COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND
WORLD WAR II
A Literary Veteran’s Day Observance

-Dust of Eden by Mariko Nagai
-Summer of My German Soldier by Bette Greene
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PAT SCALES
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PAT SCALES
World War II

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a five-star general and commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, established a committee in 1954 to plan a Veterans Day observance. This day honors all veterans of the United States and is held each year on November 11 with a somber ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. A wreath is placed on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and followed by a parade of colors. In 2015, the United States and the world will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Victory in Europe occurred on May 8, 1945, but the official end of the war came when Japan surrendered to the United States on August 15, 1945. Some students may have family members who remember World War II, but most only know the hardships both at home and in foreign war zones through books they read. The novels presented in this guide give them a glimpse of the events on the home front in the United States after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and what was happening in Europe and Asia before and after the United States entered the war.

In Dust of Eden by Mariko Nagai, 13-year-old Mina Masako Tagawa tells the story, in free verse, of what happens to her family and all Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Her father is first sent to prison while she and her brother, Nick, are sent to Camp Harmony, an internment camp in Idaho, along with her mother and grandfather. While in the camp, Mina watches her family fall apart when Nick joins the army and her grandfather dies. Back in Seattle, the Gilmores tend the Tagawa home and welcome them back with open arms when the war ends in 1945.

In Bette Greene’s Summer of My German Soldier, Patty Bergen—the 12-year-old daughter of the only Jewish family in the small town of Jenkinsville, Arkansas—is ignored by both parents and brutally beaten by her father. Only Ruth, the black housekeeper, sees Patty’s worth. Then Patty disgraces her family when she befriends and hides a German soldier who escaped from a nearby POW camp. Too young to be tried for treason, Patty is sent to reform school where her only visitor is Ruth.

Morning Is a Long Time Coming is set in 1950 when Patty Bergen is 18 years old and graduating from high school. She is still an outcast in her parents’ home, but her grandparents express their pride in her and honor her graduation with money for college. But Patty has another plan. She wants to go to Europe and search for Anton’s mother, which once again makes her a disgrace to her family. It is Ruth who she turns to for advice, and it is Ruth who assures her that she must follow her heart. Patty makes it to Germany and is disappointed to discover that Anton’s mother has died. A short visit in Paris brings a new discovery, one that may very well change her life.

Slap Your Sides by M. E. Kerr takes place in Sweet Creek, Pennsylvania, just after the United States has entered World War II. Jubal Shoemaker, the youngest of three brothers, relates the changes that occur within his family after Bud, the oldest brother, witnesses against the war because he is a devout Quaker and a pacifist. Bud registers as a conscientious objector and ships out to serve with the Civilian Public Service. Back in Sweet Creek, the Shoemakers are the targets of bullying and hate speech by those who support the war.
Your Eyes in Stars by M. E. Kerr is set in 1934 as the United States is struggling to survive the Great Depression. Jessie Myrer, the 14-year-old daughter of a prison warden in Cayuta, New York, becomes friends with Elisa Stadler, the daughter of a German family who has recently moved to town. When the prisoners frighten the Sladers they return to Germany and find it quite changed. Mr. Stadler is killed, and Elisa joins a resistance group and is killed in the forest near her grandmother’s village outside Potsdam. Jessie writes a letter to Elisa’s mother, who has remarried, and tells her all the things she learned from her friendship with her daughter.

Set in 1939, Silence over Dunkerque by John R. Tunis tells the story of Sergeant Edward Williams, a British soldier whose unit was among the first British troops to land in France. Until now the British hadn’t been in many battles, but in 1940, Winston Churchill orders the British troops to stem the tide of Nazi invasion along the southern border. With German troops surrounding them from the east and the west, Sergeant Williams and his men are cut off from the Allies and are forced to retreat to Dunkerque in the north. Their only hope for survival is to escape by sea where their families are awaiting their safe arrival in the coastal town of Dover.

His Enemy, His Friend by John R. Tunis is set in France during the German occupation. Feldwebel Hans, one of the greatest German football (soccer) stars is stationed in the village of Nogent-Plage and develops a special relationship with many of the people. One of them is Jean-Paul Varin, the son of a teacher who recognizes Hans as a hero on the football field. Then a sniper kills a German officer, and Hans is ordered to take six hostages, including Jean-Paul’s father, and shoot them if the guilty one isn’t identified. Hans is forced to carry out the order or be court-martialed. In 1948, Hans is tried as the “Butcher of Nogent-Plage” and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Then in 1964 he is playing a football match in France when he is shot down in the village of Nogent-Plage and dies in the arms of Jean-Paul, “his enemy, his friend.”

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Display the following timeline of World War II: http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/ww2_timeline.php. Divide students into groups and ask them to make note of major battles in which the United States was involved. Instruct them to use books in the library or sites on the internet to record American causalities and the outcome of the battles. Compare information in class and make a chart that includes the data.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 7-10.1, 7-10.2; Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 7-10.7, 7-10.8, 7-10.9.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

What is the purpose of the Prologue in Dust of Eden? How does it foreshadow the life of Japanese Americans from 1942 to 1945?

Define the term “profiling.” Discuss how the United States government justifies “profiling” Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. What does Mina mean when she says that all Japanese Americans are “enemy aliens”? Debate whether Patty Bergen sees herself as an “enemy alien” after she is shipped off to reform school for hiding Anton, the German POW, in Summer of My German Soldier.
Describe the treatment that the Tagawa family and all Japanese American families face on the streets of Seattle in the days after Pearl Harbor. Discuss what Mina’s grandfather means when he says, “We are neither Japanese nor Americans.” (p. 23) How does this statement affect Mina?

Explain the following simile from *Dust of Eden*: “Mother and grandpa come home looking like they are carrying the night on their back.” (p. 20) How might this simile apply to the Shoemakers in *Slap Your Sides* and Patty Bergen in *Summer of My German Soldier*?

The word “Jap” is a racial epithet that stings each time Mina hears it at school or in her neighborhood. After Mina has been in the internment camp for a while, she says that she could endure being called “Jap” if she could just go home. What does she find when her family returns home at the end of the novel? In *Slap Your Sides*, Bud Shoemaker is a devout Quaker and doesn’t believe in war. How does his family suffer the same type of prejudice and name-calling as Mina’s family in *Dust of Eden*? Why is Jubal Shoemaker so shocked to hear his father use the word “Japs” in *Slap Your Sides*?

Describe the prejudice and name-calling that Patty Bergen suffers in *Summer of My German Soldier*. Explain how Ruth, the Bergens’ housekeeper, helps Patty deal with the dark days that follow after she hides Anton? What might Mina and Jubal Shoemaker, Bud’s younger brother, in *Slap Your Sides* say to Patty? Explain Elisa Stadler’s surprise when she sees signs like “Jew Traitors” in her hometown in Germany in *Your Eyes in Stars*. How do these words affect her father?

Why is Mina’s father taken to prison? He is released and joins the family at Camp Harmony in July 1942. Explain why Nick, Mina’s brother, thinks their father is a coward. Discuss whether Tommy Shoemaker believes that Bud is courageous or a coward in *Slap Your Sides*.

Discuss Patty Bergen’s courage in *Summer of My German Soldier* and *Morning Is a Long Time Coming*. What does Ruth teach Patty about courage? Debate whether Hans in *His Enemy, His Friend* is courageous or a coward.

In *Dust of Eden*, Nick joins the army and is sent to Europe before going to Japan as a translator. Discuss the tone of the letters that he writes to Mina. Contrast his letters to the ones Bud Shoemaker writes to his brother, Tommy, in *Slap Your Sides*. Why does it take going to Japan for Nick to learn how American he is? Debate whether Bud Shoemaker feels American from his post in Colorado. How is Patty Bergen made to feel “un-American” in *Summer of My German Soldier*? Why does Elisa Stadler feel that Germany is as distant and unreal as America in *Your Eyes in Stars*?

In *Slap Your Sides*, Bud Shoemaker is classed as a “conscientious objector” and reports to the Civilian Public Service camp in Colorado. Explain the difference between a “conscientious objector” and a “draft dodger.” Debate whether Radio Dan sees Bud as a “conscientious objector” and a “draft dodger.”

Jubal Shoemaker, Bud’s youngest brother, is the narrator of the *Slap Your Sides*. Why does he say that their family isn’t the same after Bud left? Cite evidence from the novel that he is correct. Why is his family so reluctant to talk about Bud and the war? Explain why Tommy Shoemaker doesn’t tell his parents that he bought war stamps at school.
Your Eyes in Stars is set during the Depression, but ends in Germany before the United States enters World War II. Jessie Myrer and Elisa Stadler watch the movie All Quiet on the Western Front in the basement of Holy Family Catholic Church. Why does it take Jessie longer to understand the significance of the movie than Elisa? Why does Jessie feel the need to mention the movie in a letter to Elisa’s mother after Elisa’s death?

Discuss the courage it takes for Elisa to work for the resistance in Your Eyes in Stars. Debate whether Jessie is surprised by her friend’s courage. What might Bud Shoemaker from Slap Your Sides say about Elisa Stadler’s courage? How might Patty Bergen’s decision to hide Anton in Summer of My German Soldier resemble a form of resistance?

Why do the Stadlers decide to return to Germany? Explain the irony in their reason. How does the epilogue in Your Eyes in Stars bring the novel full circle?

Morning Is a Long Time Coming begins in 1950 when Patty Bergen is graduating high school. Her grandparents offer her money for college, but Patty elects to go to Europe in search of Anton’s mother. Explain her family’s reaction to the news. How does Ruth provide the same motherly advice that she offered Patty after she goes to reform school in Summer of My German Soldier?

Explain the following statement that Patty makes to her grandmother: “I’m surprised that I have to remind you of what nobody will ever have to remind me: It wasn’t one of your old countries that took away my freedom.” (p. 57)

What is Patty Bergen searching for when she goes to Europe? And what does she find on her journey to find Anton’s mother? What do you think happens to Patty at the end of Morning Is a Long Time Coming? Explain how the war led her to her future.

In Silence over Dunkerque, Sergeant Edward Williams, along with others in his British unit, are caught in the middle of the Battle of France. His wife and their twins, Ricky and Ronny, are at home in the coastal town of Dover. At what point do the twins begin to understand the true meaning of war, and the danger their father is in?

Describe the feelings of the French toward the British in Dunkerque. How does the French girl scout risk her life for the British soldiers? Explain the thought that “courage wears many uniforms.” (p. 146)

A parable is defined as a short story that teaches a moral lesson. How is His Enemy, His Friend a parable? What is the message the author wants to convey?

Explain the following quote from His Enemy, His Friend: “When conscience and the state conflict, the conscience of man must take precedence.” (p. 93) Discuss how Hans struggles with his conscience when he is ordered to kill the hostages. How might Mina in Dust of Eden and Patty Bergen in Summer of My German Soldier and Morning Is a Long Time Coming agree with the quote?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading Literature: Key Ideas & Details RL. 7-10.1, 7-10.2, 7-10.3; Craft & Structure RL. 7-10.4, 7-10.6; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 7-8.1, 7-10.2, 7-10.3; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 7-10.4, 7-10.6; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 7-10.1, 7-10.3.
CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

In *Slap Your Sides*, Tommy Shoemaker remembers the poem “Conscientious Objector” by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to read or listen to the poem (http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/conscientious-objector/). Then have them annotate each verse from Tommy’s point of view as he thinks of Bud.

*Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RL. 7-10.9.*

In *Dust of Eden*, Mina writes a paper titled “One Year Ago.” She concludes, “All Americans are going through a little of what we are going through.” (p. 68) Write a paper that Jubal Shoemaker, the narrator of *Slap Your Sides*, might write that draws the same conclusion as Mina. Encourage peer editing for clarity, spelling, and grammar.

*Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 7-10.3; Production & Distribution of Writing W. 7-10.4, 6-10.5.*

Ask students to find out the history and purpose of the Japanese American Citizens League (http://www.jacl.org/about/about.htm). JACL began offering scholarships in 1946. Think about what Mina Tagawa’s grandfather told her just before his death in *Dust of Eden*: “Your job is to learn to live with two broken pieces and make them one.” (p. 111) Write an essay titled “Two Broken Pieces Make One” that Mina might write to accompany an application for a college scholarship from the JACL.

*Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 7-10.3; Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 7-10.7.*

Bud shoemaker in *Slap Your Sides* joins the Civilian Public Service. He first goes to Colorado and is transferred to the Shenandoah State Asylum for the Insane near Stanton, Virginia. Have students write a one-page paper that outlines how the Civilian Public Service (http://civilianpublicservice.org) helps veterans today.

*Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History & Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 7-10.2; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 7-10.2.*

The War Resisters League was founded in the United States in 1923. Have students read about the purpose and the work of the league (https://www.warresisters.org). Then have them write a paper that draws a comparison between their work during World War II and today. How has doing away with the draft changed their work?

*Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History & Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 7-10.2; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 7-10.2.*

*Dust of Eden* is written in free verse, but has all of the elements of a novel. Ask students to write the concluding scene in free verse, and from the point of view of the main character, for one of the following novels: *Summer of My German Soldier, Morning Is a Long Time Coming, Slap Your Sides, Your Eyes in Stars, Silence over Dunkerque*, or *His Enemy, His Friend.*
Fred Korematsu challenged the United States government in court over the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II. At the time, the government defended its position by stating that this was a “wartime necessity.” In 1988, the government agreed to pay $20,000 restitution to Japanese American camp survivors. Ask students to write a letter that Mina might write to the Seattle newspaper on the day that she learns of the payment. What might she say about the injustice that she endured as a Japanese American?

Ask students to use books in the library or sites on the internet to research the following men: Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito. Then have them write a front-page news story about Hitler on the day he committed suicide, Mussolini on the day he was killed, and Hirohito on the day he surrendered to the United States. Remember to include who, what, when, and how. Use a quote from at least two of the main characters from the novels in this guide.

Ask students to listen to the song “Remember Pearl Harbor” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suUN6bkYiug). Then have them read about the architect and the design of the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor. (http://modular4kc.com/2009/12/07/alfred-preis-architect-uss-arizona-memorial/). Instruct them to write a one-page paper that explains the symbolism of the memorial.

VE Day (Victory in Europe) occurred on May 8, 1945, but the war was brought to an end on August 15, 1945, when Japan surrendered to the United States. Divide the class into small groups: Victory in Europe, The End of World War II, and Celebrations on the Home Front in the US. Ask each group to prepare a Power Point presentation that documents the events assigned to them. Include images from the internet, music from World War II (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2PqxR89XF4), and quotes from characters in the novels read. Then put the entire presentation together to use with other classes called “World War II: The End.” Cite sources used at the end of the slideshow.

**INTERNET RESOURCES**

http://www.nps.gov/wwii/index.htm
The official website for the World War II Memorial in D.C.

http://www.nationalww2museum.org
The official website for the National World War II Museum in New Orleans

http://www.ushistory.org/us/51e.asp
This site offers information about the Japanese Internment Camps in the United States
http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/japanese-american-relocation
The History Channel discusses the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II.

http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrpearlharbor.htm
This site provides a video and transcript of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Pearl Harbor Address to the Nation” on December 8, 1941.

COMMON CORE LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS REFERENCED IN THIS GUIDE

READING LITERATURE

Key Ideas & Details
RL. 7-10.1 – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis or what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL. 7-10.2 – Determine several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL. 7-10.3 – Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of character, or provoke a decision.

CRAFT & STRUCTURE

RL. 7-10.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL. 7-10.6 – Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Integration of Knowledge
RL. 7-10.9 – Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.

LANGUAGE

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH

L. 7-10.1 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE

L. 7-10.3 – Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
SPEAKING & LISTENING

COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION

SL. 7-10.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL. 7-10.2 – Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats.

SL. 7-10.3 – Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE & IDEAS

SL. 7-10.4 – Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL. 7-10.5 – Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SL. 7-10.6 - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

WRITING

Text Types & Purposes

W. 7-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W. 7-10.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION OF WRITING

W. 7-10.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W. 7-10.5 – With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W. 7-10.6 – Use technology, including the Internet to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

W. 7-10.7 – Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem.
W. 7-10.8 – Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.

W. 7-10.9 – Draw evidence from literary or informational text to support analysis, reflection, and research.

READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Key Ideas & Details
RI.7-10. 2 – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

Key Ideas & Details
RH. 7-10.1 – Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH. 7-10.2 – Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
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