

HITLER'S AIMS #1

Aims	What does this mean?	How did this lead to war?
Overturn the Treaty of Versailles	Hitler believed that many of Germany's problems stemmed from the unfair terms of the treaty. He promised to end reparation payments and to re-build the army.	The breaking of the treaty would upset neighbouring France and Belgium, who had yet to receive all their reparations. It also meant that Hitler may re-arm the army and re-claim land lost due to the Treaty of Versailles.
Rearmament and recruit for jobs in munition factories	Hitler wished to make Germany 'strong' again – before WW1 it had the largest and most well respected army in Europe. Versailles had placed a limit of 100,000 men on the army and banned Germany from having an air force – this, in Hitler's mind, had to be rectified.	By introducing conscription (military service for young men) and building more weapons, including a Luftwaffe (airforce), Hitler was clearly building up a military state. This would make neighbouring countries insecure, especially France.
Volksdeutsche (Unite all Germans)	Unite all people with German 'blood' who lost German citizenship under the Treaty of Versailles, in order to create a Greater Germany. 10% of Germans lived outside of Germany after the Treaty and some faced persecution.	In order to unite all German-speaking people, Hitler would need to invade neighbouring countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria. This would clearly cause conflict.



DESTROY
VERSAILLES



BUILD THE
ARMY



UNITE ALL
GERMANS

HITLER'S AIMS #2

Aims	What does this mean?	How did this lead to war?
Lebensraum (Living Space)	Expand Germany's borders in order to create 'living space' for all German people. Due to Versailles, Germany had lost 13% of its land. This restricted the amount of land Germans could farm and live on.	Hitler looked especially to the East (e.g. Poland and Czechoslovakia) for potential regions to invade. Invasion = potential for war.
Anschluss (Unite with Austria)	Germany had a shared culture and history with Austria – they were close allies during WW1. Many leading Austrians believed it would help both countries to unite.	Whilst many Austrians wished to unite with Germany, others did not. This could cause internal conflict. In addition, France and Britain would not wish for these two countries to unite.
Destroy Communism	Hitler hated the Jews, and because Karl Marx was a Jew, Hitler also carried a hatred for Communism. In addition to his personal prejudice, Hitler saw Communists as his biggest threat as their message of equality appealed to the working class.	The USSR (Communist Russia) was growing in strength and had a huge army and a Hitler-esque dictator called Stalin. In addition, the USSR was allies with many of the eastern European countries that Hitler wished to invade.



INVADE
EAST



ANSCHLUSS



DESTROY
COMMUNISM

HOW DID FOREIGN COUNTRIES REACT TO HITLER?



Britain

Prime Minister: Neville Chamberlain



Neville Chamberlain wanted to maintain peace through a policy called '**Appeasement**' – this meant giving Hitler a little of what he wanted in order to avoid war. When Hitler signed a peace pact with Poland in 1934, Chamberlain took this as proof that Hitler didn't want war.

The British people did not want another war, having lost so many young men during WWI. There was also a general feeling by the 1930s that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh and so Hitler was right to discard it.



The USSR / Russia

Communist Dictator: Josef Stalin



Because the USSR was the only communist country, Stalin was nervous about every foreign power. He was nervous of Hitler because of Hitler's threats to destroy communism and invade eastern Europe. The USSR's foreign relationships improved when they were allowed to join the League of Nations in 1934 and signed a separate alliance with France in 1935. However, Stalin was not prepared to declare war against Hitler in the 1930s because he was still only partway through his own re-armament programme so not ready for a big war.



France

President: Edward Deladier



France was going through a tough time in the 1930s (due to the Wall Street Crash) and so the president had to deal with riots, rebellions and high numbers of unemployment. He couldn't really focus on Hitler and foreign policy even if he wanted to.

Many French people felt that Germany still needed to be punished and were nervous of Hitler's rearmament programme, especially those who lived near the Rhineland. However, without British support, the French didn't feel they could win another big war.



The USA

President: Frankin D Roosevelt



Roosevelt continued the '**Isolationist**' policy that they had held during the 1920s. This was due to unemployment being as high as 25% due to the Wall Street Crash.

The general public felt like America's involvement in WWI was a mistake and were strongly against another war. FDR won the 1936 election by promising that America would stay out of European wars. However, America quietly began to build up its weapons again.

HITLER'S ROAD TO WAR, 1933-35

The Stresa Front

This was an agreement between France and Britain that they would uphold the Locarno Pact and protect Austria. Hitler did not take this agreement seriously!



April, 1935

June, 1935

The Anglo-German Naval Agreement

Britain signed an agreement to say that Germany could build up its navy to 35% the size of Britain's navy. This included permission to build submarines. Hitler saw this as proof that the military terms of Versailles were unfair. Significantly, both Italy and France were not consulted in this agreement.



The Dollfuss Affair

The Austrian chancellor, Dollfuss, was scared that Hitler would try to unite Germany and Austria together and so banned the Nazi Party in Austria. In retaliation, Hitler instructed Austrian Nazis to cause a rebellion – as a result, Dollfuss was murdered! However, the plot failed because the army supported the Austrian government. Hitler's army was not yet strong enough to fight for Austria.

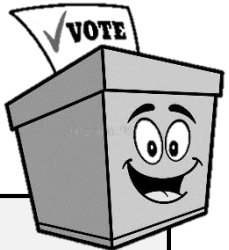


1934

Jan, 1935

The Saar Plebiscite

The Saar is a region that used to belong to Germany, but for 15 years it was under the control of the League of Nations. There was a **plebiscite** so that the people of the region could decide if they joined France or Germany. Germany won 90% of the votes – Hitler used this as propaganda and now he had a rich coalfield and industrial area that will help him create weapons.



Hitler storms out of a disarmament conference!

In 1933, Germany was still in the League of Nations and so pledged to the policy of **collective disarmament**. Hitler insisted that France should have the same size army to Germany. France refused to agree to this. So Hitler stormed out the conference and Germany left the League!



1933

THE REOCCUPATION OF THE RHINELAND, 1936



Why did Hitler want troops there?

The Rhineland is the German region that surrounds the River Rhine – it borders France and the river makes a good natural defence feature. Under Versailles, Germany was forbidden from having forts or troops in the area.

However, this left Germany vulnerable to attack from France. Under Hitler's *Lebensraum* plan, he wanted to invade Eastern Europe, however, he could not send his troops east without securing the western border to Germany's no.1 enemy. To make matters worse, in 1935, the French and Soviets signed the Franco-Soviet Pact as mutual protection against Germany.



Reaction of other countries

What did other countries do about it? Simply put – nothing! Britain felt sympathetic to the Germans who wanted to protect their borders and they were pre-occupied with Mussolini in Abyssinia. France was a little more disgruntled, but the leaders were caught up fighting a general election, and they'd sent most of the French army to Tunisia to fight Muss in Abyssinia. They believed Germany had a more powerful army and didn't want to risk another war. The League (yes, it still existed) were too busy dealing with Muss too. And don't forget, the Wall Street Crash had left Europe completely skint – and wars cost money! America remained in ICE.

Re-occupation Day, 7th March '36

Hitler used the Franco-Soviet pact as an excuse to say Germany was under threat, and so sent troops into the Rhineland. Civilians greeted the troops with flowers and much cheering. Hitler had relied upon this public support – his troops were so poorly equipped that some even arrived on bicycle. His army was still weak and he'd told generals to retreat if they received any resistance. The whole event was one big bluff!



Hitler's Ego Boost!

Hitler had clearly flouted the Treaty and got away with it so he began to think which other terms he could break... He was ready to sally eastward!

However, in the background, both France and Britain started to rearm. France began to worry that Britain might not have her back should it come to another large war.





Mussolini was impressed by Hitler and so decided to sign the Rome-Berlin Axis (tune in next lesson to find out what this is...)



WHICH COUNTRIES SUPPORTED HITLER?

Why have an Alliance?

How did the country react?

<p>Britain</p> 	<p>Hitler admired Britain's traditions, military and monarchy. He knew they'd make a powerful alliance. In 1936, he suggested a non-aggression pact that would last 25 years (well, actually, only three, but spoilers...). The agreement meant they were not to fight each other if war broke out.</p>	<p>Britain wanted to cooperate with Hitler in order to prevent another war. They needed time to rearm, raise funds and persuade the British public around to another war. This began the policy of appeasement – pleasing Hitler in a hope of avoiding war!</p>
<p>Italy</p> 	<p>Hitler had many things in common with the Fascist leader, Mussolini. They were both right-wing, nationalist dictators who believed in a strong police state and limited civil rights. However, Mussolini had prevented him from creating 'Anschluss' during the Dolfuss Affair of 1934.</p>	<p>In 1936, Hitler and Mussolini created the Rome-Berlin Axis. It was an informal agreement but they said that they would work closely together. This was effectively the start of the Axis alliance that would hold throughout WW2. However, this damaged Muss' relationship with France and Britain – as a result, he continued to pursue his dream of building a 'new Roman Empire' while Hitler builds up his 'Third Reich'.</p>
<p>Spain</p> 	<p>In 1936, Spain began a bloody civil war between a group of nationalists – led by General Franco – and Republicans. Hitler and Mussolini both sent troops to help Franco in the war. This meant that Hitler could test out his new weapons and make an ally in Franco, should he win. The Communists were in support of the Republican side, in the hope that they would then become Communist. Hitler wanted to prevent that.</p>	<p>Franco was pleased to have two strong allies. By 1939, he defeated the Republicans and became dictator of Spain. Much of the credit goes to his new best bud, Hitler.</p>
<p>Japan</p> 	<p>In 1905 Japan had fought against the USSR and there was still a long-standing rivalry. The Russians had developed the 'Comintern' – a group dedicated to the spread of communism in Asia. In retaliation, Germany and Japan signed an Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936.</p>	<p>By 1936, Japan had invaded most of China. However, Russia remained a constant neighbouring threat. Hitler hoped that, as a result of this Anti-Comintern Pact, China would surrender completely to Japan.</p>
<p>Italy and Japan</p>	<p>Italy, Germany and Japan formed a triple alliance in 1939. They would each support one another during war. Mussolini named it the Pact of Steel.</p>	<p>There was tension between the allies as to where they should focus their efforts. Mussolini wanted to focus efforts on destroying France and Britain but Japan wanted to focus on destroying the USSR.</p>

ANSCHLUSS WITH AUSTRIA, 1938



Why unite with Austria?

Hitler wanted Germany to unite with Austria for the following reasons:

1. Austria had ruled Germany as part of the 'Holy Roman Empire' for 600 years
2. They shared a language and culture
3. Hitler was born in Austria
4. It would allow Hitler to achieve his goal of uniting all German-speaking people together in the Third Reich



Step 3: Call a Plebiscite

However, Schuschnigg felt he could out-smart Hitler, by holding a plebiscite where the people voted for whether they wanted Anschluss. However, when Hitler demanded the vote is postponed, Schuschnigg backs down and resigns.

Step 4: Declare State of Emergency

Hitler ensures that his 'puppet' – a man called Seyss-Inquart – becomes Chancellor of Austria on 11th March, the same day that Schuschnigg resigns. Seyss-Inquart then declares a state of emergency and requests support from Germany.



Step 5: Send in the troops

On 12th March (the following day), Hitler moves troops into Austria. People were overjoyed to see the troops and lined the streets to show their support.

Step 6: Rig a second plebiscite

On 10th April, Seyss-Inquart holds his own plebiscite with voting stations surrounded by Nazi Stormtroopers. The plebiscite result shows 99% of Austrians in favour of Anschluss.

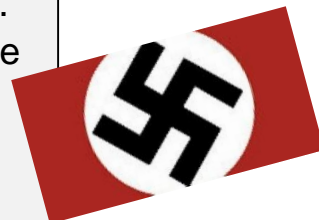
Step 1: Threaten the Austrian Chancellor

A guy called Schuschnigg had replaced Dollfuss as the chancellor. In order to keep his position (and his life) he had pledged his support to Hitler. However, this was not enough. By 1938, the Austrian Nazi Party in Austria were protesting and rioting. In January 1938, Schuschnigg's office was raided by Nazis!



Step 2: Appoint Nazis to key roles

Desperate to remain in power, Schuschnigg met Hitler on 12th February and begged for his support. In return, Hitler made Schuschnigg appoint Nazis to important roles – e.g. the Minister of Interior, who was in charge of the police. He also had to release Nazi criminals from prison. Schuschnigg had three days to fulfil Hitler's demands otherwise he would invade!



HOW DID OTHER COUNTRIES REACT TO ANSCHLUSS?

Austria



Due to the Treaty of Saint-Germaine, Austria had suffered after WW1. They had also suffered due to the Wall Street Crash. As a result, people saw how Hitler had improved people's lives in Germany and many hoped he would do the same in Austria. However, Austria was home to 180,000 Jews and once the Nazis took over, they were victims of persecution.



Germany



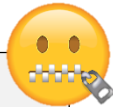
Hitler apparently cried when he signed the document that united Austria and Germany. Due to Nazi propaganda, many Germans believed that Austria was in a desperate state and needed saving, and this made Hitler a hero. In addition, Austria had many natural resources, such as steel and iron, which would boost Germany's economy.



Britain



Many in Britain saw Austria and Germany as one country that should be allowed to unite. However, Winston Churchill and his followers argued that Hitler should have negotiated the union of Austria and Germany through diplomacy rather than sending in troops. Nonetheless, people remained anti-War and anti-Versailles.



France



France still had too many problems of its own to do anything about Anschluss. Two days before Anschluss, the whole French government had been forced to resign due to unrest and economic problems. However, this move worried the French, who continued to mistrust Hitler.



Czechoslovakia



The Czechs were very fearful after Anschluss because they saw their country as the next target under Hitler's 'lebensraum' programme. They asked for British and French support, which was half-heartedly given. Chamberlain (Mr Appeasement) asked Hitler what his intentions were with regards to Czechoslovakia and Hitler promised that he had nothing to fear. So what was there to worry about?!?



Consequences

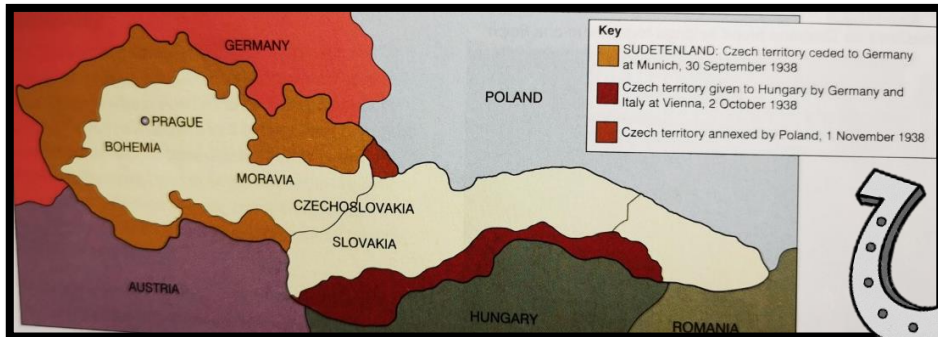
1. Hitler now had better access to the East
2. Hitler gained the Austrian army (100,000 men)
3. Austria's steel and iron helped Hitler's rearmament programme
4. Germany now bordered Czechoslovakia on three sides



THE SUDETENLAND CRISIS, 1938

Where is the Sudetenland?

The Sudetenland was a region of Czechoslovakia that bordered Germany. It formed a 'horseshoe' shape around Czechoslovakia, which was a new country that had been set up under the Treaty of Versailles. It had a strong army and defended its border with Germany.



Why did Hitler want the Sudetenland?

Hitler wanted to take it over because:

1. He was 'righting another wrong' from Versailles – Czechoslovakia should never have existed
2. The Sudetenland had many forts, railway lines and natural resources that would add to Germany's strength
3. The region had 3 million German-speaking people who claimed they were being persecuted by the Czechs
4. Sudeten was the perfect base to launch a full attack on Czechoslovakia

How did Hitler justify his actions?

In a very similar way to *Anschluss* – he instructed Nazis to cause disruption in the Sudeten region, then in May 1938, he publicly declared that he would take over the region in order to save the Sudetens from chaos and persecution.



How did Mr Appeasement react?

Chamberlain was a wee bit nervous – after all, he had promised to protect the Czechs in the case of a German invasion – and the last thing he wanted was to declare war! Therefore, on 15th September 1938, Chamberlain met with Hitler at his holiday mountain retreat in Bavaria to negotiate. Hitler insisted that the only way to resolve the issue was to allow Germany to take over the Sudetenland. Desperate to keep the peace, Chamberlain then flew to Czechoslovakia and persuaded them to give over the Sudetenland.

Hitler wants more!

On 22nd September, Chamberlain returned to Germany with the good news that Hitler was allowed to take the Sudetenland and everyone can live happily ever after. However, Hitler says that he now wants to take chunks of Czechoslovakia and give them to Poland and Hungary!



THE MUNICH CONFERENCE, 1938



What was the Munich Conference?

This was a meeting on 29th September, 1938, between Italy, Britain, France and Germany to discuss the borders of Czechoslovakia. Both Czechoslovakia and nearby Russia were not invited!



Uh-Oh, don't upset the bear!

Stalin (USSR dictator) had not been invited to Munich. He felt angry that he had been left out, and to make things worse, Hitler was now much closer to the borders of Russia. Stalin doubted that Britain and France would protect Russia – so he began to think of other solutions to avoid a German invasion.



What did Hitler want?

Hitler made the same demands that he had made to Chamberlain on 22nd September when they had met. The Czech army had to leave Sudeten and land also had to go to Hungary and Poland. In return, Hitler promised peace.

The French and British were satisfied – by attending this conference, both President Daladier and PM Chamberlain could say they have 'done their bit' to protect Czechoslovakia and maintain peace in Europe. It was like they were 'washing their hands' of the problem.



"Peace In Our Time!"

On 1st October, two days after the Munich Conference, Hitler and Chamberlain met and signed the Anglo-German declaration that promised the two countries would not declare war against each other. Delighted, Chamberlain then returned to Britain, and immediately made a speech, wafting the declaration in the air, announcing that he had achieved "Peace In Our Time".



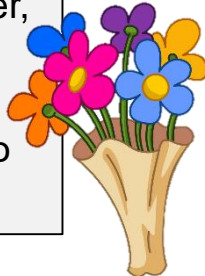
Power Up for Hitler!

Hitler had got away with invading a country that Germany had no claim over – he could no longer pretend that he was 'righting the wrongs' of Versailles. In March, 1939 (six months after Munich), Hitler invaded the whole of Czechoslovakia.



What happened next?

On 10th October, 1938, Hitler invaded the Sudetenland without the approval of the Czech government. However, since they had withdrawn troops from the region, there was nothing they could do about it. German Sudetens greeted Hitler's arrival into the region in a similar way to the Austrians – with flowers and smiles!



A missed opportunity...

Czechoslovakia was a strong country with a decent army. Combined with the armies of France and Britain, they could have stopped Hitler in his tracks. Instead, Hitler gained another piece of land, and France and Britain lost an ally in the USSR!



THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT, 1939



What was the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

This was an agreement between Stalin (leader of the USSR) and Hitler. Both countries did not believe that Poland should be its own, independent country. Therefore, Stalin and Hitler secretly agreed to divide up Poland between them. On 23rd August, 1939, they signed a non-aggression pact.



Why did Hitler wish to invade Poland?

- Lebensraum – more 'living space' for the German people
- Volksdeutsche - Under Versailles, land had been taken from Germany to create the new country of Poland. Therefore, there were German speaking people living in Poland. He wanted to unite them under a Greater Germany
- By 1939, Hitler was very confident that Britain and France would not stop him, even though they had sworn to protect Poland.

Strange Bedfellows

The alliance between Hitler and Stalin was very unusual. Hitler had made many public speeches expressing his desire to destroy Communism and had sent Communists to concentration camps. He had also said that the Russian people were racially inferior to the German 'Aryan' Race. This meant the agreement between the two countries was not based on trust. Instead, it was opportunistic – both sides had something to gain.



Why did Russia no longer trust the Allies?

Simply put – because of Appeasement! Even though Russia had been an ally to Britain and France in WWI, Stalin did not feel that they would mobilise troops if Hitler invaded Russia. Also, Stalin had witnessed how the Allies had handled other problems, and believed they were incapable of handling Hitler.

Why did the Allies not trust Russia?

Simply put – because of Communism! Both Britain and France hoped that Hitler would provide a 'barrier' in central Europe to Communist Russia to the East. As a result, they had blocked Stalin from attending important events, such as the Munich Conference. The foreign minister, called Lord Halifax, and Neville Chamberlain both hated Communism and, throughout the 1930s, declined to meet with Stalin.

Too little too late?

After Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, March 1939, Chamberlain decided it might be a good idea to meet with Stalin after all. In April, he sent a group of diplomats led by a guy called Reginald Drax – however, he sent them by boat, rather than plane. When the diplomats arrived, they had no authority to make any kind of decisions about this new alliance, and so kept having to communicate with the politicians in London. Furthermore, the diplomats insulted Stalin's military forces – saying they doubted it was powerful enough to stop Hitler.

In contrast to Britain, Hitler was very efficient. He sent a senior minister called Ribbentrop to meet with Stalin, who showed Stalin the respect he deserved. The negotiations were swift and efficient, and by the end of August, 1939, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was sealed.



THE INVASION OF POLAND, SEPT 1939

Did the Nazi-Soviet Pact make war inevitable?

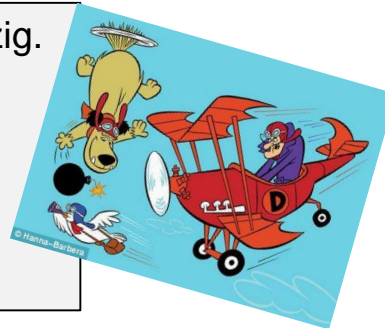
Stalin and Hitler had decided to split Poland between them and to not go to war with one another. Whilst Stalin did not trust Hitler, he felt the pact 'bought him time' to prepare for a war. For Hitler, it meant he could go to war with France and not face 'a war on two fronts' with Russia at the same time. As a result of these two key factors, many historians see the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 as being the point when war was 'inevitable' – in other words, it was going to happen, this was the point of no return!

Britain's promise to Poland

By April 1939, with the full invasion of Czechoslovakia, Britain realised that Appeasement was not working. They made a formal agreement to defend Poland if they were invaded. When the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed in August, 1939, Britain began to prepare for war. However, Hitler still believed that Britain was following Appeasement and so would not oppose his invasion.

The Invasion

On 1st September, the Nazis used a battleship to attack the port of Danzig. This was an 'independent state' on the border between Poland and Germany, created during Versailles, but 90% of the population were German. On the same day, 62 divisions of the German army and 1,300 Luftwaffe planes invaded Poland. The attack was so quick that the Luftwaffe obliterated the Polish airforce before it had even taken flight!



An Ultimatum!

On 3rd September, Britain sent Germany an ultimatum (a clear demand) – either withdraw troops from Poland by 11am or Britain would declare war. The deadline passed, and both Britain and France declared war. Nonetheless, Hitler was convinced that Britain and France would back down since Poland was fully occupied by Nazi and Soviet troops. But he was wrong: WWII had begun!

