

WW2 was conflict that involved virtually every part of the world during the years 1939–45. This was fought between the Axis powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—and the Allies—France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, China. The 40,000,000–50,000,000 deaths incurred in World War II make it the bloodiest conflict, as well as the largest war, in history.

Germany and the Depression	Key people
<p>In 1929 as the Wall Street Crash led to a worldwide depression. Germany suffered more than any other nation as a result of the recall of US loans, which caused its economy to collapse. Unemployment rocketed, poverty soared and Germans became desperate. This led to a chain of events that ended in the destruction of German democracy</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1935 - Rearmament 1936 - Remilitarisation of the Rhineland 1938 - Anschluss with Austria 1938 - The annexation of the Sudetenland 1939 - The invasion of Czechoslovakia 1939 - The invasion of Poland <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>

Key events	Consequences
<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.</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.</p> <p>7 September 1940: 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 sites and ports across the country including Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Southampton are attacked.</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. 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been estimated that 50 million people died in World War Two. The old empires of France and Britain were ruined. America and Russia were the new 'superpowers' and immediately started on a Cold War. • The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created a world which was terrified by the threat of atomic war. • Germany was divided, and remained so until 1990. • The League of Nations was disbanded. Instead, a new United Nations was declared.