




World War II



Overview

World War II

World War II, also called **Second World War**, is a conflict that involved virtually every part of the world during the years 1939–45. The principal aggressors were the Axis powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—and the Allies—France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, China. It came 20 years after the First World War that ranged from 1914 to 1918. The 40,000,000–50,000,000 deaths incurred in World War II make it the bloodiest conflict, as well as the largest war, in history.



How the war began

Adolf Hitler, had plans to take over other countries. In March 1938, Germany invaded and **annexed** Austria, which made other countries worried. On 29th September 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders signed a treaty called the Munich Agreement. This allowed Hitler to **annex** the Sudetenland (an area of **Czechoslovakia**) if he agreed not to invade anywhere else. However, in August 1939, Hitler broke the agreement and invaded the rest of **Czechoslovakia**, followed by Poland on 1st September. Britain, France and Poland had made a pact to support each other, so Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Evacuation

During World War II, over 3.5 million children, along with some of their teachers and helpers, mothers with very young children, pregnant women and people with disabilities, were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, where it was believed they would be safer from bombing. All evacuees had to take their gas mask, ration book and identity card. When they reached their destination, a billeting officer would arrange a host family for them.

Evacuation happened in waves, beginning on 1st September 1939. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain and at the start of the Blitz.

Rationing

Supply ships were targeted by German bombers and it was necessary to conserve as much food as possible. Rationing meant that each person was only allowed a fixed amount of foods. Ration books were issued, with coupons that showed people how much of each item they were allowed. Shopkeepers would remove or stamp the coupons when they were used. People were also encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' and grow as much of their own food as possible.

Petrol, soap, clothing and timber were also in short supply. Clothing ration books were issued and people were encouraged to 'make do and mend'.

Holocaust

The Holocaust is the term for the killing of over six million Jewish people before and during World War II, organised by Adolf Hitler and the **Nazi party**. Even before the war, they wanted to blame the Jews for the problems in Germany and used **propaganda** to promote widespread public hatred of them. Jewish people were openly bullied, persecuted, abused and discriminated against.

Many Jews were sent to concentration camps where they were forced to work like slaves. Many died through infection, starvation or exhaustion. Others were sent to death camps where they were killed in gas chambers. This form of mass killing is called genocide.

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Key Vocabulary	
Allies	
Axis	
Nazi Party	
Propaganda	
Invade	
Occupation	
Rationing	
Additional Vocabulary	Key Dates