**Learning Objective:**

Explain how and why U.S. participation in World War II transformed American society.

**Thematic Focus:**

*Social categories, roles, and practices are created, maintained, challenged, and transformed throughout American history, shaping government policy, economic systems, culture, and the lives of citizens.*

1. U.S. participation in World War II transformed American society, while the victory of the United States and its allies over the Axis powers vaulted the U.S. into a position of global, political, and military leadership.
2. The mass mobilization of American society helped end the Great Depression, and the country’s strong industrial base played a pivotal role in winning the war by equipping and provisioning allies and millions of U.S. troops.
	1. Military spending revived the U.S. economy. As American industry prepared for war, unemployment plummeted.
	2. The War Production Board was established for the purpose of regulating the use of raw materials. The government instituted direct price controls to halt inflation.
	3. The Office of Price Administration (OPA) established a nationwide rationing system for consumer goods such as coffee and gasoline. This assured a fair distribution of the limited consumer supplies and assured the needs of the military would be met.
	4. The War Labor Board settled disputes between business and labor without strikes so that production would not be interrupted and morale would be high. The federal government was given power to take over war-related businesses whose operations threatened by a strike.
	5. The federal government paid for its huge increase in spending by increasing the income tax and selling war bonds.
3. Mobilization and military service provided opportunities for women and minorities to improve their socioeconomic positions for the war’s duration, while also leading to debates over racial segregation. Wartime experiences also generated challenges to civil liberties, such as the internment of Japanese Americans.
	1. The war mobilization caused a significant movement of married women into the workforce. “Rosie the Riveter” was a nickname given during World War II to American women who did industrial work in the 1940s.
	2. The New Deal helped many immigrant groups feel more included. Serving together as “bands of brothers” in combat or working together for a common cause in defense plants helped to reduce prejudices.
	3. In March 1942, President Roosevelt ordered that all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast be removed to “relocation centers” for the duration of the war. Japanese Americans were sent to the internment camps on the grounds that they were, allegedly, a potential security threat.
	4. The relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II raised the question of the constitutionality of the internment of Japanese Americans as a wartime necessity. The Supreme Court ruling in Korematsu v. United States upheld the constitutionality of the internment of Japanese Americans as a wartime necessity.
4. Economic pressures, global events, and political developments caused sharp variations in the numbers, sources, and experiences of both international and internal migrants.
5. The increased demand for war production and labor during World War II led many Americans to migrate to urban centers in search of economic opportunities.
	1. President Roosevelt issued an executive order forbidding discrimination in defense industries. The order was monitored by the Fair Employment Practices Commission. As African Americans migrated into urban areas, the result was often racial tensions, most notably in the June 1943 Detroit race riot.
6. Migration to the United States from Mexico and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere increased, in spite of contradictory government policies toward Mexican immigration.
	1. The number of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans migrating to the United States increased because neither group was affected by the restrictive immigration acts of 1921 and 1924.