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Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima FREE Students will view Joe Rosenthal's famous photograph, Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima, and use their research skills to find answers to questions about the photo.5th through 8th GradesMore Social Studies WorksheetsSTW has printable worksheets covering a variety of Social Studies topics, including the American Revolution, Colonial America, the 50 States, explorers, map skills, US Presidents, and much more. This collection of worksheets on World War 2 offers students a deep and comprehensive understanding of one of the most significant and complex events in modern history. World War II was a conflict that reshaped global politics, societies, and economies, and by exploring its intricacies, students not only learn about the war itself but also gain insight into the broader cultural and political landscape of the 20th century. This conflict, which involved nations from every continent, provides a window into how ideological clashes, national ambitions, and historical grievances can converge to shape the course of human history. Through these worksheets, students can build a solid foundation of knowledge, explore new perspectives, and develop critical thinking skills that will serve them far beyond the classroom. One of the key strengths of this series of worksheets is its ability to break down the complex causes of World War II into digestible and engaging segments. Students are asked to consider multiple factors that led to the outbreak of the war, from the Treaty of Versailles and the economic turmoil of the Great Depression to the rise of totalitarian regimes in Germany, Italy, and Japan. For instance, a worksheet might ask students to analyze how the harsh penalties imposed on Germany after World War I contributed to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Through a combination of reading passages, timelines, and critical thinking questions, students are encouraged to explore the intricate web of political and economic conditions that set the stage for a global conflict. This focus on the root causes helps students understand that wars are rarely caused by a single event but are often the result of long-standing tensions and policies. The worksheets also offer students the opportunity to examine the war's key events and battles in detail, providing a chronological framework that helps clarify the war's progression. From the invasion of Poland to the D-Day landings and the eventual surrender of the Axis powers, students engage with pivotal moments that defined the conflict. For example, a timeline activity might have students map out key battles, such as the Battle of Stalingrad or the Battle of Midway, and then analyze the strategic importance of each. This not only reinforces historical knowledge but also allows students to understand the war's global scope, as they trace the connections between different theaters of war-Europe, the Pacific, and North Africa. Such activities help students appreciate the scale of the conflict and the interdependence of events happening across different parts of the world. In addition to understanding the military aspects of the war, the worksheets delve into the human experience and the social impacts of World War II. By studying the lives of soldiers, civilians, and political leaders, students gain a more personal understanding of how the war affected individuals and societies. For example, a reading passage on the home front during the war might focus on how women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, leading to shifts in gender roles and expectations. Another worksheet might include primary sources such as letters from soldiers or speeches by leaders like Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, helping students to develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the human cost of the conflict. These personal narratives and primary documents breathe life into the historical facts, making the study of World War II not just about battles and strategies, but about the people who lived through it. The series also emphasizes the global nature of World War II, encouraging students to consider how different countries and cultures were involved in and affected by the conflict. This is particularly important, as it prevents students from seeing the war solely through a Western lens. For example, a map-labeling exercise might require students to identify key Axis and Allied powers, but also to consider the roles of countries like China, India, and Australia, which often receive less attention in traditional narratives. Through such activities, students gain a more well-rounded understanding of the war's international scope, recognizing that it was truly a global conflict with far-reaching consequences for nations across the world. Understanding how countries outside of Europe and North America were involved also helps students appreciate the war's lasting impact on decolonization, geopolitics, and international relations. Another critical aspect of these worksheets is their focus on the aftermath and long-term consequences of World War II. The end of the war brought about significant geopolitical shifts, including the creation of the United Nations, the beginning of the Cold War, and the division of Europe through the Iron Curtain. Worksheets might ask students to explore how the war's conclusion set the stage for decades of ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the rebuilding of Europe through efforts like the Marshall Plan. Students are encouraged to think about the legacy of World War II and its influence on modern international relations, making the connection between historical events and contemporary global issues. For instance, a question might prompt students to reflect on how the war influenced the rise of global institutions designed to prevent future conflicts, such as the United Nations or NATO. These worksheets are designed to foster critical thinking and analytical skills, equipping students with the tools they need to engage deeply with historical narratives. For instance, a worksheet might ask students to compare different perspectives on the war, such as those of the Allied and Axis powers, or the perspectives of civilians and soldiers. Another might challenge students to debate the ethical implications of decisions like the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, encouraging them to consider moral dilemmas in times of conflict. These activities help students go beyond simply memorizing dates and facts, pushing them to ask important questions about power, justice, and responsibility. By grappling with these difficult questions, students develop not only a stronger understanding of World War II but also the ability to think critically about history and its relevance to the present day. Types of Exercises on World War II Worksheets Reading Comprehension - These exercises often involve a short passage about a specific topic related to World War II. After reading, students answer questions to demonstrate their understanding of the text. The passage might be about a major event like the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Holocaust, or D-Day. Or it could focus on important figures such as Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, or Adolf Hitler. Fill-in-the-Blank - These exercises help students recall facts and details about World War II. A sentence or paragraph will be given with certain words omitted, and students need to fill in the blanks. This could include key vocabulary terms, names of people or places, or significant dates. Timeline Activities - These exercises help students understand the sequence of events during World War II. They might be asked to put key events in order, or to match dates with events. This helps to develop a clear chronology of the war in students' minds. Map Labeling - Maps can be used to understand the geographical context of the war. Students could be asked to label countries, major cities, battle locations, or territories occupied by different countries. This helps students visualize where key events took place. Multiple Choice and True/False Questions - These questions test students' general knowledge about the war. They can cover any topic related to World War II, from causes and effects to specific battles to life on the home front. Short Answer and Essay Questions - These questions require more in-depth responses. Students might be asked to explain the causes of World War II, discuss the effects of the war, or analyze the decisions made by key figures. This encourages critical thinking and allows students to express their understanding in their own words. Crosswords or Word Searches - These can be a fun way to review vocabulary and key terms related to World War II. The History and Facts World War II, which took place from 1939 to 1945, was the deadliest conflict in human history. It started when Germany, under the rule of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party, invaded Poland. This act of aggression was a direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles, a peace treaty that ended World War I and placed responsibility and severe penalties on Germany. Hitler's actions and his clear disregard for the treaty, coupled with his earlier annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia, finally led Britain and France to declare war on Germany. Over the next six years, the conflict spread around the globe, drawing in over 30 countries and affecting millions of people. Major players on one side, known as the Axis Powers, included Germany, Italy, and Japan. On the other side were the Allies, primarily the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. World War II was marked by numerous significant events, including the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were systematically murdered by the Nazis; the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan, which led the United States to enter the war; the Battle of Stalingrad, one of the deadliest battles in history and a turning point in the war; and the D-Day invasion, where Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy in France, marking the beginning of the end for the Axis Powers. The war finally ended in 1945, first with Germany's unconditional surrender after Hitler's suicide and then with Japan's surrender after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The effects of the war were profound and long-lasting, leading to the Cold War and permanently shifting the balance of power in the world. Page 2 The worksheet focuses on the two major military alliances that were pivotal during World War II. Students are tasked with identifying the countries that belonged to the Allied Powers and those that were part of the Axis Powers, filling in the provided table. Additionally, the sheet contains questions concerning "The Big Three," the "Tripartite Pact," and a query about nations that initially aligned with the Axis but later joined the Allies. The worksheet aims to instill a clear understanding of the primary geopolitical alignments during World War II. By categorizing the countries into their respective alliances, students gain insights into the global dynamics and the major players in the war. The questions further delve into critical historical aspects, prompting students to recognize essential alliances and shifts that influenced the war's outcome. Through this exercise, learners are encouraged to think critically about the global relationships and strategies that shaped this significant period in history. Do you want to save dozens of hours in time? Get your evenings and weekends back? Be able to teach about America in World War II to your students? Our worksheet bundle includes a fact file and printable worksheets and student activities. Perfect for both the classroom and homeschooling! Click any of the example images below to view a larger version. Add a header to begin generating the table of contents Early life of Gamal Abdel Nasser The beginning of Nasser's political activity Nasser's power struggle with Naguib The political ideology of Nasser Nasser's foreign policy The defeat in 1967 Often abbreviated as WWII, the Second World War was a military conflict between the Allies and Axis Powers that lasted from 1939 until 1945. This global war inflicted more than 30 countries, which resulted in about 85 million fatalities. Considered the deadliest war in history, WWII in the Pacific ended with the US-led nuclear bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan, in August 1945. Before December 1941, the United States officially remained neutral. Despite the secret negotiations between the US, the UK, and the Netherlands in early 1941, the US also attempted to improve its strained relations with Japan. At that time, Japanese troops were ravaging parts of China. On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. The following day, US President Franklin Roosevelt declared the "Day of Infamy" speech, marking the official entry of America in WWII. Image of USS Arizona burning after the bombing of Pearl Harbour Brief background of World War II Generally, WWII began in Europe on 1 September 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, France and the United Kingdom declared war against Germany. However, some historians suggest that the Japanese aggression in Manchuria on 7 July 1937 was the beginning of WWII in the Pacific. Years before the official outbreak of war in Europe, peace settlements between post WWI nations were negotiated by the League of Nations. However, Japanese and German aggression in the Pacific and Europe became unstoppable. In 1938, Germany annexed Austria. It was followed by Adolf Hitler's insistence on the Sudetenland and the rest of Czechoslovakia. The failure of the appeasement policy employed by the Allies, particularly the UK and France was ineffective. When Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1941, in response to repeated German submarines attacks against US ships, Roosevelt advised the US Navy to defend their waters. On 17 November, provisions of the Neutrality Acts were repealed after the sinking of US destroyer Reuben James in October. Meanwhile in Eastern Europe, despite the earlier Nazi-Soviet Pact, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941. Hitler believed that the Soviet Union was plotting against Germany and that a tripartite alliance with Britain and the US was waiting. Official American Entry in WWII Along with the US, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia declared war on Japan. Before the bombing of the Pearl Harbour, Japan engaged in simultaneous attacks on Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaya, and Thailand. Historians suggest that the Japanese aggression in Southeast Asia and the Pacific was motivated by becoming a global power. Moreover, Japanese expansion in Indochina and Dutch East Indies was to acquire oil reserves since the US ceased oil imports in July 1941. At this time, the US, Britain, and the Netherlands had territories in Southeast Asia. On 20 November 1941, Japan, led by Hideki Tojo and Emperor Hirohito, proposed to withdraw their troops from southern Indochina and leave Southeast Asia if the US, Britain, and the Netherlands lifted its sanctions and ceased from aiding China. Six days later, the US sent the counter proposal which required the Japanese to free China without any conditions. Aerial shot over the Naval Yard At 7:48 o'clock in the morning, the naval base at Pearl Harbour in Honolulu, Hawaii was attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service. The Hawaii Operation was an offensive attack by Japan to prevent the US from engaging in Southeast Asia. Pearl Harbour was attacked by 353 Japanese fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes launched from six aircraft carriers. Four out of eight US Navy battleships sunk, while the remaining were heavily damaged. Furthermore, the Japanese attack destroyed 188 US aircraft, 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers, and killed 2,402 and wounded 1,282 Americans. Meanwhile, Japanese lost 29 aircrafts and 5 midget submarines. Tokyo declared war against the US and the British Empire later that day (8 December), but wasn't delivered until the next day. Despite having no formal obligation under the Tripartite Pact, Germany and Italy declared war against the US on 11 December 1941. In response, the US did the same. From isolationism and neutrality, the American public supported the war. On 1 January 1942, the Big Four (US, UK, China, and the USSR) led the Declaration by United Nations which affirmed the Atlantic Charter previously drafted by Churchill and Roosevelt. The declaration was also participated by other 22 countries. Before the end of May 1942, Japan and its conquered Thailand, successfully invaded the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Burma, Malaya, New Guinea (Rabau), and the Philippines. On 15 February 1942, the surrender of Singapore marked the largest British-led military defeat. Meanwhile, in Corregidor, Philippines, the combined Filipino-American forces was also defeated by the Japanese. About 70,000 Filipino-American forces became prisoners. Filipino historians suggest that the long resistance to invasion in the Philippines delayed the Japanese attack on Australia. The Japanese was also successful in seizing oil reserves from Borneo, Central Java, Cebu, Sumatra, Malang, and Dutch New Guinea. Due to the ongoing war on the Eastern Front, North America and the Middle East, Allied forces (Dutch, British and Australian) were short on personnel, thus provided limited aid in the Pacific. On 10 December 1941, British warships HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales were sunk by the Japanese in the Malaya. On 1 January 1942, the ABDACOM (American-British-Dutch-Australian Command) appointed British General Sir Archibald Wavell as the overall commander of the Allied forces. Fought in the Pacific theatre, the Battle of Midway was a naval encounter between the Japanese and American naval forces on 3-6 June 1942. Led by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the Japanese Imperial Navy believed that they could finally defeat the US and replicate their victory at Pearl Harbor. A surprise attack was planned by Yamamoto on the US Pacific Fleet based at Midway Island. In early 1942, US Navy cryptanalysts had decoded Japanese communication lines on planning to attack the Pacific at a location they called "AF". Given the information, Admiral Chester Nimitz, commanding the US Pacific Fleet, developed a plan. On 3 June, the US B-17 Flying Fortress bombers mistakenly assumed the Japanese fleet led by Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo as the main invasion fleet. Following the second unsuccessful US attack on Kondo's force, Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo sent four aircraft carriers with 108 warplanes to bombard the US base at Midway Islands. Meanwhile, US torpedo bombers from carriers Hornet and Enterprise were shot down by Japanese Zero fighters. After refuelling and rearming, Japanese carriers - Akagi, Kaga and Soryu were bombed by US dive bombers. The last surviving Japanese carrier Hiryu was also set ablaze. On 6 June, a Japanese submarine launched torpedoes and sank USS Hammann and Yorktown. On the same day, Yamamoto ordered his navy to retreat. By the end of the Battle of Midway, the Japanese lost about 3,000 men, 4 aircraft carriers, 1 heavy cruiser and about 300 aircraft, while the Americans lost Yorktown and Hammann, 360 servicemen and about 145 aircrafts. This huge loss of the Japanese Imperial Navy halted Japan's ambition of conquering the Pacific. According to historian Walter Lord, it was an "incredible victory" for the US Navy. On 18 April 1942, the US Navy launched the first air raid on Tokyo known as the Doolittle Raid. This served as retaliation for the attack on Pearl Harbor in December. Led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, 16 B-25B Mitchell bombers were tasked to bomb targets in the Japanese archipelago. 15 of 16 aircraft bombers crashed in China, while the last one landed at Vladivostok, USSR. In September 1942, the Australian land forces defeated the Japanese marines at the Battle of Milne Bay in New Guinea which marked Japan's land defeat in the Pacific. On 20 October 1944, General MacArthur and the US Sixth Army landed on Leyte (a province in the islands of Visayas). From the south, a series of battles were fought by the US army and local guerrilla units until the liberation of the Philippines in 1945. In the summer of 1944, airfields in Saipan and Guam were also recaptured by the Americans. On 9-10 May, 1945, Operation Meetinghouse was launched by the USAF (United States Air Force) on Tokyo. This huge firebombing of the Japanese capital city killed more than 90,000 people. Prior to this, air raids in Japanese industrial cities and ports had already begun. In addition to Tokyo, several bombing raids were also conducted in major Japanese cities of Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Toyama and Yokohama. On 5 April 1945, the USSR did not renew its nonaggression treaty with Japan. By 21 June, American ground forces invaded Okinawa which was then regarded as the bloodiest campaign in the Pacific since the Guadalcanal in 1942. Also known as the Battle of Normandy, the D-Day landings were an Allied invasion to liberate Western Europe from German control. Under codename Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy began on 6 June 1944. Since 1943, a massive deception operation was planned by the Allies. In January 1944, US General Dwight Eisenhower was appointed as commander of Operation Overlord. The Germans believed that the Allied invasion target was Pas-de-Calais (located at the narrowest point in the English Channel). In addition to a fake build-up of troops parallel to Pas-de-Calais, the Allies used dummy equipment, double agents and fraudulent radio transmissions. After a day of delay due to bad weather, the D-Day landings began on 6 June 1944. In addition to the Pacific front, between March 1944 and April 1945, the American Eighth Air Force conducted their own bomber offensive in Berlin. Led by Major General Jimmy Doolittle, the USSAAF attacked Berlin and forced a direct assault with the Luftwaffe. By 6:30am, British, American and Canadian troops landed on five beach points - Utah and Omaha beaches (US), Juno (Canada), Gold and Sword (Britain). Amongst the beach landings, Omaha suffered great casualties. About 2,000 American troops were slaughtered upon stepping ashore in Normandy. Following Eisenhower's approval to liberate Paris, the 2nd Armored Division and the 4th Infantry Division advanced to Paris. On the night of 24 August, about 20,000 of the German troops surrendered or fled. By the next morning, the western and eastern half of Paris was liberated. Choltitz was arrested on the same day. He signed a document which officially surrendered Paris to de Gaulle's provisional government. Manhattan Project and the end of WWII As early as 1939, American physicists learned of intelligence reports about the German development of nuclear fission. By June 1941, the Office of Scientific Research and Development was created by the US. This new agency conducted joint research with the war department for the development of a nuclear weapon under the Manhattan Project. The characteristic mushroom cloud as bombs were dropped on Hiroshima (left) and Nagasaki (right), 1945; Hiroshima, September 1945 On 16 July 1945, after four years of intensive research, an atomic device was tested in a desert near Alamogordo, New Mexico. At that time, despite several firebombing operations, Japan refused to surrender. US President Harry S. Truman then believed that the new atomic bomb, a monstrous weapon, would more likely defeat Japan than any conventional invasion. On 6 August 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, on 9 August, another one was dropped on Nagasaki. 60% of Hiroshima's infrastructure was destroyed. Around 140,000 people were killed in Hiroshima and 74,000 people in Nagasaki. Over the next five years, people died en-masse from the effects of radiation. While the destruction of atomic bombs was heard in Tokyo, the USSR declared war on Japan on 8 August. Two days later, the Japanese government agreed to surrender under the terms stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration. The Japanese government particularly requested the unaltered sovereign status of Emperor Hirohito. On 14 August, Japan agreed on the terms and Emperor Hirohito addressed the Japanese public to surrender. On 2 September, new Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro survived an attempted assassination by war diharders. Also on 2 September 1945, a formal ceremony of surrender took place at USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. The Allies were generally represented by military leaders MacArthur and Nimitz, while the Japanese sent Shigemitsu Mamoru and Umezu Yoshijiro. From isolationism, the US increased its international involvement after WWII. Aside from political influence, the US became a global economic and technological superpower. H T D S H A M P Y Y J O C N H J A P A N A T O M I C E P A V G V L J K B G U W V D A E R M H E H R H B B L A P D B A R G G R K M Y M U X L A G R W S S G H M Y R J W I D Y W L C K A H I H A A L G S P R S H P B L B T H G N R C E K O R A B H V T L I G W Y L D S O P R O I H R E R G A P H M S B B F K F U R O V D A L L I E D O T N E M P H N L F W F W B R O F D A M I U K R G V S E S K J W H N A T B T D R Y L I A H O M U S S O L I N I K K T J A O What were the main causes of World War II? How did the Treaty of Versailles contribute to the outbreak of World War II? How did the United States become involved in World War II? What was the Holocaust and how did it impact World War II? Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor? What lessons can be learned from World War II? How can financial brands set themselves apart through visual storytelling? Our experts explain how Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images Collections captures events from 1895 to today's most recent coverage.Discover The CollectionCurated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks.Browse Editors' FavoritesHow can financial brands set themselves apart through visual storytelling? Our experts explain how Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images Collections captures events from 1895 to today's most recent coverage.Discover The CollectionCurated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks.Browse Editors' FavoritesUnit XI: New Deal and World War II Roosevelt and the New Deal Reading with Questions First New Deal: Banking and Finance Reading with Questions First New Deal: Unemployment Reading with Questions First New Deal: Agriculture Reading with Questions First New Deal: Industry and Labor Reading with Questions The Second New Deal Reading with Questions A New Coalition Reading with Questions War and Uneasy Neutrality Reading with Questions Japan, Pearl Harbor, and War Reading with Questions Mobilization for Total War Reading with Questions War in North Africa and Europe Reading with Questions War in the Pacific Reading with Questions Politics of War Reading with Questions War, Victory, and the Bomb Reading with Questions Rise of Industrial Unions Reading with Questions World War II Leaders DIY Blank Chart Code Puzzle Worksheet: Rise of Benito Mussolini Axis and Allies Strengths and Weaknesses Blank Chart World War II in the Pacific Phrases Puzzle Worksheet Code Puzzle Worksheet: World War II World War II Timeline Worksheet World War II Causes and Effects Chart Worksheet World War II in the Pacific Word Search Puzzle Pivotal Events of World War II Blank Chart The two opposing sides in combat were called the Axis Powers and the Allied Powers. Of the Axis powers, Italy was the first to surrender, in 1943. Germany was next, surrendering to the Allies in May of 1945. Japan was growing quickly in the period before World War II. But as a small island nation, their land and limited natural resources could not sustain that growth. What triggered the start of World War II and what was the result? What did the Treaty of Versailles require of Germany? Though many countries comprised the Allied Powers, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States were known as the Big Three. When China joined the Allies, these four countries began to be called the Four Policemen. The Allied Powers did not all enter the conflict at the same time, and they didn't even all start out on the same side. The alliances between the countries that would become the Axis Powers began in 1936 when Germany and Italy signed a treaty that formed the Rome-German Axis. Which side were Romania and Bulgaria aligned with? When Japan attacked, the United States was taken completely by surprise. Hundreds of Japanese fighter planes targeted the U.S. fighter planes on the ground. The reason behind the attack was preemptive. Japan feared that U.S. Navy ships so close to Asia would interfere with Japan's plans to take over other countries and add them to the Japanese empire. Iwo Jima is an island with an area of about eight square miles, located in the Pacific Ocean, 750 miles south of Tokyo in Japan. When the Marines first landed on Iwo Jima, why were they not attacked? The Holocaust took place under the direction of Adolf Hitler, leader of Germany during this time period. During this time, in cities across Europe, the Nazis forced all the Jewish people into one part of town called the ghetto. D-Day is the name given to the day on June 6th, 1944, that the Allied Forces (Britain, America, Canada, and France) attacked the German army on the coast of Normandy in France. Though the Germans anticipated an invasion, they didn't know where it would happen. What were the major stages of the invasion and what happened during each? Anne, who wanted to be a writer when she grew up, kept a diary. When she heard the Minister of Education on the radio asking people to keep war diaries, she decided to rewrite her diary as a novel which she called The Secret Annex. Only Otto Frank, Anne's father, survived. Anne and her sister died of disease and malnutrition in Bergen-Belsen. The objective of the project was to research and develop an atomic bomb. Many theories of Albert Einstein were the foundation for developing the bomb, and Einstein was the first to recognize that an atomic bomb could be made. What was the name of the project that developed the atomic bomb? After The Great War, the treaties signed among countries were expected to solve the world's problems and prevent the outbreak of another march against one another. However, many agreements, like the Treaty of Versailles, were unfair to countries that lost the conflict, leading to much resentment. The oppressed countries regrouped, forming alliances that would later participate in the Second World War. Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, was the leading cause of World War II. Adolf Hitler had always been aggressive towards Poland; thus, he used the country's alliance with Britain and France as an excuse to declare war. Who Were the Major Powers Involved? The Second World War was initiated by the Axis powers of Italy, Germany, and Japan. Adolf Hitler, the German dictator, was determined to invade and attack Poland. For its part, Poland had alliances with British and French militaries for support in case of an attack. Nazi Germany invaded Poland to divide it between itself and the Soviets. The agreement to divide Poland was signed during the secret German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact in Moscow. The Moscow pact guaranteed that Germany and the Soviets would not attack each other for the next ten years. In retaliation, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, after it invaded Poland. Allied countries like the United States, the Soviet Union, and China reacted by joining the effort to support their allies, leading to World War II. In 1941, Germany turned against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) through Operation Barbarossa. In response, the USSR joined the Allies to fight back. The United States of America also entered the war after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Imperial War Museums discussed that World War II's outbreak resulted from the appeasement policy that Great Britain and France adopted. The two countries thought they could avoid another armed conflict by giving in to Hitler's demands. Unfortunately, this only made Hitler more aggressive, and he started to attack other countries. Factors That Contributed to the Aggression Apart from Germany's invasion of Poland, other factors that contributed to the Second World War are: Treaty of Versailles The Allied Powers signed the Treaty of Versailles after The Great War to ensure that such a conflict would never happen again. However, the treaty had a crippling effect on Germany's economy as they were forced to pay huge war reparations. The pact also led to the loss of Germany's territories. Therefore, Germany was resentful. The Great Depression The global economic crisis that started in August 1929 had a significant impact on the countries involved in World War II. For instance, the United States stopped lending money to Europe while Japan's economy declined due to the fall in export demand. The Great Depression increased unemployment, which increased support for fascist regimes such as Adolf Hitler's Nazi party. Militarism After ascending to power, Hitler started to build a strong military by breaking the Treaty of Versailles. He also began to occupy other countries such as Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1936. The other Axis Powers, such as Italy and Japan, also strengthened their militaries. The three countries united their armies in 1936, creating the Axis Powers that started the war. On the other hand, the Allies were not keen on increasing their militaries as they thought that would lead to more violence and aggression. A Weak League of Nations The League of Nations was created in 1919 after The Great War to ensure that such a war never happens again. Unfortunately, the League was weak as it did not have its military. Hitler knew this, and he started to break the rules set by the League without facing any consequences. This made other countries lose faith in the organization, and it became one of the factors that led to the outbreak of the war. Final Thoughts World War II broke out when the Allied countries reacted to the Axis Powers. However, the underlying causes of the war are militarism, the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Depression, and a weak League of Nations. These factors led to Hitler's aggression, which resulted in World War II. Share – copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt – remix, transform, and build upon the material for your purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution – You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike – If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. 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