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The Foreign Policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Entry into World War II

Guide for Curriculum Unit 78.03.05

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Most students are unfamiliar with the international situations and events of the pre-World War II period. This unit is designed to expand students' understanding by discussing the issues and problems that led nations to war. A variety of concepts are introduced in the narrative: a) protectionism vs. international trade; b) Great Powers vs. small nations; c) isolationism vs. internationalism; d) minority problems (Jews in Europe, Germans in Sudetenland); e) when does neutrality end? f) what are the vital interests of a nation and what will a nation do to protect them? These ideas are incorporated in a narrative that is structured around the life and political career of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The history of the decades between the World Wars (including the final plunge into the war) is interpreted in terms of Roosevelt's decisions and actions. A four-week outline follows the narrative; it covers background material on Franklin D. Roosevelt, information on the New Deal, Europe in the 1930s and Roosevelt's foreign policies. Three lesson plans are included; each poses questions and offers possible responses. An annotated bibliography for students and teachers is followed by a brief list of materials for classroom use.

(Recommended for High School U.S. History II classes.)

Key Words

Foreign Policy American 1932-1941 Roosevelt Franklin Wars General World War II

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