership role.
3. Describe challenges faced by Allied forces during the Normandy invasion.
4. Understand how preparation and teamwork helped the Allies succeed.

Key Vocabulary

- D-Day
- Normandy
- Allies
- Axis Powers
- Amphibious invasion
- Supreme Commander
- Operation Overlord
- Beachhead
- Airborne troops
- Liberation

Materials Needed

- Teacher presentation/slides

- World map of Europe during WWII
- Normandy beach map
- Printed vocabulary sheet
- Student note guide
- Quiz handout
- Colored pencils or markers

Bell Ringer (5 Minutes)

Write on the board: “What qualities make a good leader during difficult times?”

Students write 3–4 sentences.

Introduction (10 Minutes)

Teacher explains:

- Europe was controlled by Nazi Germany.
- The Allies needed a way to free Europe.
- D-Day became the largest amphibious invasion in history.
- General Dwight D. Eisenhower led the invasion.

Discuss:

- Why crossing the English Channel was dangerous.
- Why surprise was important.
- Why preparation mattered.

Direct Instruction (15 Minutes)

Part 1: Eisenhower’s Early Life

- Born in Texas in 1890.
- Grew up in Kansas.
- Attended West Point.
- Strong religious upbringing.
- Learned leadership through military training.

Part 2: Preparing for D-Day

- Allies gathered troops in England.
- Fake armies and deception plans confused Germany.
- Weather delayed the invasion.
- Eisenhower made the final decision.

Part 3: The Normandy Invasion

- June 6, 1944.
- Nearly 160,000 troops landed.
- Omaha Beach had heavy casualties.
- Airplanes, ships, and tanks supported the invasion.
- The Allies successfully established a foothold.

Important Numbers

- 7,000 ships
- 12,000 aircraft
- 160,000 troops

Guided Practice (10 Minutes)

Classroom Map Activity

Students label:

- England
- France
- Normandy
- English Channel
- Germany

Teacher explains troop movement from England to Normandy.

Independent Practice (10 Minutes)

Writing Prompt

“Why was D-Day one of the most important events of World War II?”

Students write one paragraph using at least three vocabulary words.

Class Discussion Questions

1. Why was Eisenhower trusted to lead D-Day?
2. Why was teamwork important during the invasion?
3. What might have happened if D-Day failed?
4. Why did the Allies need air and naval support?

Exit Ticket

Students answer:

1. Who led D-Day?
 2. What country did the Allies invade?
 3. Why was D-Day important?
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6th Grade Quiz

Multiple Choice

1. What was D-Day? A. The attack on Pearl Harbor B. The invasion of Normandy C. The Battle of Midway D. The end of World War I
2. Who was the leader of the Allied invasion? A. George Washington B. Douglas MacArthur C. Dwight D. Eisenhower D. Winston Churchill
3. D-Day took place during: A. The Civil War B. World War I C. The Cold War D. World War II
4. Which country did the Allies invade on D-Day? A. Japan B. France C. Russia D. Italy
5. Why was D-Day important? A. It helped free Europe from Nazi control. B. It started World War II. C. It ended the Civil War. D. It caused the Great Depression.

Short Answer

1. Name one challenge Allied troops faced on D-Day.
2. Describe one leadership quality Eisenhower showed.

6th Grade Quiz Answer Key

1. B
2. C
3. D
4. B
5. A

Short Answers:

1. Weather, beach defenses, machine gun fire, mines, or difficult landings.
2. Leadership, courage, organization, planning, teamwork, decision-making.

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Extension Activities for All Grade Levels

Multimedia Activities

- Watch WWI documentary clips.
- Analyze propaganda posters.
- Listen to wartime speeches.
- Compare WWI and WWII technology.

Cross-Curricular Connections

English Language Arts

- Write a diary entry from trench warfare.
- Persuasive essay on the Treaty of Versailles.

Geography

- Map alliance systems.
- Track major battles across Europe.

Civics

- Debate neutrality vs intervention.
- Discuss leadership during wartime.

Creative Projects

- Design WWI propaganda posters.
- Create trench models.
- Build timelines.
- Hero biography presentations.

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Teacher Notes

- Emphasize cause-and-effect relationships.
- Use maps frequently for geographic understanding.
- Clarify the difference between Central Powers and Allies.
- Encourage respectful discussions about war and casualties.
- Adapt reading complexity for student needs.
- Reinforce how WWI influenced WWII.