



KIBWORTH MEAD
ACADEMY

TALENT KNOWLEDGE SUCCESS

HISTORY

Year 9

WWII

Key Words

Blitz	The German bombing of Britain (and especially London) during 1940 and 1941 in order to force the British to surrender
D-Day Landings	The landing of British, American and other troops on the French coast in 1944
Dunkirk	Port where soldiers were rescued from after the fall of France in 1940
Home Front	Refers to what civilians are doing during a war which supports the actions of the military forces e.g. working in factories.
Lebensraum	Hitler's foreign policy aim of creating more 'living space' for the German people in the East e.g. Poland and Russia
Paris Peace Conference	Meeting attended by the British, French and American leaders after WWI to decide Germany's punishment
Total War	An unrestricted war e.g. many or all civilians are involved

Causes of WWII

Treaty of Versailles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Treaty of Versailles punished Germany harshly at the end of WWI by making them take full guilt for the war, pay reparations (compensation), reduce their army to 100,000, reduce their navy to 6 battleships and drastically cutting the land they owned (and the Polish Corridor cut through Germany to give Poland access to the Sea). Germans felt the Treaty was unfair (e.g. WWI began when Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia and was not totally their fault) and so many voted for Hitler to 'right the wrongs of Versailles' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Britain later saw the Treaty as too harsh and so they didn't always enforce it by stopping Hitler when he broke it.
Appeasement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeasement meant listening to Hitler's demands and giving in to the reasonable ones. It meant that when Hitler demanded the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia Britain, France and Italy discussed it at the Munich Conference and allowed Hitler to take it. It meant that Hitler was encouraged to demand more until he eventually triggered war.
Hitler's Foreign Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hitler followed an aggressive foreign policy with the aim of 'righting the wrongs of Versailles', uniting German speakers and gaining living space (lebensraum) in the East. This meant that Hitler broke the Treaty of Versailles by building up his armed forces, remilitarising the Rhineland, Anschluss with Austria and expanding into Czechoslovakia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When Hitler invaded Poland, Britain declared war as his foreign policy aims were unlimited.

Was WWII a 'Total War'?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lives of civilians were radically altered, with many women working in munitions factories or on farms (the land army), children and other vulnerable groups being evacuated and many suffering from the impact of bombing raids Propaganda suggests that the rescue of the British army from Dunkirk after the fall of France was a result of a national effort, including fishing boats and pleasure craft being used to ferry soldiers from the beaches to waiting ships; but others say the boats were forcibly taken by the navy and Dunkirk wasn't really a success because so much weapons and equipment had to be abandoned. Also, many of the rear guard weren't rescued. Churchill said that 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few' because if the pilots hadn't stopped Germany gaining control of British skies, then Britain would have been invaded by Germany.
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Key Dates

1 September 1939	The assault on Poland begins. A German battleship opens fire on the Polish garrison in Danzig (Gdansk). Simultaneously 1.5 million German troops march over the Poland border. On 2 September Chamberlain sends an ultimatum to Hitler: if he does not withdraw his forces by the following day, there will be war.
3 September 1939	Britain and France have agreed to defend Poland under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. When Germany refuses to withdraw, Britain and France declare war. On 17 September, suspecting Hitler may attack the Soviet Union, Stalin sends the Red Army to occupy eastern Poland, to protect Soviet interests and gain more influence in the region.
10 May 1940	German troops use Blitzkrieg tactics and unleash a surprise attack to storm through neutral Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands before crossing the border into northern France. The French, with most of their forces on the Maginot Line further south, are outmanoeuvred and outfought. In the ensuing battles the German Army suffer 150,000 casualties, but the Allies suffer more with 360,000 casualties. Hopelessly outgunned, the British Army retreats towards the coast.
19 May 1940	Defeated and humiliated, the Allies retreat north with their backs to the sea. They are no match for the ruthless German forces and their surrender looks inevitable, but an enormous rescue mission is undertaken to save them. Between 26 May and 4 June a fleet, ranging from battleships to pleasure boats braves the Channel to save the stranded soldiers from Dunkirk.
19 July 1940	Hitler wants to attack Britain in the summer of 1940, but before he launches a ground invasion, he must gain air superiority by destroying the Royal Air Force. With 640 fighters to combat the Luftwaffe's 2,600 fighters and bombers, up step "the few". The Luftwaffe fails to dominate British skies and, by the end of October, the threat of invasion recedes.
September 1940	5,300 tonnes of high explosives are dropped on London in just 24 nights. Tens of thousands of city children are evacuated to the countryside.
7 December 1941	Japan, allies to Germany, bomb the American fleet moored at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, in a pre-emptive knock out attack on the US in an attempt to destroy the Pacific fleet. But the raid fails, because Japan's main target, three US aircraft carriers, are at sea elsewhere and escape unscathed. US President Roosevelt declares war on Japan and Germany.
2 February 1943	With nearly two million military and civilian casualties, house-to-house fighting in Stalingrad drags on until 2 February 1943. With food and ammunition exhausted, the German commander, Friedrich Paulus, surrenders. This is a turning point in the war, and Hitler pays the price for underestimating the sheer size and determination of the Soviet forces, which begin the long push west towards Berlin.
6 June 1944	The German defences along the Atlantic Wall stretch over 1,000 miles from Biarritz in southern France to Denmark. They have no idea where the allies might strike. Taking the Germans completely by surprise, 150,000 British, Canadian and US troops land on five beaches in Normandy. Although they sustain heavy casualties, they gain a crucial beachhead – the liberation of France begins.
8 May 1945	The Red Army gradually push back the Third Reich into Germany. The Soviets evict the Germans from Poland and send troops into Romania, Hungary and the Balkans. Stalin is determined his troops will get to Berlin before the British and Americans, who are advancing from the west. As the Red Army reach Berlin, brutal fighting continues street by street and Hitler takes his life in his bunker with his newly wed wife Eva Braun. Nazi Germany is defeated.
6-9 August 1945	The Americans drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and three days later, on Nagasaki. This terrifying new weapon causes unprecedented death and destruction. Emperor Hirohito surrenders and the most destructive war in history comes to an end.