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# What Was D-Day?



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## Synopsis

In the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, an armada of 7,000 ships carrying 160,000 Allied troops stormed the beaches of Nazi-occupied France. Up until then the Allied forces had suffered serious defeats, yet D-Day, as the invasion was called, spelled the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany and the Third Reich. Readers will dive into the heart of the action and discover how it was planned and carried out and how it overwhelmed the Germans who had been tricked into thinking the attack would take place elsewhere. D-Day was a major turning point in World War II and hailed as one of the greatest military attacks of all time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Patricia Brennan Demuth is the author of Who Was Bill Gates?, What Was Ellis Island?, and What Was Pearl Harbor?

What Was D-Day? June 6, 1944 In the dark hours before dawn, a giant war fleet was sailing across the English Channel to France. There were over 5,000 ships and boats of all shapes and sizes. More than 155,000 soldiers were on board "mostly American, British, and Canadian. They

were called the Allies. Allies means friends joined together in a cause. Another huge Allied force had just flown over the channel to France, filling 11,000 airplanes. All of these soldiers, on boats and in planes, were risking their lives to invade Europe and end World War II. The Second World War had been raging for five years. It had started in 1939 when Adolf Hitler, the leader of Nazi (NAHT-see) Germany, invaded Poland. Now more than thirty nations were part of the war. The Germans had overtaken nearly all of mainland Europe. And World War II had become the bloodiest war that ever was. The Allies were fighting Hitler. But so far, they had almost no troops on the ground in Europe—let alone in Germany itself. There was only one way the Allies could defeat Nazi Germany and free Europe. They had to fight—and beat—Hitler on his home ground. But how? First the Allies had to land a huge army on the coast of France—plus tanks, trucks, and supplies. Then they had to fight their way inland for 700 miles to reach Berlin, the capital of Germany. For nearly two years, the Allies planned the great invasion. Millions of people worked on it. Engineers invented new war machines. Factory workers produced new planes and tanks. Spies fed Hitler false reports. And nearly two million Allied soldiers trained hard in Britain. Yet the whole invasion could fall apart. The Germans had built a wall of steel and concrete defenses up and down the coast. Could the first waves of Allied soldiers break through and gain control of the beaches and exit roads? That was the only way the rest of the troops could land. If the D-Day soldiers failed, all would be lost. There was no backup plan. The Allies had thrown everything they had into this one. D-Day is a code word for the day of any major military attack. But when people talk about D-Day now, they mean June 6, 1944. D-Day was a turning point in history—it was the beginning of the end of World War II.

Chapter 1: The World at War

Germany was one of the countries defeated in World War I. That war killed nearly ten million soldiers between 1914 and 1918. After Germany surrendered, its cities lay in ruins and its economy was in shreds. There were hardly any jobs. People were starving. Then in 1933, Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi party, rose to power. He stamped out democracy, making himself the dictator of Germany. Freedom disappeared. Hitler named certain groups enemies, especially the Jews. Hitler built up a powerful army with millions of well-trained soldiers. Their weapons were the best in the world. Then he set plans to conquer all of Europe—and beyond. Without warning, in September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. First, bomber planes blasted Polish railroads, airfields, and telegraph lines. Then more than a million German ground troops plowed into Poland with tanks and heavy arms. This kind of attack—bombing followed by a crush of tanks—is called lightning war. The German word is blitzkrieg, or blitz for short. England and France immediately declared war on Germany. World War II had begun. England and France were no match for the powerful Hitler.

After Poland fell, German troops crashed through Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. In June 1940, France itself fell to the Germans. The free world was in shock. On the other side of the world, Japan was overtaking lands in Asia and the Pacific. Japan signed an agreement with Germany in September 1940. Along with Italy, the three countries were called the Axis powers. Meanwhile in Europe, British troops stood alone against Hitler. The United States shipped Britain arms, tanks, and planes. But for now, the United States did not send troops. More than 115,000 American soldiers had been killed in World War I. The country did not want to fight another war overseas. Then on December 7, 1941, the Japanese led a surprise air attack against American forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. More than two thousand American troops died. The next day, US President Franklin Roosevelt declared war against Japan and its allies, including Germany. From then on, the United States played a key role in World War II. American men enlisted in huge numbers. The US military grew from 334,000 men at the beginning of the war to a force of twelve million. Overnight, the nation turned itself into a war factory. Thousands of warplanes, battleships, and arms were churned out and shipped overseas. In 1939, America made fewer than a thousand military planes a year. By the end of 1943, it produced eight thousand per month. Yet Hitler and the Axis powers seemed unstoppable. Hitler overran almost all of Europe. His troops marched east into the Soviet Union. Japan seized countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Italy was winning battles in North Africa. At the beginning of 1942, news from the Allied war front was grim. Then slowly, one hard battle at a time, the Allies began to gain ground. Japan's advance was halted at a small island in the Pacific called Midway. The Soviets stopped Hitler's advance in Russia. Allied troops forced Italy out of Africa. The Italians then overthrew their dictator, Mussolini, and signed a truce with the Allies. There was a surge of hope. Allied leaders began planning a strategy for ending the terrible war.

My students are in a 5th and 6th grade gifted class and all really enjoy the entire series of "Who Was?" "Who Is?" and "What Was?" books for their AR (Accelerated Reader) goals. These series are all classified as nonfiction, with book level from 4.5-6.0 and they are worth 1 point. I was glad to find this book because none of my students were even alive for 9/11, and their knowledge of anything beyond 2000 is almost nonexistent. World War II is fascinating and the event that truly united the country and propelled our economy to be what it was today. Oh, and we defeated the Nazis as a bonus.

I chose to read this book to my children on our way to Normandy France on the 71st anniversary of

D-Day. My intent was to give my children (ranging from ages 5-11) a clear and yet "PG" rated picture of just what happened 71 years ago on this day. This book gives enough detail starting with background information of what led the United States to join the fight of WWII and ends with the specifics of what happened on D-Day, focusing mostly on Omaha Beach. The book ends with a few details of how the war ended complete with a photo montage of soldiers, paratroopers, and other scenes from WWII.

Great educational series of books. Very fun for my nine year old. He mostly reads fiction but these books are easy to read and understand. This books covers the basics of D Day so that a young reader can stay engaged. My son usually finishes these books in a day or two.

I gave this book to my 7 yr old grandson I told him about my father who participated in the invasion on June 6He has read the book several times and took it and a photo of his great grandfather to school. Mercifully, every one was interested. This is a great series

Excellent! This text is an easy, engaging read for students (and teachers). I am amazed at how well the author took the topic of WWII and D-Day, and condensed it in such a concise, easy-to-read manner. The author carefully defined tricky vocabulary with explicit textual clues - perfect for struggling readers. While the book focuses on D-Day, it provides a great WWII foundation.

I like this book because it talks about not only D-day but also World War II. It is interesting how they not only give a overall review of WWII but also they talk about the weapons that they used at D-Day.

This set of easy chapter books are perfect for third-fourth grade reluctant readers. Well written, motivating and fun to read. I especially like this one about D-Day and I learned some things I did not know about this day in history.

Purchased this and three other books by Patricia Brennan Demuth for my nine year old granddaughter who enjoys reading this author's books. I highly recommend this author.

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