Primary Source Worksheet: Germany's Surrender (1945)

Teaching with Documents - Germany's Surrender 1945:

Student: https://worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar578820

Advanced: https://worldbookonline.com/advanced/article?id=ar578820

Analyse the featured document and answer the following questions:

Understanding the Source:

1. Who signed the surrender document on behalf of Germany?
2. What does the term "unconditional surrender" mean?
3. When were German forces ordered to stop fighting?
4. Which groups accepted Germany's surrender?

Interpreting the Source:

5. Why do you think the Allies demanded an unconditional surrender rather than negotiating terms?
6. What does this document suggest about Germany's situation at the end of the war?
7. Why is it significant that both Western Allies and the Soviet Union are mentioned?

Critical Thinking:

8. How might German soldiers and civilians have felt upon hearing about the surrender?
9. Why do you think May 8 is celebrated as V-E Day, even though the document was signed on May 7?
10. How did Germany's surrender change the course of world history?

TEACHER PAGE

1. Alfred Jodl
2. It means surrendering completely without conditions or negotiations
3. 23:01 hours on May 8, 1945
4. The Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command
5. To ensure total control and prevent Germany from continuing conflict
6. Germany was defeated and had no power to negotiate
7. It shows cooperation between major Allied powers despite differences
8. Answers may vary (relief, fear, uncertainty, defeat)
9. The Instrument of Surrender ordered German forces to “cease all active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on May 8 and to remain in the positions occupied at that time”.
10. It ended WWII in Europe and led to major political and global changes