

Research Artifact 1

In 1919, Lloyd George of England, Orlando of Italy, Clemenceau of France and Woodrow Wilson from the US met to discuss how Germany was to be made to pay for the damage world war one had caused.



Woodrow Wilson wanted a treaty based on his 14-point plan of national self-determination which he believed would bring peace to Europe.

Georges Clemenceau wanted revenge. He wanted to be sure that Germany could never start another war again.

Lloyd George personally agreed with Wilson but knew that the British public agreed with Clemenceau. He tried to find a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau.

Germany had been expecting a treaty based on Wilson's 14 points and were not happy with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. However, they had no choice but to sign the document as their weak new government had no means of continuing the war effort.

The main terms of the Treaty of Versailles were:

- **The War Guilt Clause** - Germany should accept the blame for starting World War One
- **Reparations** - Germany had to pay 6,600 million pounds for the damage caused by the war
- **Disarmament** - Germany was only allowed to have a small army and six naval ships. No tanks, no air force and no submarines were allowed. The Rhineland area was to be de-militarized.
- **Territorial Clauses** - Land was taken away from Germany and given to other countries. Anschluss (union with Austria) was forbidden.

The German people were very unhappy about the treaty and thought that it was too harsh. Germany could not afford to pay the money and during the 1920s the people in Germany became very poor. There were not many jobs and the price of food and basic goods skyrocketed. The situation only worsened in the 1930's when a worldwide depression caused by the failure of American banks sank Germany's economy even further. The people were so dissatisfied with the new democratic government which had replaced the Kaiser's monarchy that they eventually voted to empower a man who promised to rip up the Treaty of Versailles. His name was Adolf Hitler.

Research Artifact 2

The League of Nations was an international organization set up in 1919 to help keep world peace. It was intended that all countries would be members of the League and that if there were disputes between countries they could be settled by negotiation rather than by force. If this failed then countries would stop trading with the aggressive country and if that failed then countries would use their combined armies to fight.

In theory the League of Nations was a good idea and did have some early successes. But ultimately it was a failure.

In 1931, Japan was hit badly by the Great Depression. People lost faith in the government and turned to the military to find a solution. The army gained political dominance and invaded Manchuria in China, an area rich in minerals and resources. China appealed to the League for help. The Japanese government was told to order the army to leave Manchuria immediately. However, the military leaders ignored the government and continued its conquest of Manchuria.



Manchuria



Invasion of Manchuria 1932

The League then called for countries to stop trading with Japan but because of the depression many countries did not want to risk losing trade and did not agree to the request. The League then made a further call for Japan to withdraw from Manchuria but Japan's response was to simply leave the League of Nations.

In October 1935, Italy, under the control of the fascist (oppressive and radically nationalist government) Dictator Benito Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. The Ethiopians did not have the strength to withstand an attack by Italy and appealed to the League of Nations for help.

The League condemned the attack and called on member states to impose trade restrictions with Italy. However, the trade restrictions were not carried out because they would have little effect. Italy would be able to trade with non-member states, particularly America. Furthermore, Britain and France did not want to risk Italy making an attack on them.

In order to stop Italy's aggression, the leaders of Britain and France held a meeting and decided that Italy could have two areas of land in Ethiopia provided that there were no further attacks on the African country. Although Mussolini accepted the plan, there was a public outcry in Britain and the plan was dropped.

The main reasons for the failure of the League of Nations can be summarized into the following points:

Not all countries joined the League

Although the idea for the League of Nations had come from Woodrow Wilson, there was a change of government in the United States before the signing of the treaty and the new Republican government refused to join. As a punishment for having started World War One, Germany was not allowed to join and Russia was also

excluded due to a growing fear of Communism. Other countries decided not to join and some joined but later left.

The League had no power.

The main weapon of the League was to ask member countries to stop trading with an aggressive country. However, this did not work because countries could still trade with non-member countries. When the world was hit by depression in the late 1920s countries were reluctant to lose trading partners to other non-member countries.

The League had no army

Soldiers were to be supplied by member countries. However, countries were reluctant to get involved and risk provoking an aggressive country into taking direct action against them and failed to provide troops.

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 nations. When countries called for the League to intervene, the League had to set up an emergency meeting, hold discussions and gain the agreement of all members. This process meant that the League could not act quickly to stop an act of aggression.

Research Artifact 3

Adolf Hitler was an Austrian born German man who would rise to gain control of most of Europe. He fought in World War One and gained the rank of Corporal before being temporarily blinded by a mustard gas attack. After the abdication of the Kaiser, the newly established German government, known as the Weimar Republic, quickly surrendered to the allies, ending any hope for Hitler finding glory in the first World War.

After the war Hitler joined a group in Germany called the National Socialist German Worker's Party (Nazi) which denounced the Treaty of Versailles and had strong anti-Semitic (anti Jew) opinions. They blamed the Jewish people of Germany for supposedly betraying the country during World War One claiming they were in league with the Russians and helped bring down Germany's economy thereby causing the German's to lose the war. He eventually became the leader of the Nazi Party and tried to use the 56,000 Nazi members in Bavaria (a southern state in Germany) to forcibly gain political control in the region. Their attempt however failed and Hitler was imprisoned in 1924 for 9 months. During his imprisonment he wrote an autobiography entitled *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) which outlined his position and would later help, along with his powerful public speaking abilities, to gain him many new political supporters.

His popularity among the mostly radical Nazi Party gained Adolf Hitler the political appointment of Chancellor of Germany (Head of Government) in January 1933 although he never gained more than 1/3 of the popular vote. Almost immediately he began secretly building up Germany's Military capabilities. In 1934 he increased the size of the army, began building warships, and created a German air force. Compulsory (forced) military service was also introduced.



Adolf Hitler 1937



Although Britain and France were aware of Hitler's actions, they were also concerned about the rise of Communism and believed that a stronger Germany might help to prevent the spread of Communism to the West. Therefore they turned a blind eye to Hitler's blatant violations of the Versailles Treaty's disarmament clauses.

Research Artifact 4

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.

Hitler also made two important alliances during 1936. The first was called the Rome-Berlin Axis Pact and allied Hitler's Germany with the Benito Mussolini's Dictatorship in Italy. The second was called the Anti-Comintern Pact and allied Germany with Japan.

Hitler's next step was to begin taking back the land that had been taken away from Germany at the end of World War One. In March 1938, German troops marched into Austria. The Austrian leader was forced to hold a referendum asking the people whether they wanted to be part of Germany.

The results of the vote showed that 99% of Austrian people wanted Anschluss (union with Germany) with over 99% of the people turning out to vote. It seems likely that the German military occupation of the area may have influence the overwhelming results. The Austrian President attempted to gain aid against the Germans from Britain, France and Italy, but Hitler's promise that the Anschluss was the end of his expansionist aims, along with the fear of a new war, caused the other European nations to ignore the risks of an expanding Germany.



Hitler did not keep his word and six months later demanded that the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia be handed over to Germany as well. He argued that many of those who lived in the region were German speaking peoples and therefore should be under the control of Germany.

Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Britain, met with Hitler three times during September 1938 to try to reach an agreement that would prevent war. The Munich Agreement stated that Hitler could have the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia provided that he promised not to invade the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Hitler was not a man of his word and in March 1939 invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia which no longer had any defenses against the advancing German army as their fortification had mainly been found in the Sudetenland. Despite calls for help from the Czechoslovakian government, neither Britain nor France was prepared to take military action against Hitler. However, 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. Chamberlain believed that, faced with the prospect of war against Britain and France, Hitler would stop his aggression. Chamberlain was wrong.

Research Artifact 5

Appeasement means giving in to someone provided their demands are seen as reasonable. During the 1930s, many politicians in both Britain and France came to see that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had placed restrictions on Germany that were unfair. As a result, Hitler's actions were seen as understandable and justifiable.

When Germany began re-arming in 1934, many politicians felt that Germany had a right to do so in order to protect itself. It was also argued that a stronger Germany would prevent the spread of Communism to the west.

In 1936, Hitler argued that because France had signed a new treaty with Russia, Germany was under threat from both countries and it was essential to German security that troops were stationed in the Rhineland. France was not strong enough to fight Germany without British help and Britain was not prepared to go to war at this point. Furthermore, many believed that since the Rhineland was a former part of Germany it was reasonable that German troops should be stationed there.

In May 1937, Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister of Britain. He believed that the Treaty of Versailles had treated Germany badly and that there were a number of issues associated with the Treaty that needed to be put right. He felt that giving in to Hitler's demands would prevent another war. This policy, adopted by Chamberlain's government became known as the policy of Appeasement.

The most notable example of appeasement was the Munich Agreement of September 1938. The Munich Agreement, signed by the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy, agreed that the Sudetenland would be returned to Germany and that no further territorial claims would be made by Germany. The Czech government was not invited to the conference and protested about the loss of the Sudetenland. They felt that they had been betrayed by both Britain and France with whom alliances had been made. However, the Munich Agreement was generally viewed as a triumph and an excellent example of securing peace through negotiation rather than war.



This famous picture shows Chamberlain returning from Munich with the paper signed by Hitler declaring 'We shall have peace in our time.' He was, however, completely wrong.

When Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, he broke the terms of the Munich Agreement. Although it was realized that the policy of appeasement had failed, Chamberlain was still not prepared to take the country to war over "...a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing." Instead, he made a guarantee to come to Poland's aid if Hitler tried expanding to the east.

Research Artifact 6

On September 1st 1939 some 1.5 million German troops invaded Poland all along its border with Germany. Simultaneously, the German *Luftwaffe* (air force) bombed Polish airfields, while German warships and U-boats attacked Polish naval forces in the Baltic Sea. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler claimed the massive invasion was a defensive action, but Britain and France were not convinced.

To neutralize the possibility that the USSR would come to Poland's aid, Germany signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union a few days earlier on August 23, 1939. In a secret clause of the agreement, the two countries agreed to divide Poland between them. The British, realizing the likelihood of an attack on Poland, signed an alliance of support in the hopes of discouraging German aggression towards Poland.

Hitler turned to propaganda and misinformation, alleging persecution of German-speaking people who lived in eastern Poland and even staged a fake Polish invasion of Eastern Germany to provide a reason for the attack. Fearing imminent attack, Poland began to call up its troops, but Britain and France persuaded Poland to postpone their military mobilization until August 31 in a last ditch effort to dissuade Germany from war.

At 4:45 a.m. on September 1, the invasion began. Nazi diplomats and propagandists scrambled to head off hostilities with the major Western powers, but without luck. On September 2 Britain and France demanded that Germany withdraw by September 3 or face war. Hitler did not and on September 3, they declared war on Germany, marking the start of World War II.

In Poland, German forces advanced at a dizzying rate. Employing a military strategy known as the *blitzkrieg*, or "lightning war," armored divisions smashed through enemy lines and isolated segments of the enemy, which were encircled and captured by motorized German infantry while the *panzer* tanks rushed forward to repeat the pattern. Meanwhile, the sophisticated German air force—the *Luftwaffe*—destroyed Polish air capability, provided air support for the blitzkrieg, and indiscriminately bombed Polish cities in an effort to further terrorize the enemy.



German Panzer tanks leading the blitzkrieg in Poland

The Polish army was able to summon one million men but was hopelessly outmatched in every respect. Rather than take a strong defensive position, troops were rushed to the front to confront the Germans and were systematically captured or annihilated. In a famously ill-fated strategy, Polish commanders even sent horsed cavalry into battle against the heavy German armor. By September 8, German forces had reached the outskirts of Warsaw, having advanced 140 miles in the first week of the invasion.

The Polish armed forces hoped to hold out long enough so that an offensive could be mounted against Germany in the west, but on September 17 Soviet forces invaded from the east and all hope was lost. On September 28, the Warsaw garrison finally surrendered to a relentless German siege. That day, Germany and the USSR concluded an agreement outlining their zones of occupation. For the fourth time in its history, Poland was partitioned by its more powerful neighbors.

World War Two Causes

Research Worksheet

Artifact One	Define: Clause
Descriptive Title:	Reparations
	Disarmament
Possible Causes of WWII	

Artifact Two	Define: Aggression
Descriptive Title:	Fascist
	Benito Mussolini
Possible Causes of WWII	

Artifact Three	Define: Radical
Descriptive Title:	Weimar Republic
	Nazi
Possible Causes of WWII	

Artifact Four	Define: Pact
Descriptive Title:	Referendum
	Sudetenland
Possible Causes of WWII	

Artifact Five	Define: Appeasement
Descriptive Title:	Neville Chamberlain
	Munich Agreement
Possible Causes of WWII	

Artifact Six	Define: Hostilities
Descriptive Title:	Blitzkrieg
	Luftwaffe
Possible Causes of WWII	

