NAME DATE CLASS

# Biography Activity

## World War II and the Holocaust

### Hideki Tōjō (1884–1946)

Hideki Tōjō was born in Japan and entered the Japanese military as a young man. He earned respect for his work both on and off the battlefield, and in 1938 he was appointed Japan’s vice-minister of war. Two years later he became head of the war department.

In 1941, Tōjō became the prime minister, ruling Japan largely as a dictator. Hirohito still reigned as emperor, but in practice he had very little power. Tōjō ordered successful attacks on Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and many islands of the eastern Pacific, and led the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. However, by 1944 Japan was losing territory, and it was clear that Tōjō’s strategy was no longer working.

Following Japan’s surrender in 1945, Tōjō was charged with war crimes, found guilty by an international court, and executed in 1946.

**1. Making Inferences** After Tōjō’s attack on Pearl Harbor, he began to have less military success. Why might this have been the case?

**2. Constructing Arguments** While Tōjō was tried and put to death for his role in World War II, Japan’s emperor, Hirohito, was not punished. Do you think the difference in penalties was reasonable? Why or why not?