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### STUDY GUIDE: WORLD WAR II

#### Causes of the War

- \*Germany was angry at being blamed for WWI and for having to pay reparations.
- \*Italy, under **fascist** dictator **Benito Mussolini**, wanted more territory.
- \*Japan also wanted more territory and hoped to conquer China.
- \*Even though WWI had been fought in part to “make the world safe for democracy,” fascism had arisen in Italy.
- \*Hitler had risen to power as the leader of the Nazi Party. **Nazi** meant German National Socialist Party. He had attained the position of German Chancellor in 1933.
- \*Both Hitler and Mussolini were involved in the **Spanish Civil War**.
- \*Eventually, between 1936 and 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed treaties that thereafter designated them as the **Rome-Berlin-Tokyo-Axis**. **Axis** became their collective name for short.

#### Early Inciting Steps to All-Out War

- \*In March 1938, **Hitler** annexed Austria. Mussolini backed him up politically and when the British and French weakly objected, he claimed that Austria’s affairs pertained only to internal German politics.
- \*In September of the same year, Hitler threatened to annex the Sudetenland, part of Czechoslovakia, and British **Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain** encouraged the Czechs to let him do so, on the condition that he wouldn’t take any more of their territory. This policy of **appeasement** was a grave mistake that led to war.
- \*By March of the next year, Hitler had taken over the remainder of Czechoslovakia. France had promised Poland help in case of invasion, and Britain followed suit. Josef Stalin, dictator of the Soviet Union, signed the Nazi-Soviet pact, promising its neutrality and that it would not fight Germany. It also entitled Russia to parts of Finland, Poland, Romania, Estonia, and Latvia.

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### Actual War Events

- \*On the first day of September in 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, the French and British declared war, but they were unable to prevent Germany from taking over Poland with the **blitzkrieg**.
- \*Two months later, the U.S.S.R. declared war on Finland.
- \*The next April, Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway.
- \*Hitler invaded Belgium and Holland, areas referred to as the “**Low Countries**” in 1940.
- \*By June 1940, the Germans were attacking France. Italy also declared war on France and Great Britain.
- \*The same month, **Pétain** gave up some of France in exchange for an armistice.
- \***Winston Churchill**, the leader of Great Britain, vowed to keep fighting against Germany. The Germans tried to use their U-boats to starve the British, who relied on imports of food and supplies. In August 1940, the **Battle of Britain** took place, which involved raiding cities, such as London, day and night. Hitler ultimately stopped fighting this battle.
- \*Hitler prepared to attack Russia.
- \*In November 1940, Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria joined the Axis alliance. When Yugoslavia declined to join, Hitler invaded and conquered it, although its guerrilla armies continued to fight against his supremacy.
- \*Hitler also battled in North Africa and the Balkans.
- \*Finally, in 1941, U.S. and British conferences began, and the U.S. was no longer exclusively neutral. In 1941, its Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act to help other countries financially and technologically, without providing troops. We also helped escort naval ships with our **convoys**—large fleets designed to accompany and protect other ships.
- \*One of the final straws was when Japan took Indochina from France. The U.S. refused to trade with Japan, specifically the building and oil materials they would need for war. So, Japan signed a treaty with Russia, and the U.S., Britain, and Netherlands froze their assets, so they couldn’t supply their army anyway.
- \*In the middle of 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler wanted parts of the Ukraine and the Caucasus region (for its oil), but his military advisors insisted on more important political targets. The result was a compromised offensive strategy. A lack of understanding of the severity of the Russian winter climate made it possible for Stalin’s armies to defend themselves somewhat.
- \*The Japanese tried to seize more territory, such as the islands in Southeast Asia, realizing that such acts might bring the U.S. into the war. **General Tojo Hideki** set a secret deadline that would be the last day Japan would accept the U.S.’s lifting of its embargo. Their Japanese airships attacked **Pearl Harbor** on December 7<sup>th</sup>, a Sunday, sinking eight battleships and thirteen navy ships. This attack was the reason that the U.S. **finally entered the war on December 8<sup>th</sup>**.
- \*Italy and Germany both declared war on the U.S. three days later.

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\***Battle of Midway** - In this battle, the Japanese were headed toward Midway, but our dive-bombers destroyed three of the four Japanese carriers in just five minutes. The same day, they sunk the last one. **Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku**, the commander in chief of the Japanese navy, retreated from this battle.

\*Most European countries were busy fighting the Germans. It was the U.S. that primarily battled Japan because they knew how to fight in the Pacific. They also formed the United Nations, also known as the anti-Axis coalition, as well as what it is now commonly called, **the Allies**.

\*Late in 1941, Hitler realized he'd made a vital error in cutting off production for the army and increasing it for the air force and navy, but he wanted to win the war by 1942, so he attacked Russia again.

\*The U.S. fought Japan in **Guadalcanal** from August of 1942 until February of 1943.

\*The U.S. and Britain met in January of 1943 at the **Casablanca Conference**.

\*Also, Roosevelt announced that the Axis powers would not accept anything less than unconditional surrender. America and Britain both began to bomb Germany with air raids.

\*The Americans and British, accompanied by the Canadians, invaded Italy and conquered it on August 17<sup>th</sup>. By the 25<sup>th</sup>, Mussolini was no longer in power, and the Italians made public their armistice, signing it on the eighth of September.

\*Roosevelt and Churchill met with Stalin in Tehran to discuss operation **Overlord** against the Germans. It was implemented on June 6, 1944, and it became known as **D-Day**.

\*The U.S. and Britain invaded **Normandy**. Hitler thought it was a ploy to distract him from another attack, and he didn't move any of his troops to help. Eventually, this enabled the British, the Americans, and the French (by this point headed by **Charles de Gaulle**) to liberate Paris and France.

\*Around this time, German officers and higher-ups were even suspected of a plot to assassinate Hitler in order to end the war. Their attempt was unsuccessful.

\*In the **Battle of the Philippines**, the U.S. was successful at gunning down many of the Japanese planes.

\***The Battle of the Bulge** was Germany's last attempt to stop the Allied invasion into Germany. It lasted one month, and the victorious Allies advanced into Germany.

\*Roosevelt and Churchill again met with Stalin at the **Yalta Conference**, where Stalin agreed to reenter the war against Japan after the Germans had surrendered, all in exchange for foreign territories.

\*Franklin D. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945.

\*Finally, the British, Russians, and Americans forced the Germans to surrender in their own country.

\*Hitler hid in Berlin, and he committed suicide on April 30<sup>th</sup>. His successor, Karl Doenitz, allowed his emissary to sign a surrender. The rest of the German forces, (in Denmark, Holland, and other parts of Germany), had already surrendered. Britain and America dubbed May 8<sup>th</sup>, Victory in Europe Day, abbreviated **V-E Day**.

\*By 1945, the Japanese were using **kamikazes** to sink U.S. ships (the equivalent of suicide pilots).

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\*The U.S. arrived in **Iwo Jima** and **Okinawa** to battle them.

\*The U.S. had engineered an atomic bomb made of uranium and plutonium and tested one at **Alamogordo** in New Mexico in 1945. They had two more, which **President Truman** decided to drop on **Hiroshima** on August 6<sup>th</sup>, and **Nagasaki** on August 9<sup>th</sup>, hoping to end the war. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded. Japan gave up and surrendered.

### Consequences

\*After the war, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. emerged as the major world leaders.

\*Britain, France, Germany, and Japan were no longer the strongest military powers.

\*Over six million Jews and other ethnic minorities were killed in the Holocaust.

\*Overall, 55 million deaths resulted from the war.

\*Thirty million of those were civilians, not military personnel.

\*WWII was the most destructive war in history in terms of destruction of human life and property.

### Weapons

\*Most of the weapons used in WWII were more advanced versions of those used in WWI.

\*The long-range rocket was introduced, and the atomic bomb was used near the end of the war.

\*B-17 Flying Fortresses were bombers.

\*T-34's were Russian Tanks.

\*Mustang P-51's were long-range fighters.

### Timeline of the War

1931---Japan invades Manchuria, and the Sino-Japanese War begins.

1933---Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.  
Japan withdraws from the League of Nations.

1935---Italy invades Ethiopia.  
The **Spanish Civil War** begins.

1936---Germany remilitarizes and reoccupies the **Rhineland**. This action had been forbidden by the Versailles Treaty.

1937---Italy withdraws from the League of Nations.

1938---March 13-- Germany takes over Austria.  
September 29-30-- The Munich Conference gives Hitler part of Czechoslovakia to appease him.  
October 1-- Hitler annexes the Sudetenland.

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- 1939---August 23: Germany and Russia sign a pact of non-aggression.  
The **Nazi-Soviet Pact** is signed.
- August 25: Britain and Poland sign a treaty.
- September 1: Germany invades Poland.
- September 3: Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- September 17: Russia invades the Eastern part of Poland.
- September 28: Poland surrenders to the Germans and Russians.
- November 30: Russia attacks Finland.
- December 14: Russia is ejected from the League of Nations.
- 1940---April 9: Germany invades Denmark and Norway.
- April 15: British and French troops land in Norway.
- May 10: The **Phony War** ends with Germany attacking the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.  
**Chamberlain** resigns, and **Churchill** replaces him as prime minister.
- May 12: Germany invades France.
- May 15: The Dutch Army surrenders.
- May 28: The Belgian Army surrenders.
- June 10: Italy invades France.
- June 9: Norway surrenders.
- June 10: Italy declares war and invades France.
- June 16: **Marshal Petain** becomes president of France.
- June 17: Petain announces armistice with Germany.
- June 18: Charles de Gaulle calls for French resistance.
- July 1: The "Vichy government" is set up in France.
- July 10: The Battle of Britain begins.
- August 27: The U.S. votes on the first peacetime draft.
- September 7: The German Blitz begins in London.
- September 15: Climax of Battle of Britain.
- 1941---March 11: U.S. votes to **Lend-Lease** to countries needing assistance.
- April 6: The Germans invade Greece and Yugoslavia.
- June 23: Germany assaults Russia.
- July 24: Japan takes over French Indochina, so the U.S. prohibits trading with Japan.
- December 5: Battle of Moscow.
- December 7:** **Japan attacks the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor** in Hawaii, declaring war on Britain and the U.S.
- December 8: U.S. and Britain reply by declaring war on Japan.
- December 10-11: Germany and Italy declare war on the U.S.
- December 22: Japan invades the Philippines.

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- 1942---January 20: Wansee Conference discusses the **“Final Solution to the Jewish Question.”**
- April 8: Tokyo is bombed by U.S. planes.
- May 4-9: The Battle of Coral Sea becomes the first all-carrier naval battle.
- May 12: The first extermination of Jews occurs in gas chambers at Auschwitz.
- June 4: Battle of Midway.
- August 7: U.S. Marines arrive in Guadalcanal.
- November 11: German armies invade the rest of France.
- 1943---January 14-24: Casablanca Conference.
- January 31: German forces surrender at Stalingrad.
- June 13: North African campaign ends with Axis losing.
- June 22: German U-boats leave the North Atlantic.
- July 9-10: Allies invade Italy.
- July 25: Mussolini was dismissed.
- September 8: Italy surrenders.
- 1944---January 16: Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe.
- January 22: Allied troops land near France.
- January 31: U.S. forces invade the Marshall Islands.
- June 4: Allies conquer Rome.
- June 6: D-Day--Allied invasion of Normandy.
- June 19: Battle of the Philippine Sea.
- July 20: Advisors try to kill Hitler but are unsuccessful.
- August 25: Allies liberate Paris.
- September 8: First V-2 rockets land in London.
- December 16: German Battle of the Bulge.
- 1945---February 4-12: Yalta Conference.
- February 19: U.S. Marines arrive at Iwo Jima.
- April 1: U.S. invades Okinawa.
- April 12: President Roosevelt dies, and Truman succeeds him.
- April 28: Mussolini is executed.
- April 30: Hitler commits suicide in Berlin.
- May 2: Russian troops take Berlin.
- May 8: V-E day (Victory in Europe).
- July 17: Potsdam conference (to discuss Germany’s punishment and the prevention of problems with Germany in the future).
- August 6: First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, killing over 70,000.
- August 8: Russia declares war on Japan.
- August 9: The Atomic Bomb is dropped on Nagasaki, killing over 35,000.
- September 2: Japanese surrender on USS Missouri, marking the end of World War II.

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### Terms You Should Know

**Anschluss:** German term for making Austria part of Germany.

**Blitzkrieg:** Also known as lightning war, it referred to the type of war fought by modern technology of the time, such as by air and with mechanized weapons.

**Cold War:** This refers to the power struggle and hostilities over political, economic, and ideological differences that lasted from the end of the war until 1989 between Capitalist and Communist countries.

**Concentration Camps:** Dachau and Buchenwald were two of these work camps. Jews were sent here. Their property was taken away from them; they were treated badly and were used as slaves.

**Dresden Raid:** The Allied bombing of Germany that began on February 13, 1945.

**Extermination Camps:** Auschwitz and Birkenau were two of these camps designed to implement Hitler's "final solution to the Jewish question," which meant exterminating large numbers of Jews.

**Gestapo:** The German Secret Police.

**Holocaust:** This term refers to Nazi Germany's persecution and killing of the Jews during WWII.

**Kristallnacht:** This term is translated "Night of Broken Glass" and refers to November 9, 1938, a night where Nazi riots destroyed Jewish property, businesses, and synagogues, as well as lives.

**Luftwaffe:** The German Air Force.

**Manhattan Project:** This referred to the secret U.S. government project in the early 40s to try to build an atomic bomb. It was dubbed "Manhattan" because that's where it took place, starting at Columbia University.

**Mein Kampf:** A book written by Hitler to encourage jealousy and hatred of the Jews. It claimed they had a conspiracy, which accounted for their power and wealth. The book recommended the extermination of Jews.

**Panzer:** An armored tank division of the German army that could attack quickly.

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**Phony War:** The early part of the war when war had been declared, but actual forces were not yet engaged.

**Potsdam Conference:** Truman, Stalin, and Churchill met to discuss their occupation and after-war punishment of Germany and some strategies to limit its future power.

**SONAR (ASDIC if British):** Devices that could detect submarines underwater. The acronym stood for *sound navigation ranging*.

**SS:** Schutzstaffel – Hitler’s special police as well as his bodyguards.

**Third Reich:** This term referred to Germany while the Nazi regime was in power.

**V-J Day:** This stood for Victory over Japan Day.

### Other Important War Personalities

**Hermann Goering:** This Nazi leader headed the Gestapo. He also headed Hitler’s four-year economic program. Hitler made him air minister of Germany as well as prime and interior minister of Prussia. He even declared Goering his successor, but went back on his promise in the last years of the war. Goering eventually surrendered to the U.S. and was tried at Nuremberg and sentenced to hanging. He swallowed poison before his execution.

**General Erwin Rommel:** This German general was called “The Desert Fox” because he commanded the troops that were fighting in North Africa.

**General George C. Marshall:** He supervised the Allied strategy.

**Emperor Hirohito:** He was the Emperor of Japan.

**General George S. Patton:** This U.S. general, a veteran of WWI, commanded several forces in WWII.

**General Douglas MacArthur:** This supreme commander of Allied forces in the Pacific was very influential in the Philippines maneuvers. In the Korean War, he led the UN forces between 1950 and 1951.