World War II was a huge global conflict involving every major world power and many other countries. Germany’s 1939 invasion of Poland triggered a chain of international alliances—countries that had pledged to come to each other’s aid if attacked. The main combatants were the Axis powers, which included Germany, Italy, and Japan, versus the Allies, which included Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the U.S. By the time the war ended in 1945, an estimated 60 million people had been killed: 15 million military combatants, the rest civilians.

Study this chronology, then answer the questions.

**Questions**

1. Which countries entered the fighting because they had pledged to aid Poland?
2. When did the Soviet Union join the Allies and why?
3. What led the U.S. to join the fighting?
4. A large area of France (about three fifths of the country) came under German control in June 1940, after which country invaded it?
5. What was the first major Allied victory in which the U.S. was involved?
6. On which two continents did most of the fighting take place?
7. Only two atomic bombs have ever been used in war. Where and when were they dropped and by which country?
8. How long after the D-Day victory by the Allies did Germany surrender, ending the war in Europe?
9. Originally, August 14 was celebrated as V-J (Victory Over Japan) Day. After 1945, however, V-J Day has been celebrated on a different date. What date do you think that is, and why?
10. About how many civilians were killed in World War II?