

- **although** =while
- **artillery** = large guns that are moved on wheels or fixed in a place
- **attack** = to use guns and bombs against an enemy in a war
- **attention** =concentration, interest
- **battle** = a fight between armies as a part of a war
- **battle line** = the line that separates two fighting armies
- **capture** = to catch a person and keep them as prisoner
- **conquer** = to get control of land by fighting
- **counterattack** = an attack you make against someone who has attacked you in a war
- **defeat** = to lose against
- **defend** =protect, guard
- **destroy** =to ruin completely so that you cannot use something again
- **enemy** = the country you are fighting against
- **expand** = to grow, get bigger
- **factory** = building where products are produced
- **food supplies** = the food people need to survive
- **forces** = here: soldiers
- **frostbite** = when it is very very cold and your fingers and toes swell and become darker; sometimes they even fall off
- **goods** = things that are produced so that they can be sold
- **harsh** = very bad and difficult
- **head for** = to go for
- **invasion** = when you enter a country with an army
- **population** = the people who live in a country
- **retreat** = to move back
- **sign** = to put your name on a document
- **smash** = here: to break through very fast
- **strengthen** = to make stronger
- **suburb** = an area of the city which is farther away from the centre
- **suffer** =to feel pain
- **surround** = to be all around
- **tank** = a heavy military car that has a large gun and moves on a belt
- **treaty** = a written paper that two countries sign
- **turning point** =here: the time when one army starts winning battles and the other starts losing them
- **victory** = if you win against someone
- **weapons** = things that you use to fight with in a war
- **wheat** =food plant that white bread is made from
- **withdraw** = to move back

Although Adolf Hitler **conquered** many western European countries during the first years of the war he saw the Soviet Union as his main **enemy**. He was afraid that the Russians would **expand** towards central Europe and he also wanted



control the Soviet **wheat** and oil fields. Hitler **signed** a **treaty** with dictator Joseph Stalin in 1939 that would keep the Soviet Union out of the war while he overran western Europe.

On June 22, 1941 Germany started Operation Barbarossa—the **invasion** of the Soviet Union. The **attack** surprised the Soviets and German **tanks smashed** through the Russian **battle lines**. In the first few weeks hundreds of thousands of **enemy** soldiers were **captured**. As the Germans went forward, the Soviet **population destroyed factories**, dams, railroads, **food supplies** and other things that might help the Germans. The Germans were **heading** for a fast **victory** but then they started making mistakes. Hitler's generals wanted to **capture** Moscow before the winter started but Hitler himself had a different plan. He ordered the German army to wait until new **forces** came to help them. This gave the Soviets time to **strengthen** their army. By December 1941 the Germans had **surrounded** Leningrad and were in the **suburbs** of Moscow. But then a **harsh** winter set in early and temperatures dropped to -40° C . German troops did not have enough clothing and they **suffered** from **frostbite**. **Tanks** and other **weapons** broke down in the bitter cold. The Russians started a **counterattack** and the German army had to **retreat**.

Although Hitler had lost many soldiers and a lot of Russian territory his army was still strong enough to continue fighting. In the summer of 1942 he turned his **attention** to the Caucasus, an oil-rich mountainous region in southern Russia. In August Hitler **attacked** Stalingrad. It was the biggest **battle** of World War II. German **artillery destroyed** the city but the Russians **defended** the city with what they had left. When winter began they **counterattacked** and drove the Germans back. After having lost more than 200,000 men the German army **surrendered** at the end of January 1943. The **defeat** was the worst that Nazi Germany **suffered** and Stalingrad became a **turning point** in the war.

The Germans had to **withdraw** from the Caucasus and as time went on the Soviets drove them out of their whole country. From this point on the Russian army got stronger and stronger and started their march towards the west.