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| **World War II** |

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| World War II (1939-1945)The rise of the **fascist****Adolf Hitler** and the formation of German **totalitarianism** is directly related to the Versailles Treaty. Hitler blamed the treaty for Germany's economic trouble and made a call for German patriotism. The **Nazi Party** quickly came to power in the early 1930's and used terror to achieve its goal of a strong German nation. The most obvious example of this is **anti-Semitism**, the blaming of the Jewish people for many German problems. **Benito Mussolini**, the fascist leader of Italy, had a similar rise and utilized the same policies. Without the negative influence of the Versailles Treaty, Germans and Italians may not have supported the oppressive regimes of Hitler and Mussolini. Causes of World War IIWorld War II was fought for many of the same reasons as the First World War. The **Axis Powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan**, were hungry for territory and resources. Institutions like the League of Nations, and peace treaties such as the **Kellogg-Briand Pact**, were weak and ineffectual. The immediate cause of WWII was the policy of **appeasement** adopted by the **Allied Powers** of Europe, and eventually the United States. Germany, as it had previous to WWI, was using **nationalism** and **militarism** to imperialize surrounding areas. Austria and portions of Czechoslovakia were taken by Germany in direct violation of the dictations of the Versailles Treaty. Likewise, Italy had taken Ethiopia, and Japan had imperialized much of China. Under the leadership of **Neville Chamberlain**, British Prime Minister, a conference was called in **Munich** in 1938. Appeasement became the official policy when Hitler was allowed to keep what was already taken if he promised to stop taking territory from that point forward. The futile hopes of appeasement were quickly dashed when Hitler annexed the remainder of Czechoslovakia. The worst fears were realized when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 using the **blitzkrieg** tactic. Blitzkrieg, or Lightening Warfare used all available military resources to attack the target simultaneously. The invasion of Poland marks the beginning of World War II.Aspects of World War IIWWII is divided into two areas, **the European Theater** and the **Pacific Theater**. In Europe, Germany had quickly taken over large amounts of territory. France fell after French and British troops were pushed off of the European mainland at **Dunkirk**. Then, Germany failed to win the **Battle of Britain** in the skies over England. Italian and German troops gained control of the Mediterranean and the North coast of Africa. Germany also attacked the **Soviet Union**, despite the secret agreement between Hitler and **Josef Stalin**, which stated neither would attack the other. This proved Germany's undoing as it had in World War I, as a two-front war is nearly impossible to win. The **Battle of Stalingrad** was the turning point of the war in Europe. After this Soviet victory, Allied troops retook Africa and then move on to take the Italian peninsula. Mussolini's Italy was considered the weak point of Europe. After the daring D-Day invasion of Normandy, and Germany's last-ditch effort in the **Battle of the Bulge**, it was only a matter of time before Berlin fell. Hitler committed suicide as Soviet troops took the city in the spring of 1945. The surviving Nazis that were captured were held accountable for their war crimes in the **Nuremburg Trials**. The atrocities of the **Holocaust** would come to light, resulting in the execution of Nazi Party officials and ending the darkest segment of human history.  |