



**THE HISTORY CHANNEL.**



## **Study Guide for *Band of Brothers* – Episode 10: Points**

**INTRO:** *Band of Brothers* is a ten-part video series dramatizing the history of one company of American paratroopers in World War Two—E Company, 506<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, known as “Easy Company.” Although the company’s first experience in real combat did not come until June 1944 ( D-Day), this exemplary group fought in some of the war’s most harrowing battles. *Band of Brothers* depicts not only the heroism of their exploits but also the extraordinary bond among men formed in the crucible of war.

In this final episode, Easy Company enters the abandoned Bavarian town of Berchtesgaden, formerly the home of the top officers of the Third Reich, and then takes Hitler’s mountaintop fortress, known as “Eagle’s Nest.” The balance of the episode turns to what happened after that, as the soldier’s awaited the war’s end. Amid much talk about returning to the United States, the company receives word it is soon to be redeployed in the Pacific. Many men compare the “points” they have accumulated in battle to see who has enough to go home, but the Japanese surrender ends up terminating the war before the company is shipped out. A final vignette summarizes what happened to the men after the war.

**CURRICULUM LINKS:** *Band of Brothers* can be used in history classes.

**NOTE TO EDUCATORS:** *Band of Brothers* is appropriate as a supplement to units on World War Two, not as a substitute for material providing a more general explanation of the war’s causes, effects, and greater historical significance. As with war itself, it contains graphic violence and language; it is not for the squeamish. Mature senior high school students, however, will find in it a powerful evocation of the challenges of war and the experience of U.S. soldiers in the final phase of the European theatre.

**STANDARDS:** *Band of Brothers* fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5-12: chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretations.

### **PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES:**

*Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war’s many facets. Topics such as the war’s origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, and the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war’s major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war’s progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?



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### CRITICAL VIEWING QUESTIONS:

1. What was the meaning of the title of this final episode, Points?
2. In the scene where the SS officer surrenders to Maj. Winters, he says, “I wonder what will happen to men like you and me when there are no more wars.” What do you think he is imagining?
3. Why does Maj. Winters allow the German colonel to keep his weapon?
4. When Darrell “Shifty” Powers goes to say goodbye to Maj. Winters, he says, “Back home in Virginia, I don’t rightly know how I’m going to explain all this.” What is he referring to? Why is it a problem for him?
5. The pent-up frustration of the war leads the soldiers into some reckless and, in some cases, extralegal behavior. Which of the men appear to deal well with the situation and which appear not to? Why is their situation so difficult at that point, especially given vastly improved conditions they are in?
6. What is the significance of the formal speech that the German officer makes to his soldiers? How is meant to reflect on the war as a whole?
7. Why does Maj. Winters request an immediate transfer to the Pacific? Why is his request denied?

### ADVANCED VIEWING QUESTIONS:

1. What are the major themes of this final episode? What messages or conclusions does this episode end with?
2. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What’s the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
3. There are almost no women in *Band of Brothers*. Women, however, were affected by World War Two as much as men were. American women worked in the war industries in the United States and hundreds of thousands served in the women’s divisions of the U.S. armed forces. What is the effect of focusing on the war as essentially a contest fought by male military combatants? What aspects of the war does this leave out?
4. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?
5. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel’s on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?



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### NAMES:

Richard Winters  
Lewis Nixon  
Donald Malarkey  
Lynn “Buck” Compton  
William Guarnere  
Joseph Liebgott  
Edward “Babe” Heffron  
Joseph Toye  
Joseph Ramirez  
Darrell “Shifty” Powers  
Frank Perconte  
Harry Welsh  
Ronald Spiers

### EXTENDED ACTIVITIES:

Sending and receiving letters was one of the most important ways soldiers coped with the loneliness and fear of war and with the pain of missing loved ones. For historians, such letters mix personal stories with important firsthand accounts of the war’s major (and minor) developments. Imagine you were a member of Easy Company; write a letter (or several) to a loved one back home, describing your experience in Berchtesgaden.

### RESOURCES - WEBSITES:

<http://www.hbo.com/band/landing/currahee.html> - HBO.com’s Band of Brothers website

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/wwii.htm> - World War Two Documents: The Avalon Project of the Yale Law School

[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/lessons/powers\\_of\\_persuasion/powers\\_of\\_persuasion.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion.html) - Powers of Persuasion: Poster Art of World War II – On-line Educational Program of the National Archives

### RESOURCES - BOOKS:

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York, 1992)

David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (1999)