D-Day

D-Day Facts

- 6th June 1944 was D-Day.
- Allied[1] forces landed in Normandy (France).
- It began the liberation of Western Europe from the German occupation[2].
- Over 150 000 soldiers landed on the beaches of Northern France.

Why Did It Take Place?

Germany had invaded France and most of Europe. Hitler was trying to take over Britain from France. However, Britain and the United States had managed to slow down the advancing[3] German forces. They were now able to strike back.

The Allies gathered troops and equipment in Britain in preparation for the landings. They also increased the number of air strikes and bombings in German territory. Just before the invasion, over 1000 bombs a day were hitting German targets. They bombed railways, bridges, airfields, and other important places to slow down and delay the German army in its advance.

Did You Know?

- The D-Day landings were planned for a clear, moonlit night.
- The landings needed a high tide to be successful.
- The plans were called Operation Overlord.

What Were the Plans?

The Germans knew that troops were gathering in the South of England. They could tell preparations were in place, but they didn't know when or where the attacks would happen. They thought the invasion would be at Calais (a much shorter sea crossing), so enemy troops were sent there.

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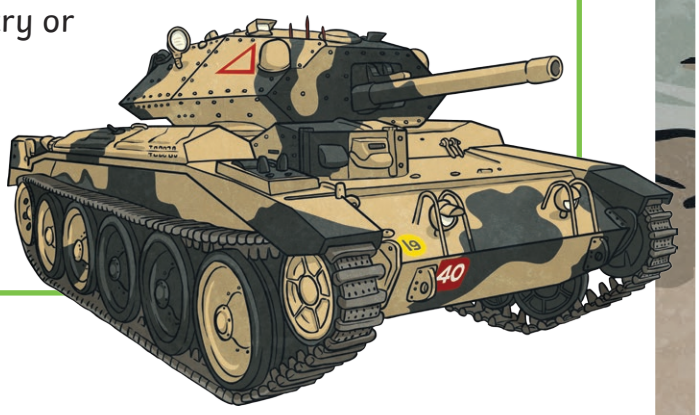
The Attack

The first part of the attack began with paratroopers.	These were the men who jumped out of planes using parachutes. They jumped at night in the pitch dark and landed behind enemy lines. Their job was to destroy important targets and capture bridges so that the main invasion force could land on the beaches. Thousands of dummies were dropped to make the enemy think that many more men were parachuting down.
The next stage of the battle involved thousands of planes.	They dropped bombs on German defences.
Shortly after that, warships began to bomb the beaches from the water.	
While the bombing was going on, members of the French Resistance spoiled the German communications by cutting telephone lines and destroying railways.	
Finally, the main invasion force of over 6000 ships carrying troops, weapons, tanks, and equipment approached the beaches of Normandy.	

Glossary

1. Most troops came from Britain, USA, Canada or France. However, they were also supported by troops from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.
2. The invasion and control of a country or area by enemy forces.
3. To move or bring forward: The general advanced his troops to the new position.



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Questions

1. What was the date of D-Day?

2. Which countries made up the Allied forces?

3. How many soldiers landed on the beaches of France?

4. Why were railways, bridges and roads bombed?

5. Why did the Germans think the attack would be at Calais?

6. What was the French Resistance doing whilst the bombing was going on?

7. Why do you think the attack was planned for a moonlit night?

8. Why do you think the attack was planned for a high tide?

9. How does the glossary help you to understand the text?

10. If you had to make up a name for the attack, what name would you give it and why?

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Answers

1. What was the date of D-Day?

   D-Day took place on 6th June 1944.

2. Which countries made up the Allied forces?
   Most troops came from Britain, USA, Canada or France. However they were also supported by troops from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.

3. How many soldiers landed on the beaches of France?

   150 000 soldiers landed on the beaches in France.

4. Why were railways, bridges and roads bombed?
   The railways, bridges and roads were bombed to slow down the German troops and tanks.

5. Why did the Germans think the attack would be at Calais?

   The Germans thought the attack would be in Calais because it is much shorter sea crossing from the British coast.

6. What was the French Resistance doing whilst the bombing was going on?

   The French Resistance were cutting telephone lines and destroying railways.

7. Why do you think the attack was planned for a moonlit night?
   The attack was planned for a moonlight night so the troops could see what they were doing without having to put lights on that would give them away.

8. Why do you think the attack was planned for a high tide?
   The attack was planned for a high tide so that the boats could land on the beaches more easily.

9. How does the glossary help you to understand the text?
   The glossary helps to explain words that are in the text without having to look them up in a dictionary.

10. If you had to make up a name for the attack, what name would you give it and why?
    Various responses and explanations that are appropriate to the theme of the text and the importance of the events.

D-Day

D-Day Facts

- 6th June 1944 was D-Day.
- Allied forces landed in Normandy (France).
- It began the liberation of Western Europe from the German occupation.
- The British commander in charge of the attack was called General Bernard Montgomery.
- The American general was called Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- The invasion of Normandy was the largest land and sea attack ever launched with over 150 000 troops, over 7000 ships and 11 000 aircraft.

Why Did It Take Place?

D-Day had been planned by British forces before the United States joined the war. German troops had taken over huge parts of Europe and were planning to invade Britain from France. For some time, codebreakers had been able to break the coded messages that the Germans were sending to each other. Their plans were to attack but Britain was planning to do so first. The Germans didn't think that an attack would come from the sea but that's just what was being organised.

D-Day was originally planned for 5th June but a sudden storm made the invasion too dangerous and General Eisenhower postponed it for a day.

What Were the Plans?

The first planned attack was on 1st May 1944, but the operation was postponed for a month to allow more time to collect troops and equipment. The timing was essential to allow for the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions.

In order to keep the location of the landings secret, a trick plan, Operation Fortitude, was arranged. This led the Germans to believe the main target was at Calais, much closer to the south coast of England.

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The Attack

The attack was planned in great detail.

The first part of the attack began with paratroopers.	These were the men who jumped out of planes using parachutes. They jumped at night in the pitch dark and landed behind enemy lines. Their job was to destroy important targets and capture bridges so that the main invasion force could land on the beaches. Thousands of dummies were dropped to make the enemy think that many more men were parachuting down.
The next stage of the battle involved thousands of planes.	They dropped bombs on German defences.
Shortly after that, warships began to bomb the beaches from the water.	
While the bombing was going on, members of the French Resistance spoiled the German communications by cutting telephone lines and destroying railways.	
Finally, the main invasion force of over 6000 ships carrying troops, weapons, tanks, and equipment approached the beaches of Normandy.	

Did You Know?

- To plan for the D-Day landings, the BBC ran a competition for French beach holiday photographs. It was really a way of gathering information on suitable beaches for landing troops and tanks.
- The weather forecast was so bad in early June that the German commander in Normandy, Erwin Rommel, went home from France to give his wife a pair of shoes on her birthday. He was in Germany when the news reached him.
- The German air force, the Luftwaffe, was outnumbered 30:1 on D-Day and didn't shoot down any Allied planes in air to air combat.

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Questions

1. In which part of France did the Allied forces land?

2. What does the word **liberation** mean?

3. Who were the British commander and the American general in charge of the attack?

4. How did the codebreakers help the Allied plans?

5. How do you think **'the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions'** would help the invasion plans?

6. If you had to make a name for the trick **'Operation Fortitude'** what would it be and why?

7. As well as soldier paratroopers, what else was dropped from the aeroplanes during the attack? Why did this happen?

8. How did the BBC holiday snaps competition help the invasion plans?

9. Why do you think Erwin Rommel went home if the weather was bad?

10. What does the word **'outnumbered'** mean?

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Answers

1. In which part of France did the Allied forces land?
   The Allied forces landed in Normandy.

2. What does the word **liberation** mean?
   Liberation means to free from captivity.

3. Who were the British commander and the American general in charge of the attack?
   The British Commander was General Bernard Montgomery and the American in charge was called Dwight D Eisenhower.

4. How did the codebreakers help the Allied plans?
   The codebreakers could read the coded plans from the Germans and then send false plans back to trick them.

5. How do you think **'the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions'** would help the invasion plans?
   The weather had to be good so that the troops, ships and planes could move without being stopped by bad weather such as wind or rain. The moon needed to be full so the invasion could take place at night without using lights and the tide high so that the ships could land on the beaches easily.

6. If you had to make a name for the trick **'Operation Fortitude'** what would it be and why?
   Various responses that are appropriate to the theme of the text and the importance of the events.

7. As well as soldier paratroopers, what else was dropped from the aeroplanes during the attack? Why did this happen?
   Dummies were dropped from the aeroplanes to give the impression that more soldiers were parachuting in.

8. How did the BBC holiday snaps competition help the invasion plans?
   The BBC holiday snaps competition meant that the generals could see the beaches that they wanted to land troops on without having to send anyone to photograph the area during the war.

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Answers

9. Why do you think Erwin Rommel went home if the weather was bad?

   Erwin Rommel did not think that the invasion would happen during the bad weather so he thought it was safe to leave the area for a while.

10. What does the word **'outnumbered'** mean?

    Outnumbered means that one side has more of something than the other side.

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D-Day

D-Day Facts

- 6th June 1944 was D-Day – the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe from German occupation.
- Allied forces landed in Normandy (France) on the beaches code named; Utah, Omaha, Juno, Gold and Sword.
- PLUTO – an underwater fuel pipe line from England to Normandy was secretly constructed for the invasion.
- Apart from Omaha Beach, where US troops landed, most of the other 4 landings were relatively free from major casualties.
- The British commander in charge of the attack was called General Bernard Montgomery. The American general was called Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- The invasion of Normandy was the largest land and sea attack ever launched with five army divisions of over 150 000 soldiers, over 7000 ships and 11 000 aircraft.

Why Did It Take Place?

D-Day had been planned at the Quebec Conference in Canada in 1943 by British forces before the United States joined the war. By 1944, German troops had taken over huge parts of Europe and were planning to invade Britain from France. For some time, the British ENIGMA codebreakers had been able to break the coded messages that the Germans were sending to each other. They sent false messages back so that they weren't discovered, but all the time they were intercepting German plans. Their plans were to attack, but Britain was preparing to do so first. The Germans didn't think that an attack would come from the sea but that's just what was being organised. The Allies put huge efforts into convincing the Germans that the invasion was going to be near Calais, not Normandy. They invented armies that were supposedly stationed in Kent and built imitation equipment. They even located General

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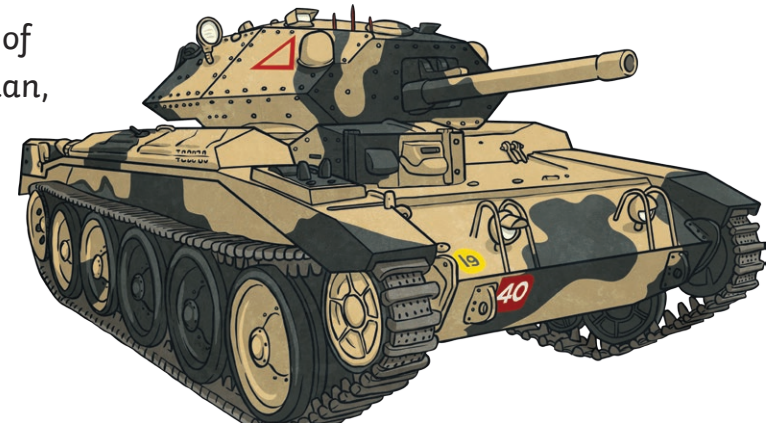
George S. Patton, who the Germans considered the best allied general, in south-east England. The Germans were so influenced that even after D-Day they held many of their best troops in the Calais area expecting a second invasion.

D-Day was originally planned for 5th June but a sudden storm made the invasion too dangerous and General Eisenhower postponed it for a day.

What Were the Plans?

The first planned attack was on 1st May 1944, but the operation was postponed for a month to allow more time to assemble troops and equipment. The timing was essential to allow for the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions.

In order to keep the location of the landings secret, a trick plan, Operation Fortitude, was arranged. This led the Germans to believe the main target was at Calais, much closer to the south coast of England.



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Did You Know?

- Life Magazine's Robert Capa was the first photographer to land on Omaha Beach. He took over 100 photographs, but a darkroom assistant in London ruined all but 11. Life magazine said they were blurred because Capa's hands were shaking with the anxiety of the events.
- On D-Day invasion night, only around 15% of paratroopers landed in the right place.
- War-time Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, announced that he would sail with the fleet and watch the D-Day landings from HMS Belfast. It took King George VI to stop him. He insisted that if Churchill went he would also go, which eventually forced Churchill to back down.

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Questions

1. What were the names of the landing beaches in France?

2. Why was it necessary to construct a fuel pipe from Britain into France?

3. Where and when was the D-Day invasion planned?

4. Why do you think the British codebreakers sent false messages to the Germans? How could they have been found out?

5. What was the purpose of building false equipment in Kent? How do you know the plan worked?

6. What does the word **'influenced'** mean?

7. Why was the timing **'essential to allow for the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions.'**?

8. What was the purpose of the actions of the French Resistance?

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Questions

9. If you had ruined the important invasion photographs, what excuse could you give for your mistake?

_____

_____

10. Why do you think the Prime Minister was determined to watch the invasion from a ship close by? Would you have done the same?

_____

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Answers

1. What were the names of the landing beaches in France?
   The landing beaches were; Utah, Omaha, Juno, Sword and Gold.

2. Why was it necessary to construct a fuel pipe from Britain into France?
   If the British troops invaded France the Germans could cut off the fuel supply so the tanks and vehicles wouldn't have anything to run on.

3. Where and when was the D-Day invasion planned?
   D-Day was planned in Canada at the Quebec Conference in 1943.

4. Why do you think the British codebreakers sent false messages to the Germans? How could they have been found out?
   The codebreakers sent false messages to the Germans to trick them into thinking an invasion would take place in another part of France. If they sent too many false messages, the Germans would know they were being tricked and realise that their codes were being read.

5. What was the purpose of building false equipment in Kent? How do you know the plan worked?
   False equipment was built to give the impression that troops and supplies were being made ready for an invasion to Calais. The Germans were taken in by this because they sent a lot of their troops to Calais in preparation.

6. What does the word **'influenced'** mean?
   Influenced means to be persuaded by or be affected by something someone else says or does.

7. Why was the timing **'essential to allow for the right weather, a full moon, and high tide conditions.'**?
   The weather had to be good so that the troops, ships and planes could move without being stopped by bad weather such as wind or rain. The moon needed to be full so the invasion could take place at night without using lights and the tide high so that the ships could land on the beaches easily.

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Answers

8. What was the purpose of the actions of the French Resistance?
   The French Resistance cut telephone lines and destroyed railways so the Germans couldn't contact their armies for more support after the invasion or move troops by rail.

9. If you had ruined the important invasion photographs, what excuse could you give for your mistake?
   Various responses that are appropriate to the theme of the text.

10. Why do you think the Prime Minister was determined to watch the invasion from a ship close by? Would you have done the same?
    I think the Prime Minister wanted to watch the invasion from a ship so that he could see all of his plans being carried out and to support the troops as they were invading.
    I would have done the same because I think it is important to be seen to support people when they do something important.
    I would not have done the same because I think it is important to keep important people safe from harm and he could have easily been hurt or killed during the fighting.

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