

The Second World War



Quick summary



The Second World War was the most deadly conflict the world has ever seen. It brought into opposition the countries of the Allies (France, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union) and the Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). By the end of the conflict, approximately 50 million people had been killed, and the political and social organisation of the world was changed forever. The end of the war saw Communism growing in the east and a significant shift in power towards the United States in the west. The Second World War is one of the most significant events in history, and its influences are still felt in daily life today.



Location

The Second World War was a truly global conflict. The Allies and Axis powers drew more than 30 countries into the conflict. From its beginnings in Western Europe, battles raged across Europe, around the Mediterranean, in Africa and the Middle East and around the Pacific.



Conflict

In the decades after the First World War, Europe was still under the threat of another great conflict. Hitler, the leader of the Nazi party in Germany, had come to power promising to rebuild the German army and was soon invading parts of Europe. Britain and France agreed to help Poland if it was invaded, but that didn't stop Hitler. His army moved into Poland, and the Second World War had begun. The conflict involved some of the most famous battles in history, including the Battle of Britain between the British and German airforces. Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese and brought the United States into the war in 1941. The Second World War also witnessed the use of a powerful new weapon, the atomic bomb, which the USA used on two cities in Japan.



Main events

1939: Germany invaded Poland
1939: Britain and France declared war on Germany
1940: British forces evacuated from Dunkirk
1941: Hitler invaded Russia
1941: The USA entered the war
1942: Mass killings began at Auschwitz

1943: German army defeated at Stalingrad, Russia
1944: D-Day: allied invasion of France
1945: Hitler committed suicide, Germany surrendered
1945: Japan surrendered after the USA dropped two atomic bombs



Vocabulary

Communism: a political belief system

significant: important

influences: effects on what people say or do

decades: periods of ten years

evacuated: removed from a dangerous place



Settlements



Beliefs



Culture and pastimes



Location



Main events



Food and farming



Travel and exploration



Conflict



Society



Artefacts

The Second World War – impact



Quick summary



The Second World War was the most destructive conflict the world has ever experienced. In six years of fighting, over 50 million people died, including six million Jews in the **Holocaust**. The war caused the death of vast numbers of civilians as well as those fighting in the military and had a significant impact on the lives of people across the globe for decades. There were some positive **legacies** of the horror, however, including the creation of the United Nations and the Universal **Declaration** of Human Rights. The United Nations brought most of the countries of the world together, with a shared commitment to avoid another global war at all costs. However, almost immediately after the end of the war, a different type of conflict, called the Cold War, began between two major superpowers.

Countries involved in World War II



Location



■ Allies
■ Axis
■ Neutral



Conflict

The United Nations (UN) is an international organisation that tries to resolve conflicts and create positive relationships between nations. Created by 51 countries, at the end of the war in 1945, the UN is now made up of 193 nations. Despite the UN's goal of global peace and security, two of its founding members, the US and the Soviet Union, quickly found themselves in another conflict with each other. This Cold War didn't involve actual fighting but was a period of **dispute** and tension that meant the possibility of a nuclear war became very real.



Society

In Britain, daily life changed completely as a result of the war. **Rationing** began in 1940 and didn't end until 1954. Major towns and cities had to be rebuilt after the German bombing raids. The post-war years saw the introduction of a free National Health Service (the NHS).



Main events

September 1945:
Second World War ended
October 1945:
United Nations formed
1947: Cold War began
1948: Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed



Vocabulary

Holocaust: the deliberate mass murder of Jews and political prisoners by the Nazis

legacies: things left behind from the past

declaration: official announcement

dispute: argument or disagreement

rationing: limiting the amount of food, water or fuel



Settlements



Beliefs



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