

From Appeasement to War

Section 1: Japanese and Italian Aggression

- 1) Why did Japan seize Manchuria in 1931?
- 2) How did Japan react to the League of Nations condemning its actions?
- 3) Why did Mussolini attack Ethiopia?
- 4) Why were sanctions proposed by the League of Nations ineffective?

Section 2: German Aggression

- 1) How did Hitler violate the Treaty of Versailles? (THREE WAYS!)
- 2) Think back to what you remember about the Austria-Hungary empire. Why might Hitler want to annex Austria? (Hint: same answer as below)
- 3) Why did Hitler want to annex the Sudetenland?

Section 3: Pacifism and Appeasement

- 1) What is appeasement and why did the western democracies support it? (THREE REASONS!)
- 2) How did the Americans react to rising tensions in Europe? How might this contribute to the outbreak of war?

Section 4: Neutrality and Alliances

- 1) Which countries made up the Axis Powers?
- 2) What was the result of the Munich Conference?
- 3) How did Chamberlain and Churchill differ in their attitudes toward the outcome?
- 4) What did Hitler and Stalin agree to do as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

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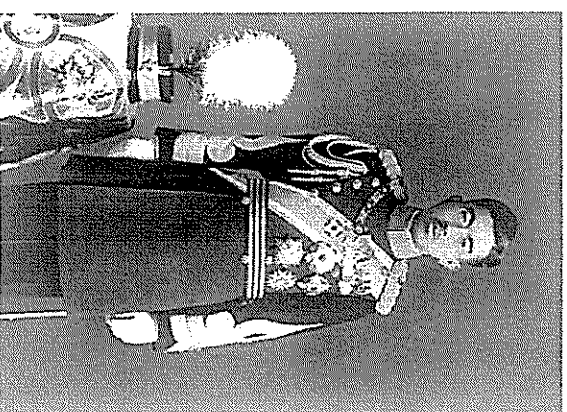
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Directions: Use the readings below to answer the questions in your graphic organizer.

Section 1: Japanese and Italian Aggression

One of the earliest tests of peace policies had been posed by Japan. Japanese military leaders and ultra nationalists thought that Japan should have an empire equal to those of the Western powers. In pursuit of this goal, Japan seized Manchuria (part of China) in 1931. When the League of Nations condemned the aggression, Japan simply withdrew from the organization. Japan's easy success strengthened the militarist faction in Japan. In 1937, Japanese armies overran much of eastern China, starting the Second Sino-Japanese War. Once again, Western protests did not stop Japan.



Emperor Hirohito of Japan

In Italy, Mussolini decided to act on his own imperialist ambitions. Italy's defeat by the Ethiopians at the Battle of Adowa in 1896 still rankled (caused pain/festered). In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, located in northeastern Africa. Although the Ethiopians resisted bravely, their outdated weapons were no match for Mussolini's tanks, machine guns, poison gas, and airplanes. The Ethiopian king Haile Selassie appealed to the League of Nations for help. The League voted **sanctions** (penalties/restrictions) against Italy for violating international law. But the League had no power to enforce the sanctions, and by early 1936, Italy had conquered Ethiopia.



Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler

Section 2: German Aggression

By then, Hitler, too, had tested the will of the Western democracies and found it weak. Hitler violated the Versailles treaty in two ways. First, he built up the German military. Then, in 1936, he sent troops into the "demilitarized" **Rhineland** bordering France—another treaty violation.

From the beginning, Nazi propaganda had found fertile ground in Austria. By 1938, Hitler was ready to engineer the **Anschluss**, or union of Austria and Germany. Early that year, he forced the Austrian chancellor to appoint Nazis to key cabinet posts. When the Austrian leader balked at other demands in March, Hitler sent in the German army to "preserve order." To indicate his new role as ruler of Austria, Hitler made a speech from the Hofburg Palace, the former residence of the Hapsburg emperors. **The Anschluss violated the Versailles treaty** and created a brief war scare.

Germany turned next to Czechoslovakia. At first, Hitler insisted that the three million Germans in the **Sudetenland**—a region of western Czechoslovakia—be given autonomy. Czechoslovakia was one of only two remaining democracies in Eastern Europe. Still, Britain and France were not willing to go to war to save it. As British and French leaders searched for a peaceful solution, Hitler increased his demands. The Sudetenland, he said, must be annexed to Germany.



Czechs "celebrate" the annexation of the Sudetenland

Some even thought that Hitler's actions constituted a justifiable response to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which they believed had been too harsh on Germany.

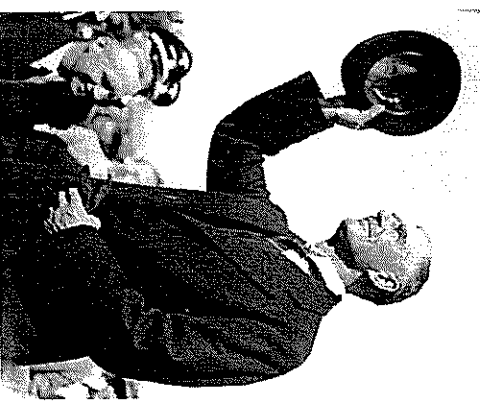
In both Britain and France, many saw Hitler and fascism as a defense against a worse evil—the spread of Soviet communism. Additionally, the Great Depression sapped the energies of the Western democracies. Finally, widespread **pacifism**, or opposition to all war, and disgust with the destruction from the previous war pushed many governments to seek peace at any time.

As war clouds gathered in Europe in the mid-1930s, the United States Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts. One law forbade the sale of arms to any nation at war. Others outlawed loans to warring nations and prohibited American from traveling on ships of warring powers. The fundamental goal of American policy, however, was to avoid involvement in a European war, not to prevent such a conflict.

Section 4: Neutrality and Alliances

In the face of the apparent weakness of Britain, France, and the United States, Germany Italy, and Japan formed what became known as the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Known as the **Axis Powers**, the three nations agreed to fight Soviet communism. They also agreed not to interfere with one another's plans for territorial expansion. The agreement cleared the way for these anti-democratic, aggressor powers to take even bolder steps.

At the **Munich Conference** in September 1938, British and French leaders again chose appeasement. The caved in to Hitler's demands and then persuaded the Czechs to surrender the Sudetenland without a fight. In exchange, Hitler assured Britain and France that he had no further plans to expand his territory.



Neville Chamberlain

Returning from Munich, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain told cheering crowds that he had achieved "**peace for our time.**" He told Parliament that the Munich Pact had "saved Czechoslovakia from destruction and Europe from Armageddon." British politician Winston Churchill, who had longed warned of the Nazi threat, judged the diplomats harshly: "They had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor, they will have war."

In August 1939, Hitler stunned the world by announcing a nonaggression pact with his great enemy—Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator. Publicly, the Nazi-Soviet Pact bound Hitler and Stalin to peaceful relations. Secretly, the two agreed not to fight if the other went to war and to divide up Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe between them.