

# USA in two world wars

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**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU**  
**UČITELJSKI FAKULTET**  
**ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**

**MIA VESENJAK**

**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

# **USA IN TWO WORLD WARS**

**Zagreb, rujan 2018.**

**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU  
UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE  
(Čakovec)**

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**Zagreb, rujan 2018.**

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## **SUMMARY**

Students learn about World War I and World War II in their history classes so the aim of this thesis is to investigate student awareness of the USA in these two wars. The thesis consists of the theoretical part about the USA in these wars and the research conducted with primary school students.

The theoretical part is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. The second chapter focuses on migration in the United States, the intellectual expansion, the woman suffrage movement and the imperialism of the USA before the start of World War I. The third chapter is about World War I. and the focus is on the beginning of the war, neutrality of the United States during the first couple of years of the war, the blockade of the sea and social changes during the period of neutrality. American intervention in World War I, women in wartime, President Wilson's peace program, truce and impact of the war is also discussed in this chapter. Chapter four is about the period between two world wars in the USA. Women, science, media and political situation during the 1920s, the Great Depression and the New Deal is also discussed. Chapter five is about World War II, the beginning of the war, America's isolation and neutrality at the beginning of the war, Pearl Harbor and the end of neutrality, struggle with the Axis, the American economy, race and gender in the war, Operation Torch, the Tehran Conference, the Normandy Invasion, the war against Japan, the liberation of Europe, the birth of the U.N., the Yalta conference, the atomic bomb and the impact of the World War II,

Research consists of a questionnaire which was filled out by students from three primary schools. The research was about students knowledge of the USA in the First and the Second World War.

**Keywords:** World War I, the USA, neutrality, World War II

## SAŽETAK

Učenici uče o Prvom svjetskom ratu i Drugom svjetskom ratu na satovima povijesti pa je svrha ovog rada istražiti upoznatost učenika o SAD-u u ta dva rata. Rad se sastoji od teoretskog dijela o SAD-u u tim ratovima te istraživanju provedenom na učenicima osnovnih škola.

Teoretski dio je podijeljen na pet poglavlja. Prvo poglavlje je uvod. Drugo poglavlje se odnosi na migraciju u SAD, intelektualnu ekspanziju, pokret sufražetkinja i imeprijalizam SAD-a prije početka Prvog svjetskog rata. Treće poglavlje je o Prvom svjetskom ratu i odnosi se na početak rata, neutralost SAD-a tijekom prvih godina rata, blokadu mora i socijalne promjene tijekom razdoblja neutralnosti. Američka intervencija u Prvom svjetskom ratu, žene u ratno doba, mirovni program predsjednika Wilsona, primirje i utjecaj rata je također objašnjeno u tom poglavlju. Četvrto poglavlje je o razdoblju između dva rata u SAD-u. Žene, znanost, mediji i politička situacija dvadesetih godina, Velika depresija i New Deal se također objašnjavaju. Peto poglavlje je o Drugom svjetskom ratu, početku rata, američkoj izolaciji i neutralnosti u početku rata, Pearl Harboru i završetku neutralnosti, borbi sa Silama Osovine, američkoj ekonomiji, rasi i rodu u ratu, operaciji Torch, Teheranskoj konferenciji, invaziji Normandije, ratu protiv Japana, oslobođenju Europe, nastanku UN-a, konferenciji na Jalti, atomskoj bombi i utjecaju Drugog svjetskog rata.

Istraživanje se sastoji od upitnika kojeg su ispunili učenici triju osnovnih škola. Istraživanje je o učeničkoj informiranosti o SAD-u u Prvom i Drugom svjetskom ratu.

Ključne riječi: Prvi svjetski rat, SAD, neutralnost, Drugi svjetski rat

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, Europe had a leading place in the world and several European countries were associated with two military-political alliances. On one side, it was Entente Powers whose members were Great Britain, France, and Russia. Their opponents were Central Powers whose members were Germany and Austria-Hungary. World War I lasted from summer 1914 to autumn 1918. All big European countries and many smaller states were involved in this war. At the end of the war, Europe did not regain peace because two decades later there was an even more devastating war. World War I left behind a large number of human victims and material destruction. About 10 million soldiers were killed on both sides and there were demographic consequences (Koren, 2014).

For many years after the peace conference, historians discussed the fairness of peace agreement and how much it affected the beginning of the new war. It was also debated whether the appeasement was the cause of the World War II. The war officially began in September 1939 when Germany attacked Poland after which other countries got involved in the war. Italy was an exception. Over time, the United States and Japan entered the war. In World War II there were also two sides, the Allies and the Axis. The Axis were successful in the first three years of the war, but after that, the Allies began to win. The war officially ended in 1945 and left the biggest destruction in history with mass murder and genocide (Koren, 2014).

Students learn about World War I in Grade Seven and they are expected to know about political alliances and their members, consequences of the USA joining the war, the influence of war on everyday life, women's situation in that time and similar themes. Students learn about World War II in grade eight, and they are expected of them to know about the period between two wars, causes of World War II and its course, civilian casualties and some other subjects (Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu, 2006).

The theoretical part is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. The second chapter focuses on the situation in the USA before the start of World War I. The third chapter is about World War I, while chapter four is about the period between two world wars in the USA. Chapter five of theoretical part is about World War II. In this thesis aim of the research, participants, hypothesis, instrument and

procedures of the research are also described.. Research consists of a questionnaire which was filled out by students from three primary schools. The research was about students knowledge of the USA in the First and the Second World War.

## **2. SITUATION BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

This chapter will focus on the situation in the world and the United States prior to the World War I. The chapter is divided into four parts including the migration in the United States, the intellectual expansion, the woman suffrage movement and the imperialism of the USA.

### **2.1. Migration in the USA**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a large number of European populations were struggling due to rapid growth. In rural areas of Europe, the rural population did not have land, and the prospect of survival was sought in emigration. This was inspired by the ease of overland travel and the low price of transportation. Fewer people migrated from the industrialized countries. They were skilled workers hoping to have better wages outside Europe. An example from Scandinavia, where peasants mostly did not migrate, but their workers went to the United States because of a better wage (Renouvin, 2008).

The largest wave of migration was to the American continent because the population density was relatively weak: 90 percent of Europeans were leaving for the United States. Between 1900 and 1913, the United States received thirteen million immigrants and kept them at least eight million. Thanks to immigrants, the United States advanced soil treatment and exploitation of the mineral resources (Renouvin, 2008, p.20).

### **2.2. Intellectual expansion**

In the United States, a number of teaching institutions and research institutes got developed. They also had a literature that in the first years of the 20th century began to liberate from the European influence and took on the original form. In terms of art, they were still European standards, and in music, there was not much work of worthy attention. Only after the arrival of Europeans did the USA develop music societies. The influence of France prevailed in art, while in architecture the original American creation had begun with the first New York skyscrapers (Renouvin, 2008).

### **2.3. Woman Suffrage**

In April 1910 the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) presented Congress with a petition. More than 400 000 people signed it. NAWSA wanted to allow women to vote, but Congress refused. A woman called Alice Paul became the main figure of the suffrage movement (Ayers, Gould, Oshinsky, & Soderlund, 2000).

### **2.4. Imperialism of the United States**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the overwhelming influence of Europe in international politics was confronted with competition and obstacles. Two non-European forces became Europe's rivals: Japan and the United States (Renouvin, 2008).

Already in 1895, the great American republic gave the basis for its new policy. The United States of America was experiencing an expansion of the Spanish - American War in 1898, the annexation of the Pacific Ocean and the revolution in Panama. The emerging imperialism arose more from the mood than on some economic or strategic needs (Renouvin, 2008).

Theodor Roosevelt declared the general doctrine in December 1904 in which it was stated that if a US state is in a state of chronic disorder or helplessness, the intervention is necessary to resolve such a situation. According to Monroe's doctrine, the intervention of European forces is not allowed if their action could lead to the occupation. The next president Taft went on to do more than just maintaining the order but also removing the financial situation that could compromise maintenance. So it is not just about closing the road to the political action of European states, but also about preventing European capital investment. The US expansion policy displaced European interests in much of Central America, but in the South American countries, it had not threatened Europe's supremacy (Renouvin, 2008).

### **3. WORLD WAR I**

Chapter 3 will focus on the beginning of the World War I, neutrality of the United States during the first couple of years of the war, the blockade of the sea and social changes during the period of neutrality. American intervention in the World War I, women in wartime, President Wilson's peace program, truce and impact of the war will also be discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.1. The Beginning of the War**

The causes of the First World War have been occupying historians for decades and there have been various theories on the topic. In pre-war years, there had been a lot of tensions and international rivalries, and it actually only needed a motive for a final conflict. That motive was the murder of the Austrian heir to the throne, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife on June 28, 1914. This assassination is often described as a spark that lit a fire on the continent with international tensions. After the assassination, the ally of Austria-Hungary and Germany gave a feeling of calmness and therefore no other great force was engaged in the July crisis until July 23 when the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was finally sent to Serbia. Since Germany and Austria - Hungary wanted to provoke the conflict, Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, and thus triggered the domino effect of military mobilization and the declaration of the war of European forces (Mombauer, 2014).

#### **3.2. Neutrality of the United States**

A number of neutral countries existed in the war between the two military alliances, the Allies or Entente Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia), and Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary). One of these countries was the United States, which confirmed the desire to remain observers during the war. President Wilson himself sent a message to the American people on August 19 to maintain neutrality, impartiality and not to show favoritism. Wilson thought that the war would throw back the world two or three centuries ago. Despite the pacifist

feelings, the position of the president Wilson was inspired by political concern, so he pleaded for peace. Because of that, in August 1914 Wilson wrote that the people of the United States of America are made up of many nations, especially those who fight in the war and that it is only natural that there are different sympathies and desires about disagreements and conflicts. The American public was divided, so in the fall of 1914, the east parts declared for the Allies. On the other hand, there was the resistance of the American Germans, who established solid groups in Chicago, and the resistance of Irish immigrants, with the population of more than four million, who did not want Britain to win because of Ireland's independence (Renouvin, 2008).

Soon after the onset of war, President Wilson sent a letter to all the European monarchs of the countries involved in the war in which he offered American mediation in order to achieve universal peace. Both sides did not respond to this because the prevailing opinion was that this war should be executed. Because of that, in January 1915 Wilson sent Colonel House to the European capitals. House planned a peace conference between the wounded parties, but it never happened. It is believed that if a peacekeeping conference had taken place, in which Germany would have had to accept Allies demands which it probably would not, many human lives would have been saved because the United States would have entered the war one year earlier and would have shortened the overall duration of the war (Kardum, 2009).

After House had returned, he concluded that the United States cannot expect a favorable outcome of the war, regardless of the winner. American citizens did not favor Allies because its member was imperial autocratic Russia, which was a pure contradiction to democracy and civil freedom in the United States. Similarly, they did not favor Great Britain as well. These were the reasons why the Americans did not want to sacrifice their people so that the Allies would win, even though they were financially awaiting their victory (Kardum, 2009).

### 3.3. The Blockade of the Sea

In the first years of the war, when the US was not involved, there was a crisis of munitions and war supply, food, clothing, and footwear needed both on and off the battleground in the countries that were at war. Britain and France had their own colonies and they extracted raw materials and food, but in order to do that there had to be safe and undisturbed maritime trade routes between the capital and colonial estates. Germany was in worse position because it had to depend on its own resources which were bought from neutral states. The Allies decided to use their superiority over the seas to disable the supply of necessary raw materials to German coast for the continuation of the war. Because of the intertwined economic ties, it was almost impossible to implement the blockade of Germany while, at the same time, respecting the rights of free trade and navigation to the seas of neutral states. The situation was delicate because the US belonged to neutral states. Germany reacted to the blockade by introducing a submarine war against all enemy ships, whether they were military or commercial. The Germans decided to torpedo all ships around the British territory, even the neutral ones. The Allies came back with even more tightening blockade, but they were concerned about relations with the United States because Washington was dissatisfied with the search and seizure of the US ships (Kardum, 2009).

Since the beginning of the war, it was clear that the relationship with the United States was of crucial importance being the only and most important country that could deliver the necessary weapons to the Allies. The orders increased from month to month and there was a huge profit for the US industry and trade. Given such a large increase in war profits, regardless of the so-called neutrality, American sympathies were on the side that guaranteed greater earnings, and that was the Allies. Over time, their relationship was hardened because the Allies blocked the sea. There were also two diplomatic battles related to American copper and cotton, namely the ban on selling them to Germany. Although there were incidents with the Allies, there was also revolt towards Germany. In February 1915, the German declared a total underwater war to all neutral countries, but that was not all. In mid-1915 their relations were worsened when Germany torpedoed a transatlantic ship the *Lusitania*. A thousand passengers were killed with about a hundred US citizens. The Americans were enraged, and they sent a message to Germany, but there was no ultimatum yet.

At the same time, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in Washington learned that Wilson was not ready to intervene in the war. Germany and the US exchanged their notes about the *Lusitania*, and attack on the ships continued as long as Germany did not torpedo the *Arabic* passenger ship when Colonel House advised the immediate declaration of the war. That did not happen because Germany had promised that its submarines would not harm merchant ships in the future without warning. It helped Wilson to win as a peacemaker in the presidential elections because Americans did not want to fight, so their government could not take any steps that would not be approved by most Americans, though American sympathies were increasingly on the side of the Allies (Kardum, 2009).

### **3.4. Social Change During the Period of Neutrality**

During neutrality, there was a rise of the movie industry. The whole nation was talking about Charlie Chaplin. Up to 20 million Americans went to the movies on regular basis. They were mass entertainment. With time, movies became longer. Even though Charlie Chaplin was the most famous male entertainer, there were also others. In that time Hollywood, California became the center of the movie industry. This was the beginning of mass media changing American attitudes and social customs (Ayers et al., 2000).

At the beginning of World War I the divorce rate rose and family size was decreasing. At the same time, a woman named Margaret Sanger saw a lot of women suffering from disease and poverty because they had a large number of children. Because of that, she fought for the awareness of birth control (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **3.5. American Intervention in the War**

American diplomacy dealt with three interrelated topics: trade and loan, blockade and submarine, and Wilson's ambition to mediate. Since the beginning of the war, Wilson had been thinking about establishing an international organization for collective security. In addition to advocating for the League of Nations, he also

advocated for democratic peace based on consensus among citizens, national self-determination, and free maritime navigation. This progressive internationalism was ideologically closer to the Allies than to the Central Powers, but Wilson was distrustful to both sides (Stevenson, 2014).

Wilson's policy began to change after Germany declared unrestricted submarine war and situation with Zimmermann's telegram. The submarine war began again on February 1, 1917, regardless of the directives of international law and the promise to the US government. A day earlier, the German government informed the US government that the British and French coasts were blocked and that neutral ships would sail on their own responsibility. Wilson was aware that such actions of German politics would force him to intervene, but it still did not mean war because Wilson still wanted peace. Congress unanimously approved the termination of diplomatic relations with Germany, while the US public was still divided. The American East was on the Allies side and maintained economic ties with the UK and France, and the big New York banks gave Allies loans. The middle and west of America, the areas that did not care about European affairs, were not directly affected by the submarine war (Renouvin, 2008).

Arthur Zimmermann, the German foreign minister, sent a telegram to Mexico saying that if the United States entered the war, Germany would offer Mexicans their alliance, financial aid, and annexation of the US territories lost by Mexico in the war. In 1846 the telegram came to Wilson who did not doubt its authenticity and soon decided to publish it, and later Zimmermann himself admitted it. Wilson then realized that he could not trust Germany and after the telegram had been published, on March 1, most US press openly called for inclusion in the war. (Stevenson, 2014) America was overwhelmed with anxiety and anti-German mood. For the first time, the solidarity of all Americans was felt against the common enemy, and that is how Wilson got support from the public (Kardum, 2009).

America encouraged ship-owners to continue trading despite the dangers of torpedoing, and the US merchant navy was granted permission to be armed with cannons. In March, Germany sank several US ships so the Senate accepted the declaration of the war on Germany on April 2. (Renouvin, 2008) Wilson emphasized that the US entered the war solely to protect itself, and not to create new territories,

loot or domination. He wanted to defend the foundations of international law and the rights of neutral countries that were threatened by German militarism (Kardum, 2009).

When the US entered the war, the following republics of Latin America joined as well, Cuba and Panama, which were under the influence of Washington, and Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica, which broke up diplomatic relations with Germany. Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay and Ecuador were also against Germany (Renouvin, 2008).

By entering the war, the United States retained a separate role because the Allies were not considered allies for Washington, but associates. That meant that the American nation did not want to commit, but instead had the right to withdraw from the fight in their time. When Wilson joined the war, he was eager to spare Austro-Hungary. Initially, the war was declared only on Germany, and only on December 7 to Austro-Hungary. In addition, they preserved diplomatic relations with Bulgaria (Renouvin, 2008).

The US intervention made great maritime, economic and diplomatic benefits to the Allies but the Americans were careful about their contribution. Wilson always had in mind the USA's best interests, whether it was ships, loans or war goals (Stevenson, 2014).

The US government announced on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, that it intends to interfere in the fight and thus form an army that will fight on the French battlefield. That was the decisive moment for the fate of the European war. From that moment on, the governments of the Allies depended on the US treasury. The first Liberty Bond Act that the Congress passed authorized the government to give in advance payments up to 10 billion dollars, with governments of the Allies spending the money on the US territory (Renouvin, 2008).

US military ground forces were weak and had to start from scratch because they had a shortage of soldiers, officers, and weapons. Conscription Law was passed by Congress and providing for the mandatory enlistment of citizens in May 1917. Most of the married men or those who supported the family were excluded. Although

America had great financial power, it did not create either a large and trained army or a capable war industry (Stevenson, 2014).

### **3.6. Women in Wartime**

American women achieved a great thing in World War I, winning the right of suffrage. In January 1918 suffrage amendment was passed in the House of Representatives. President Wilson came out in favor of the amendment. The war made possible the eventual victory to give women the vote. During the war, they joined labor forces, some found better-paid jobs, some served in the military etc (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **3.7. Wilson's 14 points**

The First World War ending was completely uncertain at the beginning of the 1918. Although a year earlier, America had joined the war, the Allies could have expected military assistance only in the late summer of that year. Thus, the individual statements of countries involved, on the foundations of world peace, began. It was important to convince Wilson that the Allies' standpoint does not differ essentially from American standpoints on the principles of future world peace and order (Kardum, 2009).

Wilson made his 14-point peace program, which was a diplomatic masterpiece because he stimulated the Allies and gave them moral strength before the military conflict in the spring of 1918, while, at the same time, giving hope to opponents for an honest and honorable peace. Wilson presented this peace program to Congress. He began by stating that the American wish and intention was that when peace negotiations began they should be discussed publicly, without any secret treaties. He said that the United States had no interest in that war but had entered the war because there were violations of rights that prevented the USA citizens from having a normal everyday life. His program was based on the following basics:

1. Public negotiations and peace agreements after which there can be no secret international agreements and diplomacy in the future and they must always be open to the public.
2. Full freedom of navigation on seas beyond territorial waters, both in war and peace, unless it has to be completely or partially closed with international action for the purpose of implementing an international agreement.
3. Removal, as far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of equal trade conditions among all nations in order to ensure and maintain lasting peace.
4. Providing and seeking adequate guarantees that state armaments will be limited to the lowest possible level with regard to national security.
5. Solving all colonial questions freely, impartially, keeping in mind the principles that determine all matters of sovereignty and taking the same amount of the interests of the population of these areas and the demands of the colonial forces in question and whose status should be determined
6. Evacuation of the entire Russian territory and resolution of all matters referring to Russia in such a way as to ensure the best cooperation with other nations of the world to ensure that it freely decides itself on its political development and national politics. Russia needs to be convinced that it is sincerely welcomed into the society of free nations with the political arrangement that it has chosen. In addition, Russia can also count on the assistance of its own will and need.
7. The whole world will agree that Belgium must be evacuated and restored without any restrictions on its sovereignty, which it enjoys alongside all other free nations. No other act will, to such an extent, contribute to the restoration of the people's trust in the provisions of international law. Without this, the whole structure and the value of international law would forever remain overwhelmed.

8. The entire territory of France must be released and the occupied territory is renewed. The situation regarding Alsace and Lorena, which has threatened world peace for almost fifty years, must be corrected for the purpose of general interest and the preservation of peace.
9. The correction of the Italian border should be carried out by clearly recognizable ethnic lines.
10. We want the people of Austria-Hungary to have secured and preserved place among the nations. They should have undisturbed autonomic development.
11. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro must be evacuated and the occupied territory restored. Serbia should be granted safe and free access to the sea. The Balkan states need to set their relations mutually beneficial to historically determined sub-national relations and national affiliation. The Balkan states need to provide political and economic independence, as well as territorial integrity, with international guarantees.
12. Turkey must enjoy full sovereignty and other nations which are now under Turkish rule should be able to ensure, in a secure manner, the freedom of living and the autonomy of the country. The free passage of ships and trade of all nations through Dardanelles must be ensured by international guarantees.
13. An independent state of Poland should be established on a territory that is undeniably inhabited by the Poles and provide it a free and safe exit to the sea. The international treaty requires Poland to ensure political and economic independence as well as territorial integrity.
14. A general community of nations should be established which would guarantee political independence and territorial integrity equally for large as well as small states through mutual agreements (Kardum, 2009, pp.247-249).

The basic idea of the US peacekeeping program is to secure justice, equality and security for all nations, both large and small, because it is a foundation without which no construction of international law can be built. The most important were three ideas: respect for the principle of nationality, the abolition of secret diplomacy,

the creation of the League of Nations. At the end of October 1918, Americans published the interpretation of this program in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. Unfortunately, leading European politicians were willing to follow Wilson's ideas only until their country's interests were not endangered (Kardum, 2009).

### **3.8. Truce**

American President Wilson did not play any role in negotiating a treaty with Turkey and Austria. That changed, in case of negotiations with Germany. (Renouvin, 2008) Germany turned to Wilson with a note asking him to try to establish the peace and to inform all the parties. It asked for a momentary ending of war on land, sea, and air to stop further bloodshed. Wilson responded a few days later, without any consultation with the Allies. He wanted to know whether Germany accepts unconditionally *Fourteen Points* or just wants to discuss practical applications. As for the German truce proposal, Wilson explained that he would not propose to the Allied governments the suspension of hostilities as long as the Army of the Central Powers is in Allied territory. Wilson thought honest negotiations could only begin when the Central Powers withdraw from occupied territories (Kardum, 2009).

Allies sent Wilson a telegram that would be of great help if the US would send their Ambassador to Europe, who would consult with the Allies and give them the view of the United States. Leaders of the Allies were afraid of Wilson's idealism and wanted to provide such interpretation of *Fourteen Points* that would prevent the rejuvenation of hostility (Kardum, 2009).

Germany responded affirmatively to Wilson, accepting his *Fourteen Points* as the foundation of peace and evacuating the occupied area as a prerequisite for peace. Although Germany responded with such a calm tone, their army was doing the opposite, causing the enemy's losses during the retreat, and the German submarines continued to sink Allied ships. Wilson's next note came soon. He warned Germany that neither the United States nor the Allies would approve the truce while the German army was destroying cities and robbing the civilian population while withdrawing. Wilson found it unacceptable that German submarines continued to

sink passenger and merchant ships while at the same time their government wanted to make peace (Kardum, 2009).

In his third note, Wilson informed Germany that the conditions would be such that Germany would no longer be able to renew hostilities. There would be an unlimited right of the Allies and the United States to dictate and fulfill the conditions of peace. Wilson had added that he wanted Germany not to be a monarchy any more because he would require full surrender. Germany responded to Wilson's note that the Constitution had changed according to his demands and that military commanders were subordinate to civilian authorities. The German government was ready to accept conditions of the truce that would enable peace and justice as Wilson had promised (Kardum, 2009).

The Allied governments decided to send Wilson a memorandum. It said in it that the Allies were ready to conclude peace based on *Fourteen Points*, but with two reserves. The first thing they wanted was freedom of the sea. The other situation was related to the restoration of the occupied territories, requiring Germany to compensate for all the damage sustained by the civilian population of the Allied nations and their possessions due to the aggression of Germany on the sea, the land, and the air. Finally, between November 10 and 11, German representatives signed the capitulation. (Renouvin, 2008) The conditions Germany accepted were very difficult. Germany had to evacuate all the occupied territories, had to hand over cannons, submarines, and warships, and return all war prisoners. This ended the First World War (Kardum, 2009).

### **3.9. The impact of World War I**

Wilson attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 because he believed he needed to direct negotiations himself. The Europeans greeted Wilson with applause, they cheered him in Paris. He met with the prime minister of Great Britain, the premier of France and the prime minister of Italy. They were known as the Big Four. Wilson's main achievement was the establishment of the League of Nations. He came back to Paris for the signing of a final version of the treaty. Later he became ill. Some say that postwar period was pretty hard for Americans. They had influenza

epidemic without vaccines or antibiotics. There was a high cost of living, unemployment grew, there were strikes and racial tensions. The good part was that women suffrage had been achieved. (Ayers et al., 2000)

## **4. AMERICA BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

Chapter 4 will focus on the period between two world wars in the USA. Women, science, media and political situation during the 1920s will also be discussed. This chapter will focus on the Great Depression and the New Deal.

### **4.1. The 1920s**

America was a part of the 1920s consumer-oriented culture. Movies became even more popular than before but the most important way of communication was radio. Psychology and psychiatry were evolving, in which women played a larger role. There were also many American writers active at that time, such as F.Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, T.S.Elliot, William Faulkner and others (Brinkley, 2008).

Some women entered politics, and two states even elected female governors who were both replacements for their husbands. Women of that time joined the workforce in growing numbers, but they still had problems. For example, when a female schoolteacher married, many school districts compelled her to resign. Many women had difficulty advancing in their careers (Ayers et al., 2000).

There was also a rebirth of Ku Klux Klan, an American secret society devoted to white supremacy, and anti-Semitism. The people of Clan were the esteemed members of the local communities, and at night they walked in white halves and made acts of crime (Wenborn, 1994). This new clan was concerned with intimidating African-Americans, Catholics, Jews and foreigners. Sometimes they terrorized these groups very violently, such as public whipping, tarring, arson and lynching. Another cultural controversy was religious fundamentalism. During the mid-1920s one fundamentalist who insisted that the Bible was to be interpreted literally demanded forbidding the teaching of evolution in public schools. Some states accepted it (Brinkley, 2008).

From 1921 until 1933, the USA had a Republican federal government. The goal of that time was helping business and industry to operate with maximum

efficiency and productivity. This close relationship between the private sector and the government continued from World War I (Brinkley, 2008).

#### **4.2. The Great Depression**

At the end of the 1920s, the market began to fall apart. This stock market crash was not a cause of the Great Depression, but rather a trigger to a chain of events revealing weaknesses in the American economy (Brinkley, 2008). There was a high rate of unemployment, In 1931, even more than 8 million Americans were out of work. There was no insurance scheme for the unemployed, so many survived by charity (Wenborn, 1994). In rural areas the conditions were very bad. The third of all farmers lost their land. Almost half of the black population was on public relief system. During the 1930s and 1940s, the migration of black people from rural South into the cities had accelerated. The economic crises convinced many people that woman's place is at home. Despite that, by the end of the Depression, 25 percent more women were working than at the beginning. They still had smaller wages than men and white women were in much better position than black women. With such hard times, people entertained themselves with radio, movies and literature. Almost every household had a radio and even though most radio stations broadcast socially and politically provocative programs, there were also entertainment programs. At the beginning of Depression, movie attendance dropped significantly but with time people resumed their movie-going attendance. Walt Disney became the champion of animation and children's entertainment, producing his movie Snow White (Brinkley, 2008).

#### **4.3. The New Deal**

American president Franklin D. Roosevelt promised, "a new deal" to American people. (Ayers et al., 2000) From 1933 to the beginning of World War II, the federal government had series of experiments designed to relieve the distress of unemployment and poverty, trying to reform the economy to prevent further crises and bringing the Great Depression to an end. They only had partial success in their

efforts. Both unemployment and poverty remained high and the structure of the economy remained the same. The New Deal did not end Great Depression but kept it from getting worse, and the most important thing, it taught Americans that individuals deserved some protection from the unpredictability and instability of the modern economy. (Brinkley, 2008) When the New Deal ended in 1939, a lot of Americans were still unemployed. That changed with a new world war and the full mobilization that followed (Ayers et al., 2000).

## **5. WORLD WAR II**

Chapter 5 will focus on the beginning of the World War II, America's isolation and neutrality at the beginning of the war, Pearl Harbor and the end of neutrality. Struggle with the Axis, the American economy and race and gender in the war will also be discussed. Other topics in this chapter will also be Operation Torch, the Tehran Conference, the Normandy Invasion, the war against Japan, the liberation of Europe, the birth of the U.N., the Yalta conference, the atomic bomb and the impact of the World War II.

### **5.1. Beginning of war**

During the 1930s, neither the US government nor the public paid much attention to foreign affairs. In Germany, the National Socialists (the Nazis) took power and their leader, Adolf Hitler, began speeches denouncing peace settlement from 1919 (Caughey & May, 1969). In 1938, Hitler invaded Austria and proclaimed a union between Austria and Germany. His next wish was annexing western Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was prepared to fight, but needed help from other nations which wanted to settle this crisis peacefully. Hitler met with leaders of Great Britain and France. They came to an agreement that they would accept Germany's demands regarding Czechoslovakia due to Hitler's promise not to extend any further. Hitler broke the agreement and began issuing threats against Poland. Great Britain and France assured Poland they would come to its assistance in case of an invasion. Hitler signed a nonaggression pact with Stalin and staged an incident on the Polish border claiming Germany had been attacked, and on September 1, 1939, he launched an invasion of Poland. Two days later Great Britain and France declared war on Germany because of their promise to Poland. This is how the World War II began in Europe (Brinkley, 2008).

## **5.2. Isolation and neutrality**

Americans showed their sentiment for isolation when Italy wanted to invade Ethiopia in 1935, then later Spanish civil war in 1936 and 1937, and even accepted Japan's apologies for bombing the US gunboat. (Brinkley, 2008) In 1937, when Roosevelt warned the public about the threat of dictator nations, they were indifferent. But the outbreak of World War II convinced Americans that their own security depended on the defeat of Germany and Italy (Angle, 1954).

At the beginning of World War II, the Neutrality Act became a law and munitions and supplies on the Atlantic began moving to British and French ports. Roosevelt started corresponding with the new Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, in 1940. Churchill said he needed America's planes, anti-aircraft equipment, materials and destroyers to combat German submarine blockade. He added that he wanted to be sure the US would give them the things mentioned above even if they could not pay for them because Great Britain was virtually bankrupt. The problem was that if Roosevelt agreed to that, the US would abandon the pretense of neutrality. But on the other hand, most of Americans of that time were favoring France and Britain. After Italy had declared war on France, who was previously attacked by Germans, Roosevelt abandoned neutrality and made the United States a non-belligerent ally of England. While all of this was happening, the USA had presidential elections and Roosevelt was elected to a third term (Caughey & May, 1969).

Some American politicians thought that Nazism was antithetic to everything Americans believed and that if Britain fell, Hitler would attack Western hemisphere. They also argued that America should strengthen itself and in that way prevent such attacks (Caughey & May, 1969).

### **5.3. End of neutrality and Pearl Harbor**

Because of the German submarines, the British navy was losing ships way faster than they could replace them, and it was difficult to transport materials from America across Atlantic. Roosevelt thought that the western Atlantic is a neutral zone and the US responsibility, so their ships started patrolling the ocean in July 1941 (Brinkley, 2008).

In August of 1941, Roosevelt met with Churchill at sea. They discussed several subjects, releasing a program for the eventual peace called Atlantic Charter, explicitly wanting the destruction of Nazism. At that time, there were changes in the European war because Hitler started Blitzkrieg toward Moscow. Even though Churchill was anti-Communist, he welcomed U.S.S.R. as an ally (Caughey & May, 1969).

At first Germany did little about the US naval patrolling, but the situation changed by September 1941. Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June that year, and the Soviets did not surrender. Roosevelt extended lend-lease to Soviets and that way the US provided assistance to Hitler's enemies on two fronts. Roosevelt gave the order to attack German submarines, and in October, the Germans hit two American destroyers, sank one of them and with that killed many American sailors. After that Congress voted and the US merchant vessels got armed and allowed them to sail all the way into belligerent ports. With that, the US launched a naval war against Germany (Brinkley, 2008).

The situation with Japan was ongoing since 1940, when Churchill mentioned to Roosevelt, Britain's hope that the US would keep Japan quiet in the Pacific. In that time America was already hostile toward Japan because of its aggression in China. Roosevelt ordered the Pacific Fleet to Hawaii, trying to scare Japan that the US would intervene if they invaded the Dutch East. In September 1940 Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. Some US officials had been urging economic pressure on Japan, freezing their assets in the US, and in that way forcing the Japanese to recognize that they were too weak to wage a major war. In 1941, American Navy cryptographers cracked Japan's secret code, they found out that

Tokyo had decided to move into Indo-China even if the result of that was war with the US. After that, Roosevelt approved economic sanctions (Caughey & May, 1969).

The US did not expect Japan to strike directly at American forces or territory. Japan had proposals for negotiation. Their prime minister Prince Konoye offered a guarantee of French, Dutch and British territory, asking that the US lift economic sanctions and help Japan in settling the four-year-old war in China. The US government was suspicious and their reply was cold. In October, Konoye resigned and the situation in Japan changed. On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, damaging six of eight American battleships there. This news shocked Washington and the whole nation, because everyone had expected the Japanese blows to fall on French, British or Dutch territory. The base, Pearl Harbor, was poorly defended, and this showed that officers at Washington and Hawaii had been shortsighted and negligent. (Caughey & May, 1969) Though this attack brought heavy casualties and damage to the Pacific fleet, there was also a little bit of relief because months of indecision had ended. The next day, President Roosevelt asked the Capital for a declaration of the war on Japan. Votes were unanimous. The day after that, he informed Americans, through the radio, that they were in war (Angle, 1954).

#### **5.4. Struggle with the Axis**

On December 11, three days after the declaration of war against Japan, Germany and Italy, Japan's allies in Europe declared war on the US and, on the same day, the US reciprocated (Brinkley, 2008).

After Pearl Harbor, Japan moved against American possessions in the Pacific, overrunning Wake Islands, Guam and the Philippines. After that, Japan invaded Burma, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The Americans suffered the biggest defeat in the Philippines. After six months of fighting, Japanese brutalized American men on the Bataan Death March and fueled America's hatred of Japan (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **5.5. The American economy in war**

On the West, the US government created manufacturing facilities to serve the needs of the military. The war also created a labor shortage because military took over 15 million men and women out of the civilian work force. The supply of workers increased so they employed the very young people, the elderly, minorities and several million women. American government funded into research and development beginning in 1940, which was a factor of many technological and scientific innovations. They produced a lot of airplanes, ships, tanks and other armaments. There was an important creation in 1940, called centimetric radar. Two years later they produced new and powerful four-engine bombers (Brinkley, 2008).

### **5.6. Race and gender in war**

Some would say that World War II produced a social revolution in the United States. Because of the labor shortage, people migrated from rural areas to cities, from South to North and to the West Coast. Women took defense jobs, started working as welders and electricians. More than 75% of women there were married, and most of them were over thirty-five. Women were told that their employment would end with the war and they would be pushed back into lower-paying work. (Ayers et al., 2000,p. 909)

The minorities were still in a bad position. Only a small number of African-Americans were employed in high-paying factory jobs. They would usually clean factory bathrooms and sweep the floors. In 1942, the American and Mexican government agreed to contract labor program. With this program, several hundred thousands of Mexicans were brought to the US to plant and harvest crops. Mexican-Americans were integrated into war, but African-Americans were not, they were rigidly segregated. Another minority with problems was Japanese-Americans. With everything happening between the US and Japan, they suffered great discrimination. They were removed from their homes, families lived together in Spartan army barracks with little privacy and poor sanitation and there was barbed wire all around (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **5.7. Torch and Tehran Conference**

TORCH was a code-named operation, in 1942, in which the American and British planned to land forty thousand troops in French colonies: Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. The Allied commander was American general Dwight D. Eisenhower. The army forces marched into the desert where they had to confront the German Afrika-Korps. On May 12, 1941, the American and British forces took the surrender of the last German command in Africa and prevented Nazi from taking Suez Canal (Caughey & May, 1969).

In the meantime, Russians overwhelmed German forces and saved Stalingrad in February 1943. This marked the turning point in the European war because the myth of German invincibility was over. In the summer of 1943, Mussolini was overthrown by antifascist Italians and the new Italian government then declared war on Germany. Doing that, Italy was recognized as co-belligerent by England and the United States. Roosevelt and Churchill set the terms of Italy's surrender without consulting Stalin, which deepened suspicions between them. They first met together in November 1943 at the Tehran Conference in Iran. There were discussions about Roosevelt's and Churchill's cross-channel invasion, the future of Poland, the partition of Germany and the need for United Nations (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **5.8. The Normandy Invasion**

In April and May of 1944, General Eisenhower assembled the army of 3 million men, thousands of planes, supplies, landing crafts and escort vessels. Despite this preparation, there were enormous risks because the Nazis had fifty-five divisions in France. Allies Intelligence spread false information about the planned invasion sites to keep Nazis disperse and guessing. This invasion was called Operation OVERLORD or D-Day invasion. It began on June 6, 1944, and succeeded. Allied forces assaulted Normandy and dropped paratroopers behind the enemy line because of air cover. The heaviest fighting was on Omaha Beach (Ayers et al., 2000).

## **5.9. War against Japan**

Japan wanted to invade or blockade Australia, but the US stopped them in May 1942. A month later, the U.S. Navy cracked the Japanese military code and knew of Japanese plans to flush out and destroy the American carrier fleet bringing a huge fleet to Midway Islands. Americans sank four Japanese carriers and shot down 320 planes. Some would say it was a revenge for Pearl Harbor. The battles between the US and Japan were sporadic but brutal, involving air attacks, naval duels and landings of U.S. Marines on some Japanese-held islands. The first American offensive occurred at Guadalcanal in August 1942. Two years later, Americans attacked Okinawa, the battle took three months in 1945 with appalling losses and American troops suffered a casualty rate of 35 percent (Ayers et al., 2000).

## **5.10. The Liberation of Europe**

On August 25, 1944, Paris was liberated from German occupation after four years. A few weeks later the Allies armies drove Germans almost entirely out of Belgium and France. In mid-December, there was a last major battle on the western front called the Battle of the Bulge when German forces struck in desperation (Brinkley, 2008).

Soviets forces swept from east to west into central Europe and the Balkans. By the early spring of 1945, they were ready to launch a final assault against Berlin. At the same time, the Americans and the British were coming from the west side. That way the German resistance was broken on both fronts. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, while Soviets were on the outskirts of Berlin. A few days later, May 8, 1945, the remaining German Forces surrendered unconditionally. (Brinkley, 2008)

### **5.11. The Birth of the U.N.**

During World War II, the Allies created several organizations:

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to provide food, clothing, medicine and other emergency supplies to areas devastated by war; an international Food and Agriculture Organization to develop longer-term plans for increasing world agriculture output and improving the distribution and thus stimulate trade; an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, generally known as the World Bank, to make available interest loans for the rebuilding and improvement of transportation, agriculture and industry (Caughey & May, 1969, p.625).

The Americans thought they should join a world organization and the government began laying plans for such an organization. In April 1945, the Charter of the United Nations Organisation was adopted. Five countries were supposed to be its permanent members: the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, China and France. Other six seats would be held by smaller states, rotating every two years. There were supposed to be no resolution without seven votes while the big five countries had a veto. This was supposed to be a permanent organization dedicated to the maintenance of collective security (Caughey & May, 1969).

### **5.12. Yalta Conference**

In February 1945, Roosevelt met with Churchill and Stalin at Yalta, in southern USSR. The purpose of the meeting was laying the groundwork for peace order in the postwar world. He wanted territorial concessions in the Far East. At that meeting they all blessed the organization that is now known as the United Nations (Ayers et al., 2000).

Stalin wanted Germany to pay at least 20 billion dollars in war reparations, with the Soviet Union getting half because of the enormous losses. Both Roosevelt and Churchill wanted Germany free from Nazism and they both feared Soviet power. Also, they all agreed to split Germany into four zones: American, Russian, British and French. (Ayers et al., 2000) Stalin promised to enter Pacific war against Japan under some conditions, and also, he accepted the Declaration of Liberated Europe

which was a promise that after the war the USSR would support the Republic of China (Caughey & May, 1969).

Two months after Yalta, in April, President Roosevelt died, and his vice-president Harry Truman became the new president. Truman first met Stalin and Churchill in July of 1945, near Berlin, but the conference was halted because Churchill lost in parliamentary elections and was replaced by Clement Attlee (Ayers et al., 2000).

### **5.13. The Atomic Bomb**

At the beginning of the war, the US found out that Nazi scientist wanted to create an atomic bomb, so the Americans and the British began a race to develop this weapon before the Germans. This research of constructing atomic weapon was called Manhattan Project, led by scientist Robert Oppenheimer. The government invested almost 2 billion dollars into this project. The laboratories were in several hidden locations. The first successful test was an atomic explosion in July 1945. It was a plutonium-fueled bomb called Trinity (Brinkley, 2008).

Truman heard about the project after he had become president. He issued an ultimatum to the Japanese wanting their surrender by August 3, 1945, or they would face a total devastation. The Japanese did not meet the deadline and Truman decided to use a new atomic weapon against them. "On August 6, 1945, an American B-29, the Enola Gay, dropped an atomic weapon on the Japanese industrial center at Hiroshima" (Brinkley, 2008, p. 751). The bomb killed more than 80 000 civilians and triggered the crippling effects of radioactivity. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan two days later and the day after that Americans dropped another bomb on Japan. This time it was on the city of Nagasaki, causing 100 000 deaths. The Japanese government was ready to give up and on September 2, 1945, on the American battleship, the Japanese officials signed the surrender. That was the end of the second World War (Brinkley, 2008).

#### **5.14. The impact of World War II**

Some could say that the World War II was a repetition of the World War I, although there were some obvious differences. In World War II, Italy was on the other side, although it eventually changed side near the end, roughly the same European allies fought with almost the same enemies as in the first war. The war also ended in the same way, defeating Germany. Although Japan has caused Germany to declare war on the United States, the two countries did not join forces (Taylor, 1994). The price of the World War II was enormous. Money cost was estimated around 2 billion American dollars and the number of dead was around 60 million people (Povijest: velika ilustrirana enciklopedija: od osvita civilizacije do suvremenog doba, 2009).

## **6. RESEARCH**

### **6.1. Aim of the research**

The aim of this research was to test the knowledge of Grade Eight primary school students with the involvement of United States in World War I and World War II. Questions in the questionnaire concentrated on World War I and World War II, and the involvement of the United States in these wars.

### **6.2. Hypothesis**

In Croatian school system, there are 5 grades. Comparing with an American system, the highest grade 5 is A, 4 is B, 3 is C, 2 is D and 1, a failing grade, is F (Novak-Milić & Barbaroša-Šikić, 2008). According to a Gaussian function, most of the students get a grade C, then grade D and B, and a smaller amount of students get a grade F and A (Zrno, 2011). Because of that and based on the conversation with the history teachers from primary schools and students average grade the *Hypothesis* is that most of the students would get a grade C if this questionnaire was a test.

### **6.3. Participants**

The research was conducted on a sample of Grade Eight primary school students. Participants in the research were 104 students from these primary schools in the County of Varaždin: Primary School "Vladimir Nazor" and Second Primary School and Fourth Primary School in Varaždin.

### **6.4. Instrument**

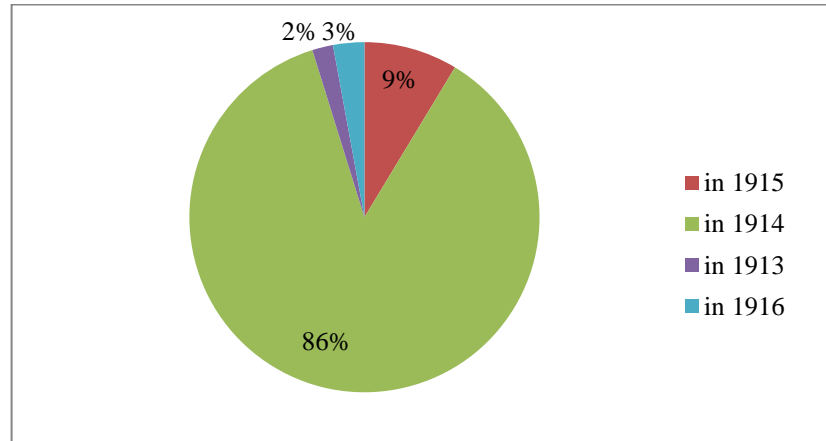
For the purpose of this research, a questionnaire was constructed as the instrument (see Appendix 1 – Upitnik na hrvatskom jeziku). The questionnaire was anonymous and it consisted of fifteen questions. They were multiple choice questions and the students were supposed to circle the correct answer. The instrument was written in Croatian, the participant's native language so that they could understand and complete the questionnaire.

## **6.5. Procedures**

The students filled out a questionnaire in their schools in May 2018. The research was conducted in cooperation with school principals who had received a certificate from the faculty, and with the teachers who had collected the signed consents of the students's parents. Before filling out the questionnaire, the parent's consents were collected. The research was completely voluntary, anonymous and in line with the Code of Ethics.

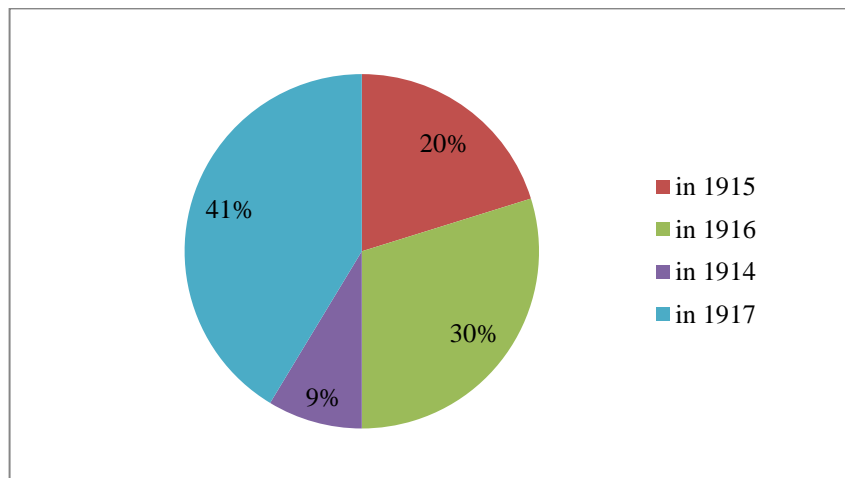
## 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In question 1, students were asked to circle the year of the start of World War I. This question had four possible answers: in 1915, in 1914, in 1913 and in 1916. The correct answer was in 1914. In *Figure 1* we can see that 9% of the students circled in 1915, 86% circled the correct answer in 1914, 2% of the students in the sample circled in 1913 and 3% of students in 1916.



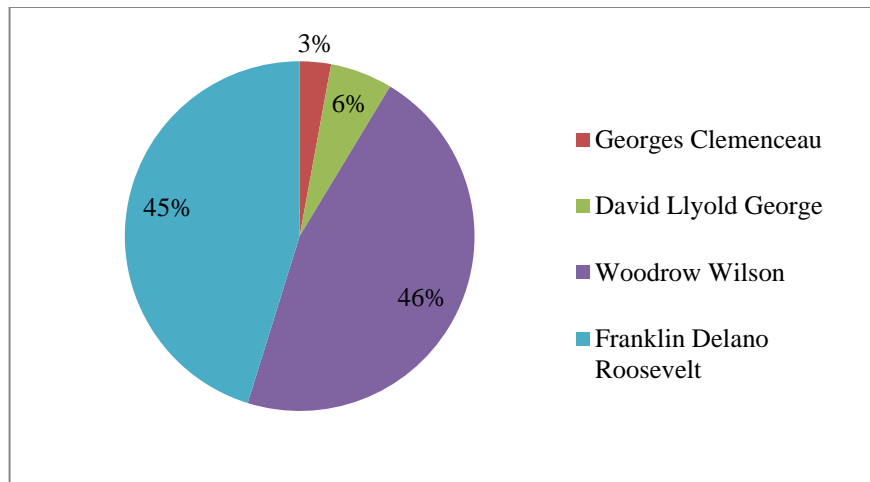
*Figure 1:* Answers to question 1 (in percentages)

In question 2, students were asked to circle the year when the United States had entered World War I. The options were in 1915, in 1916, in 1914 and in 1917. The correct answer was in 1917. In *Figure 2* we can see that 20% of the students circled 1915, 30% circled 1916, 9% circled 1914 and 41% of the students circled the correct answer, in 1917.



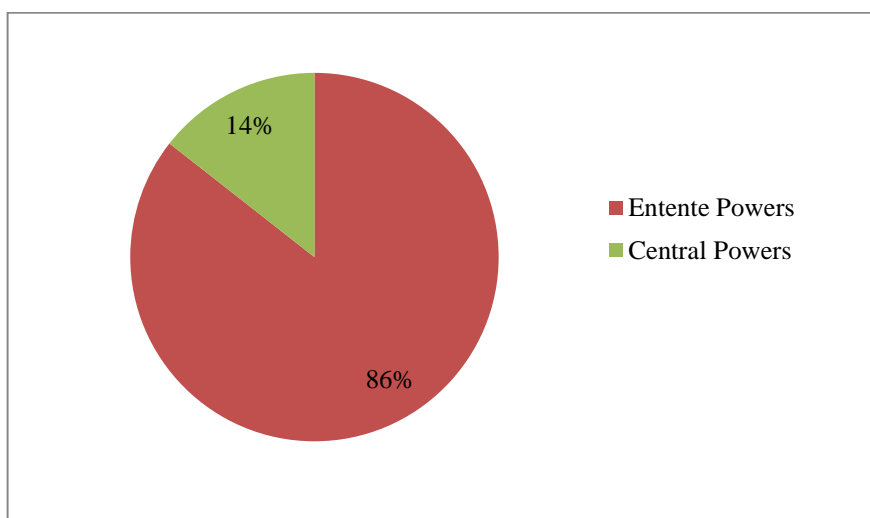
*Figure 2:* Answers to question 2 (in percentages)

In question 3 students were asked to circle the name of the president of the United States during World War I. The options were Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The correct answer was Woodrow Wilson. In *Figure 3* we can see that 3% of students circled Georges Clemenceau, 6% circled David Lloyd George, 46% of students circled the correct answer Woodrow Wilson, and 45% circled Franklin Delano Roosevelt.



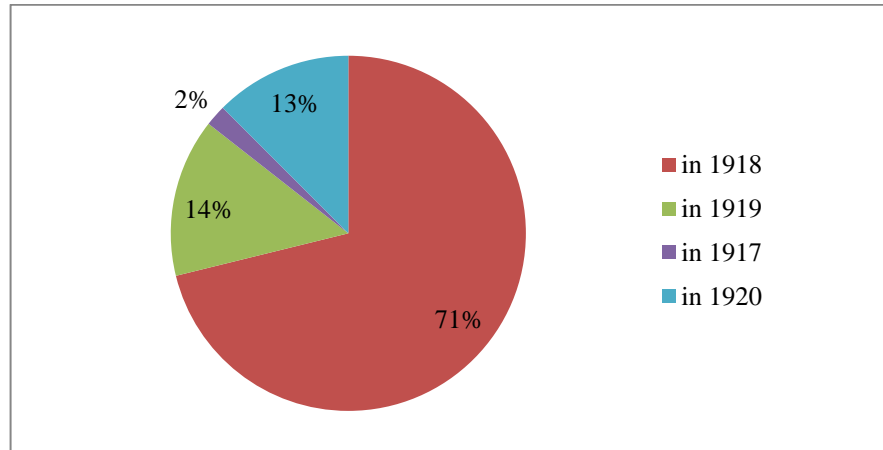
*Figure 3:* Answers to question 3 (in percentages)

In question 4 students were asked if the United States had joined Entente Powers or Central Powers. The correct answer was Entente Powers and 86% of the students circled that while 14% of students circled Central Powers which we can see in *Figure 4*.



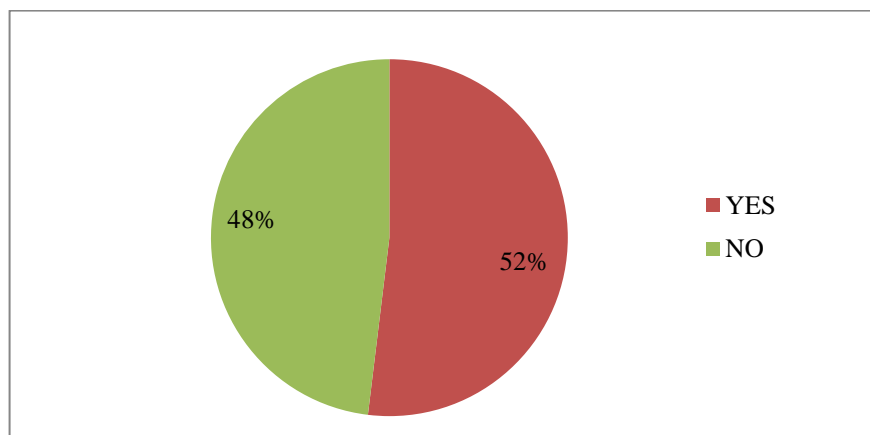
*Figure 4:* Answers to question 4 (in percentages)

In question 5 students were asked to circle the year when World War I had ended. The options were: in 1918, in 1919, in 1917 and in 1920. The correct answer was in 1918. We can see in *Figure 5* that 71% of the students circled the correct answer, in 1918, 14% circled in 1919, 2% circled in 1917 and 13% of the surveyed students circled in 1920.



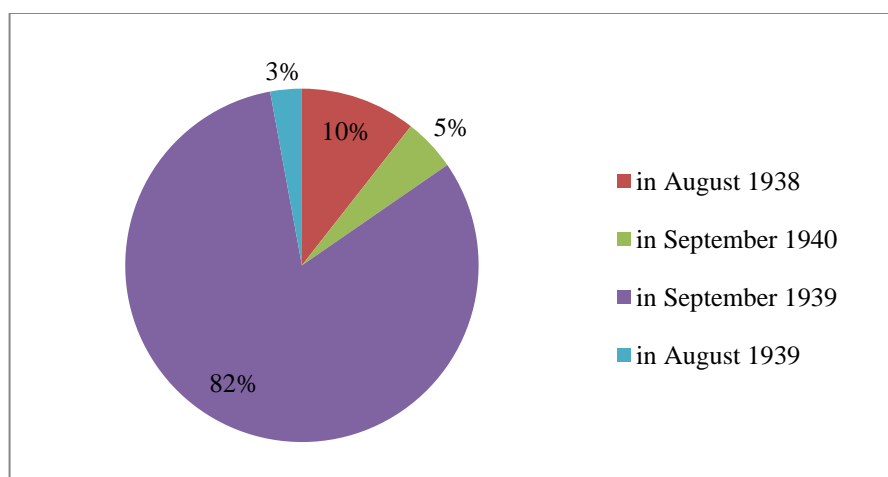
*Figure 5: Answers to question 5 (in percentages)*

In question 6 students were asked to circle whether the following statement was true or not: "President Roosevelt founded League of Nations." We can see in *Figure 6* that the percentage is almost the same but the correct answer is NO. More than half of the students circled YES, 52 % and only 48% of the students that had participated in this research study circled NO.



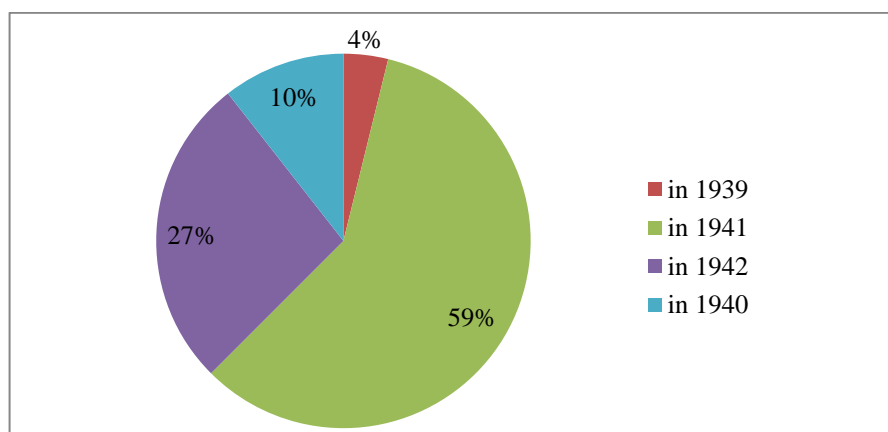
*Figure 6: Answers to question 6 (in percentages)*

In question 7 students were asked to circle the year when World War II had started. This question had four choices: in August 1938, in September 1940, in September 1939 and in August 1939. The correct answer was on September 1939. It can be seen in *Figure 7* that 10% of the students circled in August 1938, 5% circled in September 1940, 82% circled the correct answer – in September 1939, and 3% circled in August 1939.



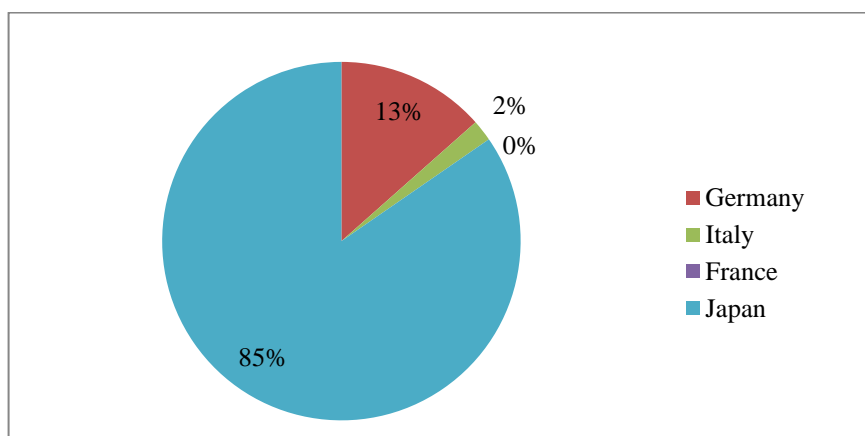
*Figure 7: Answers to question 7 (in percentages)*

In question 8 students were asked to circle the year when the United States had entered World War II. The alternatives were: in 1939, in 1941, in 1942 and in 1940. The correct answer was in 1941. In *Figure 8* we can see that 4% of the students circled in 1939, 59% circled 1941, 27% circled 1942 and 10% circled that the United States had entered World War II in 1940.



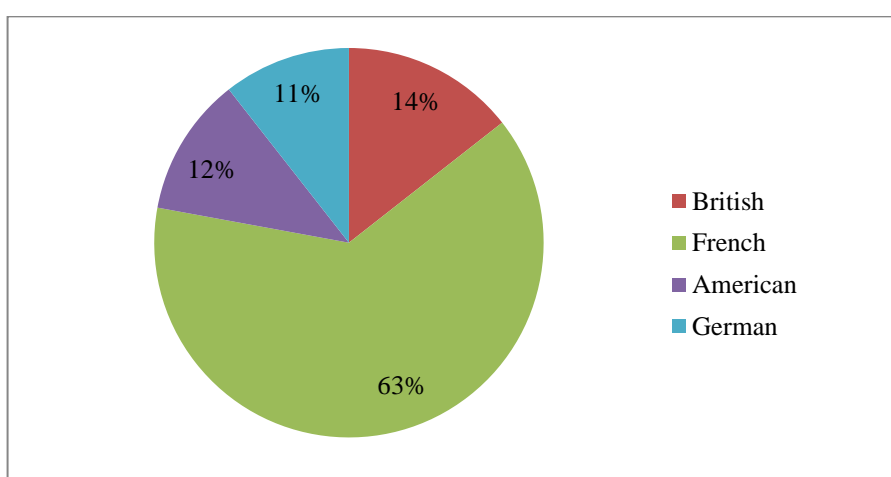
*Figure 8: Answers to question 8 (in percentages)*

In question 9 students were asked to circle who had attacked Pearl Harbor. This question had four choices: Germany, Italy, France and Japan. The correct answer was Japan. If we look at *Figure 9* we can see that 13% of the students had circled Germany, 2% Italy, 0% France and 85% the correct answer, Japan.



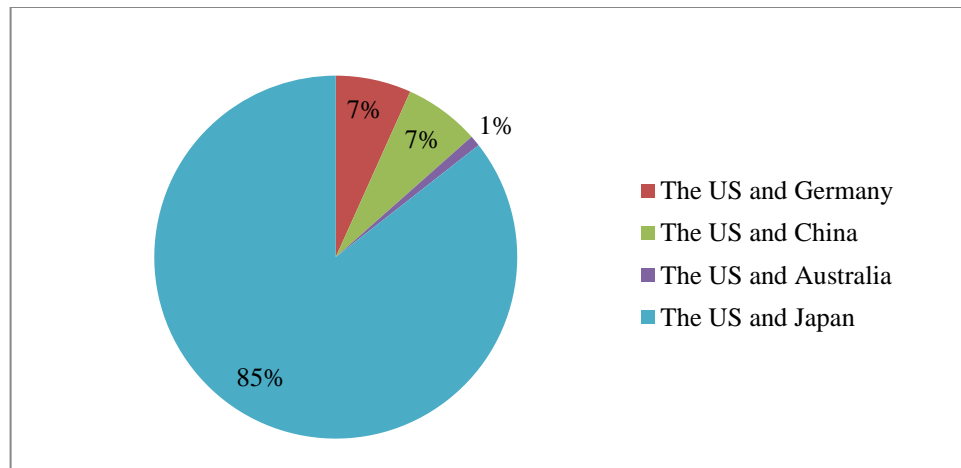
*Figure 9:* Answers to question 9 (in percentages)

In question 10 students were asked to circle on whose territory D-Day had taken place. The options were: British, French, American and German. The correct answer was the French territory. It can be seen from *Figure 10* that 14% of the students had circled British, 63% the correct answer, French, 12% circled American and 11% of the students had circled German territory.



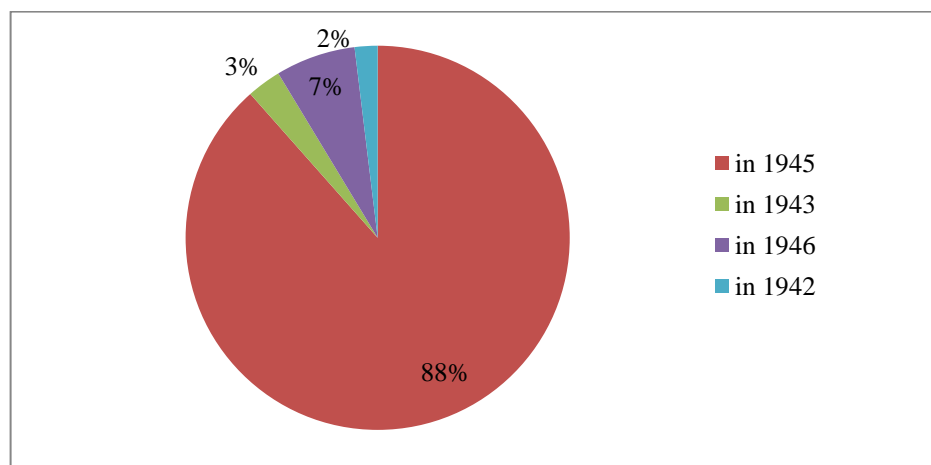
*Figure 10:* Answers to question 10 (in percentages)

In question 11 students were asked to circle the names of the nations that had fought in the Pacific War. The options were: the US and Germany, the US and China, the US and Australia and the US and Japan. The correct answer was the US and Japan. It can be seen from *Figure 11* that 7% of the students had circled the US and Germany, 7% circled the US and China, 1% circled the US and Australia and 85% of the students in this sample circled the correct answer, the US, and Japan.



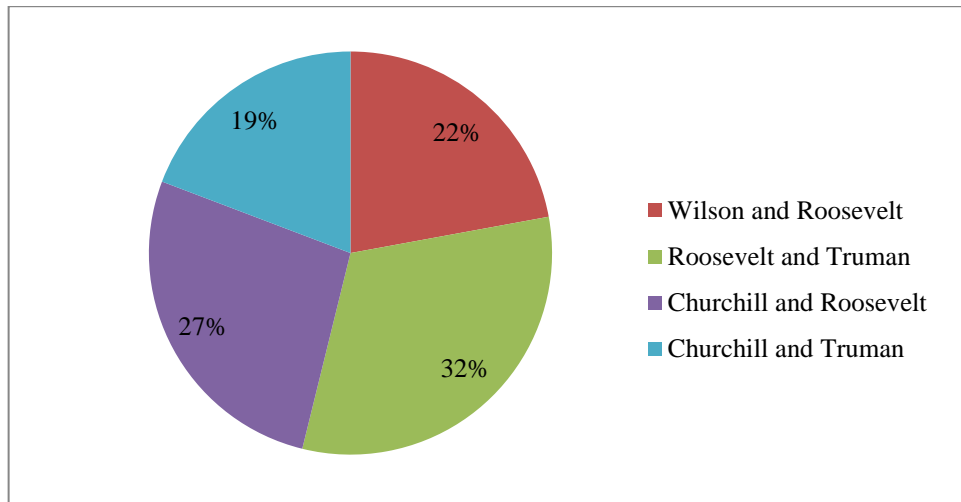
*Figure 11:* Answers to question 11 (in percentages)

In question 12 students were asked to circle the year when World War II had ended. The alternatives were: in 1945, in 1943, in 1946 and in 1942. The correct answer was in 1945. *Figure 12* reveals that 88% of the students had circled correctly, in 1945, 3% circled 1943, 7% circled 1946 and 2% circled 1942.



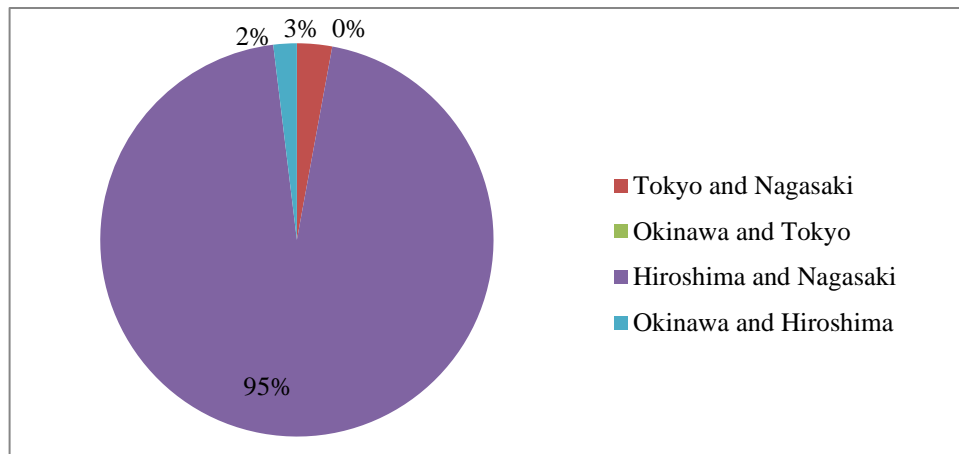
*Figure 12:* Answers to question 12 (in percentages)

In question 13 students were asked to circle the name of the presidents of the United States during World War II. The options were: Wilson and Roosevelt, Roosevelt and Truman, Churchill and Roosevelt and Churchill and Truman. The correct answer is Roosevelt and Truman. *Figure 13* illustrates that 22% of the students circled Wilson and Roosevelt, only 32% circled correct answer, Roosevelt and Truman, 27% circled Churchill and Roosevelt and 19% of the students circled Churchill and Truman.



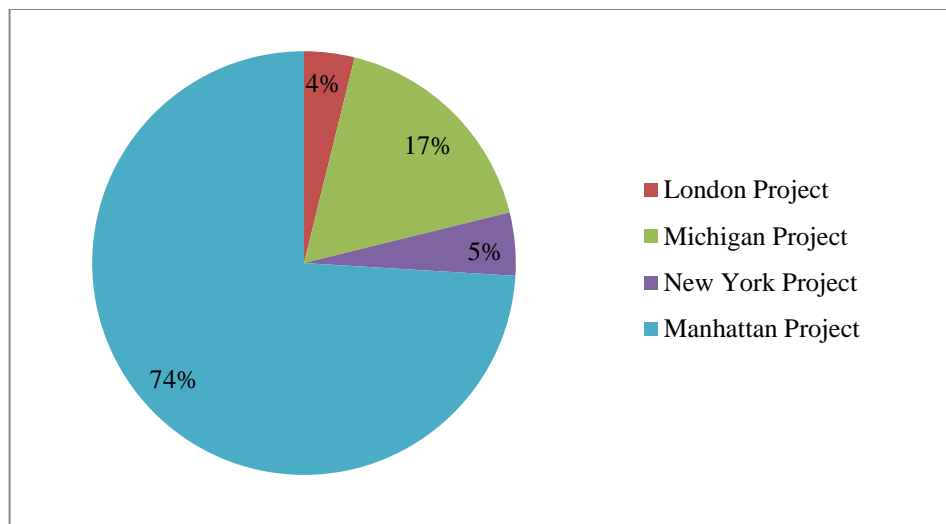
*Figure 13: Answers to question 13 (in percentages)*

In question 14 students were asked to circle the names of the cities the United States had bombarded with an atomic bomb during World War II. The options were: Tokyo and Nagasaki, Okinawa and Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Okinawa and Hiroshima. The correct answer was Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In *Figure 14* we can see that 3% of the students circled Tokyo and Nagasaki, 0% circled Okinawa and Tokyo, 95% of the students circled the correct answer, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and 2% of the surveyed students circled Okinawa and Hiroshima.



*Figure 14: Answers to question 14 (in percentages)*

In question 15 students were asked to circle the name of the project developing an atomic bomb. The options were: London Project, Michigan Project, New York Project and Manhattan Project. The correct answer was Manhattan Project. A quick glance at *Figure 15* reveals that 4% of the students circled London Project, 17% circled Michigan Project, 5% circled New York Project and 74% of students circled correct answer, Manhattan Project.



*Figure 15: Answers to question 15 (in percentages)*

QUESTIONS	PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT ANSWERS
1	86%
2	41%
3	46%
4	86%
5	71%
6	48%
7	82%
8	59%
9	85%
10	63%
11	85%
12	88%
13	32%
14	95%
15	74%

*Table 1.* Number of correct answers (in percentages)

We can see in *Table 1* the number of correct answers for every question, in percentages. Every question is described above the table with the percentage of incorrect answers.

CORRECT ANSWERS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
15	4,81%
14	7,69%
13	15,38%
12	7,69%
11	16,35%
10	16,35%
9	10,58%
8	3,85%
7	10,58%
6	1,92%
5	3,85%
4	0,00%
3	0,96%
2	0,00%
1	0,00%

*Table 2.* Number of students with most correct answers (in percentages)

If we look at *Table 2* we can see that the lowest number of correct answers is 3. Students are supposed to have more than half correct answers so that they can pass the test. In our case, the correct number of answers is 8, for students to pass the test. If we look at *Table 2* we can see that 17,31% of the surveyed students would not pass the test. Grade D would get 14,43 % of the students, grade C would get 31,7%, grade B 23,07% and grade A would get 12,5% of the surveyed students. We can see in the results that most of the students would get a grade C, 31,7% of them and because of that our *Hypothesis* has been confirmed.

## **8. RESEARCH CONCLUSION**

Before writing a questionnaire for the research the author had to take into consideration questions that were appropriate for the age of my participants. The questions were based on the syllabus, and the history textbooks used in Grade Eight of Croatian primary schools. Participants were Grade Eight students and they learned about World War I and World War II in their history classes. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, and all of them were multiple-choice. Only two questions had two possible choices, remaining 13 questions had four possible choices. By looking at the results of question 2 and 3 the author concludes that only less than half of the students correctly answered when the USA entered World War I and that less than half of the students were familiar with the names of the US presidents. Students were also confused in question 6 when more than half of them answered that President Roosevelt had founded League of Nations, which is not true, as this had been done by President Wilson. Those were the questions dealing with World War I, and because of the time span, the students forgot the right answers. Question 10 was problematic because it asked about the location of the Operation D-Day, but 63% of the students answered correctly. The author was surprised to see that in question 13 only 32% of the students answered correctly that Roosevelt and Truman were presidents of the USA during World War II. It seems that students are not very familiar with American presidents during that time. Students answered correctly all the other questions so my conclusion is that they are more or less well informed about the involvement of the USA in World War I and World War II.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In pre-war years, there had been a lot of tensions and international rivalries, and some historians think that only a motive was needed for a final conflict (Mombauer, 2014). When World War I began the United States wanted to stay away from the conflict and to remain observers during the war because the USA was made up of many nations, especially those who fought in the war and that there were different sympathies and desires about disagreements and conflicts. The USA remained neutral until March 1917, but when Germany sank several US ships they declared war on Germany (Renouvin, 2008). The Allies won and the peace was based on President Wilson's *Fourteen Points* but the conditions that Germany accepted were very difficult (Kardum, 2009).

World War II started in September 1939 and the USA showed sentiment of isolation until then but the outbreak of war convinced Americans that their own security depended on the defeat of Germany and Italy (Angle, 1954). At the beginning of the war, the USA was neutral until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor which shocked Washington and the whole nation so the USA entered World War II (Caughey & May, 1969). The war officially ended in 1945 when Japanese officials signed the surrender after the USA bombed two Japanese cities (Brinkley, 2008).

Both World War I and World War II cost a lot of money and the number of dead was enormous. The wars were very similar because almost the same countries fought each other, and the ending was the same, the defeat of Germany. In both wars, the USA was neutral when the war started, but entered the war only after it was directly attacked. World War II was truly horrible because of the genocide and the atomic bomb. Cicero said "Historia est magistra vitae", meaning history is life's teacher, and that we should learn from the past, but World War II is a clear sign that they did not learn anything.

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## APPENDICES

### 1.Upitnik na hrvatskom jeziku

1. Kada je počeo Prvi svjetski rat?  
a) 1915.                      b) 1914.                      c) 1913.                      d) 1916.
2. Kada je SAD ušao u Prvi svjetski rat?  
a) 1915.                      b) 1916.                      c) 1914.                      d) 1917.
3. Tko je bio predsjednik SAD-a tijekom Prvog svjetskog rata?  
a) Georges Clemenceau                      b) David Lloyd George  
c) Woodrow Wilson                      d) Franklin Delano Roosevelt
4. Kome se SAD pridružio ulaskom u Prvi svjetski rat?  
a) Antanti                      b) Centralnim silama
5. Kada je završio Prvi svjetski rat?  
a) 1918.                      b) 1919.                      c) 1917.                      d) 1920.
6. Je li ova izjava točna?  
Predsjednik Roosevelt je osnovao Ligu naroda.                      DA                      NE
7. Kada je počeo Drugi svjetski rat?  
a) Kolovoz 1938.                      b) Rujan 1940.  
c) Rujan 1939.                      d) Kolovoz 1939.
8. Kada je SAD ušao u Drugi svjetski rat?  
a) 1939.                      b) 1941.                      c) 1942.                      d) 1940.

9. Tko je napao Pearl Harbor?
- a) Njemačka                      b) Italija                      c) Francuska                      d) Japan
10. Na čijem teritoriju se odvijao Dan D?
- a) britanskom                      b) francuskom                      c) američkom                      d) njemačkom
11. Tko se borio u ratu na Tihom Oceanu?
- a) SAD i Njemačka                      b) SAD i Kina  
c) SAD i Australija                      d) SAD i Japan
12. Kada je završio Drugi svjetski rat?
- a) 1945.                      b) 1943.                      c) 1946.                      d) 1942.
13. Tko su bili predsjednici SAD-a tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata?
- a) Wilson i Roosevelt                      b) Roosevelt i Truman  
c) Churchill i Roosevelt                      d) Churchill i Truman
14. Koje gradove je SAD bombardirao tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata?
- a) Tokyo i Nagasaki                      b) Okinawa i Tokyo  
c) Hiroshima i Nagasaki                      d) Okinawa i Hiroshima
15. Kako se zvao projekt za razvijanje atomske bombe?
- a) Projekt London                      b) Projekt Michigan  
c) Projekt New York                      d) Projekt Manhattan

## 2. Translation of the Croatian questionnaire

1. When did the World War I start?  
a) in 1915                      b) in 1914                      c) in 1913                      d) in 1916
2. When did the United States enter World War I?  
a) in 1915                      b) in 1916                      c) in 1914                      d) in 1917
3. Who was the president of the United States during World War I?  
a) Georges Clemenceau                      b) David Lloyd George  
c) Woodrow Wilson                      d) Franklin Delano Roosevelt
4. Whom did the United States join while entering World War I?  
a) Entente Powers                      b) Central Powers
5. When did the World War I end?  
a) in 1918                      b) in 1919                      c) in 1917                      d) in 1920
6. Is this statement true?  
President Roosevelt founded League of Nations.                      YES                      NO
7. When did the World War II start?  
a) in August 1938                      b) in September 1940  
c) in September 1939                      d) in August 1939
8. When did the United States enter World War II?  
a) in 1939                      b) in 1941                      c) in 1942                      d) in 1940

9. Who attacked Pearl Harbor?
- a) Germany                      b) Italy                      c) France                      d) Japan
10. On whose territory did the D-Day take place?
- a) British                      b) French                      c) American                      d) German
11. Who fought in the Pacific War?
- a) The US and Germany                      b) The US and China  
c) The US and Australia                      d) The US and Japan
12. When did the World War II end?
- a) in 1945                      b) in 1943                      c) in 1946                      d) in 1942
13. Who were the presidents of the United States during World War II?
- a) Wilson and Roosevelt                      b) Roosevelt and Truman  
c) Churchill and Roosevelt                      d) Churchill and Truman
14. Which cities did the United States bomb during World War II?
- a) Tokyo and Nagasaki                      b) Okinawa and Tokyo  
c) Hiroshima and Nagasaki                      d) Okinawa and Hiroshima
15. What was the name of the project developing an atomic bomb?
- a) London Project                      b) Michigan Project  
c) New York Project                      d) Manhattan Project

### 3. Example of consent

Poštovani roditelji,

u školi koju polazi Vaše dijete provodi se istraživanje o informiranosti učenika o Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama tijekom Prvog i Drugog svjetskog rata. Prikupljanje podataka u istraživanju provodit će se u svrhu pisanja diplomskog rada na Učiteljskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu . Anonimno je, neprofitabilnog je karaktera i ne ocjenjuje se. Predviđeno trajanje je 10-ak minuta.

S poštovanjem,  
Mia Vesenjāk, studentica

### SUGLASNOST

Suglasan/ suglasna sam da moje dijete \_\_\_\_\_, učenik/ca \_\_\_\_\_ razreda sudjeluje u istraživanju o informiranosti učenika o Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama tijekom Prvog i Drugog svjetskog rata koje će se provesti za potrebe pisanja diplomskog rada.

---

Roditelj

## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Mia Vesenjāk was born on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1993 in Varaždīn. She finished primary school in Sveti Ilija and then she finished the First Grammar School Varaždīn in 2012. In the same year, she enrolled in the Faculty of Teacher Education in the University of Osijek. A year later she transferred to the Department in Čakovec of the Faculty of Teacher Education in the University of Zagreb.

She actively writes and speaks in English, passively knows German and French. Her hobbies include yoga and learning about asian culture.

## STATEMENT ON SELF-COMPOSED THESIS

I declare that I composed this thesis by myself, using the references mentioned above and the research that I conducted with my own personal knowledge. I am thankful to principals, teachers and students who participated in this research. I am especially thankful to my mentor, dr. Vladimir Legac Ph.D., who was of great significance, and I am truly grateful for his efforts.

Candidate

In Čakovec, \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)