

Activity sheet

Task one: causes

There were four main causes of the Second World War. Look at the statements on the cards and decide if each shows that war broke out because:

- a) The Treaty of Versailles was unfair.
- b) Hitler was being aggressive.
- c) The failure of Britain, France and America's policy of appeasement.
- d) The failure of the League of Nations.

You may feel that some of the cards belong in more than once category.

Task two: links

Do any of the causes seem to connect together? Explain in your own words how two or more of the causes might be linked together.

Task three: importance

In your view, was one cause (or combination of linked causes) the most important factor in leading to war? Explain why you think this is the case using examples from the cards to support your answer.

Why did the Second World War break out?

<p>The USA had a new government in 1920 which decided not to join the League. As a punishment for having started World War One, Germany was not allowed to join, neither was Russia due to a growing fear of Communism.</p>	<p>Germany had been expecting a treaty that was fair but were not happy with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles when it was completed. However, they had no choice but to sign the document.</p>	<p>In 1936 Hitler ordered German troops to enter the Rhineland. At this point the German army was not very strong and could have been easily defeated. Yet neither France nor Britain was prepared to start another war.</p>
<p>In March 1938, German troops marched into Austria. The Austrian leader was forced to hold a vote asking the people whether they wanted to be part of Germany. The results of the vote were fixed to show that 99% of Austrian people wanted Anschluss). Britain and France did nothing.</p>	<p>In May 1937, Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister of Britain. He felt that giving in to Hitler's demands would prevent another war.</p>	<p>The main weapon of the League was to ask member countries to stop trading with an aggressive country. Countries could still trade with non-member countries. When the world was hit by depression in the late 1920s, countries did not want to lose trade.</p>
<p>Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 even though Britain and France had told him not to. Some action was now necessary and believing that Poland would be Hitler's next target, both Britain and France promised that they would take military action against Hitler if he invaded Poland. German troops invaded Poland on 1st September 1939.</p>	<p>The League had no army of its own. Soldiers were supplied by member countries. However, many countries were reluctant to get involved and risk starting a war, so they failed to provide troops.</p>	<p>Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in January 1933. Almost immediately he began secretly building up Germany's army and weapons. He began building warships and introduced conscription.</p>
<p>The League of Nations was unable to act quickly. The Council of the League of Nations only met four times a year and decisions had to be agreed by all.</p>	<p>The German people were unhappy about the treaty. Germany could not afford to pay the money causing much poverty. Unemployment rose and the price of food was high. To show their discontent, many people began to vote for more extreme parties, including the Nazis.</p>	<p>When Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, he broke the terms of the Munich Agreement. Neville Chamberlain was still not prepared to take Britain to war over "... a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing." Instead, he made a guarantee to help Poland if Hitler invaded.</p>