

Subject : Junior Cycle History
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LESSON 19
**The Cause and Course of World
War II**

Learning Intentions

1. Understand how Allied and Axis actions contributed to the outbreak of WW2.
2. Understand the course of WW2.
3. Understand the outcome and consequences of WW2.

3.4 discuss the general causes and course of World War One or World War Two and the immediate and long-term impact of the war on people and nations.

Key words - Define these

Appeasement

Blitzkrieg

Phoney War

The Blitz

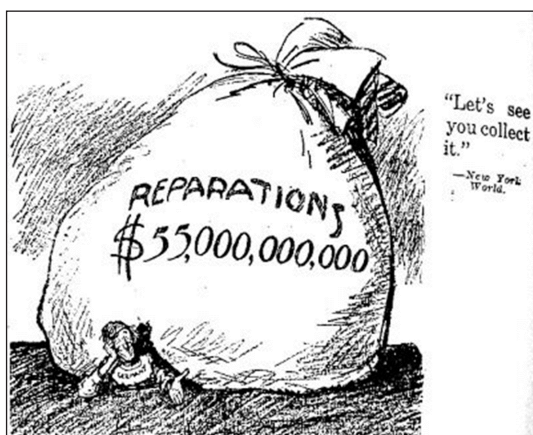
Scorched Earth Policy

Luftwaffe

D-Day

Causes of the Second World War

1. **The Treaty of Versailles** was a peace treaty that the Allies set after WW1. Its terms were extremely harsh on Germany.
 - **Payment of reparations:** Germany had to pay the cost for the damage of the war, causing severe economic hardship in Germany.
 - **Loss of land and population:** Germany surrendered its colonies, it also lost land and population to Poland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and France.



Reparations cartoon



Land lost by Germany

- **War guilt clause:** This completely blamed Germany for the outbreak of WW1.
- **Military restrictions:** The German military was limited to 100,000 men, they could have no air force, armored vehicles, and their navy was limited to 6 ships. This was so Germany could not start another war.

2. Hitler dismantles the Treaty of Versailles

- Hitler wanted to **take back land that Germany had lost** to other countries and unite German speaking peoples in Austria and the Sudetenland.
- Hitler wanted to **conquer Lebensraum (living space)** for Germans. He wanted to conquer Slavic peoples in Eastern Europe so Germans could live their instead.



- **Hitler rearmed the German military** as he knew that this would be needed to achieve his aims.
- Hitler also sent troops to **occupy the Rhineland**. This was a demilitarized zone which bordered France and Germany.



3. Allied Appeasement

- Appeasement was when the Allies would give in to Hitler's demands to prevent war. Hitler began to take advantage of this policy as he saw it as a weakness of the Allies.

4. The Munich Conference (1938)

- Hitler demanded that the German speaking region known as **Sudetenland** be given to Germany.
- When Czechoslovakia refused, the Allies held the Munich Conference to resolve the issue and eventually forced Czechoslovakia to hand over the Sudetenland to Germany.
- British Prime **Minister Neville Chamberlain** claimed that they had secured 'Peace in our time.'



British PM Neville Chamberlain

5. Japanese aggression in the Far East

- In the far east, Japan were **expanding their empire** & conquered large parts of China, Mongolia and many islands in the Pacific.
- Japan also joined the Axis powers (**Germany and Italy**).
- As a result of Japanese aggression, the USA placed **economic sanctions** (penalties) on Japan.
- In response to these sanctions, Japan attacked the US naval **Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii**. Japan wanted to knock the US navy out of the Pacific.



Japan attacks US naval fleet Pearl Harbour

The Outbreak of war in Europe

1. The outbreak of war

- On 1 September 1939, **German forces invaded Poland** from the west. Using Blitzkrieg tactics, Germany conquered Poland within five weeks.
- Russia also invaded from the east. Between them, they divided up Poland and signed a non-aggression pact.



The German and Soviet invasion of Poland

What was Blitzkrieg?

1. The **German air force (Luftwaffe)** bombed defensive positions.
2. **German tank (panzer) divisions** would quickly advance and overrun disorientated troops straight after bombing had finished.
3. **Motorized German infantry** advanced alongside tank divisions to mop up any further resistance.



The outbreak of war in Europe

- **The Phoney war** followed the conquest of Poland. This was a period of peace.
- Hitler then **conquered Denmark and Norway** on 9 April 1940. Norway provided a route to Swedish **iron ore** which was vital for the German war effort.
- Hitler began his **conquest of France, Belgium and Holland** on 10 May 1940. British and French troops were pushed back to the beaches of Dunkirk, France



- British and French troops were stranded the beaches of Dunkirk. Between May 26th and June 4th, The Royal Navy and civilian boats rescued over 300,000 troops from the beaches (**Operation Dynamo**).
- France surrendered to Nazi Germany on 22 June 1940. France was divided and the south was ruled by a French government under German control (**Vichy France**).
- The north was ruled by Germany. By this stage, the Nazis controlled western Europe.



Leaflets dropped to surrounded allied troops at Dunkirk

Operation Sealion - The Battle of Britain

- After the fall of France, Hitler set his sights on Britain. He first had to defeat the **Royal Air Force (RAF)**.
- The German air force (**Luftwaffe**) attacked RAF airfield and radar stations before turning their attention to British cities. Between August and September 1940, British cities were bombed daily during **The Blitz**.
- Over 40,000 British civilians were killed, and many cities were badly damaged. Despite this, Hitler had failed to destroy the RAF and **called off the invasion of Britain**.



The RAF during the Battle of Britain

Operation Barbarossa - The German invasion of the USSR

- In June 1941, Hitler invaded the USSR (**Operation Barbarossa**).
- Hitler hated Communism and wanted to seize *Lebensraum* (living space) for German people. He also wanted to eradicate the Slavic race and enslave a labour force.
- Using blitzkrieg tactics, the German advance was swift.
- As Red Army troops retreated, Stalin ordered a **scorched earth policy** (anything useful such as crops, bridges, communication lines) were burnt so German forces could not use them.



The German advance into the USSR



German troops during operation Barbarossa

- **The harsh Russian winter** severely slowed the German advance as temperatures dropped to -40 degrees.
- Vehicles seized and **German soldiers froze to death** as they lacked winter clothing.
- The Red Army counter attacked and prevented the Germans from capturing Moscow and Leningrad.



Freezing German soldiers

- In late summer 1942, Hitler ordered an attack on **Stalingrad**.
- Led by Marshall Zhukov, the Red Army were determined to hold the city at all costs.
- As winter approached in 1942, Zhukov launched a **pincer movement** and trapped the German army in Stalingrad. In February 1943, the German army was forced to surrender.
- This was a **major turning point in the war**.

Recap exercise 19.1

Q1. Explain three causes of the Second World War.

Q2. What was meant by 'blitzkrieg'?

Q3. Why did Hitler call off the invasion of Britain?

Q4. Why did Hitler want to conquer the USSR?

Q5. Explain one reason why the Germans failed to conquer the USSR?

America enters the war

- American and Japanese relations had worsened as a result Japanese aggression in the far East.
- Japan attacked the US Pacific naval fleet in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii on 7 December 1941. The **US declared war on Japan** and entered the war on the Allied side.
- American entry was a huge boost for the Allies. The Americans began **liberating Pacific islands** that were under Japanese control.



US Marines on the Pacific island of Tarawa

The Battle of the Atlantic

- US merchant ships carried **vital supplies across the Atlantic** to help the Allied war effort.
- They were targeted by German U-boats (submarines). Convoys began escorting merchant ships for protection.
- Over 3000 Allied merchant ships were lost along with almost 30,000 allied sailors. 800 German U-boats were also sunk.



US Cargo ships heading to Europe

The war in the skies

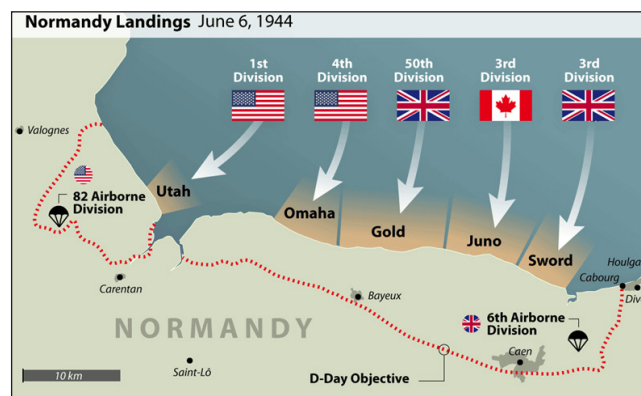
- The US Air Force and the RAF bombed German cities and industrial regions throughout the war.
- In Feb 1945, the German **city of Dresden** was firebombed for 3 days. Over **25,000 civilians were killed**. This was extremely controversial.
- The Germans developed long range rockets known as the **V-1 and V-2** rockets. They could hit British cities but were developed too late in the war.



German V-2 rocket

D-Day and the allied invasion of Europe

- On 6 June **British, American and Canadian forces** launched a joint invasion on the French coast. This invasion was codenamed **Operation Overlord** or D-Day.
- 160,000 allied troops landed along five beaches on the **Normandy coast**.
- The night before, paratroopers were dropped behind German lines. The allies fought their way across France and liberated Paris on 25 August.

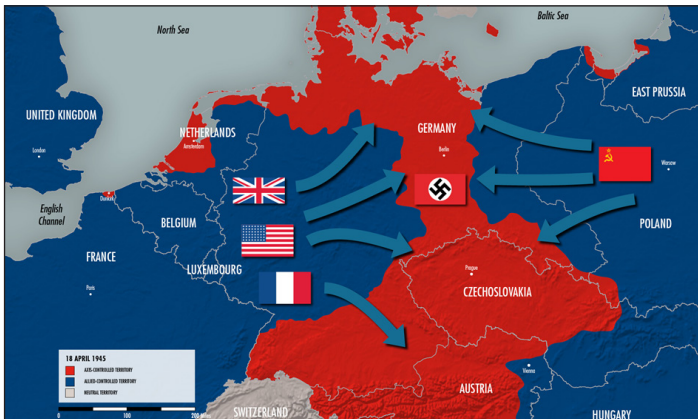


The end of war in Europe - The battle of the Bulge

- As Hitler's forces retreated from the Americans, they attempted a counter-offensive in the **Ardennes forests of Belgium**.
- This was known as the **battle of the Bulge** and was repelled by the allies despite heavy losses.
- This last-ditch attempt at pushing the Allies back failed – Allied forces would eventually push the Germans all the way back to Berlin.

The end of war in Europe

- By April 1945, Hitler and his remaining forces were hopelessly **surrounded by British, American and Russian** troops in Berlin.
- On April 30th, 1945 Hitler and his wife Eva Braun committed suicide in his bunker in Berlin to avoid capture.
- Germany surrendered just days later. This became known as **VE day (Victory Europe)** and was celebrated on 8 May.



The end of war in the Pacific

- Allied troops had been **liberating Pacific islands** from Japanese occupation since 1942.
- The Americans knew an amphibious (by boat) invasion of Japan would result in huge casualties.
- Americans decided to use their new weapon which they had developed throughout the war during the war: **The Atomic Bomb**.
- The Atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of **Hiroshima** on the 6 August 1945 and **Nagasaki** on the 9 August.



- Over 120,000 Japanese civilians were killed. Japanese emperor **Hirohito** surrendered on the 15 August 1945.
- The Second World War was over.

The Consequences of WW2

1. **60 million people died** during the Second World War.
2. Huge **destruction to towns and cities** across the world. Cities such as Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were almost completely wiped out.

