

cobblestone®

ON THE HOME FRONT: The United States in World War II

In this issue, students explore the social and economic changes that occurred in America because of World War II, from new economic opportunities for African Americans and women to the growing movement for civil rights.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did World War II change the lives of different groups of Americans?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the role of women in US history
- Students will explain how human-made catastrophic events in one place affect people in other places
- Students will learn about the roots of the American Civil Rights movement
- Students will illustrate historical and contemporary means of changing society
- Students will learn about American society at the end of World War II
- Students will evaluate solutions to current economic issues in terms of benefits and costs for different groups and society as a whole
- Students will conduct research
- Students will create a timeline
- Students will use details from a text to write a historical narrative



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Womanpower!**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L
- **Democracy's Limits**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L
- **Postwar America**
Expository Nonfiction, ~650L

Womanpower!

pp. 15–19, Expository Nonfiction

Learn how America's entry into World War II changed the role of women in American society.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about the role of women in US history
- Students will explain how human-made catastrophic events in one place affect people in other places
- Students will conduct research

KEY VOCABULARY

- **low-skilled industries (p. 15)** segments of the economy that employ laborers with lower educational attainment at lower wages than skilled jobs
- **public good (p. 16)** the benefit or well-being of all members of a society
- **discrimination (p. 18)** the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people based on race, age, or sex

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did World War II change the lives of different groups of Americans?

Ask students what they know about World War II. Where was it fought? Who went to fight there? Then have students hypothesize how sending millions of men to fight overseas in WW II changed life for women in America.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Write the following sentences on the board. Then ask students to decide which words from the vocabulary list should be used to complete the sentences.

- People working in _____ typically earn low wages.
- _____ against women, especially African American women, went against the _____.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What kinds of economic opportunities did women have before World War II?
- In what ways did women contribute to the war effort?
- How did World War II change social opportunities for, and expectations of, women?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Connections

INSTRUCT: Explain that World War II occurred in areas of the world mostly far away from the mainland United States and that as a result, millions of men were sent overseas. Tell students they will work in pairs to analyze the effect of this deployment on women in American society.

ASSESS: Instruct partners to reread the article and discuss the ways that men leaving for war changed women's roles in American society. Tell pairs to list at least three ways that war affected women's roles. Then invite partners to share their lists with the class.

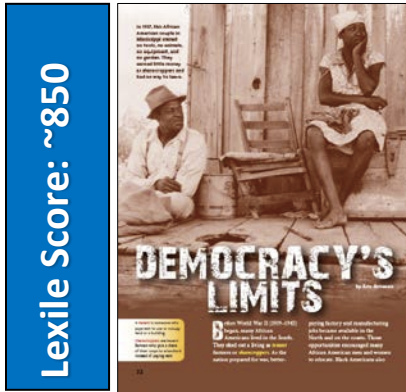
EXTEND

English Language Arts Have students conduct online and library research to find more information about women's roles in American society, both before and after World War II. Then have students work in small groups to create a two-part poster or multimedia presentation demonstrating how the war changed women's roles.

Democracy's Limits

pp. 32–35, Expository Nonfiction

Explore how social, economic, and political changes in American during World War II laid the foundation for the Civil Rights movement.



RESOURCES

- Understanding Discrimination

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about the roots of the American Civil Rights movement
- Students will illustrate historical and contemporary means of changing societies
- Students will create a timeline

KEY VOCABULARY

- **inequality (p. 33)** an unfair difference in rights or opportunities
- **desegregation (p. 34)** the ending of a policy that keeps people of different races apart
- **civil rights (p. 35)** the rights that every person should have regardless of his or her sex, race, or religion

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did World War II change the lives of different groups of Americans?

Have students share what they know about the social, economic, and political freedoms that were denied to African Americans in the early 1900s. Then ask students to hypothesize how and why World War II changed in those circumstances.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Then ask students to make predictions about the topic of the text using the vocabulary words. If necessary, help students guess the topic by revealing the title of the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- How did the war affect African American attitudes toward equality?
- Why did President Roosevelt sign executive orders that prohibited discrimination in the military?
- What major accomplishment did African American activists achieve in the 1940s?

SKILL FOCUS: Illustrate Examples

INSTRUCT: Explain that to “illustrate” an example from history means to explain how a specific event or development is an example of a general theme. Remind students that the theme they’ve been focusing on in this article is “the fight for civil rights.” Explain that as World War II ended, African Americans began to organize and fight for social, economic, and political equality.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete Part A of the *Understanding Discrimination* organizer. Tell students to be sure to cite text details in their answers. Then have students share their answers with the class. Next, have students work independently to complete the summarizing task in Part B of their organizers. Ask volunteers to share their summaries.

EXTEND

Social Studies The fight for equal rights for African Americans stretches over a long period of time. Invite students to create a timeline of the major events in this article, marking at least ten important events in the fight for civil rights. Tell students they may have to infer approximate dates of events based on details in the text.

Understanding Discrimination

Part A: During the post–World War II years in America, racial discrimination limited the economic, social, and political opportunities available to African Americans. In the chart below, fill in details from the text about these types of discrimination.

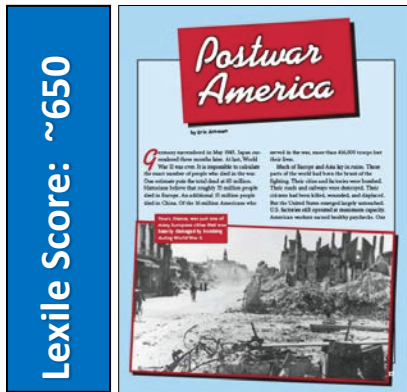
Type of Discrimination	Details of Discriminatory Practices
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● _____● _____
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● _____● _____
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● _____● _____

Part B: Connect Events over Time Think about different ways people worked together to combat discrimination in all its forms in America during the post–World War II years. Then write a summary of how African Americans’ efforts in the post–World War II era helped to lay the foundation for achieving equal rights.

Postwar America

pp. 37–39, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how different groups of Americans were affected by the economic and social impact of the end of World War II.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will learn about American society at the end of World War II
- Students will evaluate solutions to current economic issues in terms of benefits and costs for different groups and society as a whole
- Students will use details from a text to write a historical narrative

KEY VOCABULARY

- **economic depression** (p. 38) a period when many people do not have jobs and there is little economic activity
- **domestic legislation** (p. 38) any law passed by the government of any country
- **vocational training** (p. 38) training for a specific career or trade

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did World War II change the lives of different groups of Americans?

Ask students to share what they know about life in the US after WW II. Have students hypothesize the social and economic changes that might occur after a large war ends and soldiers return home to resume their lives after being away for a long time. Ask students why this might be both a positive and a difficult time.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each term with students. Then arrange students in small groups and have them write sentences using these terms. Finally, tell students to look for these terms as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What development helped to prevent a recession after the war?
- What did Roosevelt's "Second Bill of Rights" propose to do?
- How were African American veterans impacted by legislation passed shortly after the war?

SKILL FOCUS: Evaluate Solutions

INSTRUCT: Tell students that economic conditions in the United States improved during the war, but were expected to decline after the war because the government no longer needed to employ people to make war supplies. Have students reread the article to identify at least two economic issues facing Americans after the war and the solutions to those issues (either proposed or implemented).

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to review the issues and solutions they identified in the previous step. Then tell pairs to evaluate the benefits and costs of each solution for different social groups, such as veterans, women, African Americans, and for society as a whole. When all pairs have completed this task, hold a class discussion to go over responses. You might want to create a chart on the board to record the benefits and costs to the groups as students mention them.

EXTEND

English Language Arts Tell students they will write a diary entry from the perspective of an African American veteran, a Caucasian veteran, or a mother who worked in a factory during the war. Explain that diary entries should describe how the person was affected by the economic changes at the end of WW II. Remind students they will be using the pronoun *I* in their entries.