

Chapter 5 Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

5.1 The armistice and the aims of the peacemakers

REVISED

The big question at the Paris Peace Conference was how to treat Germany

- A peace treaty is a set of agreements that deal with the complicated issues left after war. The aim is to bring lasting peace.
- Germany was dealt with by the Treaty of Versailles.
- The discussions about this treaty were led by the leaders of the victorious countries (the **Big Three**).
- Germany was not invited to the peace talks at all.

President Wilson wanted a fair settlement to be based on his Fourteen Points

- Wilson wanted a settlement that allowed for the development of a more peaceful world.
- To show how to achieve this, Wilson had drawn up and published his **Fourteen Points** in January 1918 to guide the future peacemaking.
- The Fourteen Points included:
 - **self-determination**: the principle that **nationalities** should be able to rule themselves – that is, not be inside another country's 'empire'
 - **disarmament** for all countries
 - a **League of Nations** to ensure peace in the future.
- Wilson was seen as an **idealist** – seeing hope for the future and ignoring some of the harsh realities of the time.
- Wilson wanted to be fair towards Germany to help keep peace in Europe.

Clemenceau wanted a harsh settlement that would cripple Germany

- French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, was 77 years old in 1919. Twice in his life he had seen France invaded by Germany – in 1870 and in 1914. He was determined that this should never happen again.
- He had seen the great suffering caused by the war. Two-thirds of French soldiers who fought in 1914–18 had been either killed or injured.
- So Clemenceau wanted a harsh treaty to weaken Germany (so it could not attack France again) and punish Germany (because France had suffered so much in the war).
- His views reflected French public opinion.

Lloyd George often took a more middle ground

- British Prime Minister David Lloyd George knew that British public opinion was hostile to Germany. He had just won a general election promising to 'make Germany pay'.
- He wanted to see Germany punished, but not to an extent that would cause revenge.
- He wanted things that would help Britain, for example for Germany to lose its colonies and its navy because they threatened the British Empire.

Key point

The leaders of the USA, France and Britain met at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to agree a treaty to end the First World War. They disagreed significantly about how to deal with Germany.

TIP

All the key terms in **purple** are defined in the glossary at the end of each chapter.

Make sure that you can spell the key terms, know what they mean and aim to use them in your written work.

- Lloyd George wanted Germany to be able to recover internally as Germany had been one of Britain's most important trading partners. Prospering German industries would provide jobs for those involved with British trade.

Test yourself

- 1 What is the difference between an armistice and a peace treaty?
- 2 List three things that each Allied leader wanted from the peace settlement in 1919.
- 3 Why would none of the three be able to get everything he wanted in the treaty?

Spot the opinion in a source

The first question on your depth study paper will be based on a source. You will be told what its viewpoint is and you have to explain how you know that.

The source below was published in a British magazine in February 1919, during the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference.

How do you know that this source supports Britain and opposes Germany? Annotate the highlighted features to show how the message is conveyed. One has been done for you.

SOURCE A Cartoon from Punch magazine, 1919. The title was, 'Giving him rope?', and the caption reads: 'German criminal (to Allied police): "Here, I say, stop! You're hurting me!" [Aside] "If I only whine enough I may be able to wriggle out of this yet."'

Facial expression of criminal

Body of criminal Although beaten, Germany is shown as solid and dangerous, not weak

British policeman

Criminal's words



GIVING HIM ROPE?

GERMAN CRIMINAL (to Allied Police). "HERE, I SAY, STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME!" [Aside] "IF I ONLY WHINE ENOUGH I MAY BE ABLE TO WRIGGLE OUT OF THIS YET."

Practice question

Write an account of how the Armistice of November 1918 led to disagreements among the Allied leaders during the Paris Peace Conference.

(8 marks)

TIP

In answering this type of question, the key thing is to remember you are not only telling a story. Your account needs to explain the issue in the question.

5.2 The Versailles settlement

REVISED

German representatives were forced to sign the treaty in June 1919

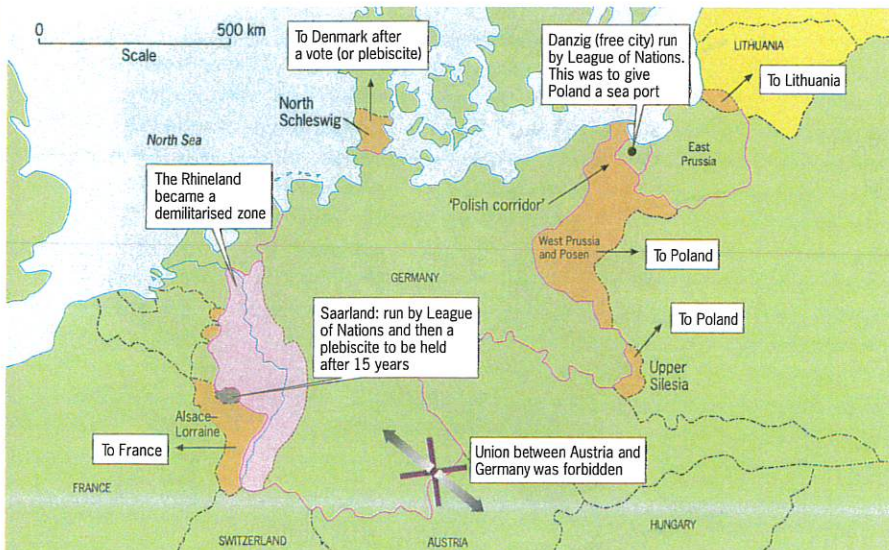
- As the defeated country, Germany was not invited to the peace conference.
- Despite this, the German government had reasons to expect a fair treaty:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| The Kaiser – the leader who had taken Germany into war – had gone | Germany had a new democratic constitution and new leaders | The new government needed all the help it could get to stabilise Germany and prevent a Communist revolution | The most powerful of the Allied leaders, Woodrow Wilson, wanted the treaty to be fair on Germany |
|---|---|---|--|

- For months, the victorious countries argued over how to treat Germany.
- When the terms were made public in May 1919, Germans were appalled. They complained it was very harsh.
- However, they ignored the fact that Germany had imposed a far harsher settlement on Russia at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918.
- The leaders of the new German government could not negotiate. It was a *diktat*. They had to sign – or face renewed attacks by the Allies.
- The treaty was publicly signed in humiliating circumstances at Versailles in June 1919.

Germany lost a lot of its land and population

- Germany lost 10 per cent of its land, 12.5 per cent of its population, 16 per cent of its coal fields and almost half of its iron and steel industry.



- Germany's overseas colonies became mandates ruled by victorious countries (mainly Britain or France) on behalf of the League of Nations.

Severe limits were put on Germany's armed forces

- The army was limited to 100,000 troops.
- Soldiers had to be volunteers. No **conscription** was allowed.
- Germany could have no tanks, submarines or military aircraft.
- The navy could have only six battleships.
- The Rhineland (the border with France) was **demilitarised**, that is, Germany was not allowed to have troops in that area.

Key point

The Treaty of Versailles punished Germany more than Germans expected because they had assumed that the terms would have been guided by the Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson.



Test yourself

- 1 List three territorial losses and three military restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles.
- 2 What are reparations?
- 3 What argument could the Allies use to justify making Germany pay reparations?

Germany was blamed for the war and was told to pay reparations

- The **War Guilt Clause** blamed Germany for starting the war and for the damage caused by it.
- This was even more unpopular in Germany than the loss of territory. Germans disagreed that their actions had been the main cause of the war.
- Because of war guilt, Germany had to agree to pay **reparations** for war damage.
- In 1921, reparations were fixed as £6.6 billion. Germany would be paying until 1984.

TIP In your exam you will be asked to evaluate two sources. You won't actually be asked to compare the usefulness of the sources but you will be able to comment on how they are more useful together than separately.

Topic summary

Copy and complete this table to show which country (France, USA or Britain) would be most pleased with a particular aspect of the Treaty of Versailles. And why?

| Aspect of the Treaty | Most pleased (France, USA or Britain)? | Explain why they would be pleased |
|--|--|--|
| Reducing the German navy | Britain | Because Britain wanted to preserve the superiority of the British navy |
| Reducing the German army | | |
| Preventing Germany putting troops in the Rhineland | | |
| Creating the League of Nations | | |
| Germany's overseas territories controlled by League of Nations | | |

Challenge: Which aspect do you think would be most disliked by the following groups? And why?
 a German army leaders b German business leaders. c German politicians.

Evaluate usefulness

The second question in your exam will be about the usefulness of sources.

How useful is Source B to a historian studying German reactions to the Treaty of Versailles?

Make notes using the grid below of what you might use in your answer.

| Provenance | Content |
|--|---|
| a Who made it, when and why? | a What does it say about German reactions? |
| b How does this affect its usefulness? | b From your knowledge of these events is this accurate? |
| | c How does this affect its usefulness? |

SOURCE B Cartoon from the British magazine Punch, 23 April 1919. 'The Reckoning'. 'German: "Monstrous, I call it. Why, it's fully a quarter of what we should have made them pay, if we'd won."'



5.3 Reactions to the Versailles settlement: strengths and weaknesses

REVISED

The Big Three who agreed the treaty were not totally happy with it

- In France, Clemenceau was criticised because many people thought the treaty was not harsh enough. In 1920 he was voted out of office.
- In contrast, Lloyd George was greeted as a hero back in Britain. But he privately feared that German anger would lead to future conflict.
- Woodrow Wilson was the most disappointed as many of his Fourteen Points had been ignored or modified.
- His most important idea was that the League of Nations would ensure lasting peace by solving international disputes by peaceful methods. But the US Congress voted not to join.

Key point

The Treaty of Versailles brought peace to Europe but it also created problems for the future, especially in Germany.

| Leader | Liked | Disliked |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Clemenceau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Military restrictions on Germany ● Gaining of Alsace-Lorraine ● Reparations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● League of Nations ● Saar only gained for fifteen years |
| Lloyd George | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Punishment of Germany ● Mandates for ex-German colonies ● Naval restriction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not enough recognition that Britain and Germany needed to re-establish trade links |
| Woodrow Wilson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of League of Nations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reparations payments ● Failure to agree on disarmament ● Failure to implement principle of self-determination |

Almost all Germans hated the treaty and it contributed to great instability in Germany

- The Weimar government was seen as weak for signing the treaty.
- Germany's problems over the next few years were blamed on the treaty.
- There was political chaos in Germany with attempted revolutions by both Communists and Nazis.
- Germany's failure to pay reparations in 1922 led France and Belgium to invade the Ruhr. This led to economic chaos and hyperinflation in 1923.
- The atmosphere of chaos and weak government encouraged the growth of extremist political parties – including the Nazis.

The treaty had strengths and weaknesses but some of these were only clear with hindsight

| Strengths (seen at the time by victorious countries) | Weaknesses (seen initially by the defeated countries and later by all) |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The treaty brought peace to Europe after four years of terrible fighting ● An international peacekeeping organisation, the League of Nations, was set up to prevent future conflict ● The terms of the treaty were not as harsh as they might have been. For example, not as harsh as Germany had imposed on Russia at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 ● Some had wanted to split Germany into separate countries but Germany was preserved as a large democratic country of 60 million people as a barrier against possible Communist expansion from Russia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Germans felt bitter about unfair treatment – which extremist parties exploited ● Reparations payments crippled the German economy ● The treaty punished Germany enough to want revenge but not enough to stop it from recovering and acting against the Allies in the future ● Woodrow Wilson placed too much faith in the League of Nations |

- However, historians now mostly agree that the negotiators did their best in a limited time while facing an almost impossible task.
- The international situation in 1919 was so complex, and countries had such competing priorities, that it would have been impossible to reach a set of agreements that pleased everyone and guaranteed future peace.

TIP

There is no right or wrong answer to essay questions such as the one at the bottom of this page. As long as you can support your view with evidence you can agree completely, disagree completely, or write a balanced answer.



Test yourself

- 1 What did the French public think of the Treaty of Versailles?
- 2 Why did France invade the Ruhr in 1923?
- 3 List three reasons why the peace settlement was likely to lead to future problems for Europe.



Develop the detail

Each of the following statements is vague and general. Add further details to show that you understand the general point being made. One example has been done for you. This will help with most questions as it is important throughout your exam to use 'detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge'.

| General statement | Supporting detail |
|---|---|
| The treaty made war less likely in the future | <i>Germany was restricted in its power and had no chance of starting a war in the near future. The League of Nations was a serious attempt to maintain world peace.</i> |
| Germany remained one country | |
| Reparations had bad consequences for Germany | |
| Woodrow Wilson was disappointed by the Treaty of Versailles | |



Support or challenge?

Your final question in the depth study exam will be an essay writing task like this:

'The main weakness of the Treaty of Versailles was the decision to impose reparations on Germany.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (16 marks)

To prepare for the essay write notes in two columns on a separate piece of paper.

| Support | Challenge |
|---------|-----------|
| | |

Start off with these statements. Which column should each go in?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Reparations assumed Germany was to blame for the war. Germans resented this. B France wanted reparations to cripple the German economy. C In peace treaties, the victors almost always demanded reparations from the losers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D The level of reparations was not set at the time. A separate commission was set up to work out what would be a reasonable figure that Germany could pay. E Germany most resented the reduction in their armed forces. |
|---|--|

5.4 The formation, organisation and membership of the League of Nations

REVISED

The League of Nations was **Wilson's idea** to prevent future wars

- The League of Nations was created as part of the post-war peace treaties. It had to enforce the terms of the post-war treaties.
- All countries joining the League had to sign the **Covenant of the League of Nations**. This involved promising to protect other member nations.
- The League would provide **collective security** – each member country would feel protected by the others who had signed the Covenant.
- The headquarters was to be in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Most people in Europe supported the creation of the League in principle as they did not want another war.

Key point

The League was set up at a time when the horror of war was very fresh in people's minds. The ambitious plans suited the atmosphere at the time. It was all an experiment, but with good will it seemed that it could work to keep world peace.

The League had a **cleverly planned** but **complex organisation**

- **Assembly** – every member country sent a representative. They met once a year. Decisions had to be unanimous.
- **Council** – a smaller group that made decisions and met several times a year. It consisted of permanent members (Britain, France, Italy and Japan) and several non-permanent members elected for three years. The Council could make decisions, but they had to be unanimous.
- **Secretariat** – kept records, prepared reports, translated documents, and fulfilled a range of other administrative functions.
- **Permanent Court of International Justice** – based at The Hague, in The Netherlands. It was intended to settle disputes between countries and provide advice to the Assembly and the Council.
- **Commissions** – committees that dealt with major economic or social issues, such as refugees and epidemics.

The League had around **50 members** – but the **USA never joined**

- The League started with 42 members. These were all countries that had fought for or supported the Allies in the war.
- The US Congress voted not to join. Congress did not want the USA to get dragged into European disputes. This was important as the USA in the 1920s was by far the most powerful and wealthy country in the world.
- At first, defeated countries were not allowed to join, although Germany was admitted in 1926.
- The USSR was not let in until 1934 because of fear of Communism.
- Some members later withdrew, for example Japan and Germany in 1933.

The League had **powers set out in the Covenant**, but in practice they were **limited**

- The Council of the League could, in a dispute between nations, decide who was in the wrong and tell the country to stop. (**Moral condemnation**.)
- The Council could tell member countries not to trade with the 'guilty' country. (**Economic sanctions**.)
- The League did not have an army but the Council could instruct its members to provide troops to fight together against the aggressor.
- The League relied on persuasion, in the 1920s this seemed to be working.



Test yourself

- 1 List the main differences between the Assembly and the Council.
- 2 What could the League do if one country invaded another?
- 3 List possible reasons why the League might not be able to stop an invasion.

Topic summary

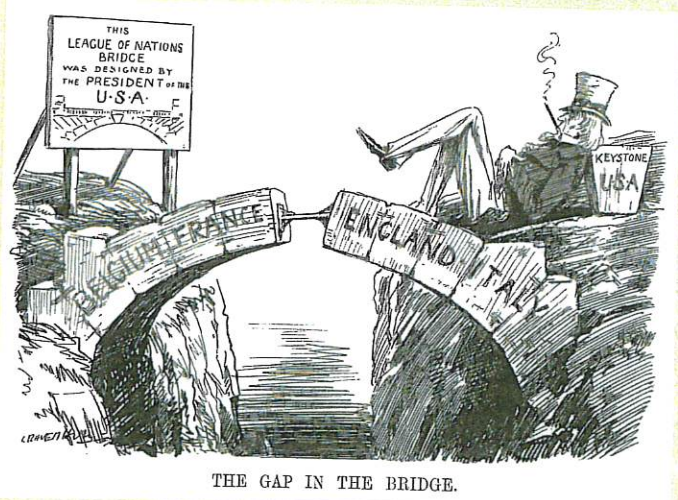
A common angle in questions on the League is about strengths and weaknesses. You might be asked to write an account of the strengths and weaknesses or asked to analyse them as part of the essay question. Whichever it is, you need to have a firm grasp of the content.

| | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Membership | Many countries were members | Defeated countries excluded, as was Russia. USA decided not to join |
| The Assembly | | |
| The Council | | |
| The International Court | | |
| The League's powers to act | | |

Evaluate usefulness

How useful is Source C for studying attitudes towards the League of Nations in 1919?

SOURCE C A cartoon from Punch, 10 December 1919. The figure in the white top hat represents the USA.



Make notes in this grid to plan your answer.

| Provenance | Content |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Who made it, when and why? | What does it say about the League of Nations? |
| | From your knowledge of these events is this accurate? |
| How does this affect its usefulness? | How does this affect its usefulness? |

TIP

Remember that all sources are useful for something. It all depends on what you are using them for. Never dismiss a source as useless because it is one-sided or incomplete. It will be still be very useful for finding out about the attitudes of the person who made it.

5.5 Successes and failures of the League in the 1920s

REVISED

The League successfully sorted out various international disputes in the 1920s

- In 1921, the League solved a dispute between Poland and Germany over part of Upper Silesia. The League asked the people to vote which country they wanted to be in and divided it in line with the vote.
- In a similar disagreement over the Åland Islands in 1920, the League decided Finland should have it. Sweden accepted this.
- The League was successful in these disputes because they did not involve the most powerful countries or ambitious dictators.

Key point

The League had successes in the 1920s, but it was limited in its scope, and some important international decisions were already taking place without using the League.

The League's Commissions did important humanitarian work

- These were the most lasting aspects of the work of the League.

| The Refugees Commission | The Health Commission | The Mandates Commission |
|---|---|--|
| Resettled hundreds of thousands who had been displaced by the war. It also helped ex-prisoners of war | Was more long term (its work has since been taken over the United Nations). It aimed to reduce deaths from dangerous diseases and educated people about good sanitation | Britain and France were put in charge of Germany's former colonies as mandates. The Mandates Commission tried to ensure that Britain and France were not acting in their own selfish interests |

There were also signs that the League was potentially weak

- Countries sometimes ignored the League. As early as 1920 Poland invaded Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, and the League was ignored.
- Mussolini, the new leader of Italy, invaded the Greek island of Corfu in 1923. Italy was clearly in the wrong, but the League sided with him.
- This showed how the League was not willing to stand up to an aggressor, even though that country had a permanent seat in the Council!

The League was helped in its peacemaking role by other international agreements

- The Locarno Treaties (1925) were important signs of goodwill between Germany and France. They promised not to invade each other. Germany promised to keep troops out of the Rhineland.
- After this agreement, Germany was allowed to join the League in 1926.
- The Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928 was signed by 61 countries who all promised not to go to war to solve disputes.
- These agreements were not the work of the League but they helped its work because they showed that countries were prepared to work peacefully with former enemies.
- That situation changed quickly with the onset of the Great Depression.



Test yourself

- 1 What did the League do when Mussolini invaded Corfu?
- 2 What was the role of the League's Health Commission?

Develop the explanation

Read the six statements below.

- 1 Decide if the statements are correct or not. Correct them if necessary.
- 2 Then for each statement add your own explanation of how this affected the power of the League in the 1920s. The first one is done for you.

| Statement | Correct? | Explanation |
|---|----------|--|
| The League was successful in the 1920s because no aggressive dictators wanted to upset the Treaty of Versailles | Correct | This made it appear that the League was more powerful than it actually was |
| Germany won the dispute over land in Upper Silesia | | |
| The Aaland Islands were divided between Sweden and Finland | | |
| The Mandates Commission looked after colonies which had been German | | |
| The Locarno Treaties ignored French fears of a future German invasion | | |
| The Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928 made sure that no war would ever happen again | | |

Spot the mistakes

People find it easy to criticise the League. Many students focus only on its weaknesses but for the essay questions you need to give a balanced answer. You also need to be aware of its strengths. This paragraph attempts to describe the strengths of the League. Cross out anything that you think is inaccurate or should not be in this answer because you think it was not a strength. Rewrite the passage making the necessary corrections.

The League of Nations had lots of members including all the important countries in the world. It was likely to succeed because in the early 1920s memories of the First World War were fresh in people's minds. The League also had an imposing organisation. For example, its Assembly consisted of all the member countries and everyone's voice could be heard. The Council could make decisions, and make sure they were carried out. The International Court of Justice could rule on international cases and make sure that everyone followed its decisions. The first time that the League was shown to be weak was when it faced a powerful country who ignored it.

Essay plan

'The main reason for the League to be seen as weak in the 1920s was the absence of the USA.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer. (16 marks)

Note down a list of things you would write in each section of this essay.

Essay plan

Introduction: You state your view on how far you agree or disagree

First main paragraph: The USA's absence was important – give some reasons

Second and third paragraphs: two other major reasons for the League being seen as weak

Conclusion: your judgement on whether the absence of the USA was the main reason

TIP

When writing an essay some people try to say too much. You only have about twenty minutes to write this essay. It is much better to write well about less than to have a long list of undeveloped points. The best answers see connections between points – what the mark scheme calls complex thinking.

5.6 The collapse of the League in the 1930s

REVISED

The Wall Street Crash followed by the Great Depression caused problems for the League in the early 1930s

- The USA recalled its loans and wanted less to do with Europe.
- The British economy suffered badly meaning less enthusiasm for spending money on the League.
- Italy faced huge economic problems. Mussolini was keen to divert attention by building an overseas empire.
- Japan had less money to buy food and raw materials.
- Germany was in turmoil leading to Hitler becoming Chancellor. He criticised the League for enforcing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

Key point

In the 1930s, international tensions rose because of the Great Depression. The League was powerless to prevent invasions by Japan and Italy.

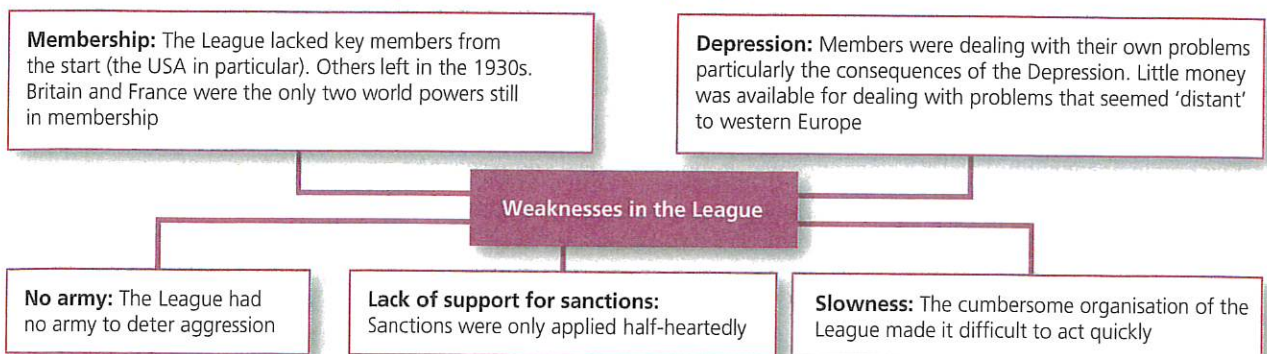
The Manchurian Crisis of 1931–33 showed the weaknesses of the League

| September 1931: Japan invades Manchuria | 1931–2: the League investigates | March 1933: Japan ignores the League |
|---|---|--|
| Japan wanted Manchuria for its raw materials. Japan knew that Chinese control was weak | China appealed to the League for help | The Lytton Commission found in favour of China |
| The Japanese already had mining rights and controlled railways in the area | It sent Lord Lytton on a fact-finding mission | The League ordered Japan to leave Manchuria |
| An incident on the railway line at Mukden was used as an excuse for a Japanese invasion | Meanwhile Japan completed its invasion | The Japanese ignored this and left the League |
| | | Japan invaded more of China |

The Abyssinian Crisis of 1935–36 confirmed how ineffective the League had become

- Mussolini invaded Abyssinia because of its mineral wealth.
- The Abyssinian Emperor, Haile Selassie, appealed to the League for help.
- The League condemned Italy and imposed economic sanctions. However, the sanctions did not include oil. Italy continued to trade with the USA.
- Britain and France were desperate not to anger Mussolini (which they feared might drive him closer to Hitler).
- The Hoare–Laval Pact was a proposed secret deal with Italy. It caused outrage when it was leaked to the public.
- Italy completed its invasion, then left the League.

These events also showed the reasons why the League of Nations was powerless to stop aggressors



Test yourself

- 1 How did the Depression affect Britain's attitude to the League?
- 2 Why did Japan invade Manchuria?
- 3 How did the League try to force Mussolini out of Abyssinia?

TIP

It is always useful to have a structure in mind to help you in the rush of the exam. For this question think of two short paragraphs on each source: one focused on provenance, the second on content.

Evaluate usefulness

In the exam, question 2 will be based on two sources. For example:

How useful are Sources D and E to a historian studying the failure of the League of Nations over Abyssinia? Explain your answer using Sources D and E and your contextual knowledge. (12 marks)

You will need to think about the following:

- Provenance: who made it, when and why?
- Content: is it useful for its content and does your knowledge agree?

Annotate each source to show the points you are going to make about provenance and content.

Challenge: write up your notes as a full answer using the writing frame suggested in the tip above.

SOURCE D A cartoon from *Punch* magazine 1935. *Punch* was usually very patriotic towards Britain; it rarely criticised British foreign policy.



THE AWFUL WARNING.

FRANCE AND ENGLAND
(together ?)

"WE DON'T WANT YOU TO FIGHT,
BUT, BY JINGO, IF YOU DO,
WE SHALL PROBABLY ISSUE A JOINT MEMORANDUM
SUGGESTING A MILD DISAPPROVAL OF YOU."

SOURCE E From a speech by Anthony Eden, who became British Foreign Secretary after the resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare, explaining to Parliament why sanctions should be ended, June 1937.

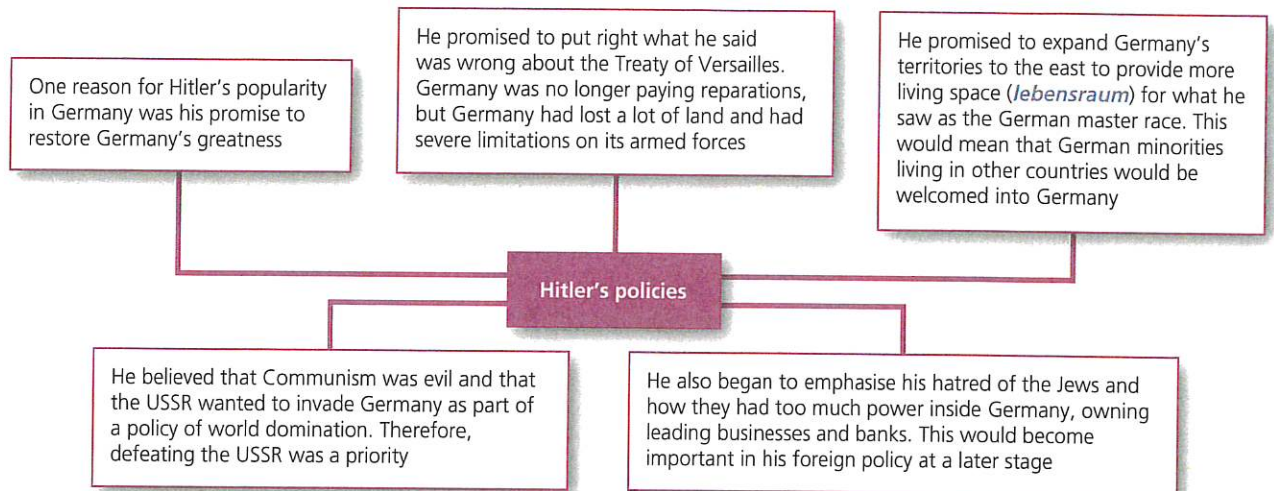
There was a very good reason for the League to enforce the particular sanctions they chose, because with an incomplete membership they were the only ones they could impose and which by their own action alone they could hope to see effective. Oil could not be made effective by League action alone.

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

5.7 Hitler's early actions, 1933–35, and the development of tension

REVISED

Hitler had clear aims for his foreign policy that would lead to tension in Europe



At home Hitler started to build up Germany's military strength as soon as he came to power

- In 1933, Hitler began rearming Germany in secret, ignoring the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- From March 1935, he openly started a policy of conscription (that is, forcing young men to join the armed forces for a number of years).
- He held massive rearmament rallies in Germany in 1935 to show off his power to European countries. He withdrew Germany from the League of Nations.
- He announced in 1935 that he had a peacetime army of 550,000 – more than five times what he was allowed.
- An air ministry trained pilots and started building hundreds of aircraft.
- He also wanted to build a bigger navy (see page 111).

Key point

From the start, Hitler made clear his aims to expand Germany and restore German pride. When he acted in these first years (1933–35), he saw clearly that Britain and France would in reality do very little to stop him – just as they had not stopped Japan in Manchuria.

In foreign policy Hitler successfully increased German influence without meeting much resistance

- In 1934, Hitler tried to take over Austria – but this was too ambitious at this time.
- There was open violence in Austria. This included the killing of Chancellor Dollfuss.
- Hitler thought of invading in support of some Austrian Nazis who had been killed, but Mussolini wanted to establish friendship with Austria, and Hitler could not afford to lose Mussolini's support.
- In 1935, Hitler was able to reunite the Saar with Germany. Over 90 per cent of the people of the area voted that this was what they wanted (they had been under the League's control for fifteen years). This was good for Hitler's confidence in his future ambitions.

- In 1935, Britain, France and Italy signed an agreement aimed at stopping Germany from doing any more against the Treaty of Versailles. It was of very limited effect, as Mussolini invaded Abyssinia later in the year, and Britain compromised with Germany over its navy.
- The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 allowed Germany to increase its navy to up to 35 per cent of the size of the British navy. Hitler had again been shown that Britain would compromise over the exact terms of the Treaty of Versailles rather than risk fighting.



Test yourself

- 1 When did Hitler start rearming Germany?
- 2 Why did Hitler not invade Austria in 1934?
- 3 What was the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935?



Write an account

Write an account of how Hitler's foreign policy made Germany stronger by the end of 1935. (8 marks)

According to the mark scheme what the examiners look for in a 'write an account' question is as follows:

- relevant, detailed and accurate knowledge ...
- well organised into an orderly account ...
- which answers the question!

So that means you need:

- To know things.
- To plan your answer so it all connects to the question and has a clear structure.
- To select from your knowledge the things that belong in your orderly account. This is not everything you know about Hitler's policies but how they made Germany stronger. Every fact you use needs to be relevant and accurate and support your narrative.
- And each paragraph needs to include a clear reference back to the question.

Link the annotations to the features in this first paragraph.

Germany had become stronger by the end of 1935 because Hitler had ignored some of the details of the Treaty of Versailles – and Britain and France allowed this to happen. He started a policy of rearmament, manufacturing more weapons, and recruiting more men into the army. He was ignoring the limit of 100,000 troops stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles and by 1935 boasted that he had more than five times that number – 550,000. He also started a policy of conscription at that time, and this guaranteed that his armies consisted of fit and trained personnel.

- A Clear opening statement.
- B Identifies one overall reason.
- C Supports the reason with examples – displaying relevant detailed knowledge.
- D Connects the reason back to the focus of the question.

Challenge: write a second paragraph on another reason (for example, the Anglo-German Naval Agreement) with the same model. Annotate your own paragraph in the same way.

TIP

A probable structure for an account is chronological – but that is not the only way. In fact writing an account in chronological order might tempt you to just describe things rather than answering the question. This example takes a thematic approach looking at each feature in turn and identifying how it made Germany stronger.

5.8 The escalation of tension, 1936–38, and the role of appeasement

REVISED

In March 1936 Hitler sent German troops into the Rhineland facing no opposition from the League of Nations

- This was a calculated risk for Hitler as he was openly breaking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- It was risky because if the French army had prevented them the German troops were not strong enough to resist.
- The Germans claimed that they were only putting troops in part of their own country to defend the area from possible French attack in the future.
- Britain and France did nothing as Hitler's reasons seemed believable. Plus the focus of attention was on Italy's actions in Abyssinia.

Key point

Britain and France tried to avoid war with Germany through appeasement – giving Hitler what he wanted. The most famous example is the Munich Agreement which gave the Sudetenland to Germany.

By 1937 Hitler had formed an anti-Communist alliance with Italy and Japan

- Hitler was keen to ally himself with Italy led by Mussolini (the other Fascist dictator in Europe).
- Mussolini had successfully invaded Abyssinia. The League of Nations had not stopped him.
- Hitler also had much in common with the expansionist government in Japan. Japan had taken over Manchuria and was advancing further in Chinese territory.
- In 1936–37, Germany, Italy and Japan signed the **Anti-Comintern Pact**. This was an alliance against Communist USSR. But it also acted as an alliance against leading democratic nations.



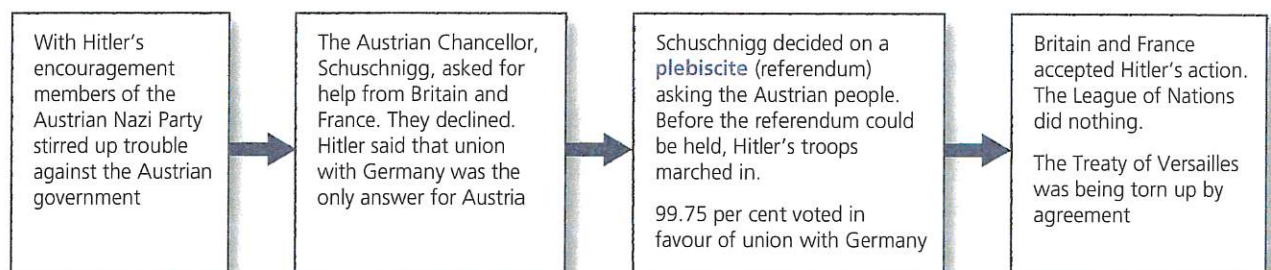
Test yourself

Explain what these words mean:

- 1 Conscription.
- 2 *Lebensraum*.
- 3 Appeasement.

In March 1938 Austria united with Germany – with the approval of most Austrian people

- A union (*Anschluss*) between Austria and Germany was forbidden under the Treaty of Versailles but Hitler was determined it should happen. Many in Austria supported it.

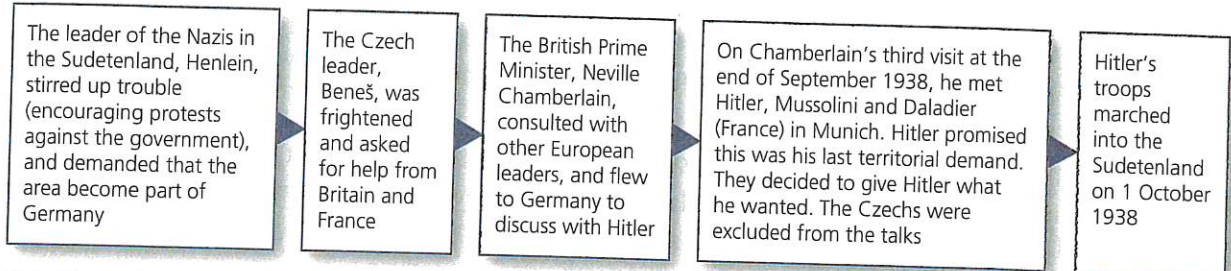


Britain and France followed a policy of appeasement for logical reasons but it played into Hitler's hands

| Reasons to appease | Reasons not to appease |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither Britain nor France wanted war. They had major economic problems. They still remembered the horrors of the First World War. Their armies and navies were not ready for a war • Many politicians believed that the Treaty of Versailles was flawed and they should not go to war to defend it • Hitler was standing up to Communism – to be encouraged! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeasement encouraged Hitler to make demands • It made Britain and France seem weak |

In September 1938 Hitler was given the Sudetenland in return for a promise to make no further demands

- The Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia consisted largely of 3 million German-speaking people who had been inside the Austro-Hungarian Empire before 1919.
- Hitler wanted this area for its industry and raw materials.



This flow chart shows how the crisis developed.

- War had been avoided and a line had been drawn. Hitler had promised that this was his last territorial demand. If he demanded or took more, he was proving right the critics of the Munich Agreement – that Hitler could not be trusted and had to be stopped.

✎ Key events

One secret of writing an account of something is to have a clear sense of the chronology – how each stage led to the next. Fill in the missing details in the chart below.

| | |
|------------|---|
| 1933 | Hitler started to make Germany stronger in Europe by ... (clue: soldiers and weapons) |
| 1935 | Hitler forced chosen young men to join the army by ... |
| 1935 | The Saar ... |
| 1936 | The Rhineland ... |
| March 1938 | Austria ... |
| Sept 1938 | The Sudetenland ... |

✎ Essay plan

'Appeasement was the best way to deal with Hitler's Germany in 1938.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer. (16 marks)

Note below your ideas for each section of your essay. Then write a full conclusion.

| Essay plan | Your ideas |
|---|------------|
| Introduction: show that you understand what appeasement was and state your view on how far you agree or disagree | |
| First main paragraph: list reasons that will help you to support the notion that appeasement was a good policy | |
| Second (and third) paragraphs: list reasons why you could challenge this and argue that appeasement was a bad policy | |
| Conclusion: outline whether you support the quotation – or wish to challenge it | |

5.9 Events in 1939 leading to the outbreak of war in September

REVISED

In March 1939 Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia ignoring the Munich Agreement

- The invasion made Germany more powerful. It gained control of additional territory and Czech raw materials and industries.
- The invasion showed Britain and France that Hitler's promises at Munich were worthless.
 - They accepted that appeasement had failed to stop Hitler's aggression.
 - His likely next move would be to invade Poland so they said they would defend Poland if that happened.

In August 1939 Germany signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact although the USSR was Germany's greatest enemy

- Nazis were anti-Communist. Hitler had said he intended to take *lebensraum* in eastern Europe and the USSR.
- Communism was anti-Nazi and the USSR aimed (in the long term) to conquer Europe as part of its policy of exporting Communism.
- Despite these differences, on 23 August 1939 they signed the **Nazi-Soviet Pact**. They agreed not to go to war against each other and to divide Poland between them.
- They both benefited:
 - Germany could now risk war in western Europe without having to worry about being invaded from the east. No war on two fronts!
 - The USSR was secure from invasion by Germany. It also gained part of Poland as well as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- News of the pact astonished Europe. It meant war was virtually certain. Preparations for war were put into action immediately. For example: Britain started evacuating children from cities at risk of bombing on 1 September – just one week after the pact.
- German troops entered Poland on 1 September 1939. Britain and France said they would declare war on Germany if its troops were not withdrawn. On 3 September, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

The main cause of war was Hitler's aggression but other factors contributed

How other factors contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War:

- The weak response of Britain and France at critical moments gave Hitler confidence. For example, after he sent troops to the Rhineland in 1936, he later said that if he had met resistance he would have drawn back.
- The harshness of the Treaty of Versailles. Leading British politicians believed that the treaty was flawed. So they saw some of Hitler's demands as reasonable.
- Fear of Communism. Western politicians saw Communist USSR as a greater threat than Germany. Some saw Germany as the buffer between the Communist USSR and western Europe. They wanted Germany to be strong enough to stand up to Soviet aggression.

Key point

When Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia it showed his promises were worthless. War was increasingly likely. The Nazi-Soviet Pact made it almost inevitable.



Test yourself

- 1 How did Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia change British policy towards Germany?
- 2 Why did a) Hitler and b) Stalin sign a Pact in August 1939?
- 3 Why was the Pact unlikely to last?

- The Nazi–Soviet Pact: Stalin’s pact with Hitler was the final act that allowed Hitler to invade Poland.
- The League of Nations had become powerless and ignored by 1939.
- The USA pursued a policy of isolation from Europe and did not want to get involved.

Essay plan

The most valuable question in your depth study exam will be an essay question like this.

‘The main reason for the outbreak of war in September 1939 was Hitler’s aggression.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (16 marks + 4 SPaG)

The secret of writing a good essay is good planning. Here is a plan.

| Plan | Purpose/points to include | Comment |
|--------------|---|--|
| Introduction | You state your view on how far you agree or disagree | This sets your essay off on a positive track and gives you an argument to hold on to throughout your answer The question asks ‘how far you agree ...’ so words and phrases such as ‘mostly’, ‘partly’, ‘totally’ will be useful |
| Paragraph 1 | Reasons to agree. Explain how the issue mentioned in the statement (‘Hitler’s aggression’) helped lead to war | This helps ensure you stay focused on the actual statement Make sure you support everything you say with detailed and precise knowledge |
| Paragraph 2 | Reasons to disagree. Explain at least one other factor that helped lead to war (for example the Treaty of Versailles) | This is your chance to shine. Whether you write about one other cause or more than one depends how quickly you think and write. But it’s better to explain one cause thoroughly than more than one superficially You can link these reasons back to Hitler’s aggression if you think the two things are linked Once again make sure you support everything you say with detailed and precise knowledge |
| Conclusion | You state your judgement as to how far you agree or disagree and give one key argument as to why | This should be easy to write if you have kept your focus through the rest of the essay There are four marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar so use your final minutes to check your work and correct it if necessary |

- Step 1: in note form write down two reasons to agree with the statement, and two reasons to disagree.
- Step 2: decide on your argument – based on your notes in step 1. How far do you agree or disagree? Stick with that conclusion when you write your essay.
- Step 3: (in the exam) this step would be to write your full essay, but for this task just practise writing your conclusion.

TIP

Candidates find it hard to give time to planning in an actual exam which is why it is very important to practise it before the exam so that it becomes instinctive.

Exam focus: Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

Model answers

Here are model answers for each of the question types on this part of the exam. The annotations highlight what makes it a good answer.

Study Source A on page 99.

Question 1: Opinion of a source

How do you know that Source A supports Britain and opposes Germany?

(4 marks)

The source is from a British magazine and shows Germany wriggling to try and avoid being punished. The Germans are shown as dangerous people. The British person appears to be shown as a policeman keeping order. It is warning British people that Germany would protest about its punishment – but that the protest should be ignored.

Identifies relevant features
Uses knowledge to explain

Study Sources D and E on page 109.

Question 2: Usefulness of sources

How useful are Sources D and E to a historian studying the failure of the League of Nations over Abyssinia? Explain your answer using Sources D and E and your contextual knowledge.

(12 marks)

Source D (the cartoon) is useful because it shows the view of a famous British magazine at the start of the crisis in 1935. It is intended to remind the British public how weak the mechanisms of the League are, and quite probably intended to encourage the British government into more explicit action.

This answer opens by directly addressing the question. This shows the examiner that you have understood, but will also help you to focus your answer as you write

Its title 'The Awful Warning' reflects the situation at the time. Mussolini was not likely to stop his aggressive policies just by threats of sanctions at some time in the future. The League lacked an army; and it had few allies by 1935 as Germany and Japan had both left the League. The USA was still neutral. Therefore, the cartoon is excellent for highlighting the weaknesses of the League which led to its failure over Abyssinia the following year.

Uses contextual knowledge to test the details or the claims made in the source

Source E comes from a speech at the end of the crisis, and its purpose was to tell both Parliament and the British public that they have to be realistic. Sanctions did not work; they were an inadequate weapon against an enemy who continued the invasion before sanctions could possibly have any effect.

Here the answer refers to the provenance of the source and uses this to judge its utility

The failure of sanctions was recognised by the British and French governments during the crisis with an attempted compromise (the Hoare-Laval Pact). When this secret proposal became public knowledge, the weakness of the League was openly recognised. The secret deal would have by-passed the League altogether. It shows how irrelevant the League had become by 1937 for dealing with aggressive dictators and keeping world peace.

Here the answer uses contextual knowledge that links back to the question

Question 3: Write an account

Write an account of how Hitler's foreign policy made Germany stronger by the end of 1935.

(8 marks)

Germany had become stronger by the end of 1935 because Hitler had ignored some of the details of the Treaty of Versailles - and Britain and France allowed this to happen. He started a policy of rearmament, manufacturing more weapons, and recruiting more men into the army. He was ignoring the limit of 100,000 troops stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles and by 1935 boasted that he had more than five times that number - 550,000. He also started a policy of conscription at that time, and this guaranteed that his armies consisted of fit and trained personnel.

The answer opens with a statement which is directly relevant to the question

Here the answer uses precise knowledge. It is crucial that you use as much relevant detailed knowledge as possible to show your grasp of the topic

Germany was also potentially stronger by the end of 1935 because of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of that year. This allowed Germany to increase the size of its navy to up to 35 per cent of the size of the British navy. This reflected the fact that Britain had agreed that Germany could ignore a key clause in the terms of the 1919 treaty.

Use of different phrases to show the importance of each development

Germany also became stronger industrially when it regained the important area of the Saar in 1935. The 1919 treaty had given the area to the League of Nations for fifteen years, after which the people of the area could vote for which ruler they wanted. In a plebiscite over 90 per cent voted to return to Germany.

Each paragraph opens with a clear link back to the question. This helps make sure your account is analytical

Hitler had also made Germany stronger by forging alliances. He saw the importance of the Fascist dictator Mussolini and he aimed to increase Nazi support in Austria with the intention of absorbing that country into Germany. Although his first attempt in 1934 failed, a large proportion of Austrians would have been in favour of it happening then - and were certainly in favour in 1938 when it happened.

Question 4: How far do you agree? (Essay)

'The outbreak of war in September 1939 was due to the actions of Hitler.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

(16 marks + 4 SPaG)

It is easy to argue that Hitler was largely responsible for the outbreak of war in September 1939, but it is important not to forget other contributory factors which aided him in his ambitions.

The answer opens by directly addressing the statement in the question

The actions of Hitler caused war because he was the aggressor. It was he who ordered the invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and Poland in September 1939, and ignored all agreements that he had made. In particular, he totally ignored the fact that he had signed the Munich Agreement less than a year before.

Each paragraph opens with a clear argument which is focused on the question

It was also Hitler's responsibility because he signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 with the explicit intention of ensuring that when he attacked western Europe he would not be attacked from the east. In other words, he could avoid the war on two fronts that had largely been responsible for Germany's defeat in the First World War. This cynical signing of the pact with his long-term enemy showed the degree of cunning he was willing to use in order to build up his Third Reich bit by bit in the next few years showing that he must be given responsibility for starting the war.

The argument in the paragraph is then supported by a range of detailed, specific knowledge

On the other hand, Hitler was aided by circumstances in Europe at the time, some of which stemmed back to the end of the First World War and others to the economic consequences of the Wall Street Crash.

This links the evidence to the question

It was the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles that gave Hitler the opportunity to summon such widespread support in Germany for an aggressive policy. If Germany had not been punished so much, the German nation would not have been so susceptible to propaganda about righting the injustices of 1919. In particular, war guilt was deeply resented by almost all Germans.

The policy of appeasement followed by Britain and France led Hitler to believe that those countries were weak and would do anything to avoid war. Hitler had gambled several times and won – and thought he could continue doing this when he invaded Poland. Indeed, he was mildly surprised when Britain actually declared war over Poland on 3 September 1939. He believed that Britain and France would continue to buy time by not declaring war.

Hence Hitler was clearly responsible; it was his Panzer divisions that started warfare on 1 September 1939. Yet only because of other circumstances was he confident of success – the alliance with the USSR, the weaknesses of Britain and France, and the backing of a German nation believing that Germany's greatest time as a nation was about to be fulfilled.

The answer fulfils the requirement to form a complex explanation by linking reasons together before coming to an overall judgement

Glossary: Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

- Anti-Comintern Pact** An alliance in 1936–37 between Germany, Italy and Japan against Communist USSR
- Appeasement** The policy followed by Britain and France in the 1930s towards Hitler, giving him what he wanted to keep peace
- Assembly of the League of Nations** The part of the League where all member states were represented equally
- Big Three** Woodrow Wilson (President of the USA); Georges Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France); David Lloyd George (Prime Minister of Britain)
- Collective security** Cooperation between allies to strengthen security for each of them
- Commissions** In connection with the League of Nations, agencies with particular responsibilities, for example refugees
- Conscription** A system whereby people are forced to join the army or navy
- Council** In connection with the League of Nations, the body where a few countries (including Britain, France, Italy and Japan) could make detailed decisions
- Covenant of League of Nations** A document which all members of the League had to sign guaranteeing to carry out the League's policies
- Demilitarised** An area without armed troops or weapons
- Diktat** Term used in Germany to describe the Treaty of Versailles because Germany had no say in the terms of the treaty
- Disarmament** Getting rid of military forces and weapons
- Economic sanctions** Deciding not to trade with a country as a punishment
- Fascist** Extreme right-wing supporters, such as the Nazis in Germany and Mussolini's party in Italy
- Fourteen Points** The proposals for a peace settlement made by President Wilson in January 1918
- before the end of the First World War
- Idealist** Someone who hopes for the future and ignores the harsh realities of life
- League of Nations** The international organisation set up in 1919 intended to prevent future wars by solving disputes peacefully
- Lebensraum** Additional territory believed to be necessary by a country for its natural development, for example Germany in the 1930s
- Mandates** Authority given by the League of Nations to one of its members to rule a territory on behalf of the League
- Moral condemnation** Shaming a country into seeing that it is in the wrong
- Nationalities** Groups of people with a common language or culture, and often their own government
- Nazi-Soviet Pact** The alliance between Germany and the USSR in August 1939 which made the Second World War almost inevitable
- Permanent Court of International Justice** International court at The Hague intended to adjudicate on international disputes
- Reparations** Compensation paid by Germany to France, Belgium, Britain and other states as a result of the First World War
- Ruhr** Area of Germany that is very industrial; occupied by France in 1923
- Secretariat of League of Nations** The huge number of clerical workers at all levels who were tasked with the job of maintaining the machinery of government of the League
- Self-determination** Where the people of an area decide their own political future
- Sudetenland** Area of Czechoslovakia where most people spoke German
- War Guilt Clause** Clause 231 of Treaty of Versailles which blamed Germany and its allies for the First World War