

Timeline

Conflict and Tension

1918–1939

This book covers a very significant 21-year period in modern world history. It focuses on the causes of the Second World War and seeks to show how and why conflict occurred and why it proved difficult to resolve the issues which caused it. The timeline on these pages highlights some of the key events of the period.



1919
January - Paris Peace Conference
June - The Treaty of Versailles is signed

1918
11 November - The Armistice is signed, ending the First World War

1920
January - First meeting of the League of Nations
August - The Treaty of Sevres signed with Turkey

1921
 Poland invades Vilna
 The Åland Island crisis
March - The League divides Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland

1922

1922
August - The Washington Naval Agreement
October - Benito Mussolini becomes dictator in Italy after his march on Rome

1922-1923
 Economic collapse in Austria and Hungary

1923
July - The Treaty of Lausanne overturns the Treaty of Sèvres
August - The Corfu Crisis

1926

1925
October - The Greek-Bulgarian Dispute
October-December - The Locarno Treaties

1926
 Germany joins the League of Nations

1928
August - The Kellogg-Briand Pact

1935
January - The Saar plebiscite; the Saar re-joins Germany
March - Hitler announces that he has built up the Luftwaffe and that conscription will be introduced to build up the German army; remilitarisation of the Rhineland
June - The Anglo-German Naval Treaty
October - Mussolini invades Abyssinia
December - The Hoare Laval Pact is leaked to the press

1931
September - The Mukden Incident. The Japanese army invades Manchuria

1929
October - The Wall Street Crash leads to global depression

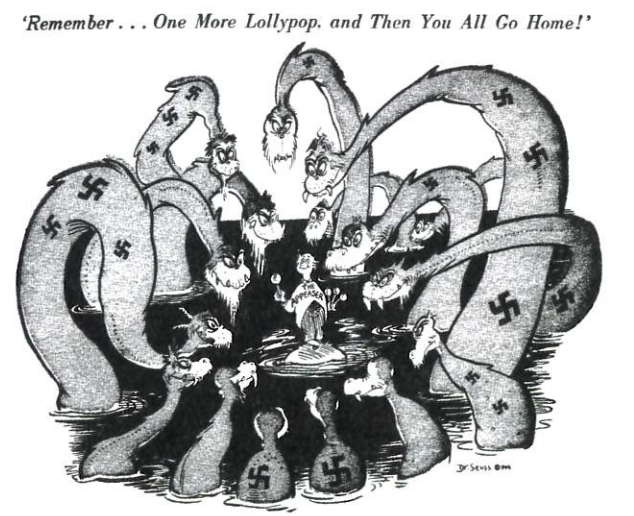
1930

1934
July - The Nazi party in Austria assassinate the Austrian Chancellor, Dollfuss
September - The USSR joins the League of Nations

1934

1933
January - Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany
October - Hitler leaves the Disarmament Conference

1938
March - Hitler invades Austria to achieve Anschluss
September - Chamberlain meets with Hitler over the Sudeten Crisis; the Munich Conference
October - German troops invade and occupy the Sudetenland



1939
May - Germany and Italy sign the Pact of Steel; a military alliance
August - The Nazi-Soviet Pact is signed
September - Hitler invades Poland. Britain and France declare war on Germany

1936
July - Outbreak of the Spanish Civil War
October - The Rome-Berlin Axis is agreed
November - Italy join The Anti-Comintern Pact which had originally been agreed between Germany and Japan

1937
July - Japan launch a full-scale invasion on China

1939

1.1 The aims of Clemenceau, Wilson and Lloyd George

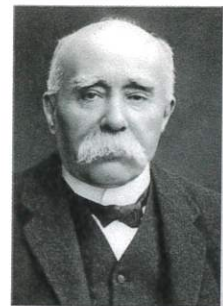
The First World War devastated Europe. Around 8 million soldiers and a further 8 million civilians lay dead. Whole towns had been flattened, farms destroyed and railways blown up. The world would never be the same again. So when the leaders of the winning countries met to decide how to deal with the losing countries, they had a huge task in front of them. They could try to build a better and more peaceful world, or they could seek revenge. So how did the discussions go? And what did the politicians *really* want from the peace talks?

Objectives

- ▶ Recall the key politicians at the Paris Peace Conference.
- ▶ Explain what each of the 'Big Three' wanted to achieve.
- ▶ Analyse the motives of the 'Big Three' in order to explain their aims.

The Paris Peace Conference

In January 1919, representatives from 32 winning countries met in the Palace of Versailles in Paris for what became known as the **Paris Peace Conference**. The discussions were led by the leaders of the most powerful victorious countries: Britain, France and the USA. The leaders of these countries were David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, Georges Clemenceau, Prime Minister of France and Woodrow Wilson, president of the USA. Collectively, they were known as **the 'Big Three'**.



Georges Clemenceau, Prime Minister of France

Much of the fighting that took place during the war was in France, particularly the north-east, and the Germans destroyed many mines, railways, factories, bridges and farmland. The French also suffered the most deaths. Many French people wanted revenge and put Clemenceau under a lot of pressure to make it happen.

Clemenceau wanted to cripple Germany to make sure that it was never powerful enough to attack France again. He also wanted to have its armed forces dramatically reduced and Germany's border to be pushed back to the Rhine in Eastern Germany, taking away its defences and making France less vulnerable to attack.

Clemenceau needed money to help rebuild France and thought Germany should have to pay compensation for the damage. He was willing to compromise with the other leaders, but prepared to fight for what his people wanted.

David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Britain

Lloyd George was elected by the British public because he promised to 'Make Germany



pay'. Many young British men died in the trenches and many people of Britain wanted revenge. However, Lloyd George was more cautious than Clemenceau. He was concerned that if Germany was treated too harshly it could lead to Germans wanting revenge and

The 'Big Three' clearly had different ideas of what should happen at the peace talks.

Write a brief summary of what each of the 'Big Three' wanted. Be prepared to compare and contrast with what actually happened when you learn about this later.

starting another war. Lloyd George also wanted to keep Germany quite strong so that Britain could trade with it, and to stop other countries in Europe from becoming too powerful.

The British Empire was also an important source of income, so Lloyd George was determined to gain German colonies if he got the opportunity. And to make sure that the Empire was safe, he needed to keep the British navy powerful. He saw the peace talks as a good opportunity to reduce the German navy to stop it from rivalling Britain's.

Key Words

Paris Peace Conference the 'Big Three' idealist
League of Nations self-determination



Woodrow Wilson, President of the USA

During the war no fighting took place on American soil. America made lots of money selling weapons to the Allies, so most Americans didn't see the need for revenge. Like Lloyd George, Wilson was concerned that being too strict with the Germans would lead to another war. He was also an **idealist**; many people said

that he was a dreamer who wasn't very practical. He wanted a future where everyone would be treated fairly. He suggested that a world parliament called the **League of Nations** was set up, where countries could work and trade together so that war was less likely. He also believed in **self-determination**, allowing countries the freedom to rule themselves. Another of his ideas was 'freedom of the seas', which meant that everyone could sail trading ships wherever they wanted. In fact, he had many ideas for a better world – and these are known as the Fourteen Points.

Work

- 1 Match each of the 'Big Three' to the country that he led:

Georges Clemenceau	Britain
Woodrow Wilson	France
David Lloyd George	the USA
- 2 a Which of the 'Big Three' wanted to punish Germany the most? Why?
b Which of the 'Big Three' wanted to punish Germany the least? Why?

- 3 Copy out the table and complete it to explain why the 'Big Three' argued:

Aim	Who would disagree?	Why?
Wilson wanted 'freedom of the seas'.		
Clemenceau wanted revenge. He wanted to destroy Germany.		
Lloyd George wanted to strip Germany of its colonies to make the British Empire bigger.		

- 4 Can you think of any other reasons the 'Big Three' disagreed? Add extra rows to your table so that you can write in your own ideas.

Practice Question

Write an account of how the Versailles peace settlement was affected by the fact that the war was mainly fought in France.

8 marks

Study Tip

This is an example of a question asking you to explain the consequences of something. To tackle it, try to explain how the war influenced Clemenceau at the peace conference. Aim to explain a range of reasons, not just one. Try to refer back to the question: 'this affected the peace settlement because...' and to link the different parts of your answer together.

Why were the 'Big Three' willing to compromise when they disagreed on so much?

When the 'Big Three' met at the Paris Peace Conference they all brought different ideas and views with them, having had different experiences of the war. Each man had to balance what they personally felt was morally and politically right, but they also had to ensure that they pleased the voters back home. With such contrasting aims and opinions, it was never going to be easy for the 'Big Three'! And these weren't the only problems that they faced...

Objectives

- **Describe** why it was difficult for the 'Big Three' to agree at the Paris Peace Conference.
- **Explain** why there were so many arguments.
- **Analyse** why Clemenceau and Lloyd George did not agree to many of Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Armistice

When Germany and its allies first surrendered they had agreed to sign an **armistice**. This is the agreement that countries at war make to stop fighting immediately. Politicians then meet to agree a final peace **treaty**. The armistice at the end of the First World War included Germany agreeing to pay **reparations**, giving the Alsace-Lorraine region back to France and moving its army out of the **Rhineland**.

Clemenceau used the fact that Germany had agreed to these principles in the armistice to argue that they should also appear in the final treaty.

▼ **SOURCE A** *The armistice was signed in a train carriage in a clearing in some woods just north of Paris. Here General Foch of France accepts Germany's surrender*



Prior agreements

During the war the **Allies** (Britain, France and the USA) had made lots of promises to different countries in return for their support. At the end of the war these countries wanted to claim what they saw as being rightfully theirs, but this created something else for the 'Big Three' to argue over. For example, Italy had been promised land from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Japan had been told that their claims on land in China would be supported.

Conflicts of interest

As you know, the 'Big Three' wanted very different things from the treaties signed with the losing countries. This made it very difficult for them to agree. Clemenceau wanted revenge for the destruction and death that France had suffered when it had been invaded; Wilson wanted a treaty that would build a fairer world (he even proposed the **Fourteen Points**, which was a list of rules that aimed to create fairness and peace); and Lloyd George was concerned what effect a harsh treaty would have, but was also under pressure from the British to make Germany pay. During the British general election of 1918 one MP, Eric Campbell Geddes, had promised 'We shall squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak', and this had become one of the main slogans of the election.

Time constraints

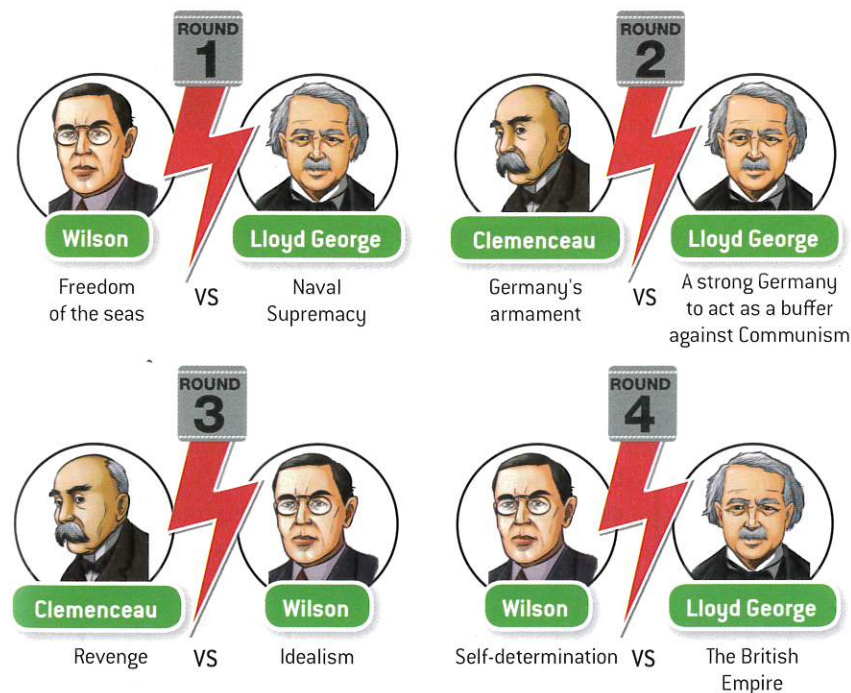
The 'Big Three' met in Versailles in January 1919. The Treaty of Versailles was signed in June, but the conference lasted 12 months, which may sound like a long time, but

in this time these men had to decide the fates of Germany and its allies. There were diplomats from 32 countries at the conference. They discussed each point in great detail, but were pressured to come to a decision quickly by the victorious countries who were keen to be given reparations so that they could start rebuilding their economies, towns and lives. As such, it could be argued that the discussions of the 'Big Three' were hurried.

A changing Europe

Since the start of the war Europe had changed considerably and the politics and economies of many countries had become very unstable. Austria-Hungary had owned a huge **empire** in Eastern Europe before the war, but now countries were breaking away and declaring independence. In Russia, a revolution had broken out in 1917. The **Tsar** (Russian Emperor) and his family had been assassinated and a new political group – the **Communists** – had taken over. This group believed that all wealth and land should be shared equally, and all towns and cities should be run by elected councils.

Europe lay in tatters and people feared that poverty caused by the war, along with instability in the way countries were governed, could easily lead to more trouble. The 'Big Three' needed to agree their treaties as quickly as possible.



Work

- 1 What did Germany agree to in the armistice?
- 2 Why did the 'Big Three' have to agree as quickly as possible?
- 3 Why do you think the 'Big Three' disagreed about giving land to Italy and Japan?
- 4 Why was it difficult for the 'Big Three' to reach a compromise?
- 5 Imagine that the 'Big Three' are appearing on a talk show. Write a script in which the presenter asks about some of the Fourteen Points and the 'Big Three' each explain why they like or dislike each point.

Key Words

armistice treaty reparations
Rhineland Allies
Fourteen Points empire Tsar
Communists disarmament

Some of Wilson's Fourteen Points:

No secret treaties

Ships of all nations have the right to sail the seas without interference

Disarmament

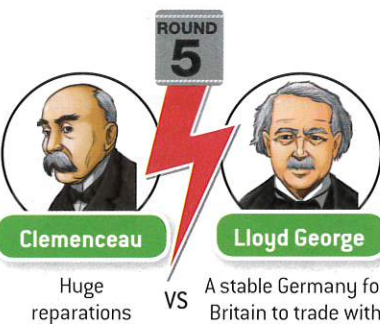
Alsace-Lorraine returned to France

Self-determination in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman (Turkish) empires

Independence to be given to Romania, Serbia and Montenegro

An independent Polish state to be created, with access to the sea

The League of Nations to be formed – a group of countries who would work together to encourage trade and peace



Fact

In 1919 Wilson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the Paris Peace Conference.

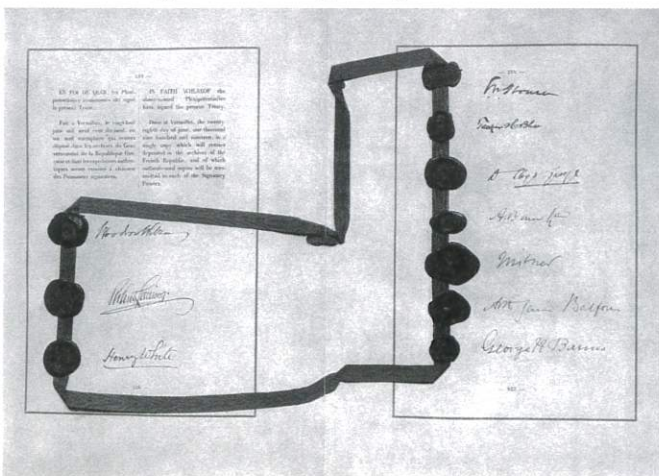
What were the terms of the Treaty of Versailles?

On 28 June 1919, it was finally announced that the 'Big Three' had reached an agreement at the Paris Peace Conference. The meetings had taken place in the Palace of Versailles, just outside Paris, so the agreement with Germany was to be called the Treaty of Versailles. Germany had not been allowed to go to the peace talks and called the treaty a 'Diktat', or dictated peace; they were devastated by the way they were treated. How was Germany affected?

Build-up to the signing

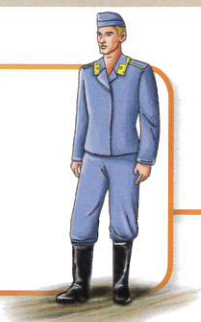
By June 1919, the discussions about what to do with Germany were over and the German government was informed of the terms. The Treaty aimed to punish Germany, to prevent them attacking France again by weakening them, and to give the winning countries compensation so that they could rebuild. Germany was told that the Allies would resume the war if the German government refused to agree to the terms. Eventually, the Germans sent a telegram confirming that a number of German politicians would arrive shortly to sign the treaty. On 28 June 1919 the peace treaty was signed. Look through the terms in the diagram carefully.

SOURCE A *The Treaty of Versailles, signed by leaders including Wilson and Lloyd George*



Objectives

- Explain what Germany lost in the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Consider how the treaty affected Germany.

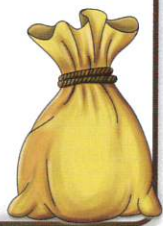


The German navy was limited to 15,000 men, 1500 officers and only 6 battleships; the size and number of other ships was also limited.

Article 231 of the Treaty was the war guilt **clause**: Germany and their allies had to take full responsibility for starting the war; this was the term that Germany hated the most.

The Rhineland, a strip of land on the border between Germany and France, was to be **demilitarised**; this meant that Germany could not put an army or defences in this area.

Article 232: Germany was blamed for the war and had to pay reparations to the winners; in 1921, the figure was agreed at £6,600 million; it was estimated this would take until 1988 to pay back!



Anschluss (union) between Germany and Austria was forbidden.

The **League of Nations** was formed, but Germany was not allowed to join.



Key Words

Diktat clause demilitarise *Anschluss*
League of Nations conscriptions mandates

The German army was limited to 100,000 men, and **conscription** was not allowed.

Germany was not allowed tanks, submarines or an air force.



Germany was split in two by the Polish Corridor, a strip of land that was given to Poland to allow them to have access to the sea.

Treaty of Versailles

Danzig was taken from Germany and made a free city under League of Nations control.



Germany's colonies in Africa were given as

mandates to the League of Nations, which meant that Britain and France controlled them.

The Saar was an important industrial part of Germany; there were many coal mines in this area; it was put under the control of the League of Nations for 15 years.

Germany lost 10 per cent of its land, including: Alsace Lorraine, which was returned to France; Eupen and Malmedy, which was given to Belgium; and North Schleswig, which was given to Denmark.

Practice Question

'Territorial losses were the worst punishment faced by Germany in the Treaty of Versailles.' How far do you agree with this statement?

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

In this kind of question you need to explain not just how the loss of territory affected Germany but how other losses affected the country too. You could consider the military restrictions, economic sanctions and/or how the Treaty affected Germany.

Work

- 1 Summarise the terms in the diagram and then colour-code them to show what Germany lost in each term: pride, territory (land), money, or military strength. Remember, some of the terms might need to be more than one colour.
- 2 Why do you think the Germans hated Article 231 the most?
- 3 Why do you think Article 232, reparations, came after the war guilt clause?

What was the reaction to the Treaty of Versailles?

The Treaty of Versailles was signed. It became international law. However, almost immediately those who had signed it began to regret some of the terms, and Germany was outraged by the harsh blow it had been dealt. How sensible were the terms of the Treaty at the time it was signed and how have historians' opinions about the Treaty changed over time?

Objectives

- ▶ **Explain** how different countries felt after the Treaty of Versailles was signed.
- ▶ **Analyse** political cartoons about the Treaty.

▼ **SOURCE A** From the German newspaper, *Deutsche Zeitung*, 1919:

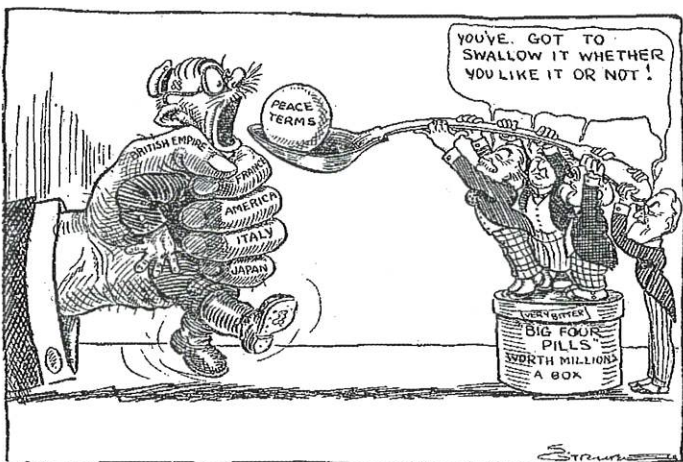
We will never stop until we win back what we deserve.

Germany and the settlement

Germany had arguably been the strongest country in Europe prior to the First World War. If Europe was going to function again, the 'German problem' had to be settled. The country was in turmoil: the Kaiser had fled to Holland and different political parties were arguing with each other. To make matters worse, people were furious about the Treaty of Versailles and how it had, they perceived, left Germany in financial ruin.

Many historians have agreed that the Treaty of Versailles affected Germany for the next two decades and that it ultimately gave Hitler the excuse to invade other countries to reclaim what had been unfairly taken from Germany. During the 1920s and 1930s the attitude towards Versailles was, largely, that it had been unjust and that Germany was right to hate it so much.

▼ **SOURCE B** A British newspaper cartoon about the Treaty of Versailles, 1919. The Big Four (Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson and Orlando of Italy) are holding the spoon. On the box it says 'Big Four Pills worth millions a box'



▶ **SOURCE C** A British cartoon from 1919. The cartoon was produced by the British Empire Union, a group that tried to encourage people to buy goods from Britain or the Empire



▼ **SOURCE D** Lenin, the leader of Communist Russia, on the Treaty of Versailles in 1920:

This is no peace, but terms dictated to a defenceless victim by armed robbers.

Looking back

At the end of the Second World War, as the Allies once more met to decide Germany's fate in another peace treaty, opinions about the Treaty of Versailles started to change. Historians argued that the terms weren't unreasonable at all: the Germans had rebuilt their country and economy so that they were, again, one of the richest, most powerful countries in Europe by 1929. However, this view was obviously influenced by events that happened some time after the Treaty was signed.

▼ **SOURCE E** A British cartoon from 19 February 1919; the man on the floor represents Germany



GIVING HIM ROPE?
GERMAN COUNCIL (to Allied Policy). - HERE, I SAY, STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME! (Loudly)
IF I ONLY WHINE ENOUGH I MAY BE ABLE TO WRIGGLE OUT OF THIS YET.

Key Word

provenance

▼ **INTERPRETATION F** Margaret Macmillan, the great-granddaughter of David Lloyd George and a professor of international history at Oxford University, in a communication with a history website in 2004:

It is my own view – and a number of historians who have been working in this area for some years – that the treaty was not all that bad. Germany did lose the war after all. Reparations apparently imposed a heavy burden but Germany only paid a portion of what it owed. Perhaps the real problem was that the treaty was never really properly enforced so that Germany was able to rebuild its military and challenge the security of Europe all over again.

Practice Question

Source B opposes the Treaty of Versailles. How do you know? Explain your answer using **Source B** and your contextual knowledge.

4 marks

Study Tip

With a question like this make sure you explain what the source is about and give specific evidence (say what you can see!) to prove that the cartoonist is against the Treaty. Then link the cartoon to your own knowledge – why did some people feel this way?

Work

- 1 Make a list of the reasons some people say that the Treaty of Versailles was a disaster.
- 2 Make a list of reasons some people defend the Treaty.
- 3 Copy and complete the table for each of the sources [A–E]:

Source	For or against the Treaty of Versailles?	Evidence from the source:	Link to my own knowledge (what aspect of the Treaty is the source about?)
A			
B			
...			

- 4 Look at **Interpretation F**. How useful is this to a historian studying the Treaty of Versailles? In your answer you should think about...
 - a What the source is about.
 - b How this links to what you know about the Treaty.
- c Any reason you might have reservations about this source. Look at the **provenance** to help you with this.

How satisfied were the Allies with the Treaty of Versailles?

The people of Britain and France had been involved in a bloody war for four years, so they wanted Germany to be severely punished. The Big Three had contrasting views on how Germany should be punished. So how satisfied were people when the Treaty of Versailles was signed?

Objectives

- **Explain** different opinions of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **Analyse** how satisfied the Allies were with the Treaty.

Britain

Throughout the war the people of Britain had been convinced by **propaganda** that the Germans were barbarians, so there was little sympathy towards the Germans now that they had lost the war. There was barely a single family in Britain who had not lost a son, brother or husband to the war. Civilians had suffered food shortages too. Britons were ready to see the Germans pay.

Headlines such as 'Hang the Kaiser' were common, and newspapers whipped the population up even more in the 1918 general election. Politicians based campaigns on their promises to be harsh on Germany.

When the Treaty was signed the general feeling in Britain was that it was fair, but could (and probably should) have been much harsher. However, on his return from Versailles Lloyd George was greeted as a hero – the streets outside the railway station were lined with people waving and cheering. The British press proclaimed that Britain would never again be threatened by the Germans. Lloyd George, however, wasn't so sure...

▼ **SOURCE A** *Lloyd George speaking about the Treaty of Versailles:*

We will have to fight another war in 25 years' time, and at three times the cost!

There were parts of the treaty that Lloyd George was pleased with; the British Empire gained extra colonies and now covered a third of the globe. Also, the German navy was restricted so that Britain could 'rule the waves' without competition. However, Lloyd George was concerned that the loss of German land and

SOURCE B

A British cartoon from 13 May 1919; the men are Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson and Orlando (of Italy); Clemenceau is saying 'curious, I seem to hear a child weeping'; the child is labelled '1940 Class' and 'fodder' means food



people to Poland would cause huge problems in the future, especially if those people were determined to be part of Germany once again.

Lloyd George also felt that the reparations were too harsh. Britain would lose an important trade partner and the people of Germany would resent the Treaty so much that it could lead to another war in years to come.

France

Most of the fighting took place in France and the country was very badly affected by the war. As a result, the French people were determined that Germany should be punished severely. Indeed, there were elements of the Treaty that the people of France were satisfied with. They were pleased that they were no longer threatened by the German army in the Rhineland and that they would be receiving reparations. They were given control of the Saar area, Germany's rich coal fields, for 15 years, which would help them financially.

However, many people were furious about the Treaty. They felt that their suffering during the war had been far greater than the Germans' suffering would be, so thought the Treaty should be much tougher.

Clemenceau was angry that Germany was allowed to retain an army, even a small one, and felt that the Rhineland should have been completely taken away from Germany and made into a small, powerless, independent state. He also felt that France should have been given the Saar permanently rather than being lent it. When the reparations were settled at £6,600 million, Clemenceau felt this sum was too small. He had wanted to see Germany financially crippled.

Shortly after the Treaty was signed Clemenceau faced an election. He was shocked when he was voted out. Many ordinary French people clearly felt that their great enemy, the Germans, had been let off too lightly!

The USA

America only joined the war in 1917 and, not being near the battle sites, many people in America felt that the Treaty was unfair on Germany and that Wilson had helped Britain and France become more powerful and rich at Germany's expense. They also favoured **isolationism**. They felt that the US should not get involved in affairs in Europe as it did more harm than good. They had wanted a fair treaty that guaranteed peace in the future, but felt that they had got the opposite.

In American politics, the Treaty was used to criticise Wilson by his rival party, the Republicans. The Treaty had to be **ratified** by the Senate (the government); they had to vote to accept it. The Republicans argued that since the Treaty had not been based on the Fourteen Points it was not in America's best interests and they

Work

- 1 Look at **Source A**. How many years out was Lloyd George's prediction that another war would start in 25 years' time?
- 2 Create a table summarising the opinions towards the Treaty of Versailles in each country.

	Leader	The general public
Britain		
France		
The USA		

- 3 Look at **Source C**. Why do you think it was published in 1919?

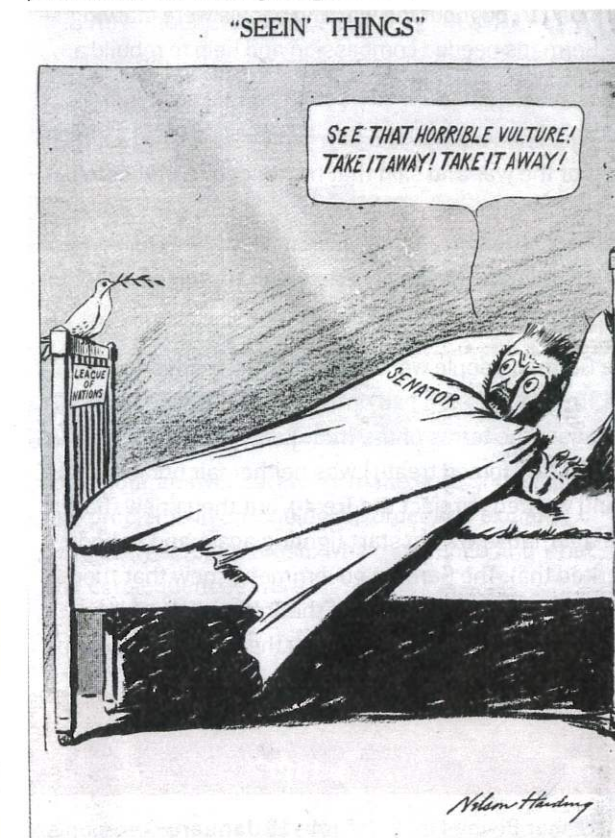
Key Words

propaganda isolationism ratify

refused to ratify it. This also meant that Wilson and America could not join his beloved League of Nations.

Wilson was devastated. He feared that a harsh treaty would result in America being dragged into another war. He was happy that the League of Nations had been created and that countries in Eastern Europe would, largely, have self-determination, but the rest of his Fourteen Points were ignored. Wilson desperately toured America, campaigning for America to join the League of Nations. However, his efforts tired him; in 1924 he died from a stroke, leaving the Republicans to dominate American politics for the next decade, based on policies of isolationism.

▼ **SOURCE C** *An American cartoon called 'Seein' things', published in the Brooklyn Eagle in 1919*



Extension

What did other countries think about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles? Can you find out about the views of Russia, Japan and Italy?



The German reaction to the Treaty of Versailles

Throughout the war, the people of Germany had been told that they were winning. Therefore, when they were told that not only had they lost, but they had also been punished so severely by the Treaty of Versailles, they were both shocked and angry. What did the terms of the Treaty mean for ordinary people in Germany?

The German people hoped that the Treaty of Versailles would be fair to them and try to guarantee future peace. A British blockade had prevented food being imported to Germany throughout the war and people were starving – the Germans needed compassion and help to rebuild a country that lay in tatters.

The Allies had blamed the German Kaiser (king) for the start of the war and said that he needed to **abdicate** before the armistice could be signed. When the Kaiser had fled to Holland, many Germans felt that the person responsible had been punished, so no further punishment was needed.

The German people were shocked by the severity of the Treaty. Germany had not even been allowed to negotiate the terms of the Treaty and people felt that this Diktat (forced treaty) was neither fair nor justified. Many wanted to reject the Treaty, but they knew that the alternative was to start fighting again and nobody wanted that. The German government knew that they had no choice but to agree to the Treaty of Versailles, but they were promptly hated by the population when

Objectives

- ▶ **Recall** why Germans hoped to be treated fairly after the First World War.
- ▶ **Explain** the political situation in Germany at the end of the war.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany.

▼ **SOURCE A** *People all over Germany protested about the Treaty of Versailles; this is a protest in Kiel in 1919*



they signed it. The government became known as the 'November Criminals' and it was said that Germany had been 'stabbed in the back'.

Politics in Germany

The abdication of the German Kaiser left no one to run the country. A new, democratic government known as

the **Weimar Republic** was set up, but some people said that it was not strong enough to run the country. They wanted one, strong leader. Others felt that the new government wasn't helping people fast enough. Many revolts broke out and the first five years after the war were unstable and violent.

▼ **SOURCE B** *The words of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, one of the German politicians who was present when the Treaty of Versailles was signed, from May 1919:*

Those who sign this treaty, will sign the death sentence of many millions of German men, women and children.

Hatred for the Treaty of Versailles

The part of the treaty that many Germans hated the most was Article 231, the war guilt clause. Germany and its allies had to accept full responsibility for starting the war and pay reparations. The German economy was in ruins. The German government claimed that 763,000 civilians had died of starvation.

Germany had to give up the rich coal fields of the Saar and their overseas colonies. The Germans lost 16 per cent of their coal and 48 per cent of their steel. Germany also lost 13 per cent of its land. Nearly six million German nationals now found themselves living in different countries, often under the control of governments who resented Germany.

Germany was also humiliated by the loss of their army – a huge source of national pride before and during the war. In the terms of the Treaty of Versailles it was to be limited to just 100,000 men. Germany felt vulnerable and alone in a ring of hostility. Many felt that France could attack at any stage and in the east a new threat was emerging. A Communist government was now in control in Russia and no one knew how much of a threat this new system of government would be.

Key Words

abdicate Weimar Republic
Weimar constitution democratic
hyperinflation Nazi

Fact

In 1929 it was worked out that it would take until 1988 for the Germans to pay back the reparations. In fact the final payment was made on 3 October 2010. In total Germany paid £59 million.

Work

- 1 Why were there protests all over Germany when the Treaty of Versailles was signed?
- 2 Why was the German government known as the 'November Criminals'?
- 3 How did Germany's government change after the Treaty was signed? Why was it unpopular?

Practice Question

Write an account of how the Treaty of Versailles caused problems for Germany.

8 marks

Study Tip

Plan your answer carefully: make sure you explain the problems in chronological order and explain why each problem arose, what happened and what the consequences were.

Timeline

1918

October Revolts in Germany; people protest about the war and food shortages
11 November The armistice is signed; Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates

1919

4–15 January Communists attempt but fail to overthrow the German government
28 June The Treaty of Versailles is signed
11 August The German Revolution ends and the **Weimar Constitution**, a list of rules that the new **democratic** government must follow, is accepted

1920

March The Kapp Putsch (revolt) against the German government is only narrowly defeated

1921

April The League of Nations agrees that Germany should pay £6,600 million in reparations



1923

January Germany misses a reparations payment; the French invade the Ruhr, a German industrial area – they plan to seize German goods instead of the money they are owed; the German government pays workers to strike so that there are no goods for the French to take and prints more bank notes to pay the strikers; the German economy crumbles
November Because of **hyperinflation**, a loaf of bread costs 200,000 million marks; the **Nazi** Party, led by Adolf Hitler, tries but fails to overthrow the government in the Munich Putsch

1924

August The Dawes Plan; America lends Germany 800 million gold marks to help them rebuild their economy



How fair was the Treaty of Versailles and the wider settlement?

The signing of the peace treaties at the end of the First World War was perhaps one of the most significant events of the twentieth century and the effects are still felt today. The Allies have faced much criticism about how fair these treaties were. What do you think?

Objectives

- ▶ Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the peace treaties.
- ▶ Analyse how fair the Treaty was.
- ▶ Evaluate historical interpretations of the Treaty.

Negative consequences of the treaties

Many historians have said that the treaties signed at the end of the First World War were unfair. Here's why...

The Treaty of Versailles

- Around six million Germans found themselves living outside of German territory. They feared persecution, especially since Germany had been forced to accept the war guilt clause.
- Germany lost 13 per cent of its land. German families were forced off land they had owned for generations as it was claimed by other countries under the terms of the Treaty.
- Many people said that the Treaty was too harsh and that it would lead to another war. Lloyd George predicted that there would be another war in just 25 years' time.
- Germans felt vulnerable. They worried that the reduced army and navy were not big enough to protect them from an attack.

▼ **SOURCE A** This picture, from a 1933 German schoolbook, shows all German losses, including people, land, cattle, wheat, potatoes, coal mines, and merchant ships



- The causes of the First World War were very complex, yet Germany and its allies were forced to accept full responsibility. Causes such as the arms race, where Britain and Germany competed to have the biggest navy and empires, were not Germany's fault alone.

- The Treaty was a Diktat (a forced peace). Germany was not allowed to send representatives to the conference or to negotiate. They had to accept whatever terms they were given.
- The Germans thought the peace treaty would be based on Wilson's Fourteen Points. These set out to achieve a fair world for everyone. If they had known that so few of these would make it through to the final treaty, they may not have signed the armistice.
- The reparations crippled Germany. It was estimated it would take until the 1980s to pay them.

Other treaties

- The new, independent countries created and recognised by the Treaties of Saint Germain and Trianon often united groups who did not want to be united. Countries such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia no longer exist today because different groups in these countries fought bloody civil wars.

- The Treaty of Sevres was so harsh on Turkey that the country revolted against it and it had to be overturned by the Treaty of Lausanne. This showed that these treaties could not be enforced and showed people like Mussolini and Hitler that the Allies would soon ignore such treaties if violence was threatened.

In defence of the peacemakers

In more recent years some historians have said that arguments like those given here do not give a fair representation of these treaties. They argue that:

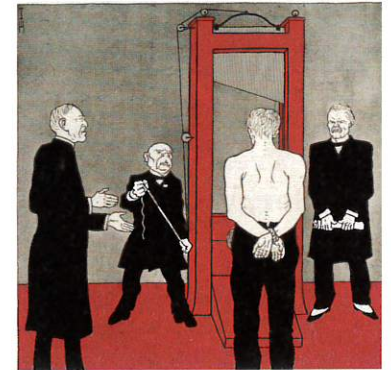
- The Treaty of Versailles was signed at the end of the most devastating war that the world had seen. It was only right that the losing countries should pay for the damage.
- It was normal for the losers of a war to agree to harsh terms. When Russia had withdrawn from the First World War Germany had made them sign The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which had taken away more than a quarter of their farmland and population. Many said that this was evidence that if Germany had won they would have treated the Allies even more strictly.
- Europe was falling apart. The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires had ruled over most of Eastern Europe, but with the collapse of these empires politics in the region had become unstable. The peacemakers had to act quickly. Under so much pressure, they did the best job they could.

▼ **SOURCE B** Adapted from *Princess E Bluecher*, An English wife in Berlin, 1920; Evelyn married a German aristocrat in 1907 and kept a diary of their life in Berlin during and after the First World War:

I fear that England has missed the right moment for laying the foundations of a lasting peace in Europe. The entente could have done anything with the German people had they made the slightest move towards reconciliation. People are ready here to make reparation for the wrong done by their leaders. But now they say that Wilson has broken his word, and an undying hatred will be smouldering in the heart of every German. Over and over again I hear the same refrain, 'We shall hate our conquerors with a hatred that will only cease when the day of our revenge comes.'

▶ SOURCE C

A cartoon from the German satirical magazine, *Simplissimus*, 1919



Practice Question

Study **Sources B** and **C**. How useful are **Sources B** and **C** to a historian studying criticisms of the Treaty of Versailles? Explain your answer using **Sources B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge. **12 marks**

Study Tip

Remember to critically consider both the content and provenance of each source in order to come to a judgement backed up with evidence.

Work

- 1 Create a chart summarising the strengths and weaknesses of the peace treaties.
- 2 Do you think the Treaty of Versailles can be justified? Write two paragraphs exploring each side of the argument, followed by a conclusion stating your opinion.

Extension

Historians' interpretations of events can change over time and different historians often have different opinions. Why not research A.J.P. Taylor's opinions on the Treaty of Versailles?

How were Germany's allies treated at the end of the war?

The Treaty of Versailles dealt with Germany, but Germany had not fought the war alone – its allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey, also had to be dealt with at the Paris Peace Conference. And here, the politicians at the peace talks faced a particularly difficult task. How were the other losing nations treated?

Objectives

- ▶ **Outline** how Germany's allies were dealt with at the end of the First World War.
- ▶ **Assess** how successful the treaties created to deal with Germany's allies were.

The Treaty of St Germain – Terms

Land:

- Austria lost land to Italy and Romania.
- Land was taken to create the new states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; Poland, which was also a new country, was given land, too.

Reparations:

- The amount was never fixed, but Austria was told to pay reparations.

Military restrictions:

- 30,000 men in the army; no conscription.
- No navy.

Other terms:

- Austria was forbidden from uniting with Germany.

Impact

- Italy had joined the war in 1915. They promised to support the Allies, and in return would be given land when the war was won. However, the Italians did not feel that they were given enough land.
- Much of Austria's industry was in land given to Czechoslovakia, so Austria lost a huge source of income. Their economy collapsed in 1921.
- The new states that were formed were a mix of different nationalities that often clashed.
- Eastern Europe now consisted of lots of new, small states instead of one powerful empire.

The Treaty of Neuilly – Terms

Land:

- Bulgaria lost land to Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania. However, Bulgaria did gain some land from Turkey.

Reparations:

- £100 million.

Military restrictions:

- Bulgarian Army limited to 20,000. No conscriptions.
- No air force; only allowed four battleships.

The Treaty of Trianon – Terms

Land:

- Hungarian land was lost to Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Austria.

Reparations:

- Agreed that reparations should be set but the amount was not fixed. The Hungarian economy collapsed so nothing was ever actually paid.

Military restrictions:

- 30,000 men in the Hungarian army.
- No conscription.
- Only allowed three patrol boats.

The Treaty of Sèvres – Terms

Land:

- Turkey lost land lost to Greece.
- In Europe Turkey lost all its land, except a small area around the capital of Constantinople.
- The Turkish (Ottoman) Empire was split up.

Military restrictions:

- Turkish army restricted to 50,000 men.
- The navy was restricted to seven sail boats and six torpedo boats.

Other terms:

- Turkish had controlled the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus straits, important waterways that connected the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, but the Treaty said they must open these to other countries.
- The Allies were allowed to keep troops in Turkey.

Impact

- The people of Turkey were so furious about the treaty that they revolted and overthrew the government.
- The new president threatened to fight the Allies over the Treaty. The British were not prepared to fight another war so they agreed to overwrite the Treaty with the Treaty of Lausanne.

The Treaty of Lausanne

Turkey regained:

- some of the land Greece had taken
- control of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits
- the right to decide how big their armed forces were.

Reparations were also cancelled and Allied troops were withdrawn.

Work

- 1 Think about the Treaty of Sèvres.
 - a How and why was it changed in the Treaty of Lausanne?
 - b Why were these changes significant?
- 2 'The Paris Peace Conference successfully solved the issues that Eastern Europe faced after the First World War.' How far do you agree with this statement?

The Significance of Sèvres

The changes to the Treaty of Sèvres are significant for a number of reasons:

- It proved that the other treaties were unenforceable; when a country rebelled against harsh terms there was very little that other countries could do. People were scared of returning to war, so they were reluctant to use force to deal with broken treaties.
- When the British agreed to make a new, fairer treaty it looked as if they were accepting that the original treaty was unfair. This undermined all the treaties.
- Seeing this, Mussolini and Hitler realised that they could also get away with breaking international law as no one would stop them.

Key Word

USSR

The new states

At the end of the First World War lots of new countries were made. Some of these worked well, for example Czechoslovakia, which was rich in natural resources and home to a well-established industry, was a rich country. As a result, it was politically stable and well respected in European politics. However, there were problems with the others.

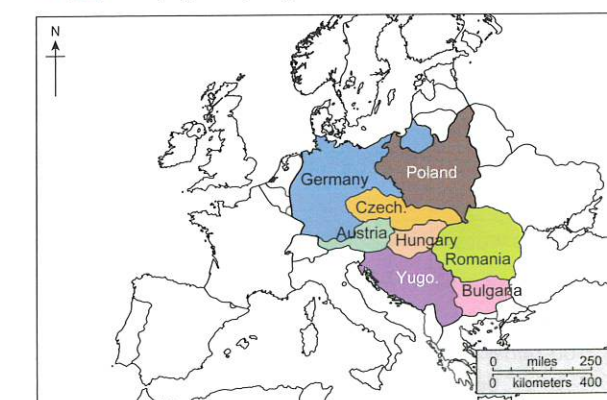
The Allies wanted to create a strong buffer zone between Germany and the **USSR**. They created a new country between these two: Poland. However, Poland had no natural barriers, such as rivers or mountains, on its borders so the country was difficult to defend.

Poland had been given a strip of German land named the Polish Corridor. This aimed to weaken Germany by splitting it in half, while giving Poland access to the sea. However, it meant that lots of Germans then lived in Poland, which they hated. The USSR also argued about Poland's eastern borders. Poland was surrounded by enemies who wanted to reclaim its territory.

▼ **A** A map of Europe before 1919



▼ **B** A map of Europe after 1919



Why was the League of Nations created?

During the First World War, many people wanted to set up an organisation that would encourage countries to get together when they had problems and work out their differences, rather than resort to fighting. At the end of the war, US President, Woodrow Wilson wanted to set up the League of Nations. What exactly was the League of Nations and how was it going to work?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the aims of the League of Nations.
- ▶ Explain how the League attempted to prevent more wars.
- ▶ Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the League.

The League's creation

When the Treaty of Versailles was written, the basic rules about how the League of Nations was going to work were included at the start of the document. All countries that signed the Treaty agreed to stick to the rules of how the League was to be run.

Who joined the League of Nations?

When the League was founded there were 42 members, and this rose to 58 by 1934. There were four permanent members of the **Council** who made all the big decisions: Britain, France, Italy and Japan.

What was the League of Nations?

The League of Nations was a vision for bringing the world together in peace. It was to be a group of countries that would work together and solve problems, like a world parliament.

Why was it formed?

Countries would work together to achieve four aims:

- To stop war from breaking out again
- To encourage disarmament
- To improve working conditions
- To tackle deadly diseases.

Woodrow Wilson was one of the key figures in its creation. Was the USA an important member too?

No: the Senate refused to agree to it and as much as Wilson tried to convince his people that it was a good idea, they had seen many young Americans die in the First World War and wanted to isolate themselves from Europe. Wilson was devastated.

Where was the League based?

In Geneva, Switzerland. Switzerland had not been involved in the war, so it was seen as a peaceful country. Another key international organisation, the Red Cross, was also based there, so it seemed like a sensible place for the headquarters.

Did all the other powerful countries join?

No: Britain and France were suspicious of the new Communist government in Russia, so Russia was not allowed to join. And the countries who had lost the war could not join – so no Germany, at first.

This changed in 1926, when the **Locarno Treaty** was signed and Germany was allowed to join the League. But Germany's membership was short lived; once Hitler came to power he took Germany out of the League again. In addition, Japan and Italy both left after they invaded other countries in the 1930s.

Extension

Find out who the 42 founding members of the League were, and how countries like the USSR felt about being left out.



What did Britain and France think of the League?

At the Paris Peace Conference David Lloyd George had been critical of the idea – but then on 25 March 1919 he issued the **Fontainebleau Memorandum** in which he said that he completely supported the League. It helped that in the final peace treaties colonies belonging to Germany and the other losing countries were given to the League of Nations to be run as mandates. The idea was that the League would run these colonies until they were ready to be independent, but some historians have said that Britain saw this as an opportunity to add to their already vast empire.

Britain generally regarded the League of Nations as a place for countries to discuss ideas, but without any real power. France, however, was glad of anything that might help protect it from another German invasion.

▼ **SOURCE A** A cartoon from the USSR created in 1919; the banner reads, 'The League of Nations: Capitalists of all countries, unite!'



Key Words

Council Locarno Treaty
Fontainebleau Memorandum
collective security
Permanent Court of International Justice
Covenant mitigation
moral condemnation economic sanctions

How did the League plan to keep peace?

It was thought that the League would work through **collective security**; the idea that if all countries worked together they could make sure that peace was kept and that the interests of every nation were looked after.

In 1920, the League also set up an international court that would establish international laws. This was called the **Permanent Court of International Justice**. If every country was following the same laws there would be less chance of them disagreeing.

And if the League couldn't prevent disputes?

The **Covenant** set out how the League would deal with aggression:

- 1 **Mitigation**: getting countries together to talk through problems.
- 2 If this didn't work they could use **moral condemnation** – a good telling off!
- 3 Finally, **economic sanctions** could be enforced, where members of the League would not trade with the warring countries.

The League didn't have its own army as it was a peaceful organisation. If an army was absolutely necessary the League was to ask its members to lend it their armed forces.

Work

- 1 What were the aims of the League of Nations?
- 2 How did the League try to prevent war?
- 3 Some historians have called the League 'toothless'.
 - a What do you think this means?
 - b Why do you think they have said this?
 - c Do you agree?

4.2 The structure of the League

The aims of the League of Nations were very ambitious. They hoped to settle disputes, encourage countries to get rid of their weapons, make the world a better place by improving working conditions, and tackle deadly diseases. To ensure that its aims were met the League had to run smoothly, so it was divided into different sections that focused on certain issues. Lots of historians say that the League was doomed to failure because its structure and organisation was flawed from day one. Let's see if you agree...

Objectives

- Explain the structure and organisation of the League of Nations.
- Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the League's structure and organisation.

The Assembly

The League of Nations worked like an international parliament. Every member could send representatives to the **Assembly**, which met once a year, on the first Monday of September, to discuss and vote on matters. Every country had an equal vote and in order to pass a vote the decision had to be **unanimous** – every country had to agree. If not, the motion couldn't be passed and would have to be referred to the Council.

The Assembly was in charge of: deciding when a new country could join; the election of judges to the Permanent Court of International Justice; voting for the non-permanent members of the Council; and deciding how the League's money was to be spent.

The first meeting was held in a Swiss hotel and 42 nations were represented. Some of the most powerful countries in the world attended – Britain, France, Italy and Japan – as well as some of the smaller nations such as Belgium, Holland, Cuba and Peru. The losing nations in the Great War – Germany, Austria, for example – weren't allowed to join and neither was Russia because its new Communist government wasn't recognised yet (they eventually joined in 1934).



The Council

An Assembly of 42 countries which met once a year would not be enough to ensure that the League ran smoothly; it was too large to react quickly in an emergency, so there was also a Council which met more frequently. In the Council there were four permanent members: Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Four other countries would be chosen to sit on the Council, each for a three-year term. This was later increased to nine non-permanent members.

The Council had the power of **veto**; it could stop a ruling with its vote. Even if the Assembly did manage to make a unanimous ruling, the Council could still stop it.

The Permanent Court of International Justice

The League set up and funded the Permanent Court of International Justice. This was a court of law that would settle international arguments. Any country could bring an issue to the court and eleven judges and four deputy judges would listen to both sides before reaching a verdict. The Court could then advise the parties involved in the argument. However, this was just advice, it wasn't a compulsory ruling and since the League had no army it was difficult to make countries agree unless they wanted to!

The Court was elected by the Assembly and the Council, and judges would fill that role for 11 years.



The Secretariat

This was the **civil service** of the League, meaning that it was in charge of administration and organising any action that the League wanted to take. It was a body of experts from different areas, such as finance, who were responsible for carrying out any decisions taken by the League, with the exception of military issues.



Special commissions

These were special groups put together to tackle issues that the League was worried about. They included:

- the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**
- the Disarmament Commission
- the Health Organisation
- the **Slavery** Commission
- the Commission for **Refugees**
- the Permanent Central Opium Board.

Other Commissions helped undeveloped countries with economic issues, supported under-represented or minority groups such as women, and supervised the mandates.



Key Words

Assembly unanimous veto Secretariat civil service International Labour Organisation (ILO) slavery refugee

SOURCE A

A cartoon from the *British Magazine Punch*, published in 1920



- 1 Create an illustrated diagram summarising the different bodies that helped run the League.
- 2 The League of Nations was meant to be an international organisation where everyone was equal. What evidence can you find to show that:
 - a all countries had equal powers
 - b some countries were more powerful than others?
- 3 Why do you think Britain and France were able to dominate the League?

Strengths and weaknesses of the League of Nations

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was written into all of the peace treaties at the end of the First World War, so all nations involved had signed an agreement that recognised the organisation. • It had a vast membership. • As there were so many members, economic sanctions and moral condemnation were daunting punishments for many countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many important countries did not, or would not, join the League. The USA, for example, never joined. This undermined the League as a 'global' organisation and meant that if a country faced economic sanctions it could still trade with some of the most powerful and richest countries. • The League had no army, which meant that it could not force people to obey it. • The structure was very complicated. It confused people and slowed action. • Decisions had to be unanimous, which meant that decision-making was slow.

Practice Question

'The organisation and structure of the League meant that it was always going to fail.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

Try to make a judgment about the statement and stick to this throughout your answer, but you should aim to demonstrate that you understand both sides of the argument.

Did the League of Nations help people?

One of the aims of the League of Nations was to make people's lives better by improving working conditions and curing diseases. This was seen as an important part of keeping world peace: if people were happy they would be less likely to argue. To achieve this aim the League set up a number of commissions or agencies. How successful were these agencies? Read the fact files below and judge for yourself!

Objectives

- ▶ **Outline** how the League's commissions tried to improve people's lives.
- ▶ **Assess** how successful these commissions were.

Commission:	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Aims:	To bring workers, employers and governments together to improve the conditions that people worked in.
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1922 – recommended banning the use of white lead in paint as it was poisonous. • 1930 – helped Greece set up social insurance (to help people if they were unemployed because of an illness). • 1928 – 77 countries agreed to set a minimum wage. • In Tanganyika, Africa, slave labour was being used to build a new railway, but conditions were so bad that 50% of workers died; the League challenged this and reduced the death rate to 4%.
Failures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1919 – tried to stop children under the age of 14 from working; this suggestion was not adopted by most members because they thought it would cost too much money. • 1935 – suggested that the working day should be limited to eight hours; when members voted on this issue, only four voted in favour of it, saying it would cost industries too much; similarly, the suggestion that workers should be paid for their holidays was unpopular – one member said that it would be 'industrial suicide'.

Commission:	The Commission for Refugees
Aims:	To return prisoners of war home and support refugees by improving camp conditions, finding new homes, or returning them to their own countries once the threat of conflict had passed.
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1921 – the League helped free around 427,000 out of 500,000 prisoners of war still imprisoned from the First World War and returned them to their homelands. • 1917 – revolution led to civil war in Russia; by 1921, 1.5 million people had fled Russia to refugee camps and the League helped them find new homes. • 1922 – Turkey clashed with Greece and the violence forced people to flee to refugee camps. The League set up refugee camps and sent doctors to help treat diseases such as cholera and smallpox in these camps; homes were found for around 600,000 Greeks fleeing from Turkey between 1919 and 1923. • Created the Nansen Passport, a document that could be used as identification by refugees (this was named after Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian explorer who became the High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921).
Failures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1933 – the League tried to appoint a High Commissioner for refugees, who were mainly Jewish, fleeing from Germany. Germany rejected this proposal, so a unanimous vote could not be reached and the motion was defeated. The commissioner was appointed, but as an independent body separate from the League of Nations, which meant that they had less power.

Commission:	The Slavery Commission
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised raids on the camps of slave traders in Sierra Leone, setting 200,000 people free. In 1927 Sierra Leone announced that slavery was to be abolished (got rid of) altogether.

Commission:	The Economic and Financial Committee
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria and Hungary had lost the war and were trying to rebuild their economies; the League sent financial experts to help so that the two countries would not go bankrupt. • Developed codes for importing and exporting so that all members were following the same rules.
Failures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When global depression hit after 1929, this commission was unable to cope.

Commission:	The Organisation for Communications and Transport
Aims:	Regulated transport developed during the war in order to keep people safe.
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced shipping lanes, which meant that fewer collisions occurred. • Produced an international highway code so that car drivers followed the same traffic rules wherever they travelled.

Commission:	The Health Committee
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started an international campaign to kill mosquitoes, which spread diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. • Worked with the government in Russia to organise an education programme to teach people about how the disease typhus was spread. • Sent doctors to look after refugees in Turkey and helped improve living conditions in refugee camps in the 1920s. • The Health Committee was later renamed the World Health Organisation (WHO), which still exists today.

SOURCE A An American cartoon from around 1919



Commission:	The Permanent Central Opium Board
Aims:	To stop the cultivation (creation) and distribution of opium (an addictive drug) – opium was legally used as a painkiller but some drugs companies also sold it illegally. After 1925 the Board became the Permanent Central Narcotics Board and tackled other drugs as well.
Successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a system where companies had to have a certificate to say that they were allowed to import opium for medicinal purposes. • Blacklisted four large companies that were involved in trading illegal drugs.
Failures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some historians claim that key members of the League were not really dedicated to stopping the sale of opium, as they made large amounts of money from it.

Work

- 1 Summarise the main achievements of the League's commissions.
- 2 Take seven small pieces of paper and write the names of each commission on them. Work with a partner to put these in order of how successful each of the commissions of the League was.
- 3 Write a paragraph explaining which commission you think was the most successful and why.

Practice Question

Source A supports the work of the League of Nations. How do you know? Explain your answer by using **Source A** and your contextual knowledge. **4 marks**

Study Tip

Explain what you can see in the source that praises the League of Nations and then use your own knowledge to explain an example of something that the League did that would make people think that it was a good idea.

4.4A

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

Before 1914 the dominant countries of Europe had built large and powerful empires. After the war the countries that lost had these taken away from them and the newly independent people were encouraged to create their own nations. However, throughout the 1920s there were many arguments about where the boundaries of new countries should be, and some nations threatened going to war over the disputes. When this occurred people turned to the League of Nations. How successful was the League of Nations at dealing with issues in the 1920s?

Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the political problems that the League tackled in the 1920s.
- ▶ **Evaluate** how successful the League was in dealing with international disputes in the 1920s.

▼ **SOURCE A** Polish soldiers invade Lithuania in 1920



1920: Vilna

After the First World War countries that had been in Austria-Hungary's empire were given independence. Lots of new countries were created including Poland and Lithuania. Vilna was to be the capital of Lithuania, but the majority of people living there wanted to be Polish. A Polish army took control of the city and Lithuania asked the League for help. The League told Poland to remove its army, but was refused.

France saw Poland as a potential ally against Germany and refused to help. Britain would not send troops without the support of other countries.

So, the first time the League was asked to settle a dispute they did nothing, and Poland took Vilna.

1921–25: Upper Silesia

Upper Silesia was on the border between Germany and Poland at the end of the First World War and both Germans and Poles were living there. Both nations wanted to claim the area, as it was important to iron and steel production. In 1921 a **plebiscite** (a vote in which the whole country takes part) was organised to decide who would own Upper Silesia. Britain and France sent troops to police voting stations and to make sure the vote was fair and calm.

Germany won 60 per cent of the votes, but Poland claimed that many of the people who voted for Germany no longer lived in Upper Silesia. They complained and the League of Nations decided to split Upper Silesia into regions according to how the people had voted. Germany received most of the rural areas, while Poland received the industrial zones.

The outcome was accepted by both Germany and Poland, and the League made sure that the partition went smoothly by ensuring that rail links, water and electricity were still supplied to each side of Upper Silesia.

However, the final settlement was considered unfair by the Poles; they received roughly half the population of Upper Silesia, but only a third of the land. Around half a million Poles were now in confirmed German territory.

The Germans weren't fully satisfied either. They lost three quarters of the coal mines they had owned prior to the settlement – a valuable source of income. In 1922 the German government complained to the League and was awarded the right to import coal at a heavily discounted rate. When this agreement ended in 1925 relations between Germany and Poland worsened.



Key Word

plebiscite

◀ **B** Map of Europe showing the areas where the League of Nations intervened in the 1920s

Fact

After the Second World War the region of Silesia was given to Poland.

1921: The Åland Islands

Both Sweden and Finland claimed the Åland Islands, which were between the two countries, and threatened war on each other. The League investigated each country's claim. They decided that the islands should go to Finland. However, Finland was not allowed to build forts on the islands, so that they could not be used as a base from which to attack Sweden. Sweden agreed to these terms, so the League had successfully avoided war.

Work

1 Copy and complete the following table:

Date:	Event:	What happened?	Verdict – was the League successful or did it fail in dealing with this issue?

2 Give an example of when the League used the following to solve problems:

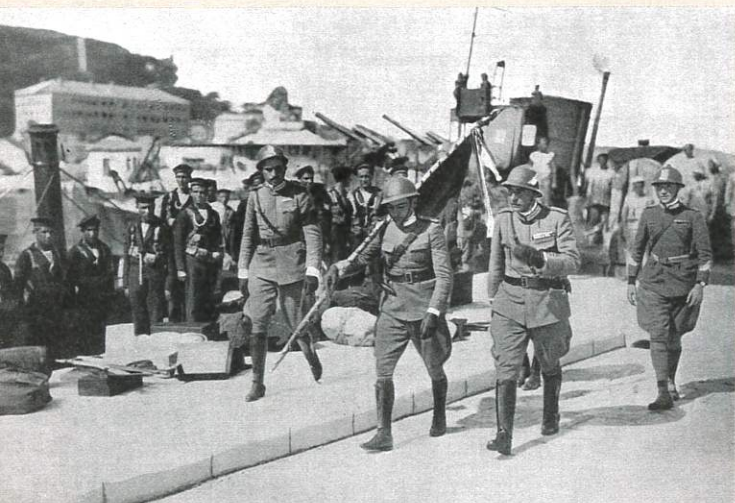
- a Plebiscites
- b The power of leading members, such as Britain and France.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** Historians Nigel Kelly and Greg Lacey in a school textbook:

[Upper Silesia was] A messy compromise, but whatever the League decided would have displeased someone. In difficult circumstances, it did as well as it could.

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

► **SOURCE E** A British cartoon from 1925; Greece and Bulgaria are shown as 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee', quarreling brothers from the book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*



▲ **SOURCED** Italian soldiers occupy the island of Corfu in 1923

1923: Corfu

After the war the boundaries of Greece and Albania were still to be agreed upon. The League gave the job to an Italian general named Tellini, but while he was surveying an area of Greece, Tellini and his team were murdered.

At the time, Italy was ruled by a **dictator** named Benito Mussolini. When he heard about what had happened he was furious and blamed the Greek government. He demanded that the murderers should be executed and that he should be paid compensation, but the Greeks did not know who had murdered Tellini and his team. On 31 August Mussolini invaded and occupied Corfu, killing fifteen people. Greece appealed to the League, who condemned Mussolini's act of aggression but agreed that Greece should pay the compensation. The League would look after this money and it would be awarded to Italy once the killers were found.

Mussolini still wasn't satisfied. He complained to the Conference of Ambassadors, a group of powerful countries including Britain, France and Japan, and persuaded them to undermine the League. Greece was forced to apologise and pay compensation directly to Italy. Mussolini did withdraw his troops from Corfu. In this instance, when a large country had threatened a smaller one with military action, the League had proved that they could be ignored and overturned by other international groups.



BALKANDUM AND BALKANDEE.
"JUST THEN CAME DOWN A MONSTROUS DOVE
WHOSE FORCE WAS PURELY MORAL,
WHICH TURNED THE HEROES' HEARTS TO LOVE
AND MADE THEM DROP THEIR QUARREL." — Lewis Carroll (adapted)

1925: Bulgaria

When Greek soldiers were killed on the Bulgarian border, Greece invaded. Bulgaria appealed to the League for help. The League condemned the Greeks and ordered them to withdraw troops and pay compensation. Greece thought that the League was being hypocritical, as Mussolini had got away with similar actions in Corfu in 1923. However, Greece was a small country and unwilling to risk poor relations with powerful members of the League such as Britain and France, so they obeyed.



▲ **SOURCE F** A protest march of unemployed people in Paris, France, 1933

1929: The Wall Street Crash

In 1929 the American economy crashed. The country was plunged into a devastating **depression**. This would last throughout the 1930s. America traded with countries across the world and had lent a lot of money during and after the war, so global economies were also affected. The whole world faced economic depression and in desperate times people lost faith in their governments. Some people turned to extremist parties such as the Nazis in Germany who promised to make Germany strong again by overturning the Treaty of Versailles. The League was powerless to do anything to help people or to control these new party leaders who were willing to resort to violence to get their own way.

Key Words

dictator depression humanitarian

Work

- 1 Add 3 more rows to the table you created for Work Question 1 on page 35, which focused on the issues the League of Nations faced in the 1920s. Write summaries and your verdict for the events covered on these pages.
- 2 Give an example of when the League used the following methods to solve problems:
 - a Overpowering smaller countries.
 - b The power of leading members, such as Britain and France.
 - c Use of experts to investigate an issue.
- 3 Why did the League face failures in the 1920s? Write a report and include the following subheadings:
 - a The League had no army of its own.
 - b The League was governed by British and French self-interest; it didn't always do what was best.
 - c The Great Depression.

Practice Question

'The League of Nations failed more often than it succeeded in the 1920s.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

Use your contextual knowledge to explain both the failures and successes that the League had in the 1920s. Remember, you can refer to both the League's **humanitarian** work and the border disputes it faced.

Fact

The dispute between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925 is sometimes called the War of the Stray Dog because some sources claim it all started when a Greek soldier ran after his dog, which had strayed across the border from Greece. The border was guarded by Bulgarian sentries, and one of them shot the Greek soldier.

5.1

How did international agreements help the League of Nations?

The League of Nations was created to encourage cooperation between countries and to stop wars from breaking out. Therefore you'd expect it to be involved in all major international discussions, conferences and agreements. However, this was not always the case. Let's look at some examples of when the League was left out of international agreements, and why this happened.

The Locarno Treaties, 1925

In the early 1920s the relationship between Germany and France was still very hostile; France was rebuilding after being ravaged by war and Germany was rebuilding after the Treaty of Versailles left the country devastated at the insistence of France. France had even invaded Germany when it had failed to make a reparations payment in 1923.

Things couldn't continue like this and in 1925 the German **foreign minister**, Gustav Stresemann, invited the French foreign minister, Aristide Briand, to meet and sign a treaty to help improve relations between the two old enemies. Germany was the country that suggested the Locarno Treaties, and since they were not a member of the League of Nations, the meetings were organised independently.

French and German representatives met in Locarno, Switzerland, where they signed seven treaties in which Germany officially accepted the borders that the Treaty of Versailles had defined, giving up any claim they had on areas such as Alsace Lorraine. They also agreed to work together to try to settle disputes peacefully.

► **SOURCE A** Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929), a German politician, who was briefly chancellor in 1923 and then took the role of foreign minister; this meant that he managed Germany's relationship with other nations



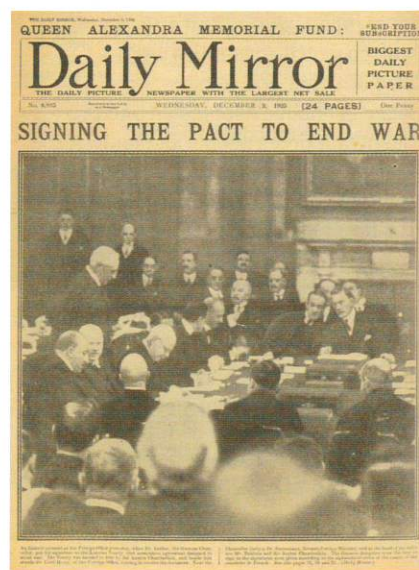
Objectives

- **Describe** international treaties that did not involve the League of Nations.
- **Assess** how significant they were and how much they damaged the League's reputation.

The treaty was also signed by Britain, Italy, Belgium and Czechoslovakia. Each country agreed not to go to war with any of the others and that if one of the countries broke the treaty they would support the country that was invaded. This was very significant for Germany who feared that the Treaty of Versailles had left them vulnerable to French attack.

The Locarno Treaties were extremely significant. Many felt they represented an end to German resentment of the Treaty of Versailles, and signed voluntarily, unlike the Diktat of 1919. Other countries saw this as Germany trying to become a peaceful nation, and relations improved so much that by 1926 Germany was allowed to join the League of Nations. However, some historians have said that this important treaty marked a failure for the League of Nations, which should have been at the forefront of any international agreements regarding peace, but had had nothing to do with it.

► **SOURCE B**
The front page of a British newspaper from 1 December 1925



Fact

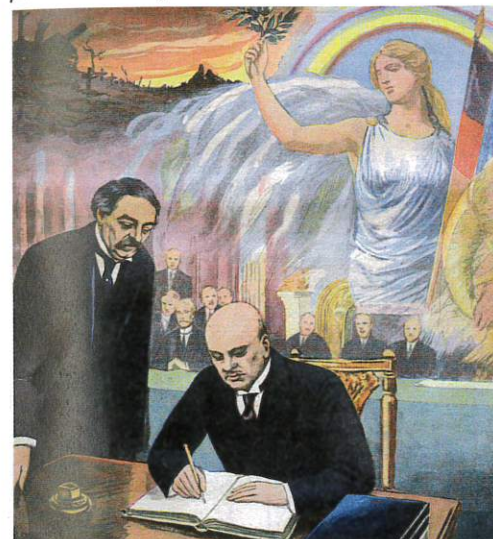
In 1926 Stresemann and Briand were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize together, in recognition of their work at Locarno in creating a treaty that had started to heal very deep wounds.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928

Sixty-five countries met in Paris where they signed an agreement stating that they would not use war as a way to solve disputes. The first countries that were involved were Germany, France and the USA and since two of these (Germany and the USA) were not members of the League of Nations this agreement took place outside the League.

Once again, individual countries acted independently of the League and made it look like it really was just a place for countries to air their problems, without being a place where a practical solution could be found.

▼ **SOURCE C** A picture from a French magazine, published in August 1928



Fact

The Rapallo Treaty, 1922

When Russia was forced to leave the First World War they had had to surrender to Germany. They were made to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which had taken away vast quantities of land and forced Russia to pay heavy reparations to Germany.

In 1922 representatives from Germany and Russia met in Rapallo, Italy, to sign a treaty. They agreed that Germany would return the money and land that Russia had lost and that the two countries would cooperate in the future. This treaty did not involve the League of Nations, as neither Germany nor Russia had been allowed to join.

Key Word

foreign minister

Fact

Washington Arms Conference 1921–22

One of the aims of the League of Nations was to encourage disarmament, but, significantly, it was not involved in the first international arms conference.

The Washington Arms Conference (or the Washington Naval Conference) was organised by and held in the USA. Major countries like Britain, France and Japan attended and discussed how big navies could be. It was decided that Britain and the USA could have the same size navies and that for every five tonnes each of their battleships weighed, Japan could have three tonnes.

The fact that Britain, France and Japan attended as individual countries, rather than sending representatives through the League, says a lot about their attitude towards the League and what their priorities were.

Work

- 1 Why wasn't the League of Nations involved in the Locarno Treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact?
- 2 Write a report about the international agreements that the League has not been involved in. Include an explanation of why they were important.

Practice Question

Source B supports the Locarno Treaties. How do you know? **4 marks**

Study Tip

Refer to the source's provenance and content in your answer.

The decline of international cooperation in the 1930s

In many countries the 1920s were an exciting time. People had survived the First World War and life was getting back to normal; people wanted to celebrate and have fun. Countries were willing to work together to make sure that these good times never ended, but in 1929 the USA was suddenly plunged into economic depression and everything changed. What did this mean for the League of Nations?

Objectives

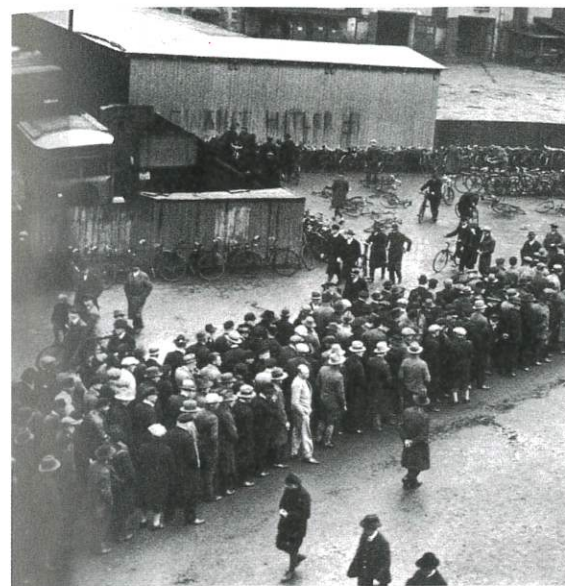
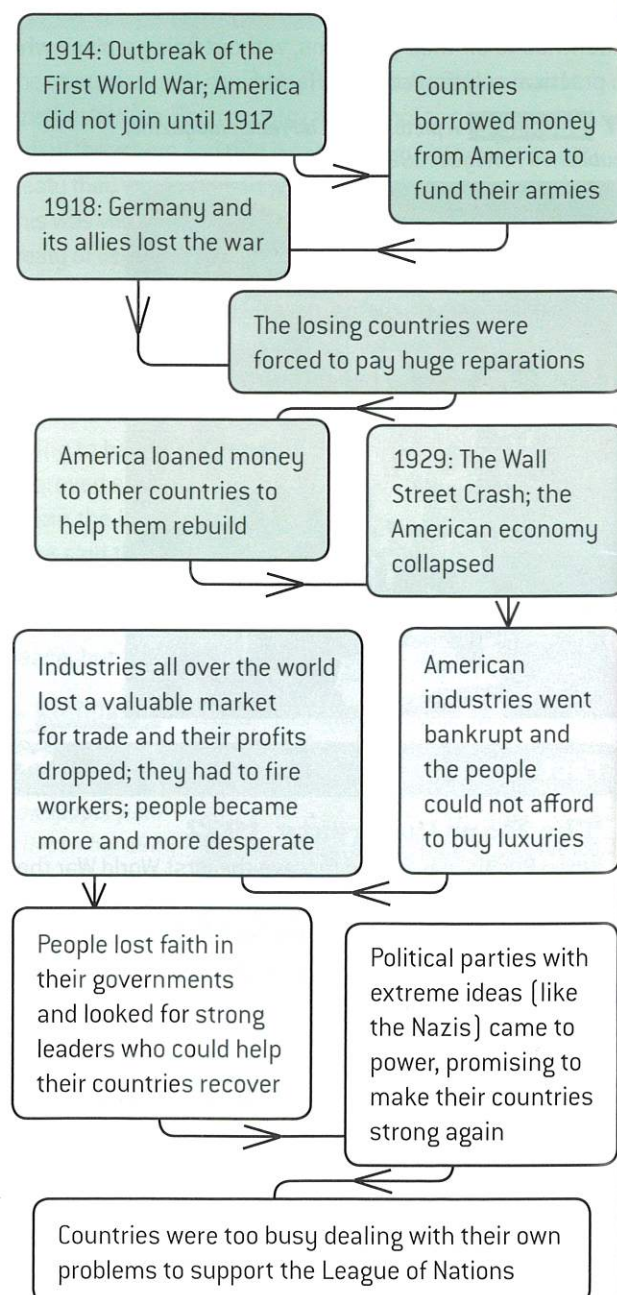
- ▶ **Outline** the impact the depression had on countries like Germany and Italy.
- ▶ **Analyse** the reasons this caused problems for the League of Nations.

The 1920s were a time of excess for many in the USA. Many new and exciting industries and businesses created lots of jobs. But in 1929, a financial crisis – known as the Wall Street Crash – hit America hard. Thousands of businesses went bankrupt and banks collapsed.

By 1933, around 15 million Americans were unemployed, and many had lost their homes. This time in American history is known as the Great Depression, and it lasted throughout the 1930s. It left people desperate and afraid. But this was just in the USA – how did these events affect the whole world?

With their families starving, people started to search for answers to their problems. Sometimes they turned to the policies of extremists such as the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany:

- **Hitler** was very skilled at offering solutions using simple slogans like 'Freedom, bread, work'. Compared to the complex solutions that other parties offered, these ideas were very pleasing.
- In a dictatorship the state (government) runs everything. This meant that they were more likely to take care of people such as the unemployed.
- They promised to take land by force so that their populations would have space, food and resources.
- They used the promise of victories in wars overseas to distract people from their problems at home. Such victories would restore national pride and the population would support its government more. This meant that dictators such as Mussolini and Hitler started to look at expanding their borders.



▲ **SOURCE A** *Unemployed Germans queuing to find work outside an employment office in Hanover in 1930. The writing on the warehouse wall translates as 'Vote Hitler'*

- Dictators found victims to blame their problems on. For example, Hitler said that Germany's problems were caused by Jews and the Treaty of Versailles. This encouraged racism, so countries were more likely to turn against other nations.

How did the Great Depression affect the League of Nations?

Hitler and Mussolini were not afraid to use violence to get what they wanted. They were not interested in collective security and they weren't scared by moral condemnation. To fight aggressive dictators the League would need an army. Since it didn't have its own it would have to ask its members to use their armies, but countries didn't want the expense of a war during the Depression. The only sanctions the League could impose were economic. However, in a time of economic crisis countries weren't willing to stop trading with others, as this would create more unemployment and hurt their own people.

Practice Question

Study **Sources A** and **B**. How useful are **Sources A** and **B** to a historian studying the impact of the Depression on Germany? Explain your answer using **Sources A** and **B** and your contextual knowledge.

12 marks

▼ **SOURCE B** *Adapted from an entry in a 1934 essay competition, by a German railway worker:*

Thousands of factories closed their doors. Hunger was the daily companion of the German working man. Many an honest working man had to resort to theft to obtain food. All fellow citizens yearned for better times. As for me, like many another, I had lost all I possessed, so, early in 1930, I joined the Nazi Party.

Key Biography

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945)



- After the war, Hitler was sent to spy on a new political party called the Nazis, but instead he joined them and became their leader. In 1923 Hitler tried to overthrow the German government and was imprisoned.
- After the Wall Street Crash people turned to the Nazi Party to solve their problems and the Party got more and more votes until Hitler became chancellor (prime minister). Once in power Hitler governed Germany very harshly.

Work

- 1 How did the Wall Street Crash lead to the global Great Depression?
- 2 Why were people more likely to support extremist governments during the Depression?
- 3 Why were these governments more likely to cause conflict?

Study Tip

Your answer to this question should be a piece of extended writing in which you explain both sides of the argument before reaching and explaining a final judgement.

The Manchurian crisis

The League of Nations faced one of its biggest tests so far in September 1931, when the Japanese army staged the Mukden Incident; they set off a bomb on a railway that they owned in China, blamed the Chinese, and used it as an excuse to invade the region of Manchuria in China. They set the area up as an independent Japanese state called Manchukuo. As a permanent member of the League's Council Japan should have been committed to the Covenant and ensuring world peace, so what went wrong? Why did this great power turn to war?

Where is Manchuria?

Manchuria is a region of China on the north-eastern coast. It's an area that is rich in natural resources such as coal and iron ore, and countries like Japan and Russia had factories there in the 1930s. The Japanese government had a policy of friendship towards the area because of this.

In the 1930s China was divided and weak. The country was split into many regions, often run by local warlords who ignored the national government.

A map showing the location of Manchuria



Why did Japan want Manchuria?

Japan was suffering in the Great Depression. Much of its economy was based on exporting silk to rich countries like the USA. However, silk is a luxury item, and people cut back on luxuries when their families were starving. So Japanese industry was in decline and many people were unemployed. By 1932 silk was worth one fifth

of what it had been sold for in the early 1920s and production and employment had fallen by 30 per cent by 1931.

Japan is made up of small islands, with very little open space and few natural resources. Therefore, when the Great Depression hit, Japan had to start looking elsewhere for its resources. Manchuria, with its fertile farmland, industry and natural resources, seemed like a good place to invade because:

- Manchuria is geographically close to Japan.
- Japan already had large industries, the South Manchurian Railway, and an army known as the Kwantung Army in the area. This foothold would make invasion easier.
- There was a history of confusion about who owned the area. Russia, Japan and China had all claimed it in the past. In 1931 it was ruled by a Chinese warlord, but his power was weakening.
- Japan was scared that China might kick out Japanese industry.
- Japan had fought a war against Russia in 1905. Taking over this land would upset their old enemies as well as distract the Japanese people from domestic problems.
- The Japanese army was getting stronger and stronger. After the Washington Naval Agreement in 1922, when Japanese politicians had agreed that Japan would have a smaller navy than Britain or the USA, Japanese generals felt that they could no longer trust their politicians to protect their country. They started acting without instructions from the government: in 1928 they assassinated the warlord of Manchuria. They thought the government's policy

Objectives

- Explain why Japan wanted to control Manchuria.
- Outline the methods the Japanese army used to take over this area.

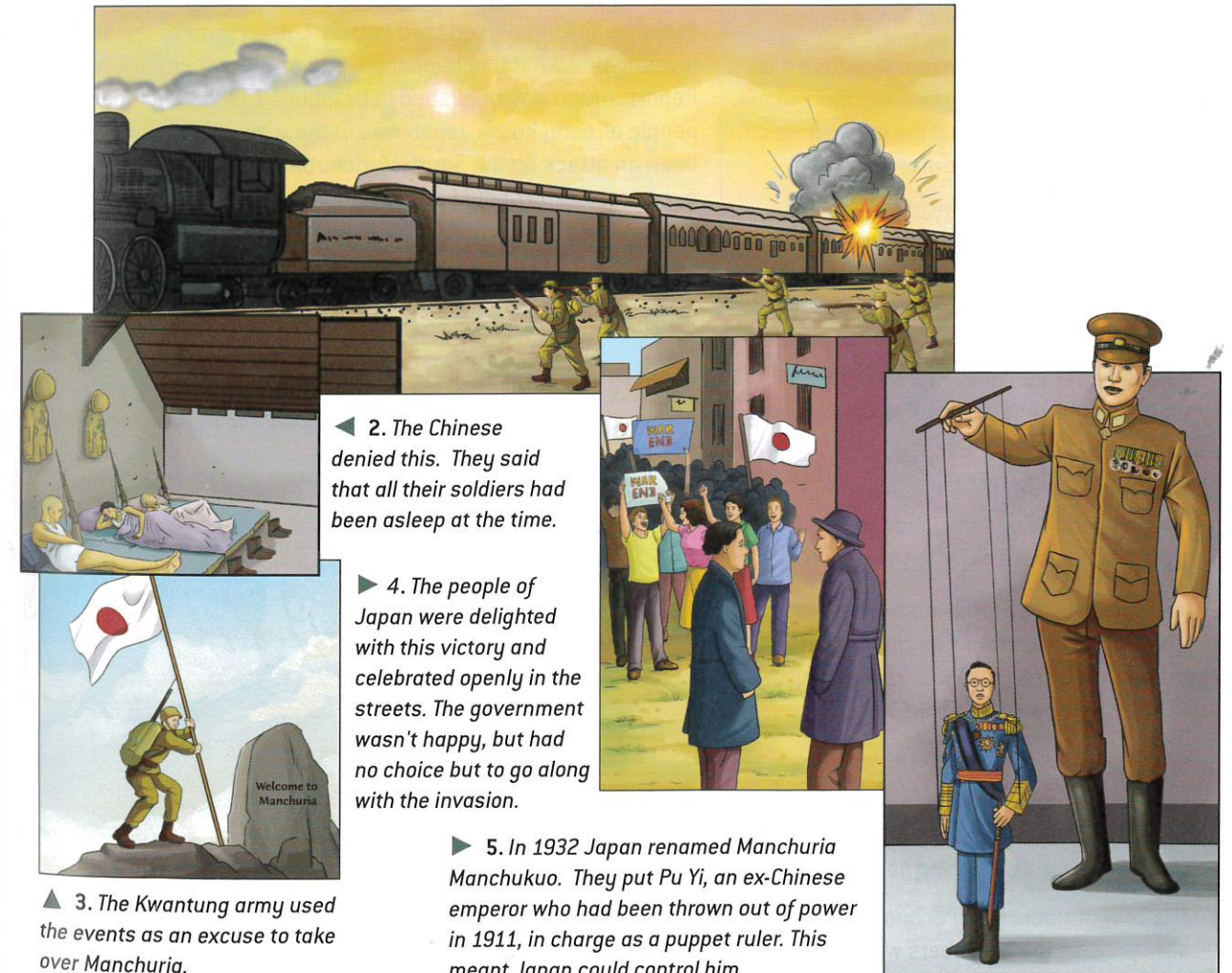
of friendship with Manchuria was wrong and that they should invade the area and take full control. The people of Japan were desperate for some good news and started supporting the army in the hope that Japan would become strong again.

- The Japanese army had murdered its prime minister in 1932, and the government then became dominated by army generals who could force them to take more aggressive actions; the politicians were scared of the army.

The Mukden Incident

The Japanese army wanted to take over Manchuria. Here's how they found an excuse to attack...

- ▼ 1. 18 September 1931 there was an explosion on the South Manchurian Railway. The Japanese army claimed that the train had been attacked by Chinese soldiers, who had also shot at the railway guards.



- ▲ 3. The Kwantung army used the events as an excuse to take over Manchuria.

◀ 2. The Chinese denied this. They said that all their soldiers had been asleep at the time.

► 4. The people of Japan were delighted with this victory and celebrated openly in the streets. The government wasn't happy, but had no choice but to go along with the invasion.

- 5. In 1932 Japan renamed Manchuria Manchukuo. They put Pu Yi, an ex-Chinese emperor who had been thrown out of power in 1911, in charge as a puppet ruler. This meant Japan could control him.

Work

- 1 Where was Manchuria?
- 2 Why had countries like Japan, Russia and China all wanted to own Manchuria in the past?
- 3 Write a memo from a general in the Japanese army in 1933 to the prime minister of Japan explaining why you think it's a good idea to invade Manchuria.
- 4 Describe the Mukden incident in no more than 150 words.
- 5 Many historians believe that there was no explosion on the South Manchurian Railway on the night of 18 September 1931. Or that if there was, it was not set off by the Chinese. Who might have staged this incident and why?

Fact

While most historians say the Second World War started in 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland, some take the date as July 1937 when, having successfully invaded Manchuria, Japan launched an invasion on the rest of China.

How did the League react to the Manchurian crisis?

When China found that Japan had invaded Manchuria they turned to the League of Nations to investigate. It looked like a clear case of aggression: Japan had invaded Manchuria and was in the wrong. One of the most powerful members of the League had undermined the covenant. What would the League do next?

Objectives

- **Describe** the League of Nations' reaction to the Manchurian crisis.
- **Evaluate** how much the Manchurian crisis damaged the League's reputation.

Why was the League reluctant to act?

- Although it was a clear case of Japanese aggression, the League did not want a big fight. Many people felt that Japan owned Manchuria and was entitled to take control – the Chinese had even agreed in treaties that Japan had economic rights in the region.
- China and Japan were far removed from the League's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Britain and France felt that the incident was simply too far away to be of real concern.
- Japan had been a powerful member of the League. The Japanese claimed that the Chinese had attacked them first; there was so much confusion about the episode that many people chose to believe the Japanese version of events so that they didn't have to get involved.
- China's politics were disorganised. Many members of the League felt that it was a good thing that Japan was trying to introduce order in the region.

The League issued a moral condemnation and told Japan to withdraw its troops, but when Japan refused there was really very little the League could do about it:

- Members of the League could not afford to send troops so far away to fight someone else's battles. Indeed, Britain and France were still facing depression.
- The League could issue economic sanctions so that members would stop

trading with Japan. However, Japan's main trade partner was the USA, which was not a member of the League.

- The nearest powerful country to Manchuria was the USSR, but since it had not been allowed to join the League of Nations it could not be called upon to help.

So what did the League do?

The League put together a Commission of Inquiry, led by a British politician named Lord Lytton. Lytton went to the area, investigated what had happened, and put together the Lytton Report, which was published in October 1932. It concluded what people already knew: Japan was in the wrong. Even if there had been an attack on the South Manchurian Railway, Japan had overreacted and should not have invaded.

The League's findings were official but Japan still ignored them and left the League. In February 1933 the Japanese invaded Jehol, another Chinese region. They then used these two areas as

▼ **SOURCE A** 'Trial by Geneva'; the judges represent the League of Nations, and lawyers are frantically reading the Lytton Report; Japan, not intimidated, is pulling faces



Timeline

1931	1932	1933	1937
18 Sep The Mukden Incident	Jan Japan invade Shanghai in China Feb Most of Manchuria under Japanese control Mar China turns to the League of Nations for help Apr Lord Lytton arrives in Manchuria to start his report Oct The Lytton Report is published, condemning Japan	Feb In a special meeting of the League of Nations, Japan is ordered to withdraw from Manchuria Japan leaves the League of Nations and invades Jehol	Jul Japan start a full-scale invasion of China

a base to invade the rest of the country in 1937. By 1938 most major Chinese cities were controlled by the Japanese army.

The end of the League?

The League had failed. One of its own members had ignored the Covenant and acted with aggression. The League had acted slowly and had, ultimately, achieved nothing. And yet the long-term damage to the League was limited; many people believed that if there was a problem involving European countries, the League would still be able to deal with it.

At the time, many people did not see the failure of the League in Manchuria as a 'fatal blow'. The League had, however, failed to stop an act of war, and in Italy and Germany Mussolini and Hitler began to wonder how they might be able to get around the League, too.

▼ **SOURCE B** From a letter from the Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge University, to his friend John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary (1933):

I know this sounds all wrong, perhaps immoral, when Japan is flouting the League of Nations, but:

- (1) she was greatly provoked,
- (2) she must ere long expand somewhere - for goodness sake let (or rather encourage) her to do so there instead of Australia and
- (3) her control of Manchuria means a real block against Communist aggression.

Practice Question

Study **Source A**. **Source A** opposes the League of Nations. How do you know? Explain your answer using **Source A** and your contextual knowledge.

4 marks

Study Tip

When answering a question about the opinion of a cartoon remember to support your explanation with evidence from the source **and** what you know about the event.

Work

- 1 Explain why the League was not keen to be involved in the Manchurian crisis.
- 2 Why did the following mean that the League could not deal with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria?
 - a The League would stop aggression by issuing moral condemnation and/or economic sanctions.
 - b Not every powerful country was a member of the League.
 - c The League was based in Europe.
 - d The League's Council could veto any decision. Permanent members of the League were France, Italy, Britain and Japan.

Extension

Some historians think that the Mukden Incident was staged by the Japanese, so that they had an excuse to invade Manchuria. Research this idea. What evidence can you find to support this theory?

Why did Italy invade Abyssinia?

After the First World War, the people of Italy turned against their government, allowing a man named Benito Mussolini to seize power in 1922. Then, in the early 1930s, the Depression hit Italy. Italian factories and businesses closed and millions lost their jobs. Mussolini searched for ways to build a 'new Roman Empire' and distract his people from hardship. In 1935 he invaded Abyssinia in north-east Africa. Why did Mussolini choose this country and how did he invade it?

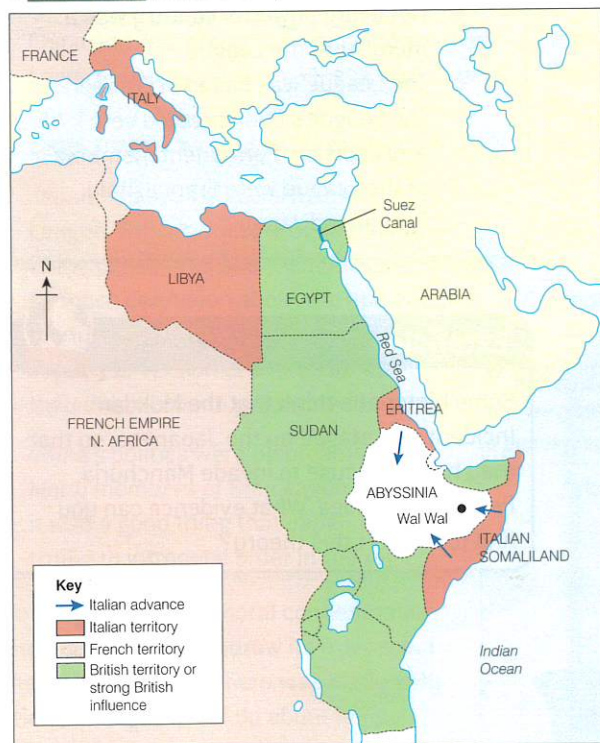
Objectives

- ▶ **State** how Mussolini invaded Abyssinia in 1935–36.
- ▶ **Assess** Mussolini's reasons for the invasion of Abyssinia.

Where is Abyssinia?

Today, Abyssinia is called Ethiopia. It is on the north-eastern coast of Africa. In 1935 it was surrounded by British and French colonies, but Abyssinia itself was still an independent country.

▼ SOURCE A North-east Africa in 1935



Why did Mussolini want Abyssinia?

- As a **Fascist** dictator, Mussolini had promised his people that he would rebuild the Ancient Roman Empire. Britain and France had added

much of Africa to their own empires throughout the nineteenth century, but Mussolini felt that Abyssinia, as an independent nation, would be an ideal target for an invasion. He didn't think that Britain and France could object when they had so many colonies in this region themselves.

- He thought the invasion would be easy because Italy already owned small colonies bordering Abyssinia: Eritrea and Somaliland. Mussolini could build bases in these countries and launch his attack from there.
- Abyssinia could also be good for the Italian economy; it was rich in natural resources and had good land for grazing animals.
- In 1896 Italy had tried, and failed, to invade Abyssinia. It had expected an easy victory against an undeveloped country, but had faced a humiliating defeat. Mussolini wanted revenge and to restore national pride.
- Mussolini was sure that he could invade Abyssinia without the League of Nations taking action. He had had dealings with the League during the Corfu crisis in 1923, when it had failed to stop him bullying Greece. He was also made more confident by the League's failure in Manchuria.
- Mussolini was convinced that Britain and France would not stop him from building an empire in Africa. In 1935 they had signed an agreement to form the **Stresa Front**, agreeing that they would unite against Hitler. France was afraid that Hitler might invade them and gave Mussolini the impression that they would do anything to keep Italy as an ally against Hitler.

How did Mussolini invade Abyssinia?

Mussolini's opportunity came in December 1934 when, on Mussolini's orders, Italian soldiers clashed with Abyssinians at Wal Wal, an oasis on the border between Abyssinia and Somaliland: 150 Abyssinians and two Italians were killed. The League tried to intervene, but found it difficult to stop Mussolini. Both Italy and Abyssinia were members of the League, but Italy was intent on war.

In January 1935 the French foreign minister, Pierre Laval, met with Mussolini and made a number of secret agreements. France promised Italy not to interfere in Somaliland and Eritrea, and gave it land in Chad, but Laval also promised to let Mussolini deal with Abyssinia however he saw fit.

In spite of moral condemnation from the League, Mussolini's troops entered Abyssinia on 3 October 1935. Italy was a modern and advanced country with a large army with the latest technology. The Italians bombed the tribal villages of Abyssinia and used chemical weapons to terrorise the people into surrendering. The only resistance they met was the small Abyssinian army, some soldiers armed with nothing more than spears.

On 30 June 1935 **Haile Selassie**, the Abyssinian emperor, had addressed the League in Geneva; warning it of the effect its failure to deal with Mussolini would have. But the League did nothing when, on 5 May 1936, Italian troops took the Abyssinian capital, Addis Ababa. The League of Nations had once again failed to prevent one of its members from violating the Covenant. From this point on many people's faith in the League of Nations was ruined and many historians claim that it was no longer viewed as a serious peacekeeping organisation.

Fact

Haile Selassie is the title given to the leaders of Ethiopia. The Haile Selassie who addressed the League of Nations in 1936 was really called Ras (meaning 'Duke' or leader)

Tafari Makonnen Woldemikael. In Jamaica some people believe that he was the Messiah (God living on the earth) and started a religion named after him: Rastafarianism.

Practice Question

Write an account of how Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia led to Italy leaving the League of Nations.

8 marks

Study Tip

Remember:

- C – chronological order
- C – causes
- C – consequences

Key Words

Fascist Stresa Front Haile Selassie

▼ **SOURCE B** A Cartoon entitled 'The Man who lifted the Lid' by cartoonist David Low, published in a British newspaper on 4 October 1935. The man pictured is Mussolini



Work

- 1 Create a timeline showing the events that led to the Abyssinian crisis of 1935–36.
- 2 Why did Mussolini think he would get away with invading Abyssinia?
- 3 Look at **Source B**.
 - a What do you think the beast that Mussolini is releasing represents?
 - b Is the cartoon praising or criticising the League of Nations? Explain your answer.

How did the League respond to the Abyssinian crisis?

Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia was an act of aggression carried out, once more, by a member of the League of Nations. The League's reputation had just about survived the Manchurian crisis, but how would it fare now? This time the issue was with a European power, so the League could not say that it was too far away to be dealt with. Yet, Mussolini's troops faced no opposition as they marched into Abyssinia's capital, Addis Ababa. Why did the League fail to stop Mussolini?

Why did the League fail in Abyssinia?

Failure to close the Suez Canal

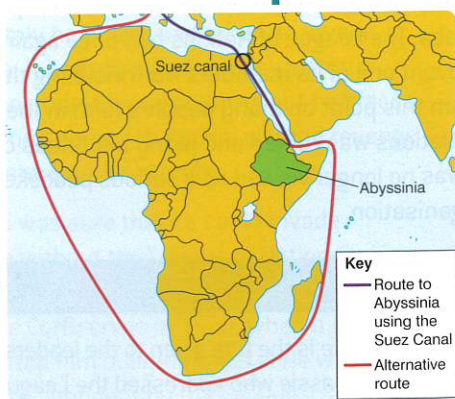
The Suez Canal was built to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. It was owned by the British and French and meant that they could travel to Eastern Africa or Asia without having to go all the way around the Cape of Africa. Britain and France could have closed the canal to stop Mussolini moving troops and supplies to invade Abyssinia, but they didn't as they wanted to avoid upsetting Mussolini. They were worried that Mussolini would unite with Hitler so they tried to keep him on their side.

Trade sanctions against Italy

Members of the League were forbidden from importing Italian goods and from selling weapons to Italy. However, it took two months to decide what else to ban, and when the decision was made, trade sanctions didn't include oil, steel, iron or coal. The British were worried that banning the trade in coal would cause unemployment in British mining areas, and the League felt that banning oil was pointless because countries like the USA and the USSR would continue to supply Mussolini.

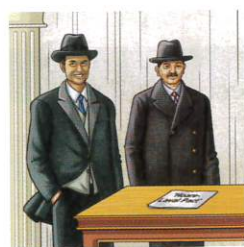


Mussolini later said that if coal and oil had been banned he would have had to stop his invasion, as he needed these to fuel war machines such as tanks.



The Hoare-Laval Pact

Britain and France sent their foreign ministers, Pierre Laval and Samuel Hoare, to come up with a settlement to offer Italy. In December 1935 they met in secret and agreed that Italy would be given areas in Abyssinia. Abyssinia would be reduced to half its size, and the land it would keep would be mainly mountain regions, while Italy would gain the fertile areas. This land was not theirs to give and they did not discuss their plan with Italy or Abyssinia.



Details of the Hoare-Laval Pact were leaked to the press, and public outcry followed. The two politicians were forced to resign, but the damage had been done: they had proved that Britain and France were willing to undermine the League for their own self-interest.

Trade sanctions against Abyssinia

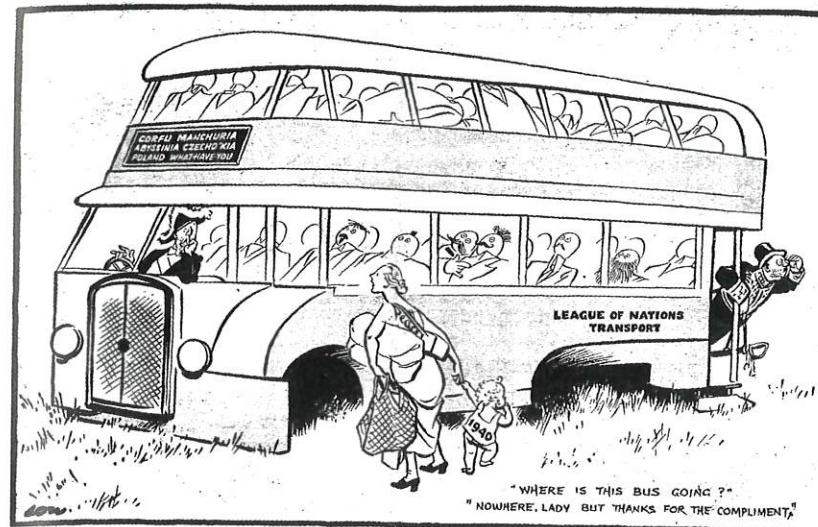
The League banned members from selling arms to Abyssinia as well as to Italy. Abyssinia was left with nothing to defend itself with against Mussolini's modern army.



Objectives

- Explain why the League of Nations failed to take decisive action against Mussolini.
- Evaluate the collapse of the League of Nations.

▼ **SOURCE A** A British cartoon from 1939. Czechoslovakia and Poland were the last two countries Hitler invaded before Britain and France declared war on him in 1939



▼ **SOURCE B** A speech by Anthony Eden, British foreign secretary; this speech was given to parliament on 18 June 1936:

There was a very good reason for the League to enforce the particular sanctions they chose, because with an incomplete membership they were the only ones they could impose and which by their own action alone they could hope to see effective. Oil could not be made effective by the League action alone.

I think it is right that the League should admit that sanctions have not realised their purpose and should face that fact.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** The British historian A.J.P. Taylor writing in 1961 about the League's failure during the Abyssinian crisis:

The real death of the League was 1935, not 1939 or 1945. One day it was a powerful body imposing sanctions, seemingly more effective than ever before; the next day it was an empty sham, everyone scuttling from it as quickly as possible. What killed the League was the publication of the Hoare-Laval pact.

Extension

Many historians say that the League of Nations fell apart after 1935. Can you research any examples of events it was involved in after this date?



The end of the League

In May 1936 Italy left the League of Nations. This left just Britain, France and the USSR (which had joined in 1934) to run the League. However, Britain and France had shown that they were more interested in their own welfare than protecting the Covenant of the League. Many historians say that from this time on no one really respected the League and its days as the international police force had ended. Small countries knew that the League would not protect them from invasion, and aggressive dictators such as Mussolini and Hitler realised that it was powerless to stop them starting a war.

Work

- 1 Why was the Suez Canal important and why didn't Britain and France close it during the Abyssinian crisis?
- 2 Why did trade sanctions against Mussolini fail?
- 3 The Hoare-Laval Pact was never put into action. Why, then, was it so significant?

Practice Question

Study **Sources A** and **B**. How useful are **Sources A** and **B** for a historian studying opinions about the collapse of the League of Nations? Explain your answer using **Sources A** and **B** and your contextual knowledge.

12 marks

Study Tip

Try to include an explanation of the views of each source, an analysis of the provenance of each source, and an overall judgment. Do these two sources tell you everything you need to know about the failure of the League?


6.6 Was the League of Nations destined to fail?

At the end of the First World War, the League of Nations was created to try to prevent another devastating world war. Yet in 1939, just 20 years after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the world was plunged into war again. The League of Nations was a well-intentioned and ambitious experiment, but it failed. What were the reasons for its failure?


Objectives

- **Summarise** your ideas about why the League of Nations had failed by 1939.
- **Evaluate** the most significant cause of the League's failure.

1 The League had no army of its own.



2 The League had some very ambitious plans and ideals – to stop war and make the world a better place, for example. However, it could be argued that these plans were *too* ambitious and didn't really stand a chance of succeeding.




3 The League met only once a year, the Council could veto proposals, and decisions had to be unanimous. This made decision-making slow.

September 2016						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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26	27	28	29	30		

4 The League's structure was complex and there weren't enough people to carry out decisions that were made.

5 America refused to join, and other powerful countries such as Germany and the USSR were not allowed to join when the League was formed.




6 Trade sanctions did not work because countries could still trade with places such as the USA.




7 Powerful countries weren't scared of moral condemnation, so the League's sanctions were useless.

8 The Great Depression meant countries were concerned with their own problems.



9 The Depression meant people turned to extremist dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini, who were keen to invade other countries. Ultimately, this led to the Second World War, as Hitler invaded more and more countries without the League doing anything to stop him.

10 The League was slow to act during the Manchurian crisis.



11 The British and French were too worried about keeping Mussolini as an ally against Hitler to stop the Abyssinian invasion.

▼ **SOURCE A** The historian H.A.L. Fisher summing up the failure of the League in 1938:

If the nations want peace, the League gives them the way by which peace can be kept. League or no League, a country which is determined to have a war can always have it.

▼ **SOURCE B** A British cartoon from Punch magazine in December 1919; it's called 'The Gap in the Bridge'



▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from historian Norman Lowe on the Wall Street Crash, writing in 1984:

The crisis in the USA affected most European countries. Europe's prosperity since 1924 had much to do with American loans. The effects were most serious in Germany where in 1931 unemployment was approaching four million, but the effects in Britain were dramatic enough.

▼ **INTERPRETATION E** Historian A.J.P. Taylor's verdict on why the League of Nations failed, written in 1966:

What killed the League was the publication of the Hoare-Laval Pact.

▼ **SOURCE C** A French poster from 1932



Work

- 1 What was the most important reason why the League of Nations failed? Look at the reasons given on page 50. Write them out onto sticky notes, then work with a partner to put them in order of importance. Discuss your ideas and explain to each other why you think some factors were more important than others.
- 2 **a** In your own words, sum up each of the reasons why the League of Nations was weak and failed.
b Now look at the **Sources** and **Interpretations** on these pages. Can you match a source or an interpretation to each one of the reasons?
- 3 Identify the reasons given for the League's failure, then give an event you would use for each as evidence to prove this was a problem for them.

Practice Question

'Structural weaknesses in The League of Nations when it was first set up were the main reasons it was doomed to fail.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks
SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

Try to make sure you refer to a specific event to support each argument. For example, if you're talking about the lack of an army, make sure you demonstrate a time when the League needed one.

1.1 What did Hitler want?

Adolf Hitler is probably the most infamous man in history. For many historians he is the single most important reason why the Second World War broke out in 1939. What steps did Hitler take that led to another war? Was he solely responsible or should other people and countries shoulder some of the blame for the collapse of peace in 1939?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe Hitler's foreign policy.
- ▶ Explain why Hitler's foreign policy meant that peace was likely to collapse in the 1930s.

Who was Hitler?

Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, promised to solve German unemployment, which had reached nearly six million by 1933, 'Right the wrong of the Treaty of Versailles', and make Germany strong again. In the midst of the Depression the people of Germany turned to the Nazis, and so in 1933 Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

Hitler identified a number of things he intended to do in order to make Germany a world power once more:

- Overturn the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler felt that the Treaty humiliated Germany and should be abolished.
- Rearm to make Germany strong again and to create jobs in munitions factories and the armed forces.
- Take **Lebensraum**, living space in the east. The Treaty of Versailles redistributed 13 per cent of German land so Hitler wanted to make sure that Germans had enough land to live on and to farm.
- Unite **Volksdeutsche** (people with German blood, but without German citizenship) and create a **Greater Germany**. Ten per cent of the German population found themselves living outside Germany after 1919. Some had been badly treated by the countries they were living in.
- Unite Germany and Austria once again in *Anschluss*.
- Destroy Communism. A Jewish man named Karl Marx had developed the idea of Communism. Hitler hated Jews and felt that they were ruining Germany, so he believed that Communism would destroy Germany if he did not destroy it first.

▼ **SOURCE A** *Hitler was a passionate public speaker who used gestures to stir up his audience*



▼ **SOURCE B** *From a speech given by Hitler in November 1923. In it, Hitler talks of his hatred for the people who signed the Treaty of Versailles, who had become known as the 'November Criminals'*

Now I am going to carry out the promise I made five years ago... to neither rest nor sleep until the November Criminals have been hurled to the ground, until on the ruins of the pitiful Germany of today has risen a Germany of power and greatness.

Fact

In 1923 Hitler tried to overthrow the German government and was sent to prison. While imprisoned he wrote a book called *Mein Kampf*, which means 'My Struggle'. This became a global bestseller. By the time Hitler killed himself in 1945, he had earned around 7.8 million reichsmarks (about \$152 million in today's money) from sales of *Mein Kampf*. Today most of the money made from sales of *Mein Kampf* is donated to charity.

▼ **SOURCE C** *Adapted from Mein Kampf, published in two parts in 1925 and 1926:*

We turn our eyes to the lands of the East. It will be the duty of Germany's foreign policy to provide large spaces for the nourishment and settlement of the growing population of Germany.

▼ **SOURCE D** *From Mein Kampf:*

Germany is the next great object of Bolshevism [Communism]. All our strength is needed to raise up our nation once more and rescue it from the embrace of the international python.

Key Words

foreign policy
Lebensraum Volksdeutsche
 Greater Germany
 rearmament
 Luftwaffe

The steps to war

Why did these policies mean that Hitler was going to alarm other countries and lead the whole world into war?

Policy	Why would this lead to war?
Lebensraum	Hitler wanted land in the east. To get this he would have to invade countries in Eastern Europe. This would be considered an act of war and other countries might try to protect the ones being invaded.
Rearmament	Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany's military power was severely restricted and the Rhineland had been demilitarised. Hitler wanted to introduce conscription and build a Luftwaffe (air force) to help reduce unemployment and to make Germany strong again, but this broke international law (the Treaty of Versailles) and other countries would become suspicious about why Germany needed a large army.
Reunite German-speaking people and create a Greater Germany	To build a Greater Germany Hitler planned to reclaim land that had been lost in the Treaty of Versailles. He also planned to unite areas that were no longer German land but where Volksdeutsche were living as part of Germany. However, it was unlikely that other countries would give up these regions without a fight and once again Hitler was breaking international law.
Destroy Communism	The USSR had a massive army and had begun to develop better relationships with Britain and France. The USSR was also allied with many of the Eastern European countries that Hitler was targeting for Lebensraum . Hitler was provoking a powerful nation that was bound to fight back.

Work

- Match the following words to their correct definitions:

<i>Lebensraum</i>	• Another name for Communism, a system of government in which everyone is considered equal
<i>Volksdeutsche</i>	• German term for 'living space'
<i>Anschluss</i>	• Book written by Hitler; the title means 'My Struggle'
<i>Mein Kampf</i>	• People of the German race
Bolshevism	• Uniting Germany and Austria
- It's important that you develop effective revision techniques. Using an acronym can help you to memorise things. For example, the acronym 'Naughty Elephants Squirt Water' helps you remember the points of a compass: North, East, South, West. Come up with your own acronym to help you remember Hitler's foreign policies.
- Look at **Sources B, C** and **D**. Which of Hitler's foreign policies is each source about?

Extension

If Hitler had achieved all of his foreign policy aims, what would the advantages have been to Germany? Think about his motives – what problems did Germany face after the Treaty of Versailles? Which of his policies would solve each problem? How would this affect the people of Germany?



How did other countries react to Hitler's foreign policies?

It's easy for us to look back at the 1930s and ask why someone didn't do something to stop Hitler sooner. Hitler talked about war often. He said that a war was needed to reclaim some of the land in Europe that he thought belonged to Germany. But at the time, some of the most important and powerful countries of the world did little to stop him. Let's find out why...

Hitler made no secret of the fact that he wanted to rebuild Germany and that he thought the way to do this was through war. Britain, France, the USA and the USSR all reacted to Hitler's actions differently. Why?

Britain

Neville Chamberlain was Britain's prime minister from 1937 to 1940. Hitler's speeches in the 1920s worried the British government and people. But when Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with Poland in 1934, many British politicians were satisfied that Hitler didn't really want war after all.

Many British people remembered the horrors of the First World War and would do anything to prevent another, even if that meant turning a blind eye to Hitler.

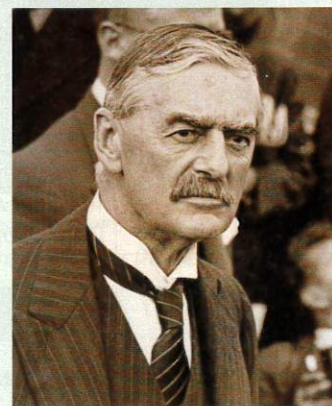
In November 1937 Chamberlain sent his friend, Lord Halifax, to meet with Hitler. Halifax was tasked with finding out what Hitler wanted. Chamberlain used the term '**appeasement**'; this meant giving Hitler a little of what he wanted in the hope of stopping a full-scale war. This was Chamberlain's policy until 1939.

Public opinion about the Treaty of Versailles had also changed. Many felt that it was too harsh and that

Germany should be allowed to reclaim some of what had been lost. This would help Germany become strong, which could help stop the expansion of the Communist USSR, and France, who Britain feared were becoming too powerful and might start to dominate Europe.

However, there were a few people who thought that Britain should take a stronger stance against Hitler. Winston Churchill believed that appeasement was a mistake. Britain also signed the Stresa Front with France and Italy in 1935, in which the three nations promised to unite against the threat of Hitler.

▼ SOURCEA Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940)



Objectives

- **Summarise** how Britain, France, the USSR and the USA reacted to Hitler.
- **Analyse** why little action was taken against Hitler by these countries.

Fact

In 1933 there was a by-election in Fulham East. This should have been an easy win for the Conservative candidate, but when he said he was in favour of British rearmament opinion suddenly shifted and

the Labour candidate received 58 per cent of the vote. This was seen by the government as proof that Britain was **pacifist**, meaning that they did not want war.

France

Édouard Daladier was president of France, for much of the 1930s. The 1930s were a difficult time for France. The people suffered greatly in the Depression and some started rebelling against the government. The government found it difficult to concentrate on the threat from Hitler with so many problems of their own, and there was no way France could have afforded to act against him without the support of Britain.

▼ SOURCEB Édouard Daladier (1884–1970)



The USSR

Joseph Stalin was the dictator of the Communist USSR. Communism was a very different political system from that of most countries in the West and because of this, the USSR's international relationships were often hostile. Stalin was concerned about Hitler – who had promised to destroy Communism – but he was also wary of the USA, Britain and France.

▼ SOURCEC Joseph Stalin (1878–1953)



Relations had started to improve in 1934 when the USSR had finally been allowed to join the League of Nations, and in May 1935 a treaty of mutual assistance was signed with France, saying that the two countries would work together. Stalin decided that it was worth cooperating with **capitalist** states if it meant that Hitler's expansion into the East could be stopped.

The USA

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (or FDR for short), came to power in 1932. Throughout the 1920s America had followed a policy of isolationism, avoiding getting involved in European affairs. The 1930s were no different. Unemployment had reached 25 per cent in the USA, following the Wall Street Crash, so FDR focused on creating jobs for his people.

▼ SOURCEC Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945)



A poll published in 1934 said that 70 per cent of Americans felt that the USA should never have got involved in the First World War and that if there was a second world war the USA shouldn't interfere. In the 1936 election FDR promised to keep America out of any war in Europe.

In 1938, FDR did try to get Hitler to promise that he would stop invading countries, but Hitler did not take the request seriously.

There was little more that FDR could do, so the US government watched and quietly started preparing its armed forces.

Key Words

appeasement pacifist capitalist

Work

- 1 Outline each country's policy towards Hitler.
- 2 What was appeasement?
- 3 Why did Chamberlain follow the policy of appeasement?
- 4 Explain why the USA wanted to remain isolated from Europe.
- 5 Why didn't France do more to stop Hitler getting more powerful?

Practice Question

'The main reason other countries failed to react to Hitler's foreign policy was their fear of war.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

Plan your answer carefully. Try to give two explanations that prove the statement, then explain two other factors that contributed to them. Finally explain your overall judgement.

German rearmament and the road to war

Hitler hated the Treaty of Versailles. He said that when Germany lost the First World War he had broken down and cried and that he would stop at nothing to overturn this hated treaty. He was true to his word and as soon as he became chancellor in 1933 he started to test how much he could get away with. This set him firmly on the road to war.

Objectives

- ▶ Explain how Hitler broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles between 1933 and 1935.
- ▶ Analyse why no one took action to stop Hitler.

1933 Hitler leaves the League of Nations Disarmament Conference

During the period 1932 to 1934 the League of Nations held a Disarmament Conference. Hitler said he would disarm, as long as every other nation would too. If other nations would not do this then he wanted to be allowed to have an army equal in size to that of France. France refused to cooperate. This gave Hitler the excuse to storm out of the conference while claiming that it was the French, and not him, who were being unreasonable. Germany then left the League of Nations and so was no longer expected to keep to its Covenant and work to avoid war.

1934 The Dollfuss Affair

Hitler was born in Austria, and Germany had been ruled by Austria for around 600 years. Many Austrians and Germans felt that the two countries should be one and were outraged when *Anschluss* was forbidden in the Treaty of Versailles.

Hitler's foreign policy included uniting all *Volksdeutsche* and overturning the Treaty of Versailles, so it made sense that he would try to unite with Austria.

Aware of Hitler's intentions, the Austrian chancellor, Dollfuss, banned the Nazi Party in Austria. In 1934 Hitler responded by telling Austrian Nazis to create havoc in the country. They murdered Dollfuss. However, Hitler's plot ultimately failed because the Austrian army supported the government and because Mussolini moved his troops onto the Austrian border, promising to stop Hitler's *Anschluss*. Hitler realised that his army was not yet strong enough to engage in war, so he backed down and claimed that the Austrian Nazi Party had acted alone.

1934

1933

▼ **SOURCE A** Lord Lothian, a British politician, speaking in January 1935, just after he returned from visiting Germany:

I am convinced that Hitler does not want war. What the Germans are after is a strong army which will enable them to deal with Russia.

Key Biography

Englebert Dollfuss (1892–1934)

- Dollfuss became the Austrian Chancellor in 1932; in March 1933 he shut down the parliament and banned the Austrian Nazi party in order to become the Fascist dictator of Austria.
- He modelled his dictatorship on Mussolini in Italy and the two became close allies.



Work

- 1 Copy out and complete the table below, to summarise Hitler's road to war from 1933 to 1935 and to show which terms of the Treaty of Versailles he violated in each event:

Date:	Event:	What happened?	How did this break the Treaty of Versailles?

- 2 Look at **Source B**. Why do you think this poster was created in 1935? Use the source and your knowledge of events to explain your answer.

▼ **SOURCE B** A German poster published in 1935, just before the plebiscite in the Saar



1935

13 January The Saar plebiscite

The Saar was a rich industrial area, which had been given to the League of Nations for 15 years under the Treaty of Versailles. This agreement was due to expire in 1935 so a plebiscite (when the people, not politicians, vote on a matter) was held to decide who should govern the area – France or Germany. Ninety per cent of the population voted to rejoin Germany and Hitler was able to use this victory as propaganda to show that German-speaking people wanted to unite under the Nazis. He also gained rich coalfields which could be used to power his industry and build weapons ready for the future.

1935

1935

March Rearmament

At the 'Freedom to Rearm Rally' in 1935 Hitler showed off weapons and troops that he had secretly been building. He also announced that he was reintroducing conscription (which he did in 1936), expanding his army to one million men and building a Luftwaffe (air force). This marked the fact that Hitler was sure that he could openly defy the Treaty of Versailles, without other countries stopping him.

1935

June Anglo-German Naval Agreement

For some time people in Britain had felt that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh on Germany. In June 1935 Britain signed an agreement with Germany saying that Hitler could build his navy to 35 per cent of the size of the British one. When Germany offered to restrict the growth of its navy and respect Britain's naval supremacy it was too good an offer for Britain to decline. Britain also allowed Germany to build 45 per cent of the number of British submarines. Hitler saw this as Britain admitting that the Treaty of Versailles was unfair and that they could, therefore, ignore it. The military terms of the Treaty were officially dead and, significantly, Britain hadn't consulted France and Italy before signing this agreement.

Practice Question

Write an account of how Hitler broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles between 1933 and 1935. **8 marks**

Study Tip

In a question that asks you to write an account you need to plan your answer carefully. Make sure that your answer is in chronological order and that you make links between the events you consider wherever possible.

1935

April The Stresa Front

The Stresa Front was an agreement between Britain, France and Italy that stated that they would guarantee the terms of the Locarno Treaty, protect Austrian independence and work together to stop Hitler from breaking any more terms of the Treaty of Versailles. However, Hitler was not concerned by this agreement.

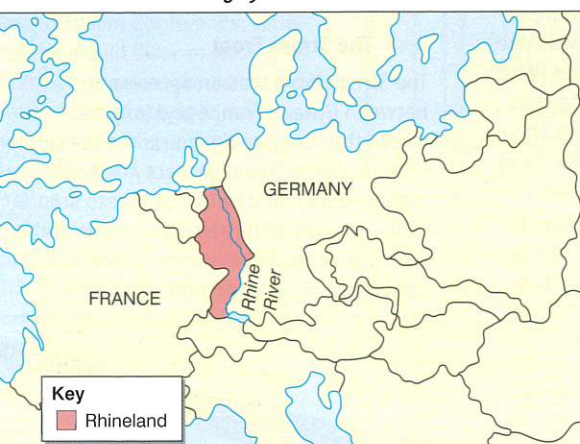
To War 1939

The reoccupation of the Rhineland

On 7 March 1936 Hitler marched 22,000 soldiers into the Rhineland, the demilitarised zone of Germany bordering France. This was banned by the Treaty of Versailles, which forbade any German soldiers from going within 50 kilometres of the River Rhine. So the decision to send in the troops was a deliberate challenge to Versailles and a clear violation of the Treaty of Locarno. How would Britain and France respond?

Why did Hitler want troops in the Rhineland?

SOURCE A The location of the Rhineland, which was demilitarised in the Treaty of Versailles



The Rhineland is the area around the River Rhine in Germany. It borders France and the river itself makes a natural defence against invasion. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the Rhineland remained in Germany but troops, weapons or fortifications were not allowed in the area.

Hitler knew that in order to gain *Lebensraum* in the east he would have to invade other countries. This could most likely provoke a response from countries like Britain and France, so Hitler had to start defending Germany's borders in the west. The **remilitarisation** of the Rhineland was key to this.

Entering the Rhineland

In 1935 France and the USSR signed the Franco-Soviet pact, an agreement to support each other if either was attacked by Germany. Hitler used this pact to claim that Germany was under threat, having enemies on both the

western and eastern fronts. He responded by sending troops into the Rhineland on 7 March 1936.

The troops were greeted by civilians who gave them flowers. Hitler had been relying on such a welcome; many of the troops had arrived on bicycle and there was no air support. Hitler knew that his army was still small, and even instructed his generals that they were to retreat if they were greeted by any resistance.

SOURCE B A photograph showing German troops entering the Rhineland in March 1936



Why didn't other countries react?

Britain

- Many Britons felt that Germany had the right to protect their own borders, and so they shouldn't have to intervene.
- British troops were already busy dealing with the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.
- The Depression hit Britain hard; the nation could not afford to get involved in foreign affairs.
- Many people believed that Hitler was simply reclaiming what was rightfully his.

Objectives

- ▶ Outline why and how Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland.
- ▶ Explain the motives behind the reaction from other countries.

SOURCE C Adapted from British politician Lord Lothian's reaction to Hitler remilitarising the Rhineland, 1936:

After all, the Germans are only going into their own back garden.

France

- Politicians in France were busy fighting a general election. No one wanted to be responsible for plunging France into a war as this would lose them votes.
- Much of the French army had been moved to Tunisia in case the situation in Abyssinia needed intervention.
- French generals believed that the German army entering the Rhineland was much larger and better equipped than it actually was. They were not prepared to risk their men.

The League of Nations

- The League was concentrating its efforts on Mussolini in Abyssinia.

SOURCE D This is what Hitler said about the events of 1936 when he looked back afterwards:

If the French had taken any action we would have been easily defeated; our resistance would have been over in a few days.

Could Hitler have been stopped?

Army generals had warned Hitler that if France decided to uphold the Treaty of Versailles the German army was not big enough to fight. Financial ministers advised him that, if he failed, Germany would have to pay crippling fines. Hitler simply was not in the position to fight, so sending his men into the Rhineland was a huge gamble.

Hitler's gamble pays off

The remilitarisation of the Rhineland was a significant step in the road to war:

- Hitler grew confident that he could do as he pleased.
- Hitler turned his attention to considering how he might get around the other terms of the Treaty of Versailles, such as the forbidden *Anschluss* (union) with Austria.

Key Word

remilitarisation

- Britain and France started rearming.
- France had treaties with several Eastern European countries, saying that it would protect them from Nazi invasion, but with the Rhineland strengthened, France now turned its attention to its own defences.
- The relationship between France and Britain was tested; the French felt that they could not rely on Britain if they were invaded by Hitler. To please France, Britain signed an agreement which strengthened the Locarno Treaty by reaffirming that they would protect each other, and Belgium, if Germany attacked.
- Mussolini decided that Hitler was a force to be reckoned with and agreed to sign a pact, the Rome-Berlin Axis. The two also worked together to send weapons to Spain, where there was a civil war. This allowed Hitler to develop and test his weapons and allow his men to gain experience of war.
- Hitler was now ready to defend his western borders, which meant he could concentrate on *Lebensraum* in the East.

SOURCE E Adapted from Winston Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on 26 March 1936. Churchill was an MP in 1936 but had previously been Chancellor of the Exchequer (in charge of money) and Minister of Defence:

The violation of the Rhineland is serious from the point of view of the menace to which it exposes Holland, Belgium, and France. When it is fortified it will be a barrier across Germany's front door, which will leave her free to sally out eastward and southward by the back door.

Work

- 1 Why was the Rhineland important to Hitler?
- 2 Look at **Source B**. Why do you think the soldiers were given flowers?
- 3 Outline the events of 7 March 1936, when Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland.
- 4 Look at **Source E**. How useful is this source for explaining the significance of Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland?

Which countries supported Hitler?

Hitler was a skilful politician who knew how important it was to have allies to support him if war broke out. As a result, throughout the 1930s he sought alliances with a number of different countries. So which nations became allies of Germany and why? And why did some countries refuse to accept Germany's offer?

Read through the following lists of potential allies for Hitler and examine the reasons why they did – or did not – join forces with Germany in the years building up to the Second World War.

Potential ally: Britain

Hitler admired the British monarchy and many of Britain's traditions and values. He was very keen to become allies and in 1936 he suggested a non-aggression **pact** that would last for 25 years; Hitler wanted the two countries to agree not to fight each other if a war broke out.

Response

Some British politicians wanted to cooperate with Hitler to avoid or postpone a war; they needed time to rearm, raise funds and persuade the British public that they had to fight, but they had no plan to sign up to an official alliance.

In the Locarno Treaty Britain had agreed to support Germany if France attacked, but this also said they would support France if Germany were the aggressors. After the remilitarisation of the Rhineland the British strengthened their agreement with France and Belgium.

Potential ally: Italy

Hitler could see that he had many things in common with Fascist Italy, yet Mussolini had prevented him from invading Austria after the Dolfuss Affair in 1934.

Response

But by 1936 things had changed. Hitler and Mussolini made the Rome-Berlin Axis. This was not a formal

Objectives

- **Identify** who Hitler wanted alliances with.
- **Explain** how these alliances strengthened Hitler's position.

Potential ally: Spain

In 1936 a bloody civil war had broken out in Spain between a group of nationalist Fascists led by General Franco and the democratic Republicans.

Hitler and Mussolini sent troops and weapons to help Franco. Hitler had several reasons for doing this:

- He could test out new weapons such as his Luftwaffe. His troops would also get experience of fighting in a war.
- If Franco won, Hitler would have gained an ally.
- The Communist USSR was supporting Franco's enemies, and Hitler had sworn to destroy Communism. If the Republicans won in Spain Hitler feared that this would become a strong Communist state in the west. He was determined not to let this happen.

Response

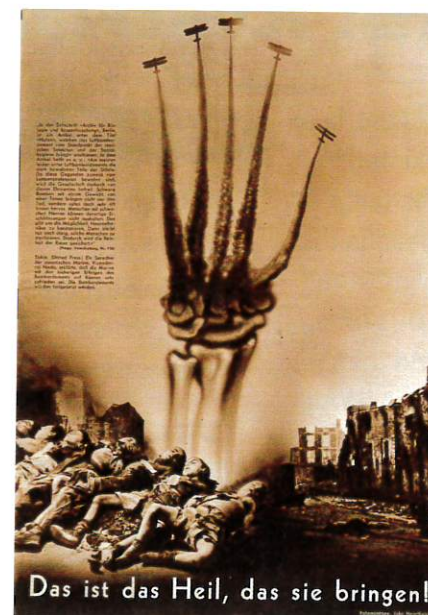
Franco was delighted to have two new strong allies. By 1939 he was able to defeat the Republicans and became the dictator of Spain. Much of his victory was thanks to the support he received from the Nazis.

agreement, but the two countries said that they would work more closely together.

Mussolini's relationship with Britain and France had suffered. Agreeing to work with Hitler meant that Mussolini was no longer isolated in Europe and that he could continue to rebuild a 'new Roman empire' safe in the knowledge that he had an ally if other countries declared war in retaliation.

SOURCE A

A poster by John Heartfield – a German Communist who made photomontages (a mixture of photographs and paintings) that criticised the Nazis. The poster shows the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica by German planes in April, 1936. Many civilians were killed and the town was devastated. The text reads 'This is the heil they bring'. 'Heil' refers to the salute Nazis gave



Potential ally: Japan

In 1905 Japan had fought against the USSR and there was still rivalry and hatred between the two countries. The Communist USSR had developed the Comintern: a group dedicated to spreading Communism. On 25 November 1936 Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, an agreement that they would work together against Communism, which was later joined by Mussolini.

Response

By 1936 Japan had invaded much of China. However, the Japanese military was aware that China's giant neighbour, Russia, may step in to support China at any time. In agreeing to this pact with Hitler, Japan hoped that China would feel threatened and surrender to Japan.

Fact

When historians study the Second World War they refer to Germany, Italy and Japan as the Axis Powers. Britain, France and later the USA are known as the Allies.

Practice Question

Study **Source A**. **Source A** opposes Hitler's involvement in the Spanish Civil War. How do you know? Explain your answer by using **Source A** and your contextual knowledge. **4 marks**

Study Tip

How do the wording and symbolism portray the Nazi involvement in the Spanish Civil War as a negative thing? What do you know about these events, or Hitler's motivations that can explain why the creator of the source is against these actions?

Key Word

pact

Potential allies: Italy and Japan

Italy, Japan and Germany entered talks to agree a triple alliance between them. However, they could not agree the focus of it: Japan wanted the pact to focus on destroying the USSR while Mussolini wanted it to be a pact against Britain and France. Because of this disagreement, Japan was not involved in agreeing the first pact on 22 May 1939. Japanese relations with the USSR had been strained ever since the invasion of Manchuria.

Response

The formal name of this agreement was the Pact of Friendship and Alliance between Germany and Italy, however Mussolini nicknamed it the Pact of Steel; their armies would work together in any war that broke out. Having Hitler on his side was definitely an advantage for Mussolini, especially as his relationship with Britain and France was declining.

Japan joined the Pact of Steel in 1940, making the three allies in the Second World War.

Work

- 1 Copy and complete the table below:

Treaty/Event:	Date:	Who did Hitler make an alliance with?	Details:

- 2 Britain was happy to follow the policy of appeasement with Germany, but did not make an alliance with Hitler. Why do you think this was?
- 3 Think about what you have just learned and your previous learning. Describe how Hitler's position in Europe had strengthened by 1936.

3 Anschluss with Austria, 1938

Hitler had already attempted to join Germany and Austria in 1934. A strong Nazi Party, totally loyal to Hitler, existed in Austria and they had murdered the Austrian leader, Dollfuss, during an attempted takeover. One of the main reasons the attempt had failed was that the Italian leader, Mussolini, stood against Hitler because he was suspicious of him at this time, along with the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact and their mutual support for General Franco in the Spanish Civil War, Hitler thought he'd try again.

Objectives

- Describe the reasons why Austria was important to Hitler.
- Explain how Hitler achieved Anschluss.

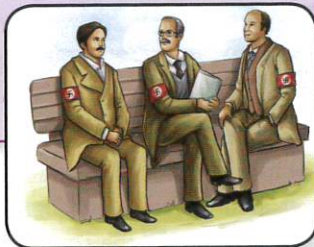
Why did Hitler want to unite with Austria?

Austria had ruled Germany for 600 years, they had similar cultures and shared a language. They had united after the First World War and Hitler was born in Austria. He felt that the two countries belonged together and would not rest until he had achieved Anschluss: the union of Germany and Austria.

Anschluss could also get Hitler closer to fulfilling two of his foreign policy aims: uniting all German-speaking people in a Greater Germany and destroying the Treaty of Versailles in which Anschluss had been banned.

After Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January 1934 he had tried to unite Germany and Austria. The attempt had failed because of Mussolini's actions. But in March 1938 relations between Hitler and Mussolini were much improved. Following a lack of action from Britain and France when he remilitarised the Rhineland, Hitler was convinced that nothing would stand in his way.

In 1934 Dollfuss had been replaced by Engelbert Dollfuss's successor, Kurt Schuschnigg. Schuschnigg was worried about what had happened to Dollfuss so made a deal with the Nazis. They would support him and in return he would give them key positions in the Austrian government.



2 However, in January 1938 police raided the headquarters of the Austrian Nazi Party and discovered plans to overthrow Schuschnigg. There were also huge demonstrations against the government, led by the Austrian Nazis, in large towns like Vienna.



3 Panicked, Schuschnigg met with Hitler. He travelled to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountain retreat in Germany. Hitler included three Nazi generals in the meeting to intimidate Schuschnigg. Schuschnigg had little say over the terms that they 'agreed', which included appointing a Nazi solicitor named Seyss-Inquart as minister for the interior, with full power over the Austrian police. Nazis were also to take the roles of ministers of finance and war. Schuschnigg was also to lift any restrictions on the Nazi Party in Austria and release Nazis from prison. Hitler told Schuschnigg to sign the agreement and make the changes within three days, or he would invade.



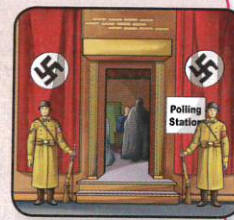
4 But Schuschnigg had a plan. He knew that Hitler wanted to claim that the people of Austria supported Anschluss, so he decided to hold a plebiscite to allow the Austrian people to vote on the matter. If people voted against Anschluss then Hitler would lose his excuse to invade.

5 On 11 March 1938 Hitler demanded that the plebiscite be postponed. Schuschnigg agreed, fearing he would not be supported by Britain, France or Italy if he defied Hitler. Hitler forced Schuschnigg to resign and made sure that Seyss-Inquart took over as chancellor. At 8pm that same day, Seyss-Inquart became chancellor and he immediately claimed that Austria was in a state of chaos and requested German help to restore peace.

6 On 12 March Nazi troops invaded Austria. However, the invasion was badly planned, with tanks having to stop at Austrian petrol stations to fill up with fuel, and commanders using tourist guides to find their way to the capital, Vienna! Not a single drop of blood was shed and people cheered for the troops as they entered towns, giving gifts and flowers to the soldiers. Mussolini stayed true to the Anti-Comintern Pact and did not oppose the Anschluss.



7 On 10 April Hitler held the plebiscite that he had discussed with Seyss-Inquart. There was a heavy presence from Nazi 'stormtroopers' and unsurprisingly 99 per cent of Austrians voted in favour of the Anschluss.



▼ SOURCE A Kurt Schuschnigg (1897–1977); Austrian chancellor, 1934–38



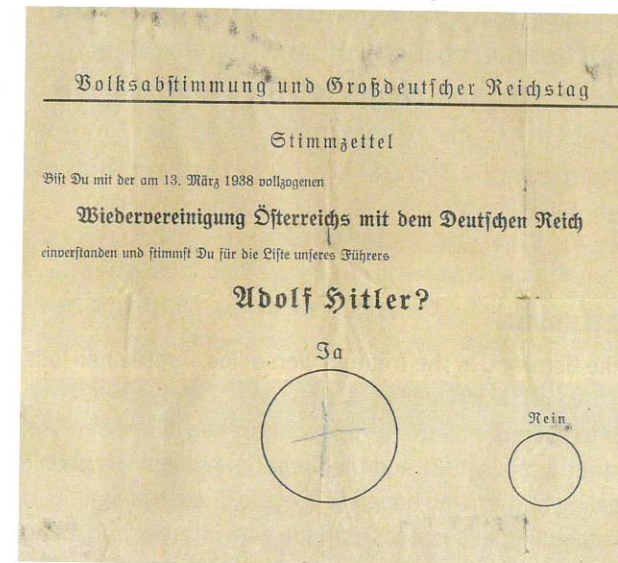
▼ SOURCE B Arthur Seyss-Inquart (1892–1946); Nazi politician; appointed minister for the interior in a deal between Hitler and Schuschnigg and became chancellor during Anschluss



Key Word

Führer

▼ SOURCE C The voting card used during the plebiscite in April 1938. The writing asks people whether they agree to the Anschluss and accept Hitler as their Führer. The large circle says 'yes' next to it and the small one says 'no'



Work

- 1 Explain the reasons why Hitler wanted Anschluss.
- 2 Hitler had tried to unite with Austria in 1934 and failed. Why did he think things would be different in 1938?
- 3 Look at Source C. Do you think that the people of Austria genuinely supported Anschluss? Explain your answer using the source and your own knowledge.

Practice Question

Write an account of how the Nazis achieved Anschluss.

8 marks

Study Tip

It's a good idea to plan your answer. You could write four or five bullet points to help you summarise the chain of events before you start your actual answer. Try to show how one event led to another.

How did people react to *Anschluss*?

March 1938 Hitler had once again broken the Treaty of Versailles when Germany united with Austria. He had already built up his armed forces beyond the levels permitted by the Treaty, and sent German soldiers into the Rhineland, both of which were also banned by the Treaty. So how would the international community react to his latest actions? Would they now confront him over his invasion?

Austria

In the Treaty of Versailles, Austria had lost a lot of pride and land in the Treaty of Saint Germain. As a result of this treaty, the country had also faced economic hardship in 1921 and the Great Depression left people feeling hungry and hopeless. People in Austria had watched Hitler's rise in Germany with interest and many were delighted to unite with the Nazis, as they believed it might make Austria great again. Ninety-nine per cent of Austrians voted in favour of *Anschluss*.

There was a dark side too. Austria was home to around 100,000 Jews, who knew that *Anschluss* marked a new era of uncertainty and danger for them. As soon as the Nazis invaded, **anti-Semitic** attacks took place on the streets of Austria. Jews were arrested at random and imprisoned or forced to scrub the streets or public fountains with their sacred prayer cloths. Thousands of Jews left Austria as quickly as they could, fearing that there was no future for them under Nazi control.

Germany

Hitler himself was so delighted with *Anschluss* that it is said that he shed tears when the document making the union legal was presented to him. Propaganda in Nazi-controlled newspapers told of the chaos in Austria (which had, of course, been started by Nazis under Hitler's instructions) and of Seyss-Inquart's request that Hitler should save the day and restore order. To many Germans Hitler was the hero who saved Austria from doom and despair.

Germany was made stronger and Hitler had made another step towards uniting German speakers and undoing the wrongs of the Treaty of Versailles. Austria

Objectives

- **Describe** how different people reacted to *Anschluss*.
- **Assess** how far *Anschluss* allowed Hitler to achieve his foreign policy.

was also rich in natural resources such as steel and iron ore, which could be used to fuel Nazi rearmament. In Germany, *Anschluss* was a propaganda success which led to heightened popularity for Hitler.

Britain

Most people in Britain felt that Austria and Germany were essentially the same country and that therefore they should be allowed to unite. There was opposition, from people such as Winston Churchill, who believed that if Austria wanted *Anschluss*, then Germany should have negotiated it, rather than sending its troops in. However, anti-war and anti-Versailles sentiments were still held by the majority of the population, so there was little appetite to get involved.

France

France had its own political problems that were seen as more pressing than the fate of Austria. Just two days before Hitler invaded Austria the whole French government had resigned because of unrest caused by economic issues.

Czechoslovakia

The Czech government heard the news of *Anschluss* with great fear. They knew Hitler wanted *Lebensraum* in the east and that Czechoslovakia would be the next country to come under Nazi pressure. They turned to Britain and France. The French were bound by a previous treaty to protect Czech independence and Britain felt that they should support their ally, France, so both agreed that they would support Czechoslovakia if Germany invaded. Chamberlain, the British prime minister, was determined to find a peaceful solution and asked Hitler what his intentions towards Czechoslovakia

were. Hitler gave his word of honour that Czechoslovakia had nothing to fear from him... But could Chamberlain really trust Hitler's word?

Fact

The League of Nations had been set up to stop aggression, but it was not even consulted when Hitler invaded Austria. It had well and truly ceased to function as the world's police force.

▼ **SOURCE A** *A crowd of Austrians welcoming Nazi troops; why do you think the people at the front are smiling and saluting, while the people at the back look less enthusiastic?*



▼ **SOURCE B** *Susi Seitz, who was a leader in the Austrian Hitler Youth in the 1930s and 1940s, was interviewed for the BBC documentary The Nazis: A Warning from History in 1997. Here she talks about meeting Hitler when he visited Austria shortly after Anschluss had taken place:*

I just looked at him [Hitler] and I saw goodness. And in my heart I promised I will be faithful to you. And I kept that promise.

▼ **SOURCE C** *This poster on a building on Vienna in 1939 translates as 'Common blood belongs together in one Reich'*



Key Word

anti-Semitic

Hitler youth

The consequences

Hitler now had access to the east, which was important for acquiring *Lebensraum*.

The Austrian army of 100,000 men added strength to German forces.

Austrian resources such as steel and iron ore helped fuel Hitler's rearmament programme.

Germany now bordered western Czechoslovakia on three sides... Hitler started plotting his next invasion, confident that as no one had stopped him yet again, he could do as he pleased.

Work

- 1 How did *Anschluss* help Hitler to achieve his foreign policy aims to:
 - a Unite German-speaking people in a Greater Germany?
 - b Overturn the Treaty of Versailles?
 - c Rearm?
 - d Provide *Lebensraum*? (Be careful with this one – Austria was not intended to be *Lebensraum*, where else could Hitler now take this from?)
- 2 Why didn't Britain and France take action over *Anschluss*?
- 3 Look at **Source B**. Why do you think some Austrians were grateful to Hitler for *Anschluss*?

What was the Sudeten Crisis?

March 1938, Hitler had broken the Treaty of Versailles on several occasions, yet nothing had been done by any of the major powers of the League of Nations. Now Hitler decided to take things one step further and invade a country which had very little to do with Germany. His quest for *Lebensraum* meant he turned his gaze to Czechoslovakia. However, Czechoslovakia was a strong nation, with a big army and lots of defences on the border with Germany. To take it, Hitler would first have to take the border region, known as the Sudetenland. Why was this region so important to Hitler?

Objectives

- ▶ Explain what Hitler's demands were.
- ▶ Analyse why Hitler wanted to take the Sudetenland.

Why did Hitler target the Sudetenland?

Czechoslovakia had been set up under the Treaty of Versailles, which Hitler had promised to overturn. He saw invading the Sudetenland as the first step towards destroying Czechoslovakia and 'righting' another 'wrong' of the Treaty of Versailles. Czechoslovakia had a big army and strong fortifications. The Sudetenland was home to forts, railways and industries, which could all be used as part of Hitler's war effort in years to come: the area had many factories producing glass and lignite (a type of coal), as well as the Skoda factory, which could be used to build tanks and other weapons.

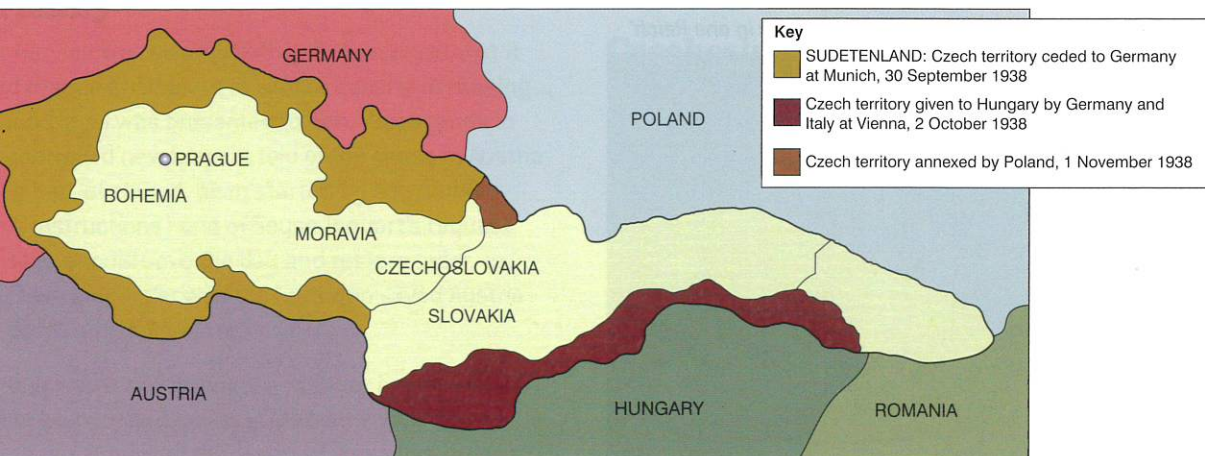
The Sudetenland was home to around three million German-speaking people. As a minority group (around 10 per cent of the population), the German-speaking Sudetens claimed that they had been persecuted by the Czechs and used this as an excuse to start riots. Hitler used this as an excuse; he needed to step in to 'save' German speakers in the Sudetenland.

- The Sudetenland was a good base from which to launch an attack on Czechoslovakia. The area jutted into Germany, which surrounded it on three sides. Hitler thought that owning the Sudetenland would be a good strategic move, making his eventual invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia easier.

Appeasement

Using similar tactics to those used in Austria, Nazis in the Sudetenland started demonstrations to weaken the government. In May 1938 Hitler made it clear that he would fight for the region, claiming that German-speaking people were being treated badly by Czechs and needed protection. As tensions rose, Europe held its breath. Having seen the devastating bombing campaigns of the Spanish Civil War, people were petrified that war could break out on the continent and that civilians would become the target of the Luftwaffe. Politicians in Britain and France racked their brains to find a way to stop Hitler invading the Sudetenland, knowing that if he did, Britain and France could be obliged to protect Czechoslovakia and declare war.

A map showing the Sudetenland



On 15 September 1938, the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, flew to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's holiday home in the German mountains, to meet with the Führer. Hitler told Chamberlain that the crisis could only be resolved if he was allowed the Sudetenland. Chamberlain was desperate to avoid war and agreed, so long as all actions were peaceful. Chamberlain's actions are known as 'appeasement' – the

desire to avoid war by making concessions (giving things up) to others. Chamberlain then met with the Czechs and forced them to agree to Hitler's terms.

On 22 September 1938 Chamberlain returned to Germany and met Hitler at Bad Godsberg, a town in western Germany. Hitler changed his demands. He now wanted the Sudetenland to be handed over by 1 October and insisted that Hungary and Poland should also receive Czech land.

This was not what Chamberlain had agreed to. Hitler was demanding more and more and war seemed to loom over Europe...

▼ **SOURCE C** Adapted from a speech given by Hitler to the people of Berlin, 1938:

We are not interested in breaking peace. I am thankful to Mr Chamberlain for all his trouble and I assured him that the German people want nothing but peace, but I also declared that I cannot go beyond the limits of our patience. I further assured him, and I repeat here, that if this problem is solved, there will be no further territorial problems in Europe for Germany.

Key Biography

Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940)



- Neville Chamberlain was born in Birmingham. His father was a politician and his half-brother, Austen, also held many positions within Conservative governments of the early twentieth century.
- In 1915 Chamberlain became lord mayor of Birmingham and in 1918 he entered the House of Commons as the Conservative MP for Birmingham.
- Chamberlain became chancellor of the exchequer in 1923 and minister of health in 1924.
- He became prime minister in 1937 and followed the policy of appeasement to avoid war with Hitler.

▼ **SOURCE B** From the Italian magazine *Illustrazione del Popolo*, 9 October 1938



Work

- 1 Create a fact file explaining why the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia were the next areas that Hitler wanted to invade.
- 2 Create a cartoon strip showing Chamberlain's efforts to appease Hitler in September 1938.
- 3 Look at **Source C**. Do you think that Chamberlain was right to appease Hitler over the Sudeten Crisis?

Practice Question

Study **Sources B** and **C**. How useful are **Sources B** and **C** to a historian studying why Britain allowed Hitler to take the Sudetenland? Explain your answer using **Sources B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge.

12 marks

Study Tip

Use your own knowledge to explain what each source is about, but also assess the provenance to see if there are limitations.

Why was Chamberlain so hopeful of 'peace in our time'?

Chamberlain's negotiations with Hitler seemed to be going nowhere and war looked certain to envelop Europe. Realising this, Mussolini suggested that the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy should meet and discuss Czechoslovakia's borders, in the hope that this would stop the imminent conflict. On 29 September 1938 the four great powers of Europe signed an agreement at the Munich Conference.

Objectives

- Explain what was decided at the Munich Conference.
- Assess why the invasion of Czechoslovakia was significant.

What did Hitler demand?

Hitler's demands were the same as they were when he met Chamberlain at Bad Godesberg:

- The Czechoslovakian army must leave the Sudetenland and the area was to be handed over to Hitler.
- Hungary and Poland also wanted to claim land on their borders with Czechoslovakia. Hitler demanded that these claims be met.
- Hitler promised peace in Europe in return for the Sudetenland.

How did other countries react to Hitler's demands?

Chamberlain and Daladier, the French president, were only too happy to attend the conference in Munich,

Germany, and to accept Hitler's demands. As a result, they felt that they were able to say that they had prevented war and that Czechoslovakia's borders were safe, as Hitler promised that he would respect them. Britain and France claimed that they had upheld their promise to Czechoslovakia to protect it from Hitler. In actual fact, Hitler had got everything he had demanded and on 10 October 1938 he marched his troops into the Sudetenland, an area that was not his, with no international opposition. Without the Sudetenland's fortifications the Czechs were defenceless and they fell to Nazi occupation.

The Czech government had not been consulted and now the people of the Sudetenland found themselves as the newest members of Greater Germany. German Sudetens greeted Nazi soldiers with flowers, just like Austrians

▼ A The terms that Hitler suggested at the Munich Conference



had in March 1938. However, the Czechs were fearful as the troops marched across their border. To them this was a real invasion.

The USSR was also not consulted. Britain and France had been trying to guarantee Soviet support in case of war, but now Stalin felt betrayed and angry. On top of this, Hitler was getting closer to countries that the USSR had close relationships with in Eastern Europe. Stalin started questioning what he could do to prevent invasion by Hitler's forces and was convinced that that answer did not lie in diplomacy with Britain and France, who were losing a very powerful potential ally in the USSR.

Peace in our time?

In spite of all this Chamberlain claimed that the Munich Conference was a great victory for Britain. The day after the conference he met Hitler alone and the two of them signed an Anglo-German declaration. They agreed that they would never go to war against each other.

As Chamberlain stepped out of his private plane on his return to Britain, he waved a copy of the Anglo-German declaration in the air and declared that he had achieved 'Peace in our time'. In Germany Hitler declared that Europe could look forward to a peaceful Christmas because of the Munich Agreement.

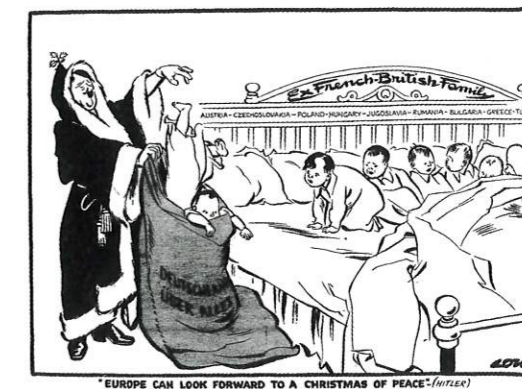
Why was the invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia significant?

- This was the first time Hitler invaded a country where he had no claim. There were no German speakers in Czechoslovakia outside of the Sudetenland and the country had not been German prior to the Treaty of Versailles. Britain and France could no longer hide

▼ SOURCE B Chamberlain holding up the Anglo-German declaration



▼ SOURCE C A British cartoon from 1938; why do you think Hitler is dressed as Father Christmas?



- behind the claim that Hitler was simply taking what was rightfully his.
- Czechoslovakia was a strong country; with support it could have fought the Nazis, preventing a full-scale world war, but this opportunity was lost.
 - Britain and France had alienated the USSR and lost a valuable ally against Hitler.
 - Hitler completed his invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. He broke the promises that he had made at the Munich Conference and to Chamberlain in the Anglo-German declaration. Chamberlain had to admit that his policy of appeasement had failed.
 - Chamberlain promised Poland, which looked likely to be Hitler's next target, that Britain would guarantee its independence.

Work

- 1 Create a fact file about the Munich Conference.
- 2 Some historians say that the Munich crisis was more significant in the outbreak of war than previous events such as the remilitarisation of the Rhineland or *Anschluss*.
 - a Why do you think they believe this? Explain why this meeting was so significant.
 - b Explain why other historians might disagree.
 - c Which event do you think was the most significant cause of war?

Extension

What do historians think about Chamberlain? Research how opinion about him changed. Was he foolish to underestimate Hitler or was he cleverly delaying a war?

How did Britain and France react to Hitler's actions?

Throughout the 1920s Hitler claimed that he would make Germany strong again by overturning the Treaty of Versailles, reuniting German speakers in a Greater Germany and taking *Lebensraum*. As soon as he became Germany's leader he began to do exactly this. To many it seemed that his aggressive actions might soon lead to war. What were Britain and France's responses to Hitler's actions up to 1938? And why didn't the two most powerful nations left in the League of Nations do anything to stop him until it was too late?

Objectives

- ▶ **Recall** the events that led to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- ▶ **Analyse** why Britain and France followed a policy of appeasement.

Timeline

1933	1935	1936	1938	1939
Hitler leaves the League of Nations Disarmament Conference	13 January People in the Saar vote to rejoin Germany	7 March Remilitarisation of the Rhineland	12 March <i>Anschluss</i> with Austria	15 March After the Munich Agreement, Hitler invades Czechoslovakia
	March The Rearmament Rally	July Hitler and Mussolini support Franco in the Spanish Civil War	September An agreement is reached in Munich which allows Hitler to have the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia	
	18 June Anglo-German Naval Agreement	October The Rome–Berlin Axis		
		25 November The Anti-Comintern Pact		

Why didn't Britain or France do anything to stop Hitler?

A Britain knew Hitler was building up his navy, so felt that if it made an agreement with him about how many ships he could have, then at least it could have some kind of control over the growth in order to retain its naval supremacy.

B The Allies weren't happy, but there wasn't much they could do about this. No one was prepared to do anything about the uniting of the two countries.

C The Allies were desperate not to get dragged into a war, so Britain and France didn't get involved. Hitler and Mussolini hadn't declared the war, they were just supporting Franco, so it wasn't their fault.

D The French refused to disarm, so there was nothing anyone could do to force Hitler to disarm.

E Many people thought that they were German people anyway, so why bother to stop it. Plus 99 per cent of people voted in favour of Hitler (who was actually born in Austria).

F Many people felt that Hitler could be a strong ally and a buffer against the Communist USSR and he would need weapons to do this. In addition, the Treaty of Versailles had been unrealistic in its military restrictions, so Germany should be allowed to ignore it.

G Chamberlain tried to stop Hitler and even met with him. However, he was convinced that Hitler was a reasonable politician and Chamberlain was determined to use the policy of appeasement to stop innocent people dying. He allowed Hitler to take this area because his only alternative was to fight. At least Hitler promised all action would be peaceful.

H The final straw! Britain and France now realised that appeasement was not working and promised that they would protect Polish independence.

I No law was broken and it was what the people of the region voted for, so people felt there was no need to do anything.

J Britain and France felt that Hitler was just 'marching into his own back garden', and he should be allowed to defend his borders.

K Britain and France felt that any alliance that was against the USSR had to be a good thing.

Fact

Appeasement is the term given to the way British politicians, such as Chamberlain, dealt with Hitler in the 1930s. The idea was that what Hitler was asking for was reasonable, that Germany had been treated badly in the Treaty of Versailles, and that Germany should therefore be given some of the things Hitler asked for. Chamberlain believed that once Germany was given what it was entitled to, Hitler would stop demanding things and war would be avoided.

Extension

Some historians have said that appeasement was an act of cowardice. What do you think? Research what historians have said about appeasement and how their views have changed over time.

Practice Question

Write an account of how Britain went about appeasing Hitler in the 1930s.

8 marks

Study Tip

This type of question asks you to explain causes and consequences. However, you will also need to demonstrate your knowledge of events, so for each reason you explain you should aim to give an example of an event that provides evidence for the reason.

Work

- 1 How did Britain and France react to Hitler's actions up to 1938? Match the statements A to K to the events in the timeline.
- 2 Copy the timeline, then colour-code the events to show which of Hitler's foreign policy aims each event helped him achieve. Don't forget to add a key.
- 3 Work with a partner to make your own historical 'who's who in history' game. You'll each need a set of cards with different individuals from this topic written on them. Take it in turn to ask each other questions, to work out who the other person has. As you correctly guess each person, turn their cards over. Who should you include? Make sure you include Hitler, Chamberlain, Churchill, Daladier, Mussolini, Dollfuss and Franco.

8.8A Was appeasement a good idea?

During the late 1930s, the British followed a policy of appeasement. This meant that the British government was prepared to go to almost any lengths to avoid war. British Prime Minister Chamberlain's use of appeasement has been argued about by lots of historians. Some support the policy, saying that it was the only responsible thing to do at the time, while others claim that if Britain and France had acted early on, while Hitler was still weak, then a full-scale war could have been avoided.

Objectives

- **Analyse** the arguments for and against appeasement.
- **Evaluate** by making a critical judgment about how effective this policy was.

Arguments for appeasement

There were several arguments for appeasement that were made at the time:

1 **SOURCE A** From the Daily Express, 30 September 1938:

People of Britain, your children are safe. Your husbands and sons will not march to battle. If we must have a victor let us choose Chamberlain. For the Prime Minister's conquests are mighty and enduring – millions of happy homes and hearts relieved of their burden.

2 Many people felt that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh on Germany and that it was only fair to allow Hitler to overturn parts of it. For example, he should be allowed to rearm and remilitarise the Rhineland, as Germany had been left vulnerable when the army was limited to 100,000 men.

3 The First World War was still fresh in the minds of the people of Europe. It is estimated that around 17 million people had been killed, including Chamberlain's own son. Twenty million had been wounded too. Chamberlain understood what it was to lose a loved one and would do anything to avoid other people having to face the same pain.

4 Hitler kept telling the British that he was a man of peace. They believed him.

5 Many of Hitler's actions gave the people what they wanted. *Anschluss* pleased 99 per cent of the Austrian people, so it was democratically right to let Hitler unite with Austria.

6 The people of Britain simply did not want war. In 1934 the 'Peace Ballot' allowed everyone to vote on how they felt Britain should handle aggressive situations. The vast majority of people said that they had faith in the League of Nations and collective security and that military action should not be taken by Britain.

7 When Chamberlain returned to Britain after the Munich Agreement, he was greeted by the public as a hero. They did not want war and Chamberlain had to represent the desires of his people.

8 The Great Depression meant that Britain and France could not afford to fight. They had their own problems to worry about and 'charity begins at home'. Why should they deal with other people's problems when they had starving and unemployed people to look after in their own countries?

9 The threat of Communism worried many people much more than Hitler did. A strong Germany would stop the spread of Communism from the USSR, so Hitler needed to be allowed to build up his army and he had to be allowed to get away with a few things to keep him on side.

10 Britain simply wasn't ready to fight. Rearmament did not start until 1936 and it would take at least four years for the army to be ready for a full-scale war. Britain needed to buy time. Entering a war earlier on could have meant that they lost.

11 The USA signed two neutrality acts in the 1930s, saying that they would not get involved if Europe went to war. Without the support from such a powerful country, and with the League of Nations having failed, Britain and France were left to fend for themselves and they did not have the money, resources or will to fight, so they did what they could.

12 **SOURCE B** A British cartoon called 'Still Hope' from 1938; it shows Chamberlain flying to the Munich Conference



STILL HOPE

Work

- 1 Choose a source that is in favour of appeasement. Explain how you know that this is the author or artist's viewpoint, using evidence from the source and your own knowledge to support your ideas.
- 2 Create a poster in favour of appeasement; why should the people of Britain support Chamberlain and his policy?
- 3 Study **Source A**. How useful is this source to a historian studying why Britain followed the policy of appeasement during the 1930s?

8.8B Was appeasement a good idea?

Arguments against appeasement

While some people were able to justify the use of appeasement, many have criticised the policy. Read their arguments and then decide what you think.

1 People misjudged Hitler. They thought he was a reasonable politician, but he had been saying throughout the 1920s that the only way to make Germany strong again was to use violence; they should have known better than to trust him.

2 People missed opportunities to stop Hitler. For example, his own generals said that the army was not strong enough to fight France if it had wanted to stop him from remilitarising the Rhineland. If France had acted then Hitler would have had to have backed down and war may have been avoided.

3 The more Hitler was given the more confident he grew and the more he took. For example, when he was 'given' the Sudetenland he knew he could then go on and take the rest of Czechoslovakia. Churchill said that the more Hitler was given the more he would continue to ask for. He felt that appeasement was a coward's way out.

4 Appeasement was morally wrong. It left countries like Austria and Czechoslovakia occupied by the Nazis who treated people brutally and with no mercy. Political games should not have been played at the expense of the lives of people in these countries.

5 The appeasers forced Czechoslovakia to back down to Hitler because they did not want to fight, yet Czechoslovakia was a strong and modern country. With a little support Hitler could have been stopped.

6 **INTERPRETATION D** Lord Halifax, in his memoirs from 1957, writes that people who criticised events at the Munich Conference were criticising the wrong event; he believed that the time to stop Hitler had been when he remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936:

I have little doubt that if we had then told Hitler bluntly to go back, his power for future and larger mischief would have been broken. But there was no section of British public opinion that would not have been directly opposed to such action in 1936. To go to war with Germany for walking into their own backyard, which was how the British people saw it, at a time moreover when you were actually discussing with them the dates and conditions of their right to resume occupation, was not the sort of thing people could understand. So that moment which offered the last effective chance of securing peace without war, went by.

7 Appeasement alienated the USSR; Stalin was worried that Hitler might invade the USSR but did not feel that he could rely on Britain and France for support if he did. Britain and France would need the USSR if war broke out but their relationship was strained by the policy of appeasement.

Key Biography

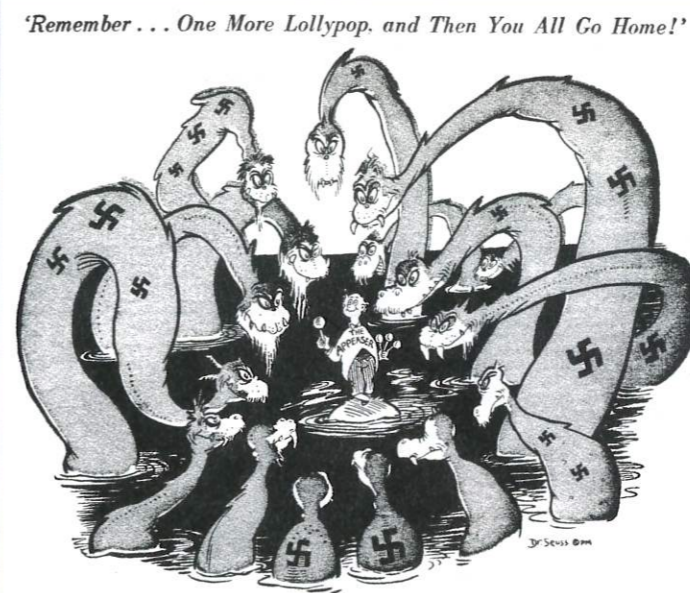
Joseph Stalin (1878 – 1953)

Joseph Stalin was the leader of Russia from 1929 until his death in 1953. During this time, he changed the country from an agricultural to an industrial economy, but treated anyone who opposed or questioned him with brutality. It is estimated that 10 million people were murdered by Stalin's regime.

8 **SOURCE E** A British cartoon by David Low, from 1936; the men Hitler is marching over are labelled 'Spineless leaders of democracy' and on their backs it says 'rearmament', 'Rhineland remilitarisation', 'Danzig' and on the final one, 'Boss of the universe'



9 **SOURCE F** An American cartoon by Dr Seuss published in 1941, after the war had broken out; the man on the island is labelled 'the appeaser'



Practice Question

'The policy of appeasement was a mistake that led to the outbreak of the Second World War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Key Word

satirical

Work

- In your own words, list at least three arguments in support of appeasement and three arguments against appeasement.
- Match each cartoon to the correct message:
 - Leaders of Britain and France are cowards who will not stand up to Hitler.
 - Appeasers are foolish; Hitler will keep demanding more because he sees he can get away with things.
- Match each cartoon to an event. Look carefully at the provenance to work out what was happening the year the cartoon was published.
- Do you think that appeasement was a good idea? Create your own satirical cartoon that is either for or against this policy.

Study Tip

When you encounter this type of question make sure you explain arguments that agree with the statement. You could then explain the arguments for the other side of the debate. Give and justify your final, critical judgment. Make sure you check your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

9.1A The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Hitler had made no secret of his hatred for Communism. His speeches were littered with references to destroying Communism and squashing Stalin, the leader of the Communist USSR. Yet in 1939 the two countries signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, making them allies. What led to this unlikely friendship? Why did two mortal enemies turn to each other in friendship?

Objectives

- Explain what the Nazi-Soviet Pact was.
- Analyse why Hitler and Stalin signed an agreement when they had previously been enemies.

Why did Germany want Poland?

By late 1938 Hitler had taken over both Austria and Czechoslovakia. Poland was Hitler's next step in his quest for *Lebensraum*.

In the hated Treaty of Versailles, areas of Germany had been given away to form the new state of Poland. Many Germans lost their property or found themselves living outside Germany. When Hitler came to power he promised to destroy the Treaty of Versailles, to reunite German-speaking people, and to claim *Lebensraum* in the east. Invading Poland would help him achieve all of these aims.

Furthermore, Hitler had grown confident. He had seen Britain and France fail to take action against him as he broke the terms of Versailles and felt that, even though they had made agreements to protect Poland, they would do nothing to stop him invading the country. Finally, Poland had no natural frontiers, so would be easy to attack.

However, Hitler still had a problem... What would the USSR do if he invaded Poland?

What was the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

When Poland was created at the end of the First World War it had been made up of former German and Russian territories. Both countries despised the new state and the USSR had immediately started questioning its existence. Stalin was determined to reclaim this land and Hitler was concerned about what Stalin would do if the Germans invaded.

Hitler could not risk Stalin intervening, so he sent his foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, to make a deal. If the USSR allowed Hitler to invade Poland, the USSR would be given Polish territory. On 23 August 1939 a non-aggression pact was signed. It was called the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

Why didn't the USSR trust Britain and France?

During the First World War Russia had been allies with Britain and France. Hitler had made many speeches about how Russians were genetically inferior to Germans, he'd murdered and imprisoned Communists in Germany and had promised to destroy Communism. So wouldn't it have made more sense for Stalin to unite with Britain and France against Hitler?

▼ SOURCE A 'Strange Bedfellows' by British Cartoonist, Bert Thomas; published in a British newspaper, 18 September 1939



▼ SOURCE B An American cartoon from 1939. The caption says 'Wonder how long the honeymoon will last?'



By 1939 Stalin feared that he could no longer trust his old allies for a number of reasons:

- Stalin joined the League of Nations in 1934, but witnessed how weak it was in the Manchuria, Abyssinia and Rhineland crises. He lost faith in the League's ability to protect Russia from Hitler's threats.
- In 1934 the USSR and France had signed an agreement stating that France would protect Russia from German invasion. But when Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936 France did nothing. If the French wouldn't stop an act of aggression on their own doorstep then the USSR could not be sure that they would do anything to protect anyone else.
- Britain and France had followed a policy of appeasement towards Germany in the 1930s. One of their justifications for this was that Hitler could act as a barrier against Communism, so should be allowed to rearm. Britain and France clearly didn't trust Stalin, so why should he turn to them?
- In 1938 the Allies signed the Munich Agreement with Hitler. Stalin was not invited or consulted. He lost any faith he had left in these nations.
- Lord Halifax, the foreign minister, and Chamberlain both hated Communism, so when Stalin first invited them to Russia for talks they declined. Then, when the situation in Czechoslovakia worsened, the British decided they did need the USSR on their side after all. In April 1939 British diplomats were sent to the USSR in the hope of agreeing an alliance.

Fact

The names 'Russia', 'Soviet Union' and 'USSR' are often used by writers and historians to describe the same place.

Work

- 1 Explain why Hitler wanted to invade Poland.
- 2 Explain why Stalin wanted to invade Poland.
- 3 In no more than 50 words, explain why the USSR did not trust the British or the French.
- 4 Look at Source A.
 - a Who are the 'strange bedfellows'?
 - b Why does the gorilla have a knife?
 - c What is the meaning of this cartoon?

Practice Question

Source B opposes the Nazi-Soviet Pact. How do you know? Explain your answer by using Source B and your contextual knowledge. **4 marks**

Study Tip

When you get a complex source like this one you need to work out what the cartoon symbolises. Try to answer the following questions. Who is the bride? Who is the groom? What does the caption mean? Why would the cartoonist ask this question?

9.1B The Nazi-Soviet Pact

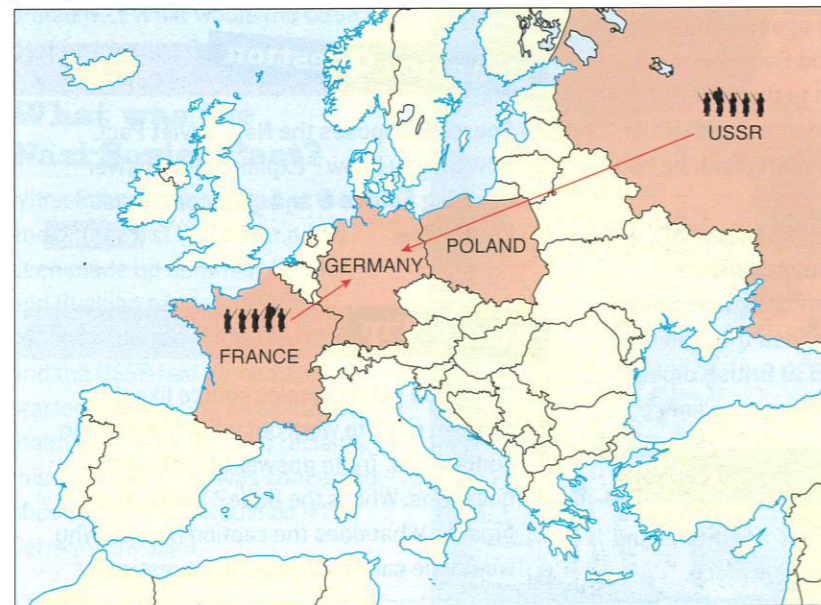
Why did Russia sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

- Hitler and Stalin secretly agreed to split Poland between them. Stalin could destroy Poland and reclaim land that had been taken from Russia. He would gain territory in Poland and didn't have to lift a finger to take it; Hitler would do all the fighting.
- Stalin did not really trust Hitler. He suspected that Hitler would turn against him at some point (which he did, in 1941, when he invaded Russia). Signing this pact meant that he was able to buy time, which allowed Russia to build up its army ready for war.
- The USSR could see that Britain and France would not stand up to Hitler; they had not consulted Stalin over key issues such as the Munich Agreement, and Chamberlain had insulted him by sending a diplomat with no real power or status to negotiate an alliance. Stalin felt isolated. Some Soviet historians have said that Stalin had no choice but to agree to the pact. It was better to be allies with Hitler than to be invaded by him.

▼ **SOURCE C** Adapted from Chamberlain's diary on 26 March 1939:

I must confess to the most profound mistrust of Russia. I have no belief whatever in her ability to maintain an effective offensive... and I distrust her motives, which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty, and to be concerned only with getting everyone else by the ears. Moreover she is both hated and suspected by many of the smaller states.

▼ **SOURCE D** Without the USSR as an ally Germany faced a war on two fronts; France would attack in the west and the USSR would attack in the east



- Owning territory in Poland would create a buffer zone, which would be useful if (and when) Hitler did decide to invade Russia.

▼ **SOURCE E** From a speech given by Stalin in 1941, shortly after Hitler had invaded Russia; he was speaking about why he had agreed to the Nazi-Soviet Pact:

We secured peace for our country for eighteen months, which enabled us to make military preparations.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact: what was in it for Germany?

During the First World War Germany had fought a war on two fronts. The French and British attacked from the west while Russia attacked from the east. Germany had had to divide its troops to fight in two different directions, which had weakened the army and ultimately led to defeat. Hitler was determined not to make the same mistake. He knew that, with every step he took towards achieving his foreign policy, war became more and more likely and Russia was a vast country with an equally vast army. He needed to take the Russians out of the equation.

Significance of the pact

Some historians have said that the Nazi-Soviet Pact made war inevitable. Hitler now knew that he could invade Poland without facing a war on two fronts.

After Hitler had broken the Munich Agreement and invaded Czechoslovakia, Britain and France realised that the policy of appeasement was not working and vowed to protect Poland if Hitler invaded, which he now surely would.

The pact also meant that when war did break out, Britain and France would face Germany without the

support of Russia. The mighty Soviet army would instead side with the Nazis, which meant that Hitler had the upper hand.

The pact persuaded Britain that war was imminent. They formalised their previous agreement with Poland. If Hitler invaded Poland, Britain would fight! Things were looking very bleak for Europe indeed...

▼ **SOURCE F** By American cartoonist Herblock in 1939; a bear is often used to symbolise the USSR



Work

1 Copy and complete the table below by colouring in each statement to show whether it was a reason for either Hitler or Stalin to sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact. (Use two colours – one colour for Hitler's reasons for signing, and a second colour for Stalin's reasons for signing.)

To prevent a war on two fronts.	Britain and France would not protect them; they needed a new ally.	To give time to rearm.	Britain and France did not seem to value them as an ally.
To gain territory, without having to fight.	Poland could provide Lebensraum, but the USSR might prevent this.	Poland could act as a buffer to stop attacks from the west.	Poland had been created from land taken from them at the end of the First World War.

2 Explain why the Nazi-Soviet Pact meant that war was more likely.

Fact

Hitler hated Communism and made no secret of it. Research what he said about it and consider what impact this may have had on the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

Practice Question

Study Sources E and F. How useful are these sources to a historian studying why Russia signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact? Explain your answer using Sources E and F and your contextual knowledge. **12 marks**

Study Tip

First think about what you can find out from these two sources. Use your own knowledge to explain what each is about. Then think about the provenance of the sources: who made them? Do they give you the full account? Then think about any limitations that the sources have. What don't they tell us about? Finally, come to an evaluation by reaching an overall judgment. Are these sources useful, a little useful or not at all useful?

The invasion of Poland and the declaration of war

When the peace treaties were signed at the end of the First World War and the League of Nations was created, the aim was to prevent another world war. Throughout the 1930s both Britain and France followed policies of appeasement towards aggressive dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini in the hope that they could avoid a major conflict. But these measures failed. On 1 September 1939 Nazi troops entered Poland and two days later the British and French declared war on Hitler's Germany. The world was at war once more.

Objectives

- ▶ Outline the events that led to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- ▶ Explain sources, using your own knowledge of events.

The invasion of Poland

Hitler was confident he could invade Poland with ease. After signing the Nazi-Soviet Pact he had the might of the USSR on his side and was convinced that Britain and France would continue their policy of appeasement. But Britain had signed an agreement with Poland, guaranteeing it security from Nazi attack!

On 1 September 1939, at 4.45am, the *Schleswig-Holstein*, a German battleship, opened fire on the port of Danzig. Danzig had been made an independent state in the Treaty of Versailles. Poland ran it, but 90 per cent of the population was German.

At the same time 62 divisions of the German army and 1300 Luftwaffe aeroplanes invaded Poland. The Polish air force was caught on the ground and obliterated.

▼ **SOURCE A** Children from a Polish neighbourhood in New York, USA, read about the Nazi invasion of Poland



▼ **SOURCE B** Bombed buildings in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, in September 1939



War is declared

Hitler's generals were worried that they were still not ready for war and even leaked plans to Britain in the hope that it would force Hitler to abandon his plans. Hitler ignored his generals' concerns and made them swear oaths of loyalty to him.

On 3 September 1939, the British sent an ultimatum to Germany. The Germans were to send assurances to Britain that they would withdraw their troops from Poland by 11am or Britain would be in a state of war with Germany, and would send troops to Europe.

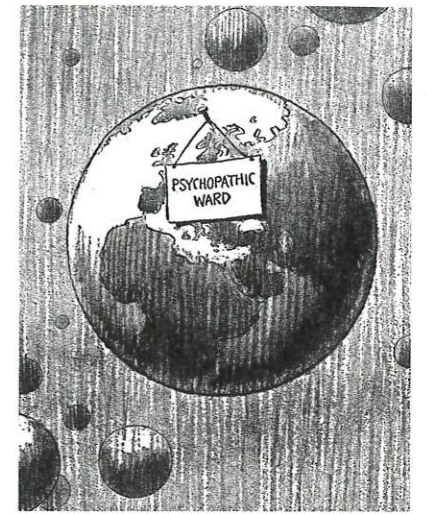
When no reply came by the deadline, Britain declared war on Germany. France followed suit and also declared war.

Poland was overrun by Nazi and Soviet troops within four weeks and Hitler was convinced that Britain and France would back down. He was wrong. The Second World War had started.

▼ **SOURCE C** The headline of an American newspaper on 3 September 1939



► **SOURCE D** An American cartoon by Herblock, published on 1 September 1939. A psychopath is someone with a personality disorder, which can lead to dangerous and violent behaviour



Fact

The Nazis occupied Poland until the end of the war in 1945. When they left, the USSR's 'Red army' moved in to help 'liberate' Poland, but in fact the USSR took

over Poland themselves. Poland did not become independent again until 1989.

▼ **SOURCE E** Adapted from Neville Chamberlain's radio address to the British public at 11:15am, 3 September 1939:

This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that, unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us.

I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.

You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more

or anything different that I could have done and that would have been more successful.

Up to the very last it would have been quite possible to have arranged a peaceful and honourable settlement between Germany and Poland, but Hitler would not have it...

Now may God bless you all. May He defend the right. It is the evil things that we shall be fighting against – brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution – and against them I am certain that the right will prevail.

Work

- 1 Draw a cartoon storyboard outlining the invasion of Poland and how Britain and France responded.
- 2 Look at **Source E**. Do you agree with Chamberlain that there was nothing more he could do in his 'long struggle to win peace'?
- 3 Look at **Source D**. What do you think Herblock is trying to say about the state of Europe in September 1939?

Practice Question

'The Nazi-Soviet pact was the main reason for the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.' How far do you agree with this statement?
Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

[Taken from AQA 2016 Paper 1 specimen material]

Study Tip

Try to explain several reasons why you agree with the statement and several reasons why you disagree with it. Then reach an overall judgement and explain it.

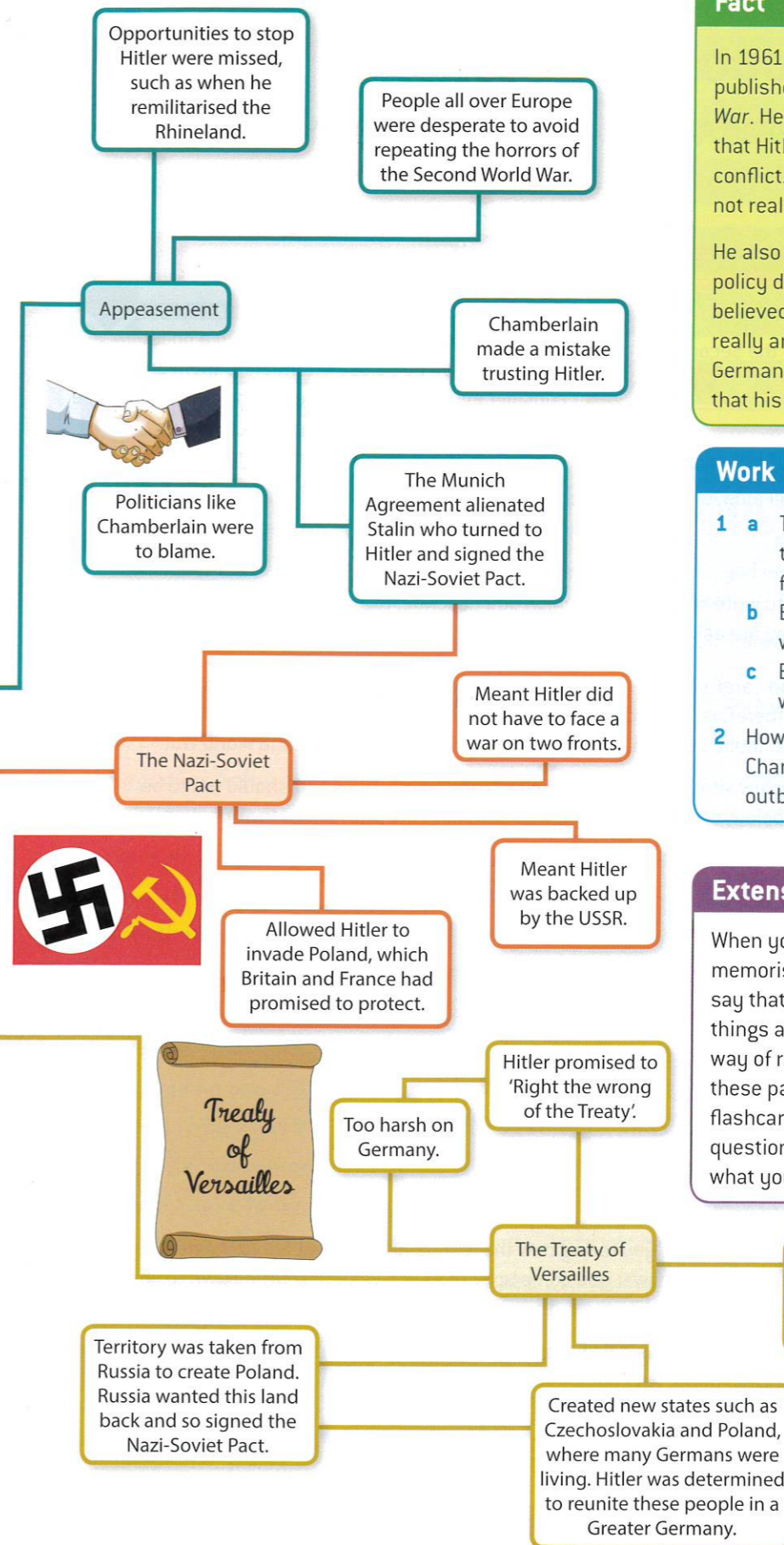
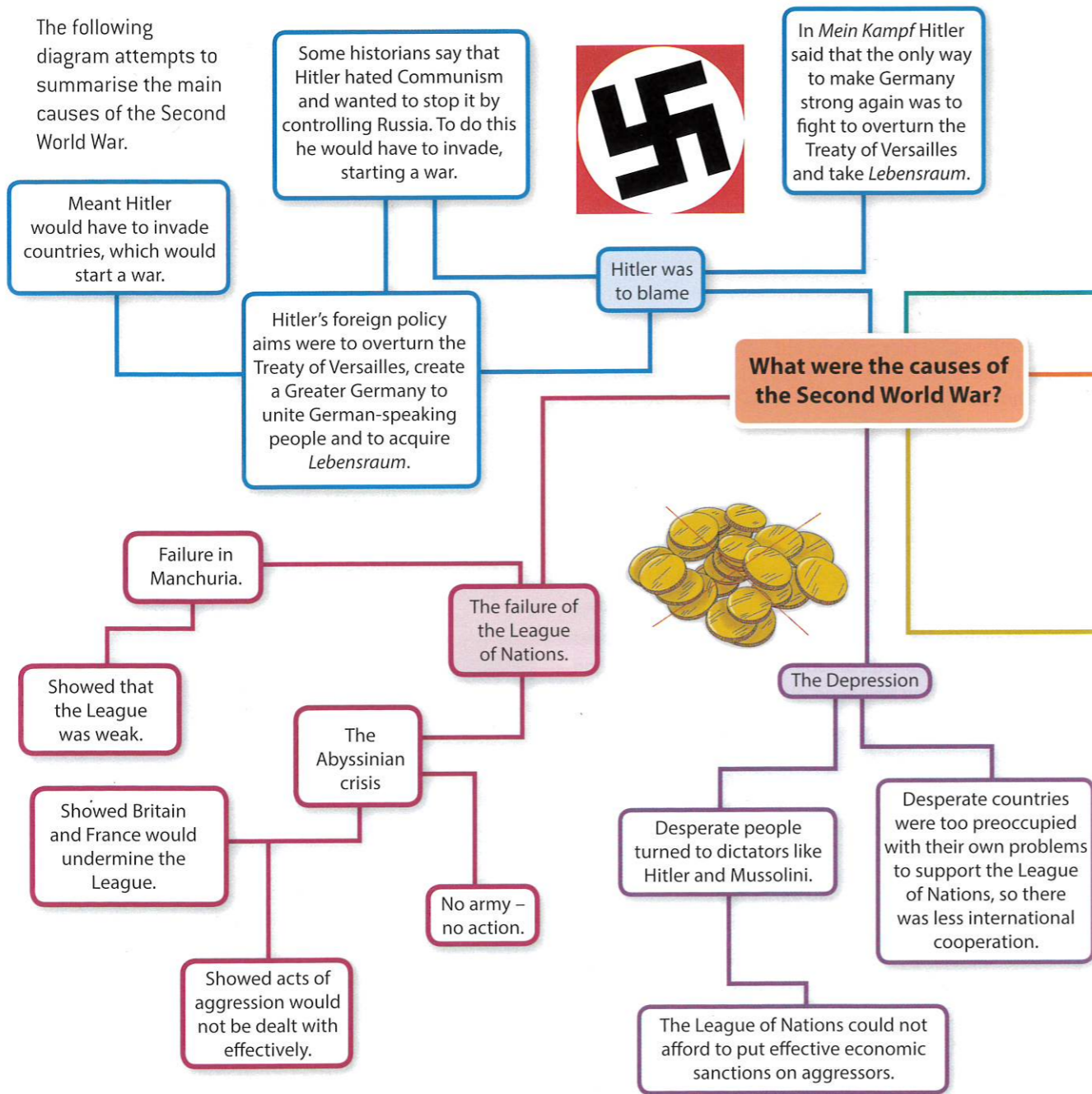
Why did the Second World War break out?

Historians disagree about what the main cause of the Second World War was. As you've seen, the culprits include Hitler, Chamberlain, Stalin and the League of Nations. What, or whom, do you think caused the Second World War?

Objectives

- Summarise the causes of the Second World War.
- Explain links between these causes.
- Analyse which cause was the most significant.

The following diagram attempts to summarise the main causes of the Second World War.



Fact

In 1961 British historian A.J.P. Taylor published *The Origins of the Second World War*. He disagreed with traditional views that Hitler was the main cause of the conflict. Instead, he argued that Hitler did not really intend to start a large-scale war.

He also argued that Hitler's foreign policy did not make war inevitable. Taylor believed that Hitler's policies were not really any different to those of previous German leaders, the only difference was that his methods were more ruthless.

Work

- The mind-map shows six causes of the Second World War. Rank them from most to least significant.
 - Explain which factor you think was the most significant.
 - Explain which factor you think was the least significant.
- How much do you think Stalin and Chamberlain were to blame for the outbreak of the Second World War?

Extension

When you revise, you will need to memorise a lot of information. Experts say that self-testing and trying to learn things at least five times are the best way of revising. Use the diagram on these pages to create a set of revision flashcards. Write out a statement or a question on the front of each card and what you need to remember on the back.