**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

# D-Day (Questions & Answers)

<http://spartacus-educational.com/EXans2WU1.htm>

Q1. Read Sources A and B. How do these authors disagree about the motivations of [Winston Churchill](http://spartacus-educational.com/PRchurchill.htm) at in Teheran in November 1943? Can you give any reasons for this disagreement?

A1: [Nikita Khrushchev](http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSkhrushchev.htm) (Source A) later explained the thinking of [Joseph Stalin](http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSstalin.htm) in 1943: "Churchill certainly played an important role in the war. He understood the threat hanging over England, and that's why he did everything he could to direct the Germans against the Soviet Union - in order to pull the Soviet Union into war against Germany. It's difficult to judge what the intentions of the Allies were toward the end of the war. I wouldn't exclude the possibility that they desired to put a still greater burden on the shoulders on the Soviet Union and to bleed us even more. They wanted to take advantage of the results of the war and impose their will not only on their enemy, Germany, but on their ally, the USSR, as well." Stalin feared that Churchill was postponing the invasion of France because he wanted Nazi Germany to destroy communism in the Soviet Union.

[William Leahy](http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWleahy.htm), chief of staff to the commander in chief of the United States, took part in the discussions in Teheran. He explained the thoughts of Winston Churchill in his autobiography, [*I Was There*](http://www.amazon.co.uk/There-Fleet-Admiral-William-Leahy/dp/B0026W1U3G/ref%3Dsr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1402002546&sr=1-1&keywords=William+Leahy+I+was+There) (1950): "There was much grumbling about the British and considerable criticism of Churchill the Prime Minister was convinced that England was not ready to undertake such a major effort, and I did not think that we were either. I personally was interested in the safety or the United States. A cross-Channel operation could have failed and we still would have been safe, but England would have been lost. I think that is what Churchill had in mind. He wanted to have much more assurance of success than General Marshall could give him. Marshall's country would have been safe, but England was sitting twenty miles across the Channel, right under the Nazi guns. England could not afford to be defeated in an invasion attempt. Churchill, in his responsibility for preserving the integrity of England, had to be satisfied in his own mind that the expedition could succeed. I cannot blame him for that."

Q2: Read Sources C and D. Why would historians be interested in reading the private letters of politicians when writing about D-Day?

A2: These letters reveal the inner-most thoughts of politicians making difficult decisions. [Winston Churchill](http://spartacus-educational.com/PRchurchill.htm) and [Franklin D. Roosevelt](http://spartacus-educational.com/USArooseveltF.htm) were both aware that some civilians in occupied countries like France were very bitter about the impact of this bombing on their lives. This included the deaths of family and friends.

Q3: What does Source F tell us about Allied military strategy during [Operation Overlord](http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWdday.htm)? Select another source from this unit to show the success of this strategy.

A3: [Charles Messenger](http://us.macmillan.com/author/charlesmessenger) explains in his book that it was very important to catch the Germans by surprise when they landed their forces in Normandy. Major Friedrich Hayn (Source G) shows that even when the reports came in of Allied landings, they were not convinced that it was a "storming of fortress Europe".

Q4: Read Sources J and L. Explain the different problems faced by paratroopers and the infantry on [D-Day](http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWdday.htm).

A4: Guy Remington (Source J) makes it clear that a paratrooper is an easy target for soldiers on the ground. "I was caught in a machine-gun cross-fire as I approached the ground. It seemed impossible that they could miss me. One of the guns, hidden in a building, was firing at my parachute, which was already badly torn; the other aimed at my body."

Sergeant Thomas Valence (Source L) landed at Omaha. He points out that soldiers leaving the boats to wade through the sea were very easy targets. This is the main reason why [Adolf Hitler](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERhitler.htm) abandoned plans to invade Britain in 1940. Valence explains that he could not move very fast as he was "in water about knee high" and carrying heavy equipment. "I worked my way up onto the beach, and staggered up against a wall, and collapsed there. The bodies of the other guys washed ashore, and I was one live body amongst many of my friends who were dead and, in many cases, blown to pieces."

Q5: Look at Source O. What is the American soldier doing?

A5: The American soldier is attempting to find out where the sniper is standing.

Q6: Study sources E, H, K, M, O and Q. Explain which of these photographs would have been published in British newspapers during the days following the D-Day landings?

A6: British newspapers tended to publish what they considered were "positive" photographs. They never showed dead Allied soldiers or images such as coffins and graves. Therefore sources such as H and Q would not have appeared in newspapers during the war.

Q7: Compare the emotions expressed by the women in sources N and P.

A7: The woman encountered by [James Bramwell Byrom](http://www.amazon.co.uk/James-Bramwell-Byrom/e/B00JU5AI1M/ref%3Dsr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1402002775&sr=1-1) (Source N) was clearly greatly relieved to find a British soldier in Normandy: "The tears streamed down her face, and in between kisses she was shouting for her husband, for lamps, for wine. In a moment, I was carried by the torrent of welcome into the warm, candle-lit kitchen. Bottles of cognac and Calvados appeared on the table, children came clattering down the wooden stairs, and we found ourselves - an evil-looking group of camouflaged cut-throats - surrounded and overwhelmed by the pent-up emotions of four years."

[Anne Frank](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERfrankA.htm) (Source P) was in hiding in the Netherlands during [D-Day](http://spartacus-educational.com/2WWdday.htm). She wrote in her diary: "Would the long-awaited liberation that has been talked of so much but which still seems too wonderful, too much like a fairy-tale, ever come true? Could we be granted victory this year, 1944? We don't know yet, but hope is revived within us; it gives us fresh courage, and makes us strong again." Two months later Anne's family were betrayed to the [Gestapo](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERgestapo.htm) and they were arrested and deported to German occupied Poland. After spending a month in the [extermination camp](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERextermination.htm) in [Auschwitz](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERauschwitz.htm), Anne was sent to [Belsen](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERbelsen.htm), a [concentration camp](http://spartacus-educational.com/GERconcentration.htm) in Germany. Anne Frank died of typhus in March, 1945.