

The Facts About World War II

When did World War II start and end?

The Second World War started on **3rd September 1939** and ended in **1945**.

Why did the Second World War start?



Adolf Hitler

It started when Germany invaded Poland, led by a man called **Adolf Hitler**. Hitler was a **Nazi** and wanted to make Germany a great nation again by conquering lots of countries. When the Nazis invaded Poland, lots of other countries declared war on Germany and World War II began.

What did Hitler and the Nazis believe?

The Nazis were a political group who believed that **Aryans** (people with blond hair and blue eyes) were the best race of people and that everyone else was inferior. Hitler was the leader of the Nazis and wanted to get rid of everyone in Germany who wasn't Aryan so that Germany would be the best country in the world. They also believed that they would be the best people to rule the world.



A swastika - the Nazi symbol

What was the 'Axis power'?

The **Axis** power means the people who fought on the side of the Germans during the war. This included Japan, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Who were the 'Allies'?

The **Allies** were all the countries who were fighting against Germany and the Axis power. This included Britain, France, the United States, Greece, Australia, Poland, South Africa and Russia.

Who was Britain's prime minister during World War II?

When the war with Germany was announced, **Neville Chamberlain** was prime minister but he became ill and in November 1940 **Winston Churchill** became Britain's prime minister.



Who were the other world leaders?

Franklin D Roosevelt was president of America; Charles de Gaulle was the French president; Mussolini was in charge of Italy; Stalin was Russia's leader; and Tojo was Japan's prime minister.

How did World War II end?

Even though the Axis power had taken over lots of countries at the start of the war, by 1944 the Allied forces were able to free these countries. Italy also swapped sides in 1943 and started to fight against the Axis power. Eventually, Germany surrendered and the Allies won the war.

What was VE Day?

VE day stands for **Victory in Europe Day**. VE Day celebrates the end of the war in Europe on **8th May 1945**.



VE day newspaper

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Why did World War II start?

The Second World War started when Adolf Hitler, the leader of Germany and head of the Nazis, invaded Poland on 1st September 1939 with over a million German soldiers. Hitler's army had been taking back the land they had lost during World War I since he came to power in 1933 and this was the last straw. Everyone saw that Hitler would not stop invading other countries so lots of countries, including Britain, declared war on 3rd September 1939.



Adolf Hitler

Who fought on which side?

There were two different sides during World War II - the Axis and the Allies. The Axis included Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria. On the opposite side (the Allied forces) were Britain, France, Russia, Greece, the United States, Australia, India, Russia, Poland and many more.

Who were the other world leaders during World War II?

As well as Adolf Hitler on the Axis side, there was also Benito Mussolini of Italy and Hideki Tojo of Japan. On the side of the Allies with Winston Churchill were Charles de Gaulle of France, Joseph Stalin of Russia and Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States.



FD Roosevelt -
President of USA

What was VE day?

VE day stands for Victory in Europe day and marks the end of the war. VE day was celebrated on 8th May 1945. Everyone in Britain and the rest of Europe celebrated. Some fighting still carried on however, and it wasn't until 14th September 1945 that World War II was officially over in the rest of the world.

Who were the Nazis?

'Nazi' was the shortened name for a German political party called the National Socialist German Worker's Party. The Nazis believed that Aryans (white people with blond hair and blue eyes) were the superior race and that all other people were 'lesser' races. They wanted to make the Aryan race the strongest in the world and make Germany a powerful world leader once more.



A swastika - the
Nazi symbol

Who was Britain's prime minister during the Second World War?

When the war broke out, Neville Chamberlain was prime minister. However, he became ill and resigned in 1940. Winston Churchill took over as prime minister on 10th May 1940 and continued as prime minister of Britain until the end of the war.



Winston Churchill

How did the war end?

During the course of the war, the Axis power had managed to invade and occupy lots of different countries. However, by 1943 Italy had changed sides and was now fighting with the Allies. The Allies became too strong for the Axis. They started freeing the occupied countries. Hitler realised he was going to lose the war so on 30th April 1945 he committed suicide. A week later Germany surrendered.



VE day newspaper

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What date did World War II start?

2

Who was Adolf Hitler?

3

Which country did Germany invade to cause the start of the war?

4

What is a swastika?

5

What kind of people are Aryans?

6

What did the Nazis believe?

7

Was Germany part of the Axis or the Allies?

8

Name 3 countries that were part of the Allies.

9 Who was prime minister of Britain when the war started?

10 Who was Winston Churchill?

11 Which country was Charles de Gaulle president of during the war?

12 Who was the Italian leader during the war?

13 Which country swapped sides in 1943 from the Axis to the Allies?

14 What date did the war end in Britain?

15 What does VE day mean?

16 Who won the war: the Axis or the Allies?