

“The Great Crusade”: Ike and the Men of D-Day

Student Education Program

Eisenhower National Historic Site



General Dwight D. Eisenhower talking to the 101st Paratroopers the day before the D-Day invasion.

Program Overview

This program allows students to learn more about the 1944 Invasion of Normandy by exploring the lives of several men who took part in it, as well as the leadership of the man who orchestrated and commanded it, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. This program will explore multiple parts of General Eisenhower’s leadership in the D-Day invasion, as well as real stories of soldiers who were killed on D-Day and are now buried in Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Pre and post-program activities will reinforce the lessons and will give students the opportunity to write their own “Order of the Day” to the men of D-Day and to gain further understanding of what General Eisenhower meant when he described the invasion as “the Great Crusade.”

Theme: The D-Day Invasion, a turning point in World War II, was made possible by the engaging leadership of Dwight D. Eisenhower and especially by the sacrifices of ordinary soldiers who embodied “the Great Crusade” of which Eisenhower spoke in his “Order of the Day.”

Essential Questions:

- General Eisenhower wrote of a “Great Crusade” in his pre-invasion “Order of the Day.” What did he mean?
- What role did General Eisenhower’s leadership play in the success of the D-Day invasion?
- How did ordinary soldiers contribute to the success of D-Day?
- How is leadership connected to serving a cause greater than yourself?
- What qualities are essential to being a good leader, and in what ways can we be leaders today?

Learning Objectives:

- Define at least three of Eisenhower’s leadership qualities.
- Analyze the experience of the American soldier at D-Day.
- Examine the cost of war by discovering the story of at least one of the soldiers who died on D-Day.
- Contextualize and explain the importance of D-Day for 20th Century American history and World history.

GRADES: 6 to 12 | CLASS SIZE: 10-50

LENGTH: Virtual Program—30 to 60 minutes | Site-Visit Program—60-120 minutes

This program consists of a visit to the Eisenhower National Historic Site and Gettysburg National Cemetery, but can also be done virtually via Zoom, Google Hangouts, or other video conferencing technology.



Pre-Program Activities

Students should be familiar with General Eisenhower and Operation Overlord prior to the program. Introduce the lesson by going over the objectives and the lesson overview. A warm-up activity may be helpful for your students. Suggested themes and questions include asking the students to list or discuss the following points

- List three ideal characteristics of a good leader.
- Ask the students if they know of any family members who participated in World War II, or specifically, in D-Day itself.
- Dwight Eisenhower took full responsibility for the success or failure of D-Day. When is a time in your life when you took full responsibility for something that you did?

Living History Videos

Before the program, visit the Eisenhower National Historic Site website to view the virtual programs “Americans on D-Day” and “Canadians on D-Day.” These programs, featuring park staff and living historians, will introduce students to some of the program’s themes, as well as the experiences of Allied soldiers who landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

These videos are available on the Eisenhower National Historic Site website, at:
<https://www.nps.gov/eise/learn/historyculture/eisenhower-and-d-day.htm>

NOTE: The following activities are at the teacher’s discretion. It is advised that at least one activity from each category be used before the program.

GET TO KNOW D-DAY

These resources will help your students become familiar with the Normandy Invasion, and will provide discussion questions for them that will assist in the virtual ranger program.

Activity A: Reading Comprehension Activity

Students should be familiar with the D-Day invasion prior to the virtual program. The attached background reading resource provides a map of Operation Overlord, as well as background information on the invasion and General Eisenhower’s role in it. Have the students read the activity sheet and answer the included questions, either in a writing assignment or a class discussion.

Activity B: Key Terms and Definitions Activity

Students should be familiar with these terms and definitions prior to the virtual program.

GET TO KNOW GENERAL EISENHOWER

These materials will help your students become familiar with General Eisenhower's leadership style and his role in the Normandy Invasion.

Activity C: What is Leadership?

In 1965, then former president Dwight Eisenhower wrote an article for Readers Digest on the subject, "What is Leadership?" Have your students review this activity and the key leadership traits that Eisenhower mentioned in his essay, as well as the included discussion and reflection questions. If you would like for them to read the entire essay, it can be provided.

Activity D: Order of the Day

General Eisenhower felt responsible for the success or failure of the D-Day invasion. Before the attack, he wrote out two messages to the troops. The first, his "Order of the Day," was to be given to each soldier, sailor, and airman before the attack began. The other message was a personal one, only to be given out in the event the attack was unsuccessful.

Have students read the two documents by General Eisenhower: his "In Case of Failure Message" and his "Order of the Day" (they are both included in the activity sheet). Afterwards, have students answer the included questions. This can be done in small groups, with class discussion afterwards, or as a writing activity. To summarize the lesson, students may write their own message to the soldiers of D-Day before they begin the invasion of France. Encourage them to think about a time in their life when they needed encouragement, and how we can encourage others today. Have the students write out these messages before the program.

GET TO KNOW THE MEN OF D-DAY

These pre-program materials will help your students become familiar with the 12 D-Day soldiers who are buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Activity E: Soldier Discovery Activity Sheet

There are 12 D-Day soldiers buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery. Either individually or in groups, assign the students to explore these soldiers by distributing the primary source document kits, background materials, and activity sheets. This may be done before the program, or during the program with the park ranger. If done before the program students will have the chance to share about the soldier they were assigned during the site visit to Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Note: The primary source document kits will be sent separately when you schedule your program.

Activity F: Soldier Background Information

This overview provides background information on what each of the 12 D-Day soldiers buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery did on D-Day.

Site Visit

Eisenhower National Historic Site (30-60 minutes): General and Mrs. Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm is the only home they ever owned, and it uniquely reflects their personalities, as well as General Eisenhower's leadership style. This portion of the program will allow students to visit the Eisenhower's Gettysburg home, allowing the students to connect with and understand the leader of the D-Day invasion, getting to see the personal side of Dwight Eisenhower and his wife Mamie. Park staff will also lead a discussion of D-Day, providing background on the events of June 6, 1944 and the soldiers who participated in the invasion of Normandy.

Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their pre-visit activities, discuss Eisenhower's philosophy of leadership, and analyze Eisenhower's D-Day Order of the Day and "In Case of Failure" messages.

National Cemetery (30-60 minutes): Though created in 1863 to provide a fitting burial place for Union dead from the Battle of Gettysburg, the Gettysburg National Cemetery continued to serve as an active burial ground for American veterans and soldiers killed in America's wars until the early 1970s. There are 590 World War II soldiers buried here, including twelve who were killed on D-Day.

After visiting the Eisenhower home, students and park staff will travel to the Gettysburg National Cemetery (5-10 minute drive from the site). This portion of the program will focus on individual soldiers who were killed on D-Day and are now buried in Gettysburg.

Students will have the opportunity to share and discuss the soldiers they were assigned in the pre-visit activities, visiting the graves of each. Discussion questions will focus on the soldier experience on D-Day, as well as what General Eisenhower meant when he described the invasion as "the Great Crusade." A park ranger will lead and facilitate this portion of the program.

NOTE: This program is also offered virtually. Park staff will join your class via Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, or Microsoft Teams to host a virtual site visit and discussion of these activities and topics.

Post –Program Activities

Extended Time Lessons

These post-program activities provide options for teachers to reinforce the lessons their students learned during the pre-lesson materials and the program.

- *War Correspondent*--During the war, thousands of journalists were on the front lines, reporting back to the home front to tell the American people about what was going on during the war. For this activity, ask students to write their own accounts of the Normandy invasion using the information they learned during the program. These accounts should include information from the pre-visit and site-visit portions of the program, telling the American people about the role General Eisenhower played in the Normandy invasion, as well as the circumstances faced by Allied troops on D-Day.
- *Who is a Hero?* -- At the end of the war, Dwight D. Eisenhower gave credit for the Allied victory to the common soldier - GI Joe, who he referred to as the hero of World War II. Develop an argument as to why a particular person or group should be considered a hero or heroes today. Be sure your argument includes a well thought out thesis, introductory and concluding paragraphs, evidence supporting your claim, and a works cited page.

Attached Lesson Materials and Activities:

- Activity A—D-Day Background Summary
- Activity B—D-Day Key Terms
- Activity C—What is Leadership?
- Activity D—Eisenhower’s Order of the Day
- Activity E—D-Day Cemetery Soldier Discovery Sheet
- Activity F—D-Day soldier background information

National Curriculum Standards (Themes) for Social Studies Met:

- 1- Culture
- 2- Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3- People, Places, and Environments
- 4- Individual Development and Identity
- 5- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- 6- Power, Authority, and Governance
- 7- Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- 9- Global Connections
- 10- Civic Ideals and Practice

National Common Core Standards Met:

Common Core English Language Arts→ Literacy in History/Social Studies→ Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1; 6-8.2; 6-8.4; 6-8.7; 6-8.10

Common Core English Language Arts→ Literacy in History/Social Studies→ Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1; 9-10.2; 9-10.3; 9-10.4; 9-10.6; 9-10.9; 9-10.10

Common Core English Language Arts→ Literacy in History/Social Studies→ Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1; 11-12.2; 11-12.4; 11-12.6; 11-12.9; 11-12.10

Common Core English Language Arts→ Writing→ Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1; 6-8.2; 6-8.4; 6-8.5; 6-8.6; 6-8.7; 6-8.8; 6-8.9; 6-8.10

Common Core English Language Arts→ Writing→ Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1; 9-10.4; 9-10.5; 9-10.7; 9-10.8; 9-10.9; 9-10.10

Writing Standards met upon completion of Post-Visit Activities

Pennsylvania Curriculum/Academic Standards for History Met:

State Standards for History→ Grades 6-8

- 8.1.6.A & B
- 8.1.7.A & B
- 8.1.8.A & B
- 8.3.6.A, B, C, & D
- 8.3.7.A, B, C & D
- 8.3.8.A, B, C & D
- 8.4.6.A, B, C & D
- 8.4.7.A, C & D
- 8.4.8.A, B, C & D

State Standards for History→ Grade 9

- 8.1.9.A & B
- 8.2.9.B
- 8.3.9.A, B, C & D
- 8.4.9.A, B, C & D

State Standards for History → Grade 12

8.1.12.A & B

8.2.12.B

8.3.12.A, B, C, & D

8.4.12.A & B

Pennsylvania Common Core Standards Met:

Common Core Reading for History and Social Studies → Grades 6-8

CC.8.5.6-8.A; CC.8.5.6-8.B; CC.8.5.6-8.D; CC.8.5.6-8.G; CC.8.5.6-8.J.

Common Core Reading for History and Social Studies → Grades 9-10

CC.8.5.9-10.A; CC.8.5.9-10.B; CC.8.5.9-10.C; CC.8.5.9-10.D; CC.8.5.9-10.I; CC.8.5.9-10.J.

Common Core Reading for History and Social Studies → Grades 11-12

CC.8.5.11-12.A; CC.8.5.11-12.B; CC.8.5.11-12.D; CC.8.5.11-12.G; CC.8.5.11-12.J.

Common Core Writing for History and Social Studies → 6-8

CC.8.6.6-8.B; CC.8.6.6-8.C; CC.8.6.6-8.E; CC.8.6.6-8.F; CC.8.6.6-8.H; CC.8.6.6-8.I.

Common Core Writing for History and Social Studies → 9-10

CC.8.6.9-10.B; CC.8.6.9-10.C; CC.8.6.11-12.D; CC.8.6.9-10.H; CC.8.6.9-10.I.

Common Core Writing for History and Social Studies → 11-12

CC.8.6.11-12.B; CC.8.6.11-12.C; CC.8.6.11-12.D; CC.8.6.11-12.H; CC.8.6.11-12.I.

*****Writing Standards met upon completion of Post-Visit Activities*****

Maryland Common Core Standards Met:

Common Core Standards for Reading 6-8

CC. 6-8.R.1; CC. 6-8.R.2; CC. 6-8.R.3; CC. 6-8.R.4; CC. 6-8.R.7; CC. 6-8.R.9; CC. 6-8.R.10.

Common Core Standards for Writing 6-8

CC. 6-8.W.1; CC. 6-8.W.2; CC. 6-8.W.3; CC. 6-8.W.4; CC. 6-8.W.6; CC. 6-8.W.7; CC. 6-8.W.9; CC. 6-8.W.10.

*****Writing Standards met upon completion of Post-Visit Activities*****

Common Core Standards for Reading 9-12

CC. 9-12.R.1; 9-12.R.2; CC. 9-12.R.3; CC. 9-12.R.7; CC. 9-12.R.10.

Common Core Standards for Writing 9-12

CC.9-12.W.1; CC. 9-12.W.2; CC. 9-12.W.3; CC. 9-12.W.4; CC. 9-12.W.6; CC. 9-12.W.7; CC. 9-12.W.9; CC. 9-12.W.10.

*****Writing Standards met upon completion of Post-Visit Activities*****

About the Eisenhower National Historic Site

Eisenhower National Historic Site, near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, preserves the home and farm of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States. Consisting of 690 acres, the site includes four distinct farms: the Allen Redding farm, purchased in 1951 by General Dwight D. and Mamie Eisenhower and expanded over the next two decades; two adjoining farms purchased by Eisenhower's associate W. Alton Jones and farmed in partnership with General Eisenhower; and an additional adjoining farm donated to the government to preserve the historic setting.

General and Mrs. Eisenhower purchased the 189-acre Redding farm adjacent to Gettysburg National Military Park in 1951, with plans of turning the aging farmhouse and agricultural lands into a retirement farm. They were drawn to Gettysburg because of its rich Civil War history and rural atmosphere, as well as Eisenhower's memories of commanding Camp Colt—a tank training camp on the Gettysburg battlefield in 1918. While General Eisenhower's time as the commander of the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces and campaigning for the presidency in 1952 delayed their plans, the Eisenhowers began renovations of the home during their time in the White House so that the couple could use the farm while General Eisenhower was president.

The renovations of the home were finished in mid-1955, and afterwards Dwight and Mamie visited the farm often during Eisenhower's presidency. As president, Eisenhower used the house as a weekend retreat, a stage for international diplomacy, and a place to recuperate. The farm even became a "temporary White House" in 1955 while General Eisenhower recovered from a heart attack. Following his tenure as president, General Eisenhower finally retired to the farm in 1961, keeping an office at Gettysburg College and focusing on writing his memoirs and spending time with family and friends. The Eisenhower family made a gift of their farm to the federal government in 1967. Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall subsequently designated the farm, with the concurrence of President Lyndon B. Johnson, as a national historic site on November 27, 1967.

Although General and Mrs. Eisenhower's initial intent was simply to purchase a quiet retirement home in the country, in the end the farm at Gettysburg provided much more than this. The farm was a weekend getaway from the pressures of Washington, D.C. It provided a place to host friends, family, and visiting dignitaries from around the world. It afforded General Eisenhower the opportunity to explore interests in sustainable agriculture and cattle production. Finally, it allowed the Eisenhower family to establish a true home for themselves amid the pastoral fields and extensively landscaped grounds surrounding their farmhouse.

Today Eisenhower National Historic Site is maintained as it was during the Eisenhower years, and the Eisenhower family's home retains nearly all of its original furnishings. The Reception Center, located next to the Eisenhower Farm barn, offers a short introductory video as well as an exhibit highlighting General Eisenhower's life from his boyhood days in Abilene, Kansas, through his military and presidential years, to retirement at his Gettysburg farm. Ranger-led programs are offered seasonally, and children can participate in the Junior Ranger Program.

Since the establishment of the Eisenhower National Historic Site in 1967, the site has been under the administration of Gettysburg National Military Park. This relationship was established because of the geographic relationship of the two national park units, the historic relationship of the Eisenhower farm with the Battle of Gettysburg, and the efficiency in providing Eisenhower National Historic Site the administrative, resource management protection, interpretive, and maintenance support that Gettysburg National Military Park has to offer.