

World War II

Lesson 2



MAIN IDEAS

1. Businesses, soldiers, and citizens worked to prepare the United States for war.
2. The war brought new opportunities for many women and minorities.
3. Japanese Americans faced internment during the war.

Key Terms and People

War Production Board agency that converted factories for war production

A. Philip Randolph African American labor leader

Tuskegee Airmen African American pilots who trained in Tuskegee, Alabama

Benjamin O. Davis Jr. group leader of Tuskegee Airmen and later the first African American general in the U.S. Air Force

zoot-suit riots Los Angeles riots in which white mobs attacked Mexican Americans

internment imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II

Lesson Summary

PREPARING FOR WAR

The Great Depression finally ended as the United States mobilized for war. The **War Production Board** was created. The Selective Training and Service Act started the first peacetime draft in the history of the United States. More than 16 million Americans served in World War II.

To fund the war, the government raised taxes and sold war bonds. Americans also gathered scrap metal for war production factories. Government rations curbed the nonmilitary use of gasoline, rubber, shoes, and some kinds of food.

Circle the number of Americans who served in World War II.

WARTIME OPPORTUNITIES

Women took on a new role in World War II. Because so many men left to fight in the war, women were urged to fill factory jobs. Women also served in the armed forces, some as pilots

Why did women take factory jobs during the war?

Lesson 2, *continued*

and as nurses. Over 300,000 women served in the armed forces during World War II.

The Great Migration continued as African Americans moved north to find factory jobs supporting the war effort. A march was planned by **A. Philip Randolph** to protest lower wages for African Americans. It was called off when Roosevelt ended the practice of racial discrimination in factories that produced war goods.

About 1 million African Americans served in the armed forces during the war. Most of them were sent to support jobs in segregated units. The **Tuskegee Airmen**, under the leadership of **Benjamin O. Davis Jr.**, flew thousands of successful missions in North Africa and Italy.

About 300,000 Mexican Americans served in the military during the war. Many also found wartime jobs in the West and Midwest. Mexico supplied farm workers to ease a lack in the United States. Despite their aiding the war effort, Mexican Americans faced discrimination. In Los Angeles in June 1943, groups of sailors attacked Mexican Americans wearing zoot suits. Zoot suits were fancy, loose-fitting outfits with oversized hats. This started the **zoot-suit riots**.

JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, fear of Japanese Americans on the West Coast increased. No evidence to back up the fear was offered, but the government began the process of **internment** of Japanese Americans. About 120,000 people, many of them native-born Americans, were forced to move and were held in internment camps. Many lost their jobs, homes, and belongings.

After Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans could not join the military. This policy ended in 1943.

Explain how World War II helped some African Americans.

Underline the name of the African American unit of pilots who flew in World War II.

When were Japanese Americans moved to internment camps?

Lesson 2, *continued*

About 33,000 Japanese Americans served in segregated units in World War II.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Analyze What assumptions did the U.S. government make about Japanese Americans when it moved them to internment camps?

DIRECTIONS In the space provided, write the letter of the description that best matches each term or person.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. War Production Board | a. group of African American pilots trained in Alabama |
| _____ 2. A. Philip Randolph | b. attacks by white mobs against Mexican Americans |
| _____ 3. Tuskegee Airmen | c. agency that oversaw the conversion of factories for war production |
| _____ 4. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. | d. first African American general in the U.S. Air Force |
| _____ 5. zoot-suit riots | e. labor leader who organized a protest over lower wages for African Americans |
| _____ 6. internment | f. imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II |

DIRECTIONS Write two adjectives or descriptive phrases that describe the term.

7. War Production Board _____

8. A. Philip Randolph _____

9. Tuskegee Airmen _____

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Lesson 2, *continued*

10. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. _____

11. zoot-suit riots _____

12. internment _____
