

Knowledge Organiser World War Two

Glossary

1	Appeasement	Making concessions to avoid conflict.
2	Nazis	A German political party who believed in the supremacy of the Germanic peoples.
3	Blitz	Short for 'Blitzkrieg' or 'lightning war', an intense bombing attack.
4	Evacuation	Remove from a place of danger to somewhere safe
5	RAF	Short for the 'Royal Air Force'—the British air force
6	Luftwaffe	The German Air Force
7	Axis	also known as "Rome–Berlin–Tokyo Axis", were the nations that fought in World War II against the Allies.
8	Allies	The Allied powers were against the Axis powers

Life in Germany following the First World War

After World War One ended in 1918, Germany had to give up land and was banned from having armed forces.

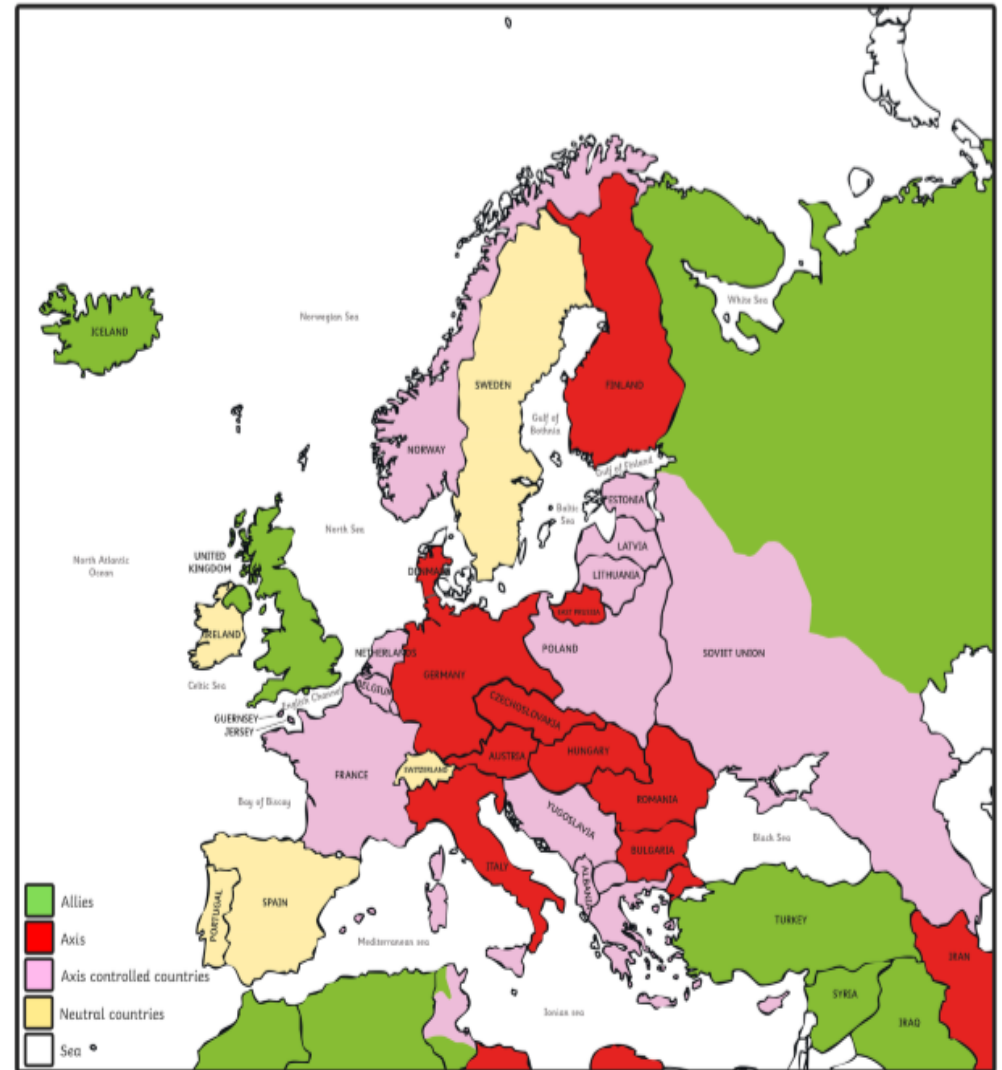
In 1933 the German people voted for a leader named Adolf Hitler, who led a political party in Germany called the National Socialists or Nazis. Hitler promised to make his country great again and quickly began to arm Germany again and to seize land from other countries.



Appeasement

During the 1930s, Britain and France followed a policy of appeasement - they gave Hitler what he wanted in order to keep the peace. But why?:

- The British public had made clear they wanted to avoid war.
- Britain and France had been following a policy of disarmament so felt weakened militarily.
- The Great Depression had affected western nations, meaning France and Britain weren't economically strong enough to finance a war.
- The League of Nations supposed to handle such issues (ultimately proved ineffective).



Key Dates

- 1933: Hitler comes to power
- 1938: Hitler and Chamberlain sign Munich agreement
- September 1 1939: Germany invades Poland.
- September 3 1939: France and Great Britain declare war on Germany
- May 1940: The evacuation of Dunkirk
- September 1940: The Blitz begins
- July 1940: Battle of Britain begins
- June 1941: Germany invades Russia
- December 1941: Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. The USA enters the war.
- June 1944: D-Day landings in Normandy
- May 7 1945: Germany surrenders. Victory in Europe for the Allies.
- August 1945: The USA drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- September 1945: Japan surrenders marking the end of the War.

The Blitz

The heavy and frequent bombing attacks on London and other cities was known as the 'Blitz'. Night after night, from September 1940 until May 1941, German bombers attacked British cities, ports and industrial areas. London was bombed every day and night, bar one, for 11 weeks. One third of London was destroyed.



Battle of Britain

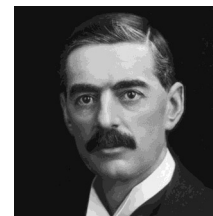
In the summer of 1940, Germany was winning the war and the British army had been driven out of France by the German Nazis.



Germany knew that to win the war they'd need to invade Britain and the best way of doing that was from the sky. The German air force (called the Luftwaffe) wanted to destroy Britain's aeroplanes, so that they could have a clear route in. So, the Germans began bombing British airfields and factories in the early summer of 1940.

Britain dramatically increased production of planes like Spitfires and Hurricanes, and improved their military tactics. The RAF were able to defend Britain from wave after wave of German air attacks.

Key leaders



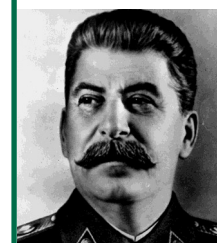
Neville Chamberlain—British Prime Minister who declared war on Germany. Was criticised for his policy of appeasement towards Hitler.



Winston Churchill—British Prime Minister following the resignation of Chamberlain. Led Britain to victory in the Second World War. Famous for his inspiring speeches.



Adolf Hitler—Founder of the Nazi party, a fascist movement promoting German pride and anti-Semitism. Became Führer (leader) of Germany and initiated World War Two.



Joseph Stalin—Stalin's name meant "man of steel". He was the supreme ruler of the Soviet Union during the War. He initially made a pact with Hitler to remain neutral, however joined the Allied forces after this was broken with the invasion of Russia by Germany.

Dunkirk

During May and June 1940, the Germans invaded France to take control of the country. The British and French retreated to the French port of Dunkirk. Churchill then ordered any ship or boat available to head across the English Channel to pick up the soldiers and bring them back to the UK. This rescue mission is called the Dunkirk evacuation.

Links to Other Units

You should already know:

- The countries of Europe
- Technology used in conflict over time
- What prejudice and discrimination mean
- The outcomes and impact of the First World War