



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 10.8.6**

***The Human Costs
of World War II***

Specific Objective: Discuss the human costs of war, with particular attention to the civilian and military losses in Russia, Germany, Britain, the United States, China, and Japan.

World War I was once considered so shattering that it was called “the war to end all wars.” But less than 30 years later, the death toll of World War II made it the most destructive war in history.

World War II Military Deaths	
Nation	Estimated Military Losses
Russia	7,000,000
Germany	3,500,000
China	2,200,000
Japan	1,300,000
Britain	350,000
United States	300,000

Civilian Losses

A civilian is a person who is not on active military duty. The total number of civilian losses during the war may have exceeded the nearly 20 million total military losses.

- ___ Millions of civilians were killed in the Nazi mass exterminations of Jews, Poles, and other persecuted groups.
- ___ The civilian death toll was a reason for postwar trials for **war crimes**—acts that violate the customs of war, including civilian murder and other crimes against humanity. The most famous were the **Nuremberg trials** of Nazi war criminals.

Wounded

In addition to military and civilian deaths, there were more than 13 million military wounded and more than 6 million civilian wounded.

- ___ The death toll might have been twice as great were it not for **penicillin** and other medical advances in treating the wounded.

Total losses—from military and civilian deaths during the war, as well as death from starvation and disease following the war—have been estimated as high as 40 million.