

| TURTON SCHOOL HISTORY DEPARTMENT – KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – WW2 | | |
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| Key events | Key people | Historical terms |
| <p>1 September 1939: At 4.45am on 1 September 1939, the assault on Poland begins. On 2 September Chamberlain sends an ultimatum to Hitler: if he does not withdraw his forces by the following day, there will be war.</p> <p>3 September 1939: Britain and France have agreed to defend Poland under the terms of the 1918 Treaty of Versailles. When Germany refuses to withdraw, Britain and France declare war.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>19 May 1940: Defeated and humiliated, around 340,000 men, including 121,000 French and Belgian soldiers, 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 ragtag fleet, ranging from battleships to pleasure boats braves the Channel to save the stranded soldiers. The incredible courage of the British civilians becomes known as 'Dunkirk spirit'.</p> <p>19 July 1940: Hitler wants to attack Britain in the summer of 1940 (Operation Sealion), but before he launches a ground invasion, he must gain air superiority by destroying the Royal Air Force; using Spitfires and Hurricanes. In July the RAF has only 640 fighters to combat the Luftwaffe’s 2,600 fighters and bombers. But up step "the few". The RAF puts up an incredible fight and, over the course of the battle, downs 1,887 German planes. The Luftwaffe fails to dominate British skies and, by the end of October, the threat of invasion recedes.</p> <p>7 September 1940: 43,000 civilians are killed and many wounded. In September 5,300 tonnes of high explosives are dropped on London in just 24 nights; the Blitz. Tens of thousands of city children are evacuated to the countryside. Industrial cites and ports across the country including Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Southampton are attacked. German bombers drop 500 tonnes of high explosives and nearly 900 incendiary bombs on Coventry in 10 hours devastating much of the city and all but destroying the Cathedral.</p> <p>22 June 1941: The Germans use Blitzkrieg tactics and one week into the invasion the Soviets suffer 150,000 casualties. By December the Germans reach the outskirts of Moscow. But their supply lines are stretched and Stalin is just as ruthlessly determined as Hitler. Aided by the harsh winter, the Soviet army holds the Germans at bay.</p> <p>7 December 1941: Japan, allies to Germany, bombs the American fleet moored at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Japan feels embittered by a US oil embargo imposed in August 1941 to stop its expansionist ambitions in China. In response it launches 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.</p> <p>6 June 1944: British, Canadian and US troops train in southern England for a year before they are given the green light to invade. The German defences 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 on D-Day.</p> <p>8 May 1945: 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.</p> <p>6-9 August 1945: With her allies Germany and Italy both defeated, Japan fights on without any hope of staving off a similar fate. Churchill and Truman demand Japan’s unconditional surrender. When the Japanese refuse, 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.</p> | <p>Adolf Hitler: Dictator of Nazi Germany from 1933-45. Once he came to power, Hitler set about doing exactly what he had said he would do in Mein Kampf. During the 1930s began to challenge the Treaty of Versailles and adapt an aggressive foreign policy, which led to war. He did this by completing the following steps:</p> <p>1935 - Rearmament</p> <p>1936 - Remilitarisation of the Rhineland</p> <p>1938 - Anschluss with Austria</p> <p>1938 - The annexation of the Sudetenland</p> <p>1939 - The invasion of Czechoslovakia</p> <p>1939 - The invasion of Poland</p> <p>Winston Churchill: Churchill was elected Prime Minister of the UK in May 1940, when Britain and her Empire stood alone against Hitler. Churchill was influential in refusing to seek a deal, but continue to fight and resist. Churchill took an active direction in the war effort, and his speeches helped to bolster morale during the difficult years of 1940 and 1941.</p> <p>Franklin D Roosevelt: US President 1932 – 1945. Roosevelt was sympathetic to the Allied cause and offered generous war loan to Britain. After Pearl Harbour, he led the US in declaring war on both Japan and Germany. The entry of the US tipped the balance of power, and by 1944, the US provided the majority of troops in the D-Day landings.</p> <p>Joseph Stalin: Leader and dictator of the Soviet Union. Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939. He was shocked when Germany invaded in 1941, but he was the figurehead in rallying Russian resistance to the invading German war machine. Stalin was a ruthless leader, but after Stalingrad, the tide of war was turned, and the Red Army began to advance towards Berlin. The Russians suffered the most casualties during the war fatalities of the Soviet Union from all related causes numbered more than 20,000,000, both civilian and military, although the exact figures are disputed.</p> <p>Harry Truman: American President from January 1945. Truman oversaw the end of the war in Europe. Truman also approved the atomic bomb to be dropped on Japan, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the aftermath of the Second World War, he helped find the United Nations.</p> <p>Neville Chamberlain: Chamberlain was British Prime Minister from 1937-40. He initially sought a policy of appeasement with Hitler to allow the UK to re-arm and also in the hope another war could be avoided. After the invasion of Poland, Chamberlain led Great Britain into war with German. The early years of the war were considered a failure, and after humiliating setbacks, he was replaced by Churchill.</p> | <p>Air raid: An attack by planes dropping bombs.</p> <p>Allies: Countries (including Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the USA) who joined forces to fight the Axis Powers.</p> <p>Axis Powers: Germany, Japan, Italy and other countries that were allies in World War 2.</p> <p>Blitz: German air raids, from a German word 'blitzkrieg' which means 'lightning war'.</p> <p>Censorship: Controlling what people say or write.</p> <p>D-Day: 6 June 1944, the date Allied forces landed in Normandy, France.</p> <p>Evacuee: Someone who was evacuated, moved from a danger area to a safer place.</p> <p>Rationing: Controlling the supply of food, clothes, petrol and other things.</p> |