

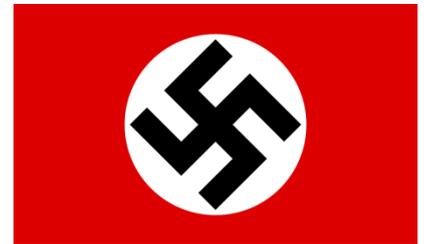
There are many **causes** of the war and some of them go back to the end of the First World War. The end of World War I and the **peace** that followed in 1919 changed the face of Europe and the **borders** of countries completely. New nations **emerged**. The countries that lost the war, **especially** Germany and Austria had to give up a lot of land. They also had to pay money to other countries for the **damages** that happened during the war.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

After the war many countries were **in debt**. The losers had problems paying **reparations** and the winners borrowed a lot of money from the United States which they could not pay back. **Inflation** in many countries left people without any **savings**. In the 1930s the **Great Depression**, starting out in the USA, **spread** to Europe and stopped the continent's **recovery**. Millions of people were out of work and **poverty** rose.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The problems after the war made the **governments** in many countries weaker and weaker. Two **movements** became more and more powerful: Communism, known as the Left, **called for** a revolution of the working class. Fascism, known as the Right, wanted a strong national government



THE AXIS AND ALLIED POWERS

Two groups of nations fought against each other during the Second World War.

During the 1930s Germany, Italy and Japan led a group of nations called the **Axis**. The leaders of these countries were dictators. They wanted their own countries to grow and others to become weaker. In the years before the beginning of World War II all three Axis powers had **strengthened** and **modernized** their armies.

In the 1930s the **Nazi Party rose** to power in Germany. In 1933 the party's leader Adolf Hitler was **appointed chancellor** and became known as der Führer. He promised to **take revenge** on the countries that had **defeated** Germany in the First World War and make Germany the most powerful country in the world. He also **claimed** that only Germans were the true **race** and wanted to **get rid of** Jews, Communists and other weaker people.

In Italy Benito Mussolini, known as the Il Duce, became the leader of the Fascist Party, which **gained** many **supporters**. He promised to bring **law and order** to the country and help **solve** its **economic** problems.



The Axis Powers **invaded** other countries and **expanded** their territory. At the beginning of the 1930s Japan **invaded Manchuria** because it had a lot of raw materials. In 1938 it attacked China and later on **expanded** to Southeast Asia. In 1935 Italy took over Ethiopia. Germany started its **conquest of foreign** territories by **invading** Austria. Italy and Germany also sent soldiers to help another dictator, Francisco Franco, in the Spanish **Civil War**.

The **Allies** were made up of a total of 50 countries. They were led by Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, China and the United States and **opposed** the Axis.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

On September 30, 1938 Great Britain, France and Germany **signed** the Munich **Agreement**. It gave Germany the right to **take over** the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia. The two Allies hoped it would **satisfy** Hitler and keep them out of the war. The **agreement**, however, was broken and Hitler not only **invaded** the Sudetenland but **took over** all of Czechoslovakia.

It was clear that Poland, on Germany's eastern **border**, would be the next **target**. Great Britain and France promised to help Poland if it were attacked. In August 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union **signed** a "non-aggression pact", in which they promised not to attack each other. Germany did this so that it would not have to fight on two fronts.

On September 1, 1939 Germany **invaded** Poland and World War II had begun.

WORDS

- **agreement** = when two people, groups or countries promise to do something
- **Allies** = the countries that fought against Germany in the Second World War
- **appoint** = to choose someone for apposition or job
- **Axis**= the countries who fought against the Allies in World War II
- **border** = the line that separates two or more countries
- **call for** = here: want to have
- **cause** = reason
- **chancellor** = the leader of a government in some countries
- **Civil War** = a war in which groups of the same country fight against each other
- **claim** = declare , to say in public
- **conquest** = take-over ; to take control of a region by fighting
- **damage** = the harm that you do to something or someone
- **defeat** = to win against
- **economic** = everything connected with business and the economy; the buying and selling of goods
- **emerge** = come up
- **especially** = above all
- **expand** = grow
- **foreign** = from another country
- **gain** = get
- **get rid of** = lowered
- **government** = the group of people who rule a country
- **Great Depression** = period after the stock market crash of 1929 ; the time before the Second World War in which millions of people all over the world were out of work and many were poor
- **in debt** = when you owe someone money
- **inflation** = when prices go up and the value of money goes down
- **invade** = to take control of a country by sending an army into it
- **law and order** = situation in which people respect the law and follow the rules of a country
- **Manchuria** = part of China
- **modernize** = to make more modern
- **movement** = group of people who believe the same things and have the same ideas
- **Nazi** = short word for National Socialist
- **oppose** = to be against
- **peace** = opposite of "war"
- **poverty** = the situation of being poor
- **race** = group of people who have the same skin color
- **recovery** = to get better
- **reparation** = money which a country that loses a war has to pay for all the deaths and damages that it was caused
- **rise -rose** = go up, grow
- **satisfy** = to please, make happy
- **savings** = all the money that you have saved
- **sign** = to write your name on a document
- **solve** = work out, find an answer to a problem
- **spread** = to go to
- **strengthen** = to make stronger
- **supporter** = people who follow a leader and his group
- **take over** = to take control of
- **take revenge** = something you do to punish someone who has hurt you
- **target** = object of attack