

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## D-Day 80th anniversary 6 June 2024

The 80th anniversary of the allied invasion of Normandy in France will be celebrated this Thursday. Coach John looks at the historic event.



D-Day was a huge **turning point** in World War Two. Beforehand, the Allied troops had no access to Western Europe. But after this victory, they had a way to send troops to fight back against the Germans and start to free countries like France and Belgium, which had been occupied by the Nazis. Ultimately, it allowed the Allies to take the war to Germany and defeat them in Berlin.

In 1940, Germany had taken over Western Europe by force, capturing France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

To fight back and free these countries, the armies of Britain, America and Canada joined together in the largest military operation on sea, air and land ever attempted.

This operation would become known as D-Day. On June sixth 1944, thousands and thousands of American, British and Canadian troops **landed** on the beaches. Supported by aeroplanes and

ships, they managed to take control of all five of the beaches they had **targeted**. This was made easier because in the weeks ahead of the attack the Allies had **tricked** Germany into thinking they would invade a different part of the French coast. When the Allies arrived in Normandy, the Germans were unprepared.

At the time, the Nazis were also locked in desperate fighting on the Eastern Front against the Soviet Union, what is today Russia and the countries around it in Eastern Europe. After D-Day, the Nazis had to **split** their armies between two fronts, the Eastern Front against the Soviet Union and the Western Front against the other allies.

This weakened their forces and **sped up** the end of the war.

Below is the transcript of the announcement of D-Day on the BBC. Listen [here](#)

*This is the BBC Home Service - and here is a special bulletin read by John Snagge. D-Day has come. Early this morning the Allies began the assault on the north-western face of Hitler's European fortress. The first official news came just after half-past nine, when Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force issued Communique Number One. This said: 'Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France'.*

**Adapted from a BBC [report](#) by ECP coach**



**John Hird**

## Word list

**turning point: (n)** a point at which an important change takes place, a critical point

**to land: (v)** to go or come ashore from a ship or boat

**to target: (v)** to direct toward a target and/or an objective

**to trick: (v)** to deceive

**to split: (v)** to divide and split

**to speed up: (v)** to increase the rate of speed of (something or someone)

**wireless: (n)** Old name for a radio. Also, having no wire **(adj)**

**to get back: (v)** to recover or retrieve, to return, esp to a former position or activity

**dire: (adj)** causing or involving great fear or suffering; terrible, indicating trouble, disaster, urgent; desperate

## Let's chat about that!

1. Summarise the texts (*To answer the questions you will need to read both texts on pages 1 and 2*)
2. Who were the Nazis fighting on the 'Eastern Front'?
3. Why is it called D-Day?
4. What was the military codename for D-Day?
5. What is the word that Peter (who remembers hearing about D-Day when he was a child) says was used for the radio in 1944?
6. What purpose does an anniversary like D-Day serve?
7. Listen to the [original BBC announcement of D-Day](#). How does the English sound?

## AN INTERVIEW WITH A YOUNG EYEWITNESS OF D-DAY

An eye-witness called Peter (who was 7 years old in 1944) tells us about hearing about the success of D-Day.

Peter recalls hearing about the success of the D-Day invasions.

**Peter:** I was seven and a half and my brother was six and a half, but I remember it because we were playing in the garden and my mother called me and my brother in. It was the most peculiar situation because I had never seen my mother cry and there were tears rolling down her cheeks, and it wasn't proper crying but there were tears there and I wondered what on earth was going on. But she put her arm around me and I was on that side, like that she put her arm around my brother and she said, 'I want you to remember this day for the rest of your lives.' I subsequently discovered why, because she explained that she had just heard on the radio, or the **wireless** as it was, that the Allies

had landed in France and she believed like many people, it was the beginning of the end.

**Narrator:** Did you know? The military code name for D-Day was Operation Neptune, which was part of the bigger Operation Overlord.

D-Day is actually a general term for the start date of any military operation. The D stands for day. It is often used when the exact start date is either secret or not yet known.

That means there were lots of D-Days during the war but this one became the most important.

Representing the moment the Allies managed to **get back** part of Western Europe for the first time since it had been captured by the Germans.

However, while D-Day was a key moment in the war and a high point for the Allies, the situation in Europe was still **dire**. Many countries were still under Nazi rule and millions of Jewish people had already been persecuted.

The success at D-Day and the possible end of the war could not come soon enough.

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