

WWII by the Numbers: Charting and Graphing WWII Data

Context: For the second time in the 20th century, the United States became involved in a devastating world conflict. The mobilization effort of the government in World War II eclipsed even that of World War I. With major operations in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters, American industries literally fueled two wars simultaneously. The social and economic consequences were profound. The Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North was accelerated. New opportunities opened for women. Americans finally enjoyed a standard of living higher than the pre-Depression years.

World War II was fought over differences left unresolved after World War I. Over 400,000 Americans perished in the four years of involvement, an American death rate second only to the Civil War. Twelve million victims perished from Nazi atrocities in the Holocaust. The deaths of twenty million Russians created a defensive Soviet mindset that spilled into the postwar era.

Directions: Today, you will become the historian who graphs and charts key data from World War II. Given three data sets, you will choose two to graph and interpret. You are to complete these graphs in a visually pleasing manner as well as provide an accurate interpretation of the stats and figures you have graphed. What are the implications of these numbers? What do they mean? How did they impact the overall significance of World War II?

Data Set I: U.S. Active Military Personnel (1939-1945)

On a line graph, fill in both axes and plot and label the growth of each branch of the U.S. military during World War II. Use the type of lines shown for each branch. Then answer the questions below.

	Army	Navy	Marines	Total
1939	189,839	125,202	125,202	334,473
1940	269,023	160,997	28,345	458,365
1941	1,462,315	284,427	54,359	1,801,101
1942	3,075,608	640,570	142,613	3,858,791
1943	6,994,472	1,741,750	308,523	9,044,745
1944	7,994,750	2,981,365	475,604	11,451,719
1945	8,267,958	3,380,817	474,680	12,123,445

Guiding Questions:

1. What was the trend in the size of the U.S. military between 1939 and 1945?
2. What year saw the largest increase of military personnel and what event(s) brought about this increase?
3. From the data in this graph, what branch of service do you predict had the highest casualty rate during WWII?

Data Set II: D-Day Combatants

Use these statistics from June 6, 1944—D-Day—to fill in and label the percentages of each country's military force in Normandy on a pie chart. Then answer the questions below.

For information on the D-Day Invasion: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/51c.asp>

Country	Number of Soldiers on D-Day	Percentage
*United States	95,000	34%
*Great Britain	60,000	21%
*Canada	20,000	7%
Germany	105,000	38%

*Allies

Guiding Questions:

1. What country had the most troops in Normandy on D-Day?
2. What percentage of the troops at D-Day were Allied troops?
3. Why did the Allied commanders think it was necessary to attack with such a large number of soldiers?

Data Set III: Casualties of World War II

Use the following statistics of WWII deaths to complete a bar graph. Label both axes. Use one bar per country and be sure to separate the number of military and civilian deaths for each country, as shown below. Answer the questions that follow.

Country	Total Deaths	% of Pre-War Pop	Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths
USSR	24,000,000	13.88	8,800,000-10,700,000	13,300,000-15,200,000
Germany	6,600,000-8,800,000	8-10.5	5,533,000	1,067,000-3,267,000
France	567,600	1.35%	217,600	350,000
United States	418,500	0.32%	416,800	1,700
Great Britain	450,700	0.94%	383,600	67,100

Guiding Questions:

1. Which countries had more civilian deaths than military deaths?
2. What does this chart tell you about the consequences of war and the decisions by leaders to go to war?