WWII Background Information

* + WWII began in Europe in 1935 and lasted until 1945.
  + It involved the majority of the world’s largest nations, with simultaneous wars taking place in Europe and in the south Pacific.
  + The start of the war is marked with the German invasion on Poland. Adolph Hitler, the leader of the German Nazi party, had become the country’s leader and was on a mission to overtake all of Europe. In the process, he targeted many minority groups, such as the handicapped and most famously, the Jews, and called for their elimination. Many Jews and other minorities attempted to flee the Nazi-occupied areas or go into hiding within the countries.
  + America entered the war after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 in retaliation for America’s trade embargo with Japan in which America obstructed the trade of many important goods with Japan.
  + Hitler rounded up Jews and other minority groups (homosexuals, handicapped, Christians, gypsies) and placed them in concentration camps where they were tortured and killed. Over 11 million people were killed in the Holocaust.
  + Meanwhile, in the US, the government feared Japanese-Americans within the US were a threat to the war effort and established Japanese internment camps to imprison this group. Over 110,000 were imprisoned. The conditions were significantly better than in the Holocaust concentration camps, but prisoners lost personal items, property, and many other rights as a result of internment. They lived in tight quarters, had rationed food, and little privacy.