World War II
1939-1942

Essential Questions:
What caused World War II?
What were the major events during World War II from 1939 to 1942?
In the 1930s, events throughout the world led to conditions that started World War II. High unemployment, desperation, and feelings of betrayal led to the rise of totalitarian dictators. Fascist dictators Mussolini & Hitler threatened to conquer new territories for Italy & Germany.
In the 1930s, events throughout the world led to conditions that started World War II. Extreme nationalism & a need for raw materials led to a desire to expand in Japan under Hideki Tojo.
By the 1930s, the world was moving towards another war but few nations were in a position to prevent war.

Britain & France were the leaders of the League of Nations but both wanted to avoid another war.

The USA was focused on the depression & wanted to avoid foreign affairs.
Japan, Italy, & Germany aggressively expanded in Africa, Asia, & Europe

In 1936, Germany, Italy, & Japan formed an alliance called the Axis Coalition
In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria in order to seize its iron & coal mines.

In 1937, Japan conquered northern China & killed 300,000 unarmed soldiers & civilians during the “Rape of Nanjing.”

Japan’s armed forces invaded Manchuria and other parts of China with the aim of exploiting China’s natural resources.

**Japanese Aggression**

- **Japan and its colonies, 1930**
- **Taken over by Japan, 1931–1939**

1936 Military leaders take control of the government.
In 1935, Mussolini began his campaign to create an Italian Empire by invading Ethiopia. The Italian army easily defeated the Ethiopians. Ethiopian soldiers defending their country from the Italian military.
Critical Thinking Decision #1: How should the League of Nations respond?
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The League of Nations condemned Japanese & Italian aggression but did nothing to stop the attacks in an effort to maintain peace in the world.
In 1935, Hitler defied the terms of the Treaty of Versailles & expanded the size of the German military.

In 1936, Hitler moved his army to the Rhineland.

Both times, the League of Nations refused to stop Hitler in order to keep peace in Europe.

The failure of the League of Nations to stop Italy or Japan, encouraged Hitler to expand Germany too.
In 1938, Hitler annexed Austria

Next, Hitler demanded that the western border of Czechoslovakia, an area known as the Sudetenland, be given to Germany

**German Aggression**

- Germany, 1933
- Taken over by Germany, 1935–1939

The failure of the League of Nations to stop Italy or Japan, encouraged Hitler to expand Germany too.
Critical Thinking Decision #2: How should the League of Nations respond?

1. 1933 Hitler gains power.

2. 1936 Germany defies 1919 treaty by returning troops to its Rhineland territory.

German Aggression

- Germany, 1933
- Taken over by Germany, 1935–1939

Legend:

0 250 500 miles
0 250 500 kilometers

Map showing Europe with shaded areas indicating German aggression from 1933 to 1939.
Critical Thinking Decision #2: How should the League of Nations respond?

The Decision: B

In 1938, leaders from England & France met with Hitler & Mussolini at the Munich Conference in order to work out an agreement to avoid war.

Germany was allowed to keep the Sudetenland if Hitler promised to stop expanding.
After the Munich Pact, British Prime Minister declared he had gained “peace for our time”

Britain & France used *appeasement* with Hitler: they gave in to his demands in order to avoid war

Six months after the Munich Conference, Hitler broke his promise & annexed all of Czechoslovakia
In 1939, Hitler demanded that western Poland be returned to Germany but he did not want to provoke a war with the Soviet Union.
Stalin & Hitler agreed to the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, promising never to attack each other.

Secretly, Germany & the USSR agreed to divide Poland.
On September 1, 1939, Hitler ordered the German military to attack Poland.
Critical Thinking Decision #3: How should Britain & France respond?

1. 1933 Hitler gains power.
2. 1936 Germany defies 1919 treaty by returning troops to its Rhineland territory.
Critical Thinking Decision #3: How should Britain & France respond?

The Decision:

D

On September 3, 1939, Britain & France declared war on Germany…World War II had begun
World War II was a two “theater” war with fighting taking place in Europe & in the Pacific
The Allies & Axis Powers converted to total war for the second time in 20 years.
When World War II began, Germany used a “lightning war” strategy called blitzkrieg that relied on fast, strong attacks using air raids, artillery, & tanks.
By 1940, Germany conquered Poland, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, & France
When France fell to the Nazis, Britain was the only nation at war with Germany in 1940. Germany began a massive bombing campaign using its air force called the Battle of Britain.
The British air force fought German planes aided by radar & the ability to crack German codes.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill vowed that the British would “never surrender.”

After 8 months, Hitler called off the attacks & focused on Eastern Europe.
The United States vowed to remain neutral when World War II began.
After the fall of France & attack on Britain, the U.S. began selling war supplies to the Allied Powers.

- China, Australia, New Zealand, India: $1,394,000,000
- Africa, Middle East, Mediterranean Area: $1,814,000,000
- U.S.S.R.: $2,983,000,000
- United Kingdom: $5,227,000,000
In 1940, Italian & German troops moved to take control of North Africa.

Meanwhile, Hitler took control of the Balkans.
In 1941, Hitler broke the Nazi-Soviet Pact & invaded the Soviet Union.
By 1942, the Axis Powers controlled most of Europe & North Africa but were unable to defeat Britain & the USSR.
Meanwhile, the Japanese were expanding in throughout the Pacific.
Critical Thinking Decision #4: How should the United States respond?
From 1939 to 1941, Japan conquered European colonies in Asia including French Indochina. Japan threatened to take the U.S. colonies of Guam & the Philippines.

Critical Thinking Decision #4: How should the United States respond?

The Decision: C
In 1941, the United States cut off sales of iron & oil with the Japanese. Japan interpreted the embargo as interfering with their right to expand.
The surprise attack crippled the U.S. navy & killed 2,300 Americans.

After the attack, the USA declared war on the Axis Powers & entered WWII.

On December 7, 1941 Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.
Avenge Pearl Harbor

...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...

Remember Dec. 7th!
After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese took the Philippines & threatened to take India and Australia.

By 1942, Japan controlled a large empire in the Pacific, “Asia for the Asiatics”
From 1939 to 1942, the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) dominated Europe, North Africa, & Asia. But, 1942 was a turning point year for the Allies who were able to win the war by 1945.