

Notes on World War 2

Build-up to the War

- ✚ **Germany** was suffering after the First World War. They lost the war so they had to pay compensations to those who won. This included land and money.
- ✚ **Germany** was made to sign **The Treaty of Versailles** after the war. This caused them to experience financial and social problems.
- ✚ **Adolf Hitler** was gathering attention as he promised to make Germany a great and powerful nation/country once again. The people wanted this.
- ✚ **Hitler** had an idea that Germany would be the best nation, to be “**the master race**”.
- ✚ He believed that to do this he would have to remove certain people from German society; **gypsies and Jewish** people.
- ✚ Hitler named his political party **The Nazi Party**.
- ✚ Hitler became Chancellor of Germany (like the Prime Minister/ Taoiseach) in 1933.
- ✚ He began to create laws that gave him even more power.
- ✚ Hitler set up the **SS or Gestapo** which were secret police force who acted as bodyguards for him and carried out orders for him.

Nuremburg Laws

- ✚ Hitler passed these laws to take away the human **rights** of Jewish people in Germany.
- ✚ They were forced to wear the **Star of David** (a Jewish symbol) on their clothing so they could be recognised as a Jew. This made their life in Germany much harder.



- ✚ Many were moved from their homes and forced to live in certain areas.
- ✚ Sadly, they began to move Jewish people to **concentration camps** or “death camps” as they were sometimes known.
- ✚ They built camps in **Poland** so people wouldn’t know exactly what was going on.
- ✚ While here, they would be worked to the bone, treated very harshly and often killed for simply being a Jew.
- ✚ By the end of the war over 12 million people were killed **including 6 million Jews**.
- ✚ The brutal killing of Jewish people during this time is known as the **Holocaust**.

The World Goes to War

- ✚ War in Europe began in **1939**. Germany invaded Poland (neighbouring countries).
- ✚ Two days later, **Britain and France** declared **war** on Germany. Stories of Hitler and Germany had caused huge concern for other countries in Europe so they took action.
- ✚ Hitler had taken a lot of Europe easily so he decided to continue and **invaded Russia** in the summer of **1941**. Russia was also known as the Soviet Union.
- ✚ What he hadn’t prepared for was how cold it would get in Russia when winter came. They were underprepared.
- ✚ The **Russian** army was known as “**The Red Army**.” They were led by another dangerous man with a lot of power; **Joseph Stalin**.
- ✚ In the meantime, Germany had created an **ally** (a partner in the war, they fought together). This ally was **Japan**.
- ✚ The United States joined in the World War after they had problems with Japan. Japan attacked **Pearl Harbour** in Hawaii and many were killed.
- ✚ Japan had conquered/taken control of most of South-East Asia. This was similar to what Germany were doing in Europe.
- ✚ In **1943** after two battles between Russia and Germany (Battle of Stalingrad was a famous one).The Russians began to win and push Germany back out.
- ✚ In 1944 we had **D-Day** where Britain and USA invaded France.
- ✚ **Germany** was being defeated by both sides of Europe and were forced to **surrender in May 1945**.
- ✚ In 1945 the USA dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, destroying the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. **Japan, shocked and surrendered** a few days later.

This is a table to make it clear the two sides that existed in World War Two. Other countries were involved but these are the main forces that went down in history for their involvement.

Allied Forces	Central Powers
USA- leader was Franklin Roosevelt Britain- leader was Winston Churchill France Russia(Soviet Union) – leader Joseph Stalin	Germany –leader was Adolf Hitler Japan Italy

The Home Front

- ✚ No one was safe in WW2 because attacks from the air became common.
- ✚ Air raids were very dangerous as lots of civilians died.
- ✚ Cities tried to evacuate all women and children to protect them. It didn't always work.
- ✚ People were asked to work hard on the "home front" so their country could spend their money and time winning the war.
- ✚ Women began to do jobs that they had never done before.
- ✚ About 20 million people died of starvation during WW2.

Ireland in the War

- ✚ In 1939 (start of the war), Ireland declared itself as "**neutral.**" They could not and would not take sides in any war.
- ✚ 70,000 Irish citizens plus 50,000 from Northern Ireland joined the British Army to fight in the war.
- ✚ 200,000 Irish people moved to Britain for work during the war. Many of those stayed.