

GI Jargon

Just as many students today use jargon, or slang, while interacting with their peers, many young people in the 1940s used jargon as well. Merriam-Webster defines the word jargon as “confused and unintelligible language” or as “a strange, outlandish, or barbarous language or dialect.” To be sure, as students study the culture surrounding World War II most will find the lingo common to the 1940s generation “strange” and “outlandish.” In the “Countdown to D-Day” packet, students will find plenty of jargon used in the letters and journal entries from the D-Day participants. Discovering the definitions to these unfamiliar terms will certainly enhance students’ knowledge and understanding of World War II history.

OBJECTIVE: Using primary sources and reference materials, students will uncover definitions to 1940s jargon to enhance their study of World War II.

BENCHMARKS: English SOLs: 6.3a, c, d; 6.5c; 7.3
Social Studies SOLs: USII.1a; US.1a; CE.1a, VUS.1a

DIRECTIONS:

1. Pass out copies of selected portions of “Countdown to D-Day”
2. Discuss the definition of jargon, or slang. How is it different from standard, grammatical English?
3. Have students define the terms on the following page. Students can find definitions by using contextual clues from the primary sources included in the “Countdown to D-Day” packet. Once the word is correctly defined, students use the term in an original sentence.

ASSESSMENT: Components for assessment include the completed definitions and the student-written sentences.

ENRICHMENT: Challenge students to research the etymology, or origin, of the following terms: Ack-Ack, chow, flak, heavies, Jerries, scuttlebutt, and strafe. Make sure students understand the difference between the definition and etymology of a word.



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Ack-ack (May 30th)

Airdrome (March 15th)

Blackout

Chow (March 14th)

ETO (May 31st)

Flak (June 6th)

Furlough (March 20th)

Heavies (March 23rd)

Jerry or Jerries (March 23rd)

Liberty (March 12th)

PX (Jan. 13th)

Scuttlebutt (March 10th)

Sleeve (May 22nd)

Sortie

Strafe

Tracers (May 27th)

U-Boats

VP (May 28th)

