

## World War II Spy Kit: The Great Nazi Intelligence Coup

### The Learning Activity:

#### TO BEGIN:

1. Before distributing project materials, ask students to write three sentences stating what they know about D-Day.
2. Either call on students for oral responses or have a number of students write one sentence each on the board.
3. Copy and distribute "Glossary of Selected Terms" and "Historical Background" to students. As they read the material, ask them to make note of areas where they have questions. When students finish reading, they should write down at least three questions they now have about Operation OVERLORD. Again, call on students to respond orally or have them write four to six questions on the board.
4. Divide the class into groups of three or four students each. Select a student to serve as group leader. Ask groups to consider group members' accumulated questions and, then, choose one question for each student to answer in detail by the end of one or two research-based class periods.
5. Print off enough copies of documents so that each group has a complete set. If possible, print them in color.

#### IN-CLASS RESEARCH:

1. Using the Resource Center that you have set up in your classroom, allow students one or two class periods to work within their groups to attempt to answer their questions as described above.
2. If possible, have separate rooms, or at least separate corners of the room where they may examine books, view videos, use computer software, and do Internet research.
3. Each student should write at least a paragraph answering his or her question. Next, each group will compile paragraphs from group members and create subheadings. Make enough photocopies of the research results so that each group will have the other groups' work.

## SCENARIO:

A suggested scenario for a fictitious German intelligence coup might be enacted as follows:

Although tight security restrictions were imposed throughout England, and especially around General Eisenhower's headquarters, a German agent is able, through a combination of luck, stealth, and a brief lapse in security, to enter General Eisenhower's well guarded personal headquarters at Telegraph House, near London. On a busy morning in April 1944, a German spy, disguised as a mail courier, is allowed to enter Telegraph House. During that morning, General Eisenhower met with his deputies to conduct a comprehensive review of OVERLORD plans, including deception plans, and intelligence available on German capabilities and intentions. Consequently, many documents of the utmost sensitivity were examined during this meeting. The spy has access to the meeting room and during a brief lunch recess sees the opportunity to strike. The meeting room is cleared and several planning documents are left exposed on the meeting room table. The spy knows that this opportunity will be brief, lasting for perhaps no more than 20 to 30 minutes, and must move quickly. Which of these documents should be photographed for transmission to German intelligence? The spy has film for only six of the documents and absolutely must not be detected. You are the enemy spy and may select only six documents. Make your selections and explain your choices.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT:

1. Organize students into their previous groups. Have each group discuss what method will be used to examine and evaluate the documents they will receive.
2. Separate groups as much as you can. If you have access to additional classrooms and have someone to time students, that would be ideal.
3. Hand each group a set of documents sealed in an envelope that is not to be opened until the person doing the timing says "Begin."
4. Set timers for 20 or 30 minutes, and allow students to begin examining the documents as a cooperative group effort. By the end of the timed period, students should have selected the six documents they feel are most important. All documents should be prioritized with the most important on the top.
5. Next, each group should prepare at least two reasons (for each of the six documents) to explain why they chose these documents over all the others.
6. Have each group attach the list of the six documents that they will use to the packet containing documents that they will not be using in developing their scenario. Ask student to hand in these packets.

7. Using the "Analyze a Primary Source" handout, ask groups to examine the six documents thoroughly and to fill out an evaluation sheet for each document.

8. Next, based on the six documents they chose, each group should prepare a 250-word narrative describing "What might have been." Some questions students may want to consider, among others, are:

- Did the spies get the stolen documents safely out and into the hands of the German high command? If so, how did they respond?
- Did the Allies discover the breach in security? If so, how did they respond?
- How did the outcome of Operation Overlord affect the rest of the war in Europe? In Asia?
- What about the Russians on the Eastern Front?
- If Operation Overlord had failed and resulted in huge American losses, how might the American public have responded?
- Briefly, how did a revised outcome of the war affect American history for the remainder of the 20th century?

9. Each group should present to the rest of the class the documents students chose and its "What might have been" scenario.

10. If time allows, students may want to re-examine documents they did not choose for the project.

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** To overcome the time limitation here, students may want to examine all of these documents copies at their own pace during one or more class periods. They can take notes, evaluate and assess the importance of each document. After having conducted this more extensive evaluation exercise, students can take turns playing the role of the spy and independently make their own selections and prepare oral or written reports explaining their choices.