In Plain Sight
D-Day Deception

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INTRODUCTION

The best deception is attained by feeding an opponent with falsehoods which he wants to believe. Using code names such as Bodyguard, Double-Cross, Fortitude, and Quicksilver, General Dwight D. Eisenhower commanded a series of covert operations that fooled the Germans time after time and played a crucial role in the victorious Allied invasion of Europe. In this program, students will examine visual and textual data presented in primary source documents to gain an understanding of D-Day deception plans.

OBJECTIVES

• Students will gain knowledge of several of the deception plans that aided in the successful D-Day invasion.

• Students will evaluate primary sources to determine how a specific operation helped deceive Hitler’s forces of the where, when, and/or what Allied forces would be used in the OVERLORD invasion?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TARGET AUDIENCE: Grades 9-10

TIME REQUIREMENT: 1 hour

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All lesson plans meet numerous national Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, as well as National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Have this quote visible to all students: **THE BEST DECEPTION IS ATTAINED BY FEEDING AN OPPONENT WITH FALSEHOODS WHICH HE WANTS TO BELIEVE.**

2. The facilitator guides students through the **Background Briefing** information. (1 per student)

EXERCISES

3. In small groups, students are to analyze one of the **Secret Files** containing primary and secondary sources on each topic. They are to use this information to fill out a **Briefing Organizer**. Inform students that each file also contains a **Glossary** of terms to aid students in their understanding of the files’ contents.

4. Each student group orally presents their Briefing Organizer to the rest of the students.

CONCLUSION

5. Use the **Conclusion** page to guide students through the success of the D-Day deception plans, and to answer the question, “How does what you’ve learned explain the quote: **THE BEST DECEPTION IS ATTAINED BY FEEDING AN OPPONENT WITH FALSEHOODS WHICH HE WANTS TO BELIEVE**?”

6. Show the video “How Did the Allies Keep D-Day a Secret?” This can be found under under “Pivotal Moments: D-Day” on the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial’s website, or at: http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/experience/#/dday/206.
THE BEST DECEPTION IS ATTAINED BY FEEDING AN OPPONENT WITH FALSEHOODS WHICH HE WANTS TO BELIEVE.

Thomas M. Hatfield, PhD
Everyone knew there would have to be an Allied invasion to liberate western Europe from Nazi control; that fact could not be kept a surprise. But where, when, and what forces had to be secret if there would be any hope for success. The Allied forces were greatly outnumbered—some reports say 10:1—by Hitler’s Nazi armies who had already built a great “Atlantic Wall” of military obstacles and reinforcements all along the Atlantic coast line. It was obvious to Hitler that the most advantageous invasion site for the Allies would be Pas de Calais, France because of its proximity to Dover, England. If the Calais ports were taken, they would provide Allied troops a place to quickly deport soldiers and supplies, and access the established French highways to make a straight-line to Hitler’s Germany.

Knowing all this, the Allied forces began strategizing how to successfully invade. A complex web of deception plans was created to simultaneously be carried out and mislead Hitler’s Nazi forces. Bodyguard was the codename chosen for the overall strategy to protect the invasion. Operation Bodyguard included many deception plans to keep the Nazi forces spread out and guessing where and when the Allies would invade western Europe.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was already serving as the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in North Africa when he was secretly chosen to serve as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe. Under this title, he would lead the invasion, codenamed “Overlord,” to liberate Europe from Hitler. Ike reported to his new London office on January 15, 1944, under the cover of a thick evening London fog. It was supposed to be a week before an announcement was made of the new commander’s identity and location, but Eisenhower soon learned that a German spy had already notified his Nazi controllers!

When Ike demanded to know how this information was leaked, he was not only informed that it was done on purpose by one of the Allies’ double-agents, he was also briefed on many covert operations and groups that were already in place or being proposed to help with Overlord. As Supreme Commander, Ike was now tasked with being the single guiding head of the various plans of deception. All responsibility came to his desk.

In groups, you are each going to learn about different aspects of these covert operations and then deliver a briefing to General Eisenhower. You will inform Ike of how your deception will help deceive Hitler of the where, when, and what forces will be used in the invasion. To do this, you will be given a file containing primary and secondary sources to analyze and use to fill out a briefing organizer.
As you analyze the primary and secondary sources in your file, you may need to refer to this glossary to better understand the terms and titles used.

23rd Headquarters Special Troops = A United States Army tactical deception unit whose mission was to impersonate other U.S. Army units to deceive the enemy. It is unofficially often called “The Ghost Army.”

Abwher = the German military intelligence division.

BODYGUARD (Operation or Plan Bodyguard) = The code name for the overall strategy to protect Operation OVERLORD. BODYGUARD contained a number of cover and deception operations.

“By Special Means” = the term used by insiders to mean “purposefully leaking information through an enemy agent.”

BI-A = Counterespionage arm of MI-5, responsible for handling double-agents.

BIGOT = This was stamped on documents to designate them as the highest security classification. They contained information about the key secrets of Operation Neptune.

COSSAC = Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander. This was renamed SHAEF after the appointment of Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

Double Cross System = The operation of turning captured German spies into double agents working for the Allies. They were controlled by a group called the Twenty Committee. In Roman numerals, twenty is XX, so the use of these double-agents was labeled the “double-cross system.” Also, to double-cross someone means to cheat or deceive them.

Enigma = The German encoding machine, thought by the Abwher to be undecipherable.

FORTITUDE (Operation Fortitude) = A major part of Operation BODYGUARD, this was the code name of a deception plan aimed at misleading the German high command about the OVERLORD invasion, especially, NEPTUNE. It was broken into several sub-plans.

FUSAG = The First United States Army Group. A skeleton army purportedly preparing for the Allied invasion at Pas de Calais. It pretended to be up to fifty army divisions.

General Harold R. Bull = Head of the Operations Division at SHAEF. He exercised day-to-day control of the deception plan.
**Ghost army or phantom army** = General terms used for small tactical groups that use deception techniques to fool the enemy into thinking they are a much larger unit than they really are and in a different location than the real army is. “The Ghost Army” is the unofficial name often used for the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops.

**Joint Security Control (JSC, American)** and **London Controlling Section (LCS, British)**. They were both responsible for devising and coordinating strategic cover and deception schemes.

**M.I.5** = British Secret Service section responsible for security within Great Britain (similar to the FBI in the U.S.).

**M.I.6** = British Secret Service section responsible for security outside of Great Britain.

**Notional** = The term used by the British to describe a simulated, or dummy, unit or position.

**Office of Strategic Services (OSS)** = The U.S. intelligence and covert action agency during World War II.

**Operation NEPTUNE** = This was the code name for the naval aspect of the D-Day invasion onto Normandy’s beaches.

**Operation OVERLORD** = The code name for the entire Allied invasion at Normandy, France. This included navy, air, and ground forces. Commonly called D-Day, it occurred June 6, 1944.

**Operation QUICKSILVER** = The codename for a number of deceptions to support the fabrication of FUSAG. It was subdivided into six sub plans numbered I through VI.

**Operation ULTRA** = The British code name for the systematic breaking of the German’s secret codes and communications.

**Ops (B)** = An Allied (SHAEF) military deception planning department in charge of the operations and intelligence for Operation BODYGUARD. It was also referred to as the Committee of Special Means (CSM).

**ULTRA** = The code name for the Allied (but handled mostly by the British) cryptographic intelligence, which was derived from breaking the code of the German Enigma machine and decoding the messages.

**SHAEF** = Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Commander of SHAEF in Europe.

**Strategic deception** = Involves attempting to fool the enemy on a grand scale over a time period of months or years.

**Tactical deception** = Concerns events that take place in a more localized area—generally within the same country or within the boundaries of one army group—and over a time period of a few hours to a few weeks.
Briefing Organizer

Secret File title/topic:

Description of this deception plan:

How will it help deceive Hitler of the **where**, **when**, and/or **what forces** will be used in the OVERLORD invasion?

THE BEST DECEPTION IS ATTAINED BY FEEDING AN OPPONENT WITH FALSEHOODS WHICH HE WANTS TO BELIEVE.
As D-Day neared, the deception was absolute and on June 6, 1944, the Overlord invasion of the Normandy beaches came as a complete surprise. The Nazis mounted fierce resistance with the forces they had at Normandy, but it could have been much worse had the deception plans not worked. Furthermore, instead of sending his full force of reinforcements to the Normandy invasion, Hitler ordered the largest of his troops (the 15th Army) to stay at Calais because of his certainty that Normandy was just a diversion for FUSAG to strike at Calais on a later date. Hitler was successfully led to believe that the invasion wouldn't come until mid-June or even mid-August. The brave and clever men of these many Allied deceptions left a trail of clues that fooled the Germans so well that they still feared the "real invasion" was coming at Calais well into August, 1944 — two months after the Allies had successfully stormed the beaches of Normandy and were on their way to Berlin, Germany. Hitler would never again regain control of the war.

Watch the video “How Did the Allies Keep D-Day a Secret?” This can be found under under “Pivotal Moments: D-Day” on the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial’s website, or at: http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/experience/#/dday/206.

How does what you have learned in this lesson explain this quote:

**THE BEST DECEPTION IS ATTAINED BY FEEDING AN OPPONENT WITH FALSEHOODS WHICH HE WANTS TO BELIEVE**

LEARN MORE: Once the Allies were firmly established in France, the time for strategic deception in Europe had ended. Tactical deception was then needed to defeat the Germans in battle. Shortly after the Allies landed in Normandy, the first operation of the 23rd Special Troops took place. This unit took part in over twenty major operations, fulfilling battlefield deceptions that helped win the war. Their skill in luring in the enemy and then disappearing at the last minute earned them the name “The Ghost Army.”
The following are recommended sources of content and primary sources.

**Eisenhower Presidential Library (National Archives), Abilene, Kansas**

Dwight D. Eisenhower; Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-52. Principal File. Box 60.


SHAEF, Office of Secretary, General Staff Records, 1943-45. Box No. 60.

SHAEF, Office of Secretary, General Staff Records, 1943-45. Box No. 56.

SHAEF, Office of Secretary, General Staff Records, 1943-45. Box No. 28.

SHAEF, Office of Secretary, General Staff Records, 1943-45. Box No. 120.

SHAEF; Selected Records, 1943-45. Box No. 41.

Smith, Walter Bedell; Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-45. Box 50.

Smith, Walter Bedell; Collection of WWII Documents, 1941-45. Box No. 33.

**Books**


Websites or Online Sources


Archives.gov


Bletchleypark.org.uk

Commons.wikimedia.org


Eisenhower.archives.gov


Docsteach.org

ghostarmy.org


