
Operation Overlord

Audience: Senior History

Time Required: 15 minutes

- Activity:** Students learn about the geography and significance of the D-Day invasion
- Standards:** Some possible links to NZ Curriculum in this inquiry
This activity could be used as part of investigation of an historical event (History Level 1:AS91001) or to develop understanding of an historical event (History Level 1:AS91002)
- Learning Outcomes:** Students will
- be able to identify key locations and explain the Allied troop movements of the D-Day invasion.
 - be able to evaluate the impact of the D-Day invasion.
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Map URL: <http://arcg.is/1qyPmj>

Ask

Where was the Atlantic Wall?

- Choose the Atlantic Wall bookmark. Using the Measure tool, calculate the area that Nazi Germany continuously controlled in Europe (excluding Scandinavian Peninsula). *[3.8-4.7 million square kilometres.]*
- Press the Show Contents button and turn on the *The Atlantic Wall* layer. Measure its length in kilometres.
- ? How long was the Atlantic Wall? *[It was 4828-5150kms.]*
- Choose the Calais bookmark. Open and read the Map Note and click the image.
- ? What was the purpose of the wall? What made it difficult to penetrate? *[It was designed to prevent an Allied invasion and bomb England. It was heavily fortified.]*

Acquire

Where was the Normandy invasion?

- Choose the D-Day Invasion-Region bookmark and turn on the D-Day Locations layer.
- Choose Show Map Legend. Point to Normandy. Germany heavily fortified this area and did not expect an invasion there; the expected location was the Strait of Dover.
- If necessary, zoom in to see the Strait of Dover
- ? What made the Strait of Dover the likely invasion site? *[It is very narrow, and Normandy beaches were the farthest from England.]*
- Use the Measure tool to calculate the distance between England and Normandy.
- ? How far did the Allied forces have to travel and go unnoticed before landing along the Normandy beaches? *[They traveled 137-160km.]*

Explore

Which countries participated in D-Day?

- The Allies watched weather reports, moon phases, and tide levels to decide when to attack.
- Turn on the D-Day Invasion and Landing Areas layers, and show the legend for each layer.
- Choose the D-Day Invasion – Local bookmark. Click these features to answer the following questions.
- ? Which countries participated in the invasion? [*Britain, Canada, and the United States.*]
- ? What types of troop advancements were involved, and why were both needed? [*Air and water/land were involved to attack the Atlantic Wall directly and from behind.*]
- The airborne landings occurred during the pre-dawn darkness of June 6, 1944.
- ? Where were the air drops located? [*Behind the Atlantic Wall.*]
- The Allies designated five beaches for land invasions. These began around 6:30 AM.
- ? What were these beaches? [*Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, Sword*]
- ? Which troops landed on each beach? [*Utah and Omaha- USA Gold, Juno and Sword –Britain and Commonwealth Allies*]

Analyse

How big was the D-Day invasion?

- Click on the Show the table for the D-Day Invasion layer.
- Using Sort Descending/Ascending and Statistics, answer the following questions.
- ? How many troops were involved in the invasion? [*154,315.*]
- ? How many casualties? [*8,129.*]
- ? Which landing areas experienced the highest casualties? [*Carentan and Omaha.*]
- Open the visible Map Note, read the caption. Click the image to enlarge it.
- ? What does this image tell you about the D-Day invasion? [*Answers will vary.*]
- Close the table.

Act

What impact did D-Day have on World War II?

- Turn off the German Occupation, May 1944 layer, and turn on the After D-Day layer.
- Choose the After D-Day bookmark and press Play to show how much land was gained starting with D-Day.
- ? Describe the pattern of Allied control following D-Day. [*It moved east toward Germany.*]
- ? Why was Operation Overlord important to ending World War II in Europe? [*It destroyed the Atlantic Wall and began the liberation of France.*]

Key Skills

Measure

- Click the Measure tool.
- Select Area or Distance.
- Choose the unit of measurement.
- Click once to start measuring. Click once to change direction and double-click to stop measuring.

Sort and Statistics

- In the Contents pane, click the Table icon beneath the layer name.
- Click the field heading.
- Choose Sort Ascending, Sort Descending, or Statistics

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW?: ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to New Zealand public and private schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription <http://www.eagle.co.nz/gis-schools>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Create pie charts in the information pop-ups to show the percentage of casualties by beach based on the D-Day Invasion layer.
- Create a heat map based on casualties for the landing areas of D-Day.

NEW ZEALAND GEOINQUIRIES

<http://arcg.is/1GPDXe>