



# The Outbreak of World War II

Read the information about the outbreak of World War II and then answer the questions that follow. Try to give as much detail as you can.

In 1934, a man called Adolf Hitler was declared as the Führer, meaning leader, of all Germany. Adolf Hitler was the leader of the Nazi party and he had big plans for his country and people.

Hitler wanted to get more land and make one country for all German-speaking people. By 1938, his Nazi troops had begun invading other countries and trying to take over.

In September 1938, the British, French, Italian and German leaders signed a document called 'The Munich Agreement' that gave Germany part of Czechoslovakia in return for stopping the invasions. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Neville Chamberlain, described the agreement as 'peace for our time'.

Unfortunately, Hitler did not keep to the agreement for long and he took over the rest of Czechoslovakia in August 1939.

## Key Dates

**1934** Hitler becomes the Fuhrer of Nazi Germany.

**March 1938** Nazis invade and annex Austria.

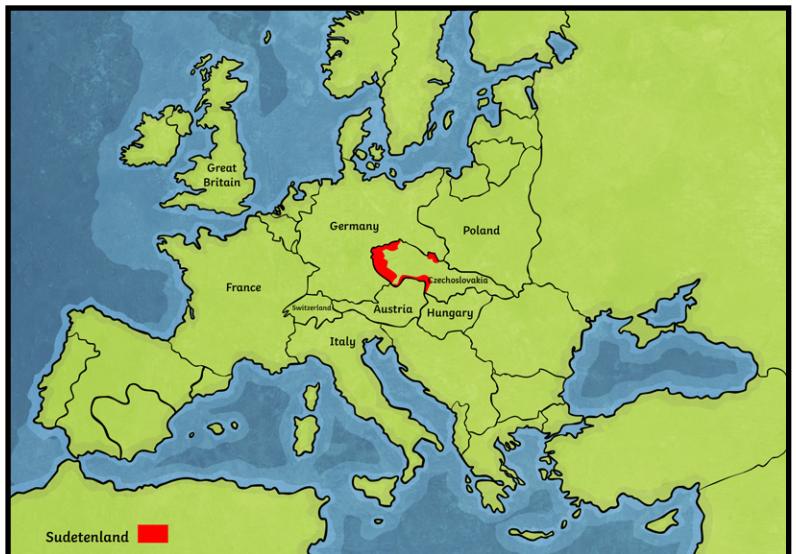
**September 1938** Munich Agreement signed.

**September 1938** Nazis occupy the Sudetenland.

**August 1939** Czechoslovakia invaded and split up.

**September 1939** Poland invaded and occupied.

**3rd September 1939** The United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany.



On 1st September 1939, Hitler sent his army into Poland. The United Kingdom and France had agreed to protect Poland if this should happen and two days later they declared war on Germany.

In the months following the declaration of war, there were no big battles on the Western Front and this period of World War II became known as The Phoney War.

The Phoney War ended when France was invaded on 10 May 1940 and the war fully begun. However, the Nazi soldiers were more successful and within the next six weeks, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands were all occupied.



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From the 26 May – 4 June 1940, the British Army managed to rescue over 330 000 Allied soldiers, who were trapped on the beaches at Dunkirk. This was code named 'Operation Dynamo'.

Hitler seemed unstoppable and soon he would set his sights on invading and occupying the United Kingdom.

## Helpful vocabulary:

**invade** – To enter another country or area with large numbers of soldiers in order to take control of it by force.

**occupy** – To move into and take control of a place.



# The Outbreak of World War II

## Questions

Answer the questions in full sentences giving as much detail as you can. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

1. Who was Adolf Hitler?

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2. What did Hitler want?

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3. Why was the Munich Agreement made?

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4. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany?

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5. What was the Phoney War?

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6. When was France invaded?

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7. What happened at Dunkirk?

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8. Why do you think that Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom?

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# The Outbreak of World War II

## Answers

### 1. Who was Adolf Hitler?

Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Worker's (Nazi) party. He became the Reich Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and Führer of all Germany in 1934.

### 2. What did Hitler want?

Hitler wanted to expand German territory and unite all German-speaking people in one country.

### 3. Why was the Munich Agreement made?

The Munich Agreement was a treaty signed by the British, French, German and Italian leaders in September 1939, which gave Hitler the Sudetenland in return for him agreeing not to continue with his military expansion plans.

### 4. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war Germany?

The United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany because Hitler sent his troops into Poland and refused to withdraw them. The United Kingdom and France had promised to protect Poland if it came under attack from Germany.

### 5. What was the Phoney War?

The Phoney War was the name given to the eight-month period following the beginning of the war. The Phoney War was so-called because to many people it didn't seem like World War II had really begun as there was no major fighting on the Western Front.

### 6. When was France invaded?

France was invaded in May 1940.

### 7. What happened at Dunkirk?

Over 330 000 Allied soldiers were trapped on the beach at Dunkirk and had to be rescued.

### 8. Why do you think that Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom?

Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom next because:

- it was a major power in the war and the last line of defence against him;
- it was the next country in line after the occupation of much of Europe;
- after the occupation of France, German troops were in position to advance across the Channel to the United Kingdom.



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Read the information about the outbreak of World War II and then answer the questions that follow. Try to give as much detail as you can.

In 1933, a man called Adolf Hitler became the Reich Chancellor of Germany and one year later he was declared as the Führer, meaning leader, of all Germany. Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi party) and he had big plans for the future of his people.

Hitler wanted to expand German territory and unite all German-speaking people in one country. By 1938, these plans were underway and a wave of invasions into surrounding countries began.

In September 1938, the British, French, Italian and German leaders signed a treaty called 'The Munich Agreement' that gave Germany the Sudetenland (part of Czechoslovakia) in return for him agreeing not to continue with his invasion plans. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Neville Chamberlain, described the agreement as representing 'peace for our time'.

Unfortunately, Hitler did not keep to the terms of the Munich Agreement and in August 1939 he went on to invade and occupy more of Czechoslovakia and, in the years to follow, many other countries.

## Key Dates

**1934** Hitler becomes the Führer of Nazi Germany.

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**September 1938** Munich Agreement signed.

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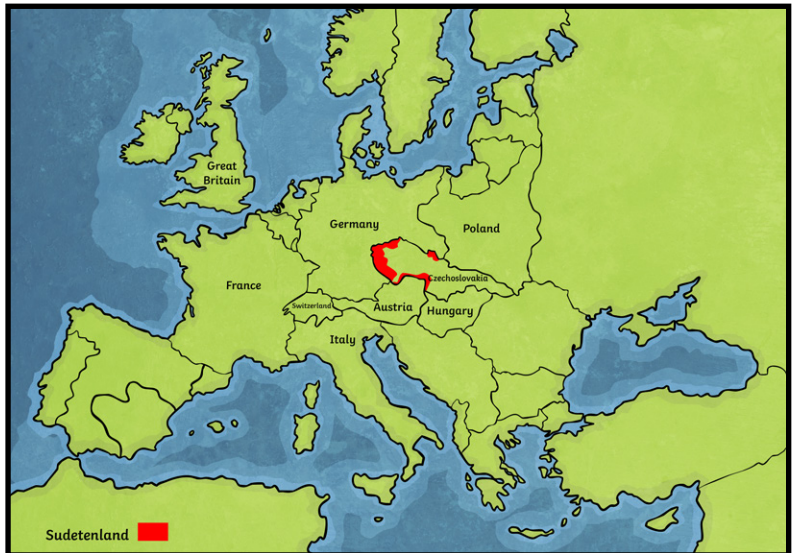
**August 1939** Czechoslovakia invaded and split up.

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**3rd September 1939** The United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany.



Neville Chamberlain addresses the crowds back in Britain after signing the Munich Agreement.



On 1st September 1939, Hitler sent his army into Poland. The United Kingdom and France had agreed to protect Poland if this should happen and two days later they declared war on Germany.

In the months following the declaration of war, there was no large scale fighting on the Western Front and this period of World War II came to be known as The Phoney War. However, Denmark and Norway were occupied by the Nazis during this time (April 1940).



# The Outbreak of World War II

The Phoney War ended when France was invaded on 10 May 1940 and the Allied forces sprang into action. However, despite their efforts, within the next six weeks France, Belgium and the Netherlands were all occupied by Nazi forces. The Allies were overpowered by the German army and forced to retreat.

From the 26 May – 4 June 1940, the British Army managed to rescue over 330 000 Allied soldiers who were cornered on the beaches at Dunkirk. This was code named 'Operation Dynamo'.

Hitler seemed unstoppable and soon he would set his sights on invading and occupying the United Kingdom.

## Helpful vocabulary:

**invade** – To enter another country or area with large numbers of soldiers in order to take control of it by force

**occupy** – To move into and take control of a place

**annex** – To add an area of land/region to another country



# The Outbreak of World War II

## Questions

Answer the questions in full sentences giving as much detail as you can. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

1. Who was Adolf Hitler?

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2. What did Hitler hope to achieve?

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3. What was the Munich Agreement and who signed it?

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4. What do you think the people of Czechoslovakia thought of the Munich Agreement?

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5. Why do you think Hitler signed an agreement he was not willing to keep?

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6. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany?

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7. What was the Phoney War? Why do you think it was called this?

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8. Which countries did the Nazis manage to occupy in May 1940?

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9. What was Operation Dynamo?

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10. Why do you think Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom next?

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# The Outbreak of World War II

## Answers

### 1. Who was Adolf Hitler?

Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Worker's (Nazi) party. He became the Reich Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and Führer of all Germany in 1934.

### 2. What did Hitler hope to achieve?

Hitler wanted to expand German territory and unite all German-speaking people in one country.

### 3. What was the Munich Agreement and who signed it?

The Munich Agreement was a treaty signed by the British, French, German and Italian leaders in September 1939 which gave Hitler the Sudetenland in return for him agreeing not to continue with his military expansion plans.

### 4. What do you think the people of Czechoslovakia thought of the Munich Agreement?

The people of Czechoslovakia may have felt betrayed by the Munich Agreement because Czechoslovakia had no say in what happened. Losing the Sudetenland meant that Czechoslovakia was open to potential attack as it was now more exposed and vulnerable.

### 5. Why do you think Hitler signed an agreement he was not willing to keep?

Hitler may have signed the Munich Agreement because it allowed him to pacify Britain and France and gave him time to work on his plans. It also legitimately gave him the Sudetenland and it would be easier to advance on the rest of Czechoslovakia once they were legally inside the country.

### 6. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany?

The United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany because Hitler sent his troops into Poland and refused to withdraw them. The United Kingdom and France had promised to protect Poland if it came under attack from Germany.

### 7. What was the Phoney War? Why do you think it was called this?

The Phoney War was the name given to the eight-month period following the beginning of the war. The Phoney War was so-called because to many people it didn't seem like World War II had really begun as there was no major fighting on the Western Front.

### 8. Which countries did the Nazis manage to occupy in May 1940?

In May 1940, the Nazis occupied France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

### 9. What was Operation Dynamo?

Operation Dynamo was the code name given to the rescue mission that rescued over 330 000 Allied soldiers from the beach at Dunkirk.

### 10. Why do you think Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom next?

Hitler might want to attack the United Kingdom next because:

- it was a major power in the war and the last line of defence against him;
- it was the next country in line after the occupation of much of Europe;
- after the occupation of France, German troops were in position to advance across the Channel to the United Kingdom.





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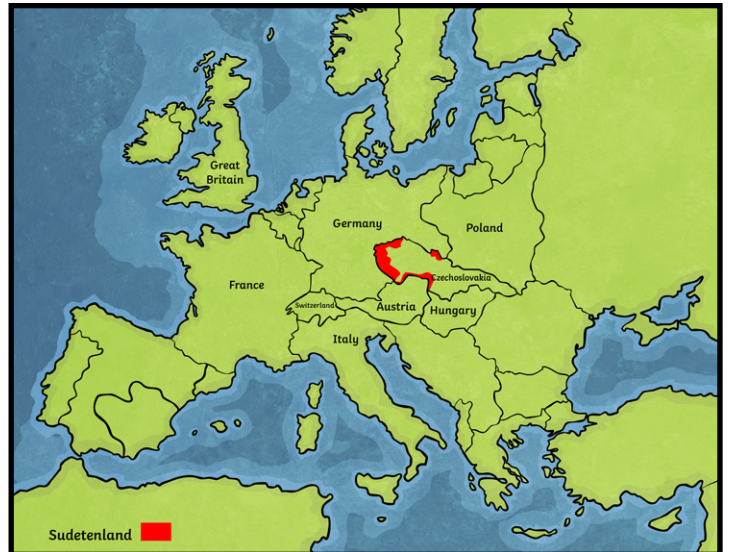
Read the information about the outbreak of World War II and then answer the questions that follow. Try to give as much detail as you can.

In 1933, a man called Adolf Hitler became the Reich Chancellor of Germany and one year later he was declared as the Führer, meaning leader of all Germany. Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi party) and he had big plans for the future of his people.

Hitler wanted Lebensraum (living space) for German people and to unite all German-speaking people in one country. By 1938, plans to expand German territory were underway and a wave of invasions into surrounding countries had begun. In March 1938, Austria was annexed into Nazi Germany and the border between the two countries was removed. Hitler looked towards the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia next where many German people lived.

In September 1938, desperate to avoid potential conflict with Germany, the British, French, Italian and German leaders signed a treaty called 'The Munich Agreement' that gave Hitler the Sudetenland in return for him agreeing not to continue with his military expansion plans. After the annexation of the Sudetenland, the rest of Czechoslovakia was exposed and vulnerable because its borders were now almost completely surrounded by German land. Many people in Czechoslovakia felt betrayed by the Munich Agreement because the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister was not invited to the meeting and the fate of the Sudetenland was decided without any Czechoslovakian representation. However, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Neville Chamberlain, described the agreement as representing 'peace for our time'.

Unfortunately, Hitler did not keep to the terms of the Munich Agreement and in August 1939 he went on to invade and annex more of Czechoslovakia and, in the years to follow, many other countries.



## Key Dates

**1934** Hitler becomes the Fuhrer of Nazi Germany.

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Neville Chamberlain addresses the crowds back in Britain after signing the Munich Agreement.



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On 1st September 1939, Hitler sent his army into Poland. The United Kingdom and France had agreed to protect Poland if this should happen and they warned Hitler that if he did not immediately remove his troops they would be forced to go to war. Hitler did not remove his troops so on 3rd September 1939 the United Kingdom and France officially declared war on Germany.

In the months following the declaration of war, there was no large scale fighting on the Western Front and this period of the Second World War became known as The Phoney War. Although Poland was completely taken over in a matter of weeks and Denmark and Norway were later occupied by the Nazis (April 1940), to many people in Britain there wasn't much happening that directly affected them. During this time, many children that had been evacuated to the countryside returned home to their parents.

The Phoney War ended when the Battle of France began. France was invaded on 10 May 1940 and the Allied forces sprang into action. However, despite their efforts, within the next six weeks Nazi forces occupied France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The Allied soldiers were overpowered by the German Blitzkrieg technique and many thousands were forced to retreat to the beach at Dunkirk.

Admiral Ramsey in Britain formulated a rescue plan and from the 26 May – 4 June 1940 the British army managed to rescue over 330 000 Allied soldiers. The men were collected in small boats, which were able to enter the shallow waters along the beach, and then transferred to larger ships to sail away. This mission was code named 'Operation Dynamo'. The now Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, described the operation at Dunkirk as a 'miracle'.

Hitler seemed unstoppable and soon he would set his sights on invading and occupying the United Kingdom.

## Helpful vocabulary:

**annex** – To add an area of land/region to another country

**Blitzkrieg** – A German technique that literally means 'lightning war', which is based on speed and surprise and using a combination of troops, tanks and aeroplanes attacking simultaneously

**invade** – To enter another country or area with large numbers of soldiers in order to take control of it by force

**occupy** – To move into and take control of a place



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## Questions

Answer the questions in full sentences giving as much detail as you can. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

1. Who was Adolf Hitler and what did he hope to achieve?

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2. What was the Munich Agreement and who signed it?

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3. Do you think the Munich agreement was a good idea? Why/why not?

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4. What do you think the people of Czechoslovakia thought of the Munich Agreement?

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5. Why do you think Hitler signed an agreement he was not willing to keep?

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6. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany?

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7. What was the Phoney War? Why do you think it was called this?

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8. Describe what happened during the Battle of France.

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9. What was Operation Dynamo?

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10. Why do you think Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom next?

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# The Outbreak of World War II

## Answers

**1. Who was Adolf Hitler and what did he hope to achieve?**

Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Worker's (Nazi) party. He became the Reich Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and Führer of all Germany in 1934.

**2. What was the Munich Agreement and who signed it?**

The Munich Agreement was a treaty signed by the British, French, German and Italian leaders in September 1939 that gave Hitler the Sudetenland in return for him agreeing not to continue with his military expansion plans.

**3. Do you think the Munich Agreement was a good idea? Why/why not?**

Accept yes or no answers that are accompanied by a valid reason.

Examples:

Yes - It helped avoid going to war straight away with Germany.

It was right to give Hitler the chance to do the right thing.

No - Czechoslovakia was let down and lost as an ally.

Hitler had broken promises before and would again. Hitler was unlikely to give up on his expansion plans.

**4. What do you think the people of Czechoslovakia thought of the Munich Agreement?**

The people of Czechoslovakia may have felt betrayed by the Munich Agreement because Czechoslovakia had no say in what happened and the agreement was signed without the presence of the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister. Losing the Sudetenland meant that Czechoslovakia was open to potential attack as it was now more exposed and vulnerable.

**5. Why do you think Hitler signed an agreement he was not willing to keep?**

It allowed him to pacify Britain and France and gave him time to work on his plans. It also legitimately gave him the Sudetenland and it would be easier to advance on the rest of Czechoslovakia once they were legally inside the country.

**6. Why did the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany?**

The United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany because Hitler sent his troops into Poland and refused to withdraw them. The United Kingdom and France had promised to protect Poland if it came under attack from Germany.

**7. What was the Phoney War? Why do you think it was called this?**

The Phoney War was the name given to the eight-month period following the beginning of the war. The Phoney War was so-called because to many people it didn't seem like World War II had really begun as there was no major fighting on the Western Front.

**8. Describe what happened during the Battle of France:**

During the Battle of France, German troops invaded and occupied France, Belgium and the Netherlands. They used a technique called Blitzkrieg, which means 'lightning war', and they attacked quickly using a combination of ground troops, tanks and aeroplanes to overpower the Allies. Over 330 000 Allied soldiers were cornered on the beach at Dunkirk during the Battle of France and had to be rescued.

**9. What was Operation Dynamo?**

Operation Dynamo was the codename given to the rescue mission that rescued over 330 000 Allied soldiers from the beach at Dunkirk. This was the idea of Admiral Ramsey, who proposed using small boats to get to the men in the shallow waters.

**10. Why do you think Hitler wanted to attack the United Kingdom next?**

Hitler might want to attack the United Kingdom next because:

- it was a major power in the war and the last line of defence against him;
- it was the next country in line after the occupation of much of Europe;
- after the occupation of France, German troops were in position to advance across the Channel to the United Kingdom.

# True or False?

I can answer comprehension questions about the outbreak of World War II.



Read the statement about World War II and discuss with your partner whether you think it is true or false. Write your answer next to the question number in the grid.

If you think the answer is true, can you add any extra information in the notes section? If you think the answer is false, can you rewrite the statement in the notes column to make it correct?

Statement	True or False	Notes
World War II began in 1945.		
The Munich Agreement gave Hitler the Sudetenland.		
The Sudetenland was a region of Austria.		
Benito Mussolini supported Britain and France during World War II.		
The eight-month period following the declaration of war was known as the Phoney War.		
France was invaded by Nazi troops in May 1940.		
The British launched an attack on German troops on the beaches at Dunkirk.		

# True or False? **Answers**

Statement	True or False	Notes
World War II began in 1945.	False	World War II started in 1939 and ended in 1945.
The Munich Agreement gave Hitler the Sudetenland.	True	It was thought that this would avoid future conflict and help to build relations with Germany.
The Sudetenland was a region of Austria.	False	The Sudetenland was a region of Czechoslovakia.
Benito Mussolini supported Britain and France during World War II.	False	Benito Mussolini was the Italian Prime Minister and a fascist dictator. Italy was one of the Axis Powers during World War II, who fought against the Allies.
The eight-month period following the declaration of war was known as the Phoney War.	True	The Phoney War was so called because there was no major fighting on the Western Front. To many people in Britain, it seemed like not much was happening.
France was invaded by Nazi troops in May 1940.	True	The act officially ended the Phoney War.
The British launched an attack on German troops on the beaches at Dunkirk.	False	The British rescued Allied soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk. This was a defensive manoeuvre.

# World War II Glossary



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# Adult Guidance - Glossary

Example definitions of terms for glossary work.

## **Allies/United Nations**

At the start of World War II, the Allies were the United Kingdom, France and Poland. These nations had made a pact to stand together against Hitler and the **Axis powers**. The Allies were soon joined by the British Commonwealth (South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and then the Soviet Union, the United States of America and China. Other Allies included British India, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia. The Allies were officially named as the United Nations in 1942.

## **Annex**

To take control of and add an area of land/region to another country.

## **Axis Powers**

The Axis powers were Germany, Japan and Italy, who made a pact to stand together in opposition to the **Allies**.

## **Chamberlain, Neville**

The Conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from May 1937 until May 1940.

## **Hitler, Adolf**

The leader of the National Socialist German Workers Political Party from 1921 - 1945. Reich Chancellor of Germany from 1933 - 1945 and Führer of Germany from 1934 - 1945.

## **Invade**

To enter another country or area with large numbers of soldiers in order to take control of it by force.

## **Munich Agreement**

Treaty agreed and signed by Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Edouard Daladier, Prime Minister of France; Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini, Prime Minister of Italy and leader of the National Fascist Party on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1939. The treaty gave control of the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia to Germany in a bid to appease Hitler and keep the peace.

## **Nazi**

Nazi is the shortened name for the National Socialist German Workers Party. People who supported the party were known as 'Nazis' and they lived by the rules and beliefs of Nazism. As Adolf Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi Party), Germany was known as Nazi Germany during his rule (1933 - 1945).

## **Occupy**

To move in and take control of a place through military conquest or settlement.

## **Phoney War**

The Phoney War is the name given to the eight-month period following the announcement of World War II during which there were no major land offences on the Western Front.

## **Sudetenland**

The area of Czechoslovakia that was annexed to Germany in September 1938 following the terms of the **Munich Agreement**.