Operation Overlord

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for U.S. History

Target audience – U.S. History learners	Time required – 15 minutes

Activity	Explore the geography and significance of the D-Day invasion.
Social Studies Standards	**C3: D2.His.1.9-12.** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts. **C3: D2.His.2.9-12.** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras. **C3: D2.His.3.9-12.** Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.
Learning Outcomes	• Students will identify key locations and explain the Allied troop movements of the D-Day invasion. • Students will evaluate the impact of the D-Day invasion.

Map URL: http://esriurl.com/historygeoinquiry13

🔖 Ask

Where was the Atlantic Wall?

- → Click the link above to launch the map.
- → Click the button, Bookmarks. Select Atlantic Wall.
- – During the war, Nazi Germany controlled 1.8-2.2 million square miles across Europe.
- → With the Details button underlined, click the button Show Contents of Map (Content).
- → Check the box to the left of the layer name, The Atlantic Wall.
- ? Use the Measure tool to estimate the length. (See Tooltip, page 2.) How long was it? *[3200-3500 miles]*
- → Select the Calais bookmark. Open and read the Map Note. 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.
- → Turn on the layer, D-Day Locations.
- → Click the button, Show Legend.
- – Germany heavily fortified this area. Germany expected an attack at the Strait of Dover.
- ? What made the Strait of Dover the likely invasion site? *[It is narrow and far from England.]*
- – Allied forces had to travel 80-100 miles and go unnoticed before landing along the Normandy beaches.

🔍 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 the arrows to answer the following questions.
- ? Which countries participated in the invasion? *[Britain, Canada, and the United States.]*
- – The airborne landings occurred during the pre-dawn darkness of June 6, 1944.
- ? Where were the air drops located? *[On land behind the Atlantic Wall.]*
- – The Allies designated five beaches for land invasions. These began around 6:30 a.m.
- ? On which beaches did the U.S. forces land? *[Omaha and Utah]*
- ? Why were both types of troop advancement needed? *[Water/land was used to attack the Atlantic Wall directly and air was used to drop men to attack from behind the Wall.]*

more ▶

Analyze

How big was the D-Day invasion?

→ Hover over the layer, D-Day Invasion. Click the button, Show Table. (See Tooltips below.)
? According to the table, how many troops were involved in the invasion? *[154,315]*
? How many casualties? *[8,129]*
? Which landing areas experienced the highest casualties? *[Near Carentan and Omaha Beach]*
→ 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 breached the Atlantic Wall and began the liberation of France.]*

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.

TABLES: SORT AND STATISTICS

- With the Details button underlined, click the button Show Contents (Content).
- Hover over a layer name.
- Click the button, Show Table.
- 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 public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at http://www.esri.com/schools.

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

TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these texts.

- *American History: A Survey by Brinkley — Chapter 26*
- *The Americans by McDougal Littell — Chapter 25*
- *History Alive! The United States by TCI — Chapter 36*