



D-Day

6 June 1944

Secondary assembly framework

Link to all resources: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z9pgqyc>



1. As pupils enter

Play the archive BBC News clip with war correspondent Robin Duff reporting from the beaches of Normandy.

2. Introduction

Explain the background to the D-Day landings:

When? 6th June is the anniversary of D-Day, the start of the Normandy Landings in 1944. This assembly should be scheduled close to D-Day.

Why is it called 'D-Day'? This is a generic term referring to the first day of any military operation – so there would have been many other 'D-Days' in World War Two. D-Day emphasises the importance of the Day – in other words it is the day.

What happened? D-Day was the first day of Operation Neptune, a naval assault on the Normandy beaches and was part of the larger Operation Overlord – the largest sea and airborne invasion in history, with more than 150,000 troops, over 6,000 ships and more than 10,000 aircraft attacking the German occupation on the northern French coast. The successful attack was a turning point in the war and gave the Allies a foothold in Western Europe by shattering Hitler's defences – the concrete barriers, bunkers and gun emplacements known as the Atlantic Wall.

Who was involved? International collaboration was crucial to the allied victory. While most of the personnel that landed in Normandy on D-Day were from the UK, the United States, and Canada, a significant number from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Poland also took part in the Normandy Campaign.

Where? The Allied invasion landed on the beaches of Normandy on the northern coast of France.

3. Play the videos

Emphasise that these are actual words spoken by men who took part in D-Day using preserved audio recordings of those who experienced the invasion first-hand. This archive material has been given new life by a cast of young actors lip-syncing in documentary settings, combined with archival footage and immersive documentary-style recreation. The two videos feature interviews from both a British and German perspective to provide an understanding of the actions of the human beings involved on both sides – the sacrifices made, the impact of war and the need for remembrance, commemoration, and learning.

4. After the video - Time to talk

You could ask students to talk to those sitting next to them about how the videos shape their view of those who died, or of the veterans who took part – perhaps asking them to summarise it in three words.

5. Opportunity for reflection

You may wish to consider the pivotal significance of D-Day – it enabled the Allies to win the war. It may be beneficial to relate to the students that many of the troops involved in D-Day were teenagers, not much older than those in the assembly, with many of them being injured or killed on the beaches – it is important to remember the sacrifices they made.