

## U.S. Wars of the 1900s

In the 1900s, the United States fought in several long and difficult wars around the world. Between 1917 and 1945, the United States fought in two major world wars: World War I

and World War II. Since 1950, the United States has fought in several other wars: the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War.

**On the chart below, work with your group and write down everything you know about each war. Then read more information about each war on the next pages.**

**World War I**

**World War II**

**Korean War**

**Vietnam War**

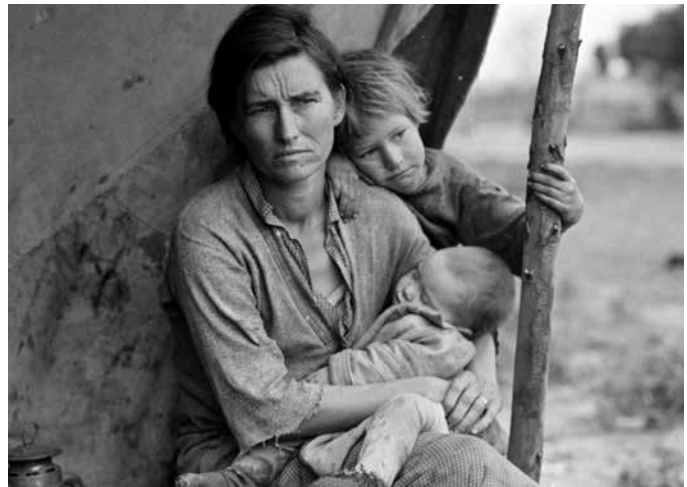
**Persian Gulf War**

## U.S. History from 1900 to 1945

World War I lasted from 1914 to 1918. Great Britain, France, Italy, and some other countries were fighting against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire during this war. Woodrow Wilson was President when the United States joined the war in 1917. Two million American soldiers were sent to France to help end the war. Many Americans called it “the war to end all wars” because they believed that it had been the worst war to date. But other long wars happened later.

After World War I, the economy in the United States became very strong. But in 1929, the stock market crashed and many banks closed. This period from 1929 to 1940 was called the Great Depression. During the Great Depression, many businesses closed and millions of people lost their jobs. Families struggled to live with very little money and food. Franklin D. Roosevelt was President at the time. He worked hard to help the country, and the economy improved. Many Americans supported him and they elected him President four times.

World War II began in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. Germany joined Italy and



*A migrant agricultural worker's family during the Great Depression, photograph by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-107577.*

Japan to fight other countries. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the American Naval ships in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. As a result, the United States entered World War II to fight against Germany, Italy, and Japan. In 1944, the United States led the invasion to free Europe from German power. The Germans surrendered in May of 1945 and the Japanese surrendered in September of 1945. The war was officially ended. One famous World War II general, Dwight D. Eisenhower, became a popular war hero. He was elected President for two terms after the war.

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### Answer these Civics Test questions.

1. Who was President during World War I? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who did the United States fight in World War II? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in? \_\_\_\_\_

## America's Fight Against Communism

After World War II, the Cold War started between the Soviet Union and the United States. During the Cold War, communism was the main concern of the United States. The Soviet Union had a communist economy where most property was owned by the government. The United States had a market economy, or capitalist economy. In a capitalist economy, businesses and property are owned by the people. The United States wanted countries around the world to have capitalism and democracy. The United States and its allies were very worried about the spread of communism to other countries.

After 1945, Korea was divided into North Korea and South Korea. The communist government in the Soviet Union supported North Korea. The United States and its allies supported South Korea. Soon, there were major conflicts over the border between the two sides. In 1950, the



*A Korean girl and her brother walk past a stalled M-26 tank at Haengju, Korea, June 9, 1951. Courtesy of the National Archives, Records Group 80: General Records of the Department of the Navy, 1804-1983.*



*Soldiers carrying a wounded comrade through a swampy area, 1969. Courtesy of the National Archives, Identifier 531457.*

communists in North Korea attacked South Korea. The United States started fighting in Korea that year. The United States wanted to stop communism from spreading to South Korea. The Korean War ended in 1953 when both sides agreed to stop fighting.

From 1959 to 1975, U.S. Armed Forces and the South Vietnamese Army fought against the North Vietnamese. The United States wanted to help stop the spread of communism to South Vietnam. The war ended in 1975 when the communists took over Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. Soon after, Vietnam was under total communist control. Many Americans died or were missing during the Vietnam War.

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### Answer these Civics Test questions.

1. What is the economic system in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
2. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

## U.S. History in Modern Times

In 1990, Iraq invaded its neighbor, Kuwait. The United States and its allies were worried about the oil reserves in Saudi Arabia and other countries nearby. They did not want Iraq to control these oil reserves. The United States and other countries entered the Gulf War in 1991. Iraq's armies left Kuwait a few months later.



*U.S. Air Force planes flying above burning oil wells during the Gulf War.*

*Courtesy of the USAF.*

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States. The terrorists were violent extremists who captured and took control of four passenger airplanes. Two planes hit the World Trade Center in New York City. One plane hit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania. Almost 3,000 people died in these attacks. Most of them were



*Firefighters unfurl a large American flag over the scarred stone of the Pentagon on September 12, 2001.*

*White House photo by Paul Morse.*

Americans but there were also victims from other countries. This was the worst attack on the United States in the country's history.

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### Answer these Civics Test questions.

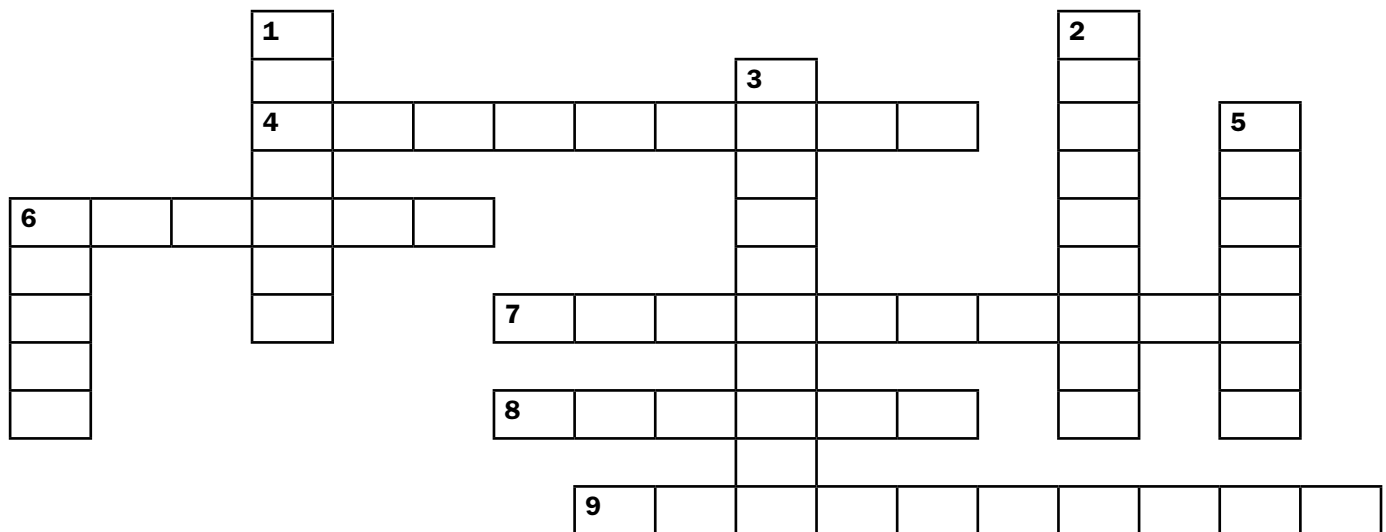
1. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

# Review—U.S. History Since 1900

Rewrite these world events in order from 1 to 8 in the column on the right.

- |                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| World War II           | 1. _____ |
| Korean War             | 2. _____ |
| September 11th attacks | 3. _____ |
| The Great Depression   | 4. _____ |
| Vietnam War            | 5. _____ |
| World War I            | 6. _____ |
| The Cold War started   | 7. _____ |
| Persian Gulf War       | 8. _____ |

Read the clues below and fill in the crossword puzzle.



**ACROSS**

- 4. Helped the country during the Great Depression
- 6. Country invaded by Iraq in 1990
- 7. Period of U.S. history when banks closed and people lost their jobs
- 8. Decided the U.S. should enter World War I
- 9. Was a U.S. general before becoming President

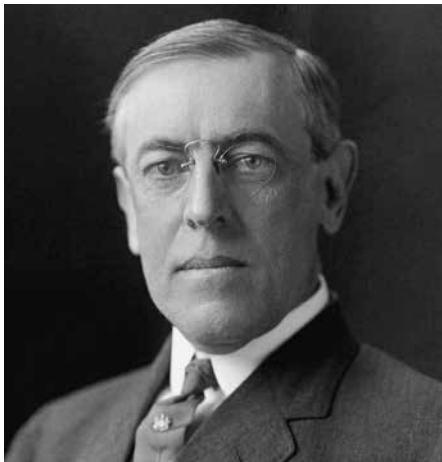
**DOWN**

- 1. One country that the U.S. fought in World War II
- 2. The main concern during the Cold War
- 3. Group of people who attacked New York and the Pentagon
- 5. Became communist after the war ended
- 6. The U.S. entered the war in this country in 1950

## Civics Test Questions—U.S. History Since 1900

Read the test questions and write the answers. Take turns practicing them with your partner.

1. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was President during World War I? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who did the United States fight in World War II? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the economic system in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
7. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_



*President Woodrow Wilson.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress,  
LC-DIG-hec-16853.*



*President Franklin D. Roosevelt.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress,  
LC-USZ62-117121.*



*President Dwight D. Eisenhower.  
Courtesy of the Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Presidential Library and Museum.*