

Cambridge
IGCSE®

Modern World History

Option B: The 20th century

CELEBRATE
in the best
of spirits
SEAGERS
GIN
100% PURE 100% PERFECT

DAILY SKETCH

No. 9,177 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1938 ONE PENNY

PEACE
SOUVENIR
ISSUE

WIRELESS: P. 19

PREMIER SAYS 'PEACE FOR OUR TIME'—P. 3

**Give Thanks In
Church
To-morrow**

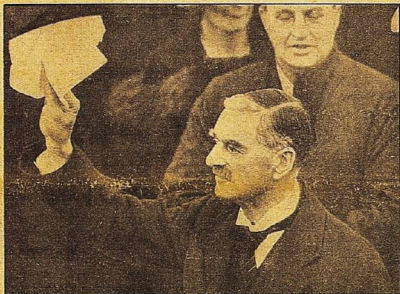
TO-MORROW is Peace
Sunday.

Hardly more than a few
hours ago it seemed as if it
would have been the first
Sunday of the most sense-
less and savage war in
history.

The "Daily Sketch" sug-
gests that the Nation
should attend church to-
morrow and give thanks.

THE fathers and mothers
who might have lost their
sons, the young people who
would have paid the cost of
war with their lives, the
children who have been spared
the horror of modern warfare
—let them all attend Divine
Service and kneel in humility
and thankfulness.

To-morrow should not be
allowed to pass without a
sincere and reverent recogni-
tion of its significance.



MR. CHAMBERLAIN shows the paper that repre-
sents his great triumph for European peace to
the thousands who gave him such a thunderous

welcome at Heston yesterday. It is the historic Anglo-
German Pact signed by himself and the Fuehrer,
Herr Hitler.

'Determined To Ensure Peace'

WHEN Mr. Chamberlain arrived at Heston
last night he said:

"This morning I had another talk with
the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler. Here is
a paper which bears his name as well as mine.
I would like to read it to you:

"We, the German Fuehrer and Chan-
cellor and the British Prime Minister, have
had a further meeting to-day and are agreed
in recognising that the question of Anglo-
German relations is of the first importance
for the two countries and for Europe.

"We regard the agreement signed last
night and the Anglo-German Naval Agree-
ment as symbolic of the desire of our two
peoples never to war with one another again.

"We are resolved that the method of
consultation shall be the method adopted to
deal with any other questions that may con-
cern our two countries and we are deter-
mined to continue our efforts to remove
possible sources of difference and thus to
contribute to the assurance of peace in
Europe."

3

Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?

FOCUS POINTS

- What were the long-term consequences of the peace treaties of 1919–23?
- What were the consequences of the failures of the League in the 1930s?
- How far was Hitler's foreign policy to blame for the outbreak of war in 1939?
- Was the policy of appeasement justified?
- How important was the Nazi–Soviet Pact?
- Why did Britain and France declare war on Germany in September 1939?

The image on the opposite page represents the most famous moment of Appeasement – the policy followed by Britain and France towards Hitler through the 1930s. The British Prime Minister has returned from a meeting with Hitler having agreed to give him parts of Czechoslovakia, in return for which Hitler promised peace.

If you know the story already then you will know that this agreement proved totally empty – 'not worth the paper it was written on' as they say! Hitler did not keep his word, and probably never meant to.

But just forget hindsight for a moment and try to join with the people of Britain welcoming back a leader who seemed to be doing his best to preserve a crumbling peace.

You can see from the newspaper there is a genuine desire to believe in the possibility of peace. Chamberlain had not given up on the possibility of peace; nor had the British people. They did not think that war was inevitable – even in 1938. They did all they could to avoid it.

In this chapter your task is to work out why, despite all the efforts of international leaders, and all the horrors of war, international peace finally collapsed in 1939.

Here are some of the factors you will consider. They are all relevant and they are all connected. Your task will be to examine each one, then see the connections and weigh the importance of these different factors.

1. Treaties after the First World War particularly the Treaty of Versailles	2. The failures of the League of Nations	3. The worldwide economic depression
4. The policy of Appeasement	5. The Nazi–Soviet pact	6. Hitler's actions and particularly his foreign policy

◀ Opposite is the front page of the *Daily Sketch*, 1 October 1938. Read it carefully and select one or two phrases which suggest or prove that:

- ♦ the British people thought Chamberlain was a hero
- ♦ the newspaper approves of Chamberlain
- ♦ people in Britain genuinely feared a war was imminent in 1938
- ♦ Hitler was respected
- ♦ Hitler could be trusted
- ♦ this agreement would bring lasting peace.

Hitler's war

Between 1918 and 1933 Adolf Hitler rose from being an obscure and demoralised member of the defeated German army to become the all-powerful Führer, dictator of Germany, with almost unlimited power and an overwhelming ambition to make Germany great once again. His is an astonishing story which you can read about in detail in Chapter 9. Here you will be concentrating on just one intriguing and controversial question: how far was Hitler responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War.

Hitler's plans

Hitler was never secretive about his plans for Germany. As early as 1924 he had laid out in his book *Mein Kampf* what he would do if the Nazis ever achieved power in Germany.

SOURCE 1

We demand equality of rights for the German people in its dealings with other nations, and abolition of the Peace Treaties of Versailles and St Germain.

From Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, 1923–24.

SOURCE 2

We turn our eyes towards the lands of the east . . . When we speak of new territory in Europe today, we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to her. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way for us here.

Colonisation of the eastern frontiers is of extreme importance. It will be the duty of Germany's foreign policy to provide large spaces for the nourishment and settlement of the growing population of Germany.

From Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Think!

It is 1933. Write a briefing paper for the British government on Hitler's plans for Germany. Use Sources 1–3 to help you.

Conclude with your own assessment on whether the government should be worried about Hitler and his plans.

In your conclusion, remember these facts about the British government:

- ◆ Britain is a leading member of the League of Nations and is supposed to uphold the Treaty of Versailles, by force if necessary.
- ◆ The British government does not trust the Communists and thinks that a strong Germany could help to stop the Communist threat.

Abolish the Treaty of Versailles!

Like many Germans, Hitler believed that the Treaty of Versailles was unjust.

He hated the Treaty and called the German leaders who had signed it 'The November Criminals'. The Treaty was a constant reminder to Germans of their defeat in the First World War and their humiliation by the Allies. Hitler promised that if he became leader of Germany he would reverse it (see Source 1).

By the time he came to power in Germany, some of the terms had already been changed. For example, Germany had stopped making reparations payments altogether. However, most points were still in place. The table on page 53 shows the terms of the Treaty that most angered Hitler.

Expand German territory!

The Treaty of Versailles had taken away territory from Germany. Hitler wanted to get that territory back. He wanted Germany to unite with Austria. He wanted German minorities in other countries such as Czechoslovakia to rejoin Germany. But he also wanted to carve out an empire in eastern Europe to give extra *Lebensraum* or 'living space' for Germans (see Source 2).

Defeat Communism!

A German empire carved out of the Soviet Union would also help Hitler in one of his other objectives – the defeat of Communism or Bolshevism. Hitler was anti-Communist. He believed that Bolsheviks had helped to bring about the defeat of Germany in the First World War. He also believed that the Bolsheviks wanted to take over Germany (see Source 3).

SOURCE 3

We must not forget that the Bolsheviks are blood-stained. That they overran a great state [Russia], and in a fury of massacre wiped out millions of their most intelligent fellow-countrymen and now for ten years have been conducting the most tyrannous regime of all time. We must not forget that many of them belong to a race which combines a rare mixture of bestial cruelty and vast skill in lies, and considers itself specially called now to gather the whole world under its bloody oppression.

The menace which Russia suffered under is one which perpetually hangs over Germany. Germany is the next great objective of Bolshevism. All our strength is needed to raise up our nation once more and rescue it from the embrace of the international python . . . The first essential is the expulsion of the Marxist poison from the body of our nation.

From Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Hitler's actions

This timeline shows how, between 1933 and 1939, Hitler turned his plans into actions.

DATE	ACTION
1933	Took Germany out of the League of Nations; began rearming Germany
1934	Tried to take over Austria but was prevented by Mussolini
1935	Held massive rearmament rally in Germany
1936	Reintroduced conscription in Germany; sent German troops into the Rhineland; made an anti-Communist alliance with Japan
1937	Tried out Germany's new weapons in the Spanish Civil War; made an anti-Communist alliance with Italy
1938	Took over Austria; took over the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia
1939	Invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia; invaded Poland; war

War

SOURCE 4

Any account of the origins and course of the Second World War must give Hitler the leading part. Without him a major war in the early 1940s between all the world's great powers was unthinkable.

British historian Professor Richard Overy, writing in 1996.

Other factors

When you see events leading up to the war laid out this way, it makes it seem as if Hitler planned it all step by step. In fact, this view of events was widely accepted by historians until the 1960s.

In the 1960s, however, the British historian AJP Taylor came up with a new interpretation. His view was that Hitler was a gambler rather than a planner. Hitler simply took the logical next step to see what he could get away with. He was bold. He kept his nerve. As other countries gave in to him and allowed him to get away with each gamble, so he became bolder and risked more. In Taylor's interpretation it is Britain, the Allies and the League of Nations who are to blame for letting Hitler get away with it – by not standing up to him. In this interpretation it is other factors that are as much to blame as Hitler himself:

- the worldwide economic depression
- the weaknesses of the post-war treaties
- the actions of the leading powers – Britain, France, the USA and the USSR.

As you examine Hitler's actions in more detail, you will see that both interpretations are possible. You can make up your own mind which you agree with.

Revision Tip

The details in this chart will be very useful for your exam. So add pictures and highlights to help you learn the information.

Think!

Hitler and the Treaty of Versailles

- 1 Draw up a table like this one to show some of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles that affected Germany.
- 2 As you work through this chapter, fill out the other columns of this 'Versailles chart'.

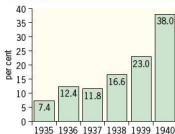
Terms of the Treaty of Versailles	What Hitler did and when	The reasons he gave for his action	The response from Britain and France
Germany's armed forces to be severely limited			
The Rhineland to be a demilitarised zone			
Germany forbidden to unite with Austria			
The Sudetenland taken into the new state of Czechoslovakia			
The Polish Corridor given to Poland			

SOURCE 5

I am convinced that Hitler does not want war . . . what the Germans are after is a strong army which will enable them to deal with Russia.

British politician Lord Lothian,
January 1935.

SOURCE 6



The proportion of German spending that went into armaments, 1935–40.

Source Analysis

How far do Sources 6 and 7 prove Source 5 to be wrong?

Rearmament

Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933. One of his first steps was to increase Germany's armed forces. Thousands of unemployed workers were drafted into the army. This helped him to reduce unemployment, which was one of the biggest problems he faced in Germany. But it also helped him to deliver on his promise to make Germany strong again and to challenge the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.




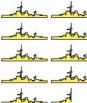
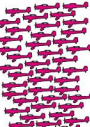

Hitler knew that German people supported rearmament. But he also knew it would cause alarm in other countries. He handled it cleverly. Rearmament began in secret at first. He made a great public display of his desire not to rearm Germany – that he was only doing it because other countries refused to disarm (see page 42). He then followed Japan's example and withdrew from the League of Nations.

In 1935 Hitler openly staged a massive military rally celebrating the German armed forces. In 1936 he even reintroduced conscription to the army. He was breaking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, but he guessed correctly that he would get away with rearmament. Many other countries were using rearmament as a way to fight unemployment. The collapse of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference in 1934 (see pages 42–43) had shown that other nations were not prepared to disarm.

Rearmament was a very popular move in Germany. It boosted Nazi support. Hitler also knew that Britain had some sympathy with Germany on this issue. Britain believed that the limits put on Germany's armed forces by the Treaty of Versailles were too tight. The permitted forces were not enough to defend Germany from attack. Britain also thought that a strong Germany would be a good buffer against Communism.

Britain had already helped to dismantle the Treaty by signing a naval agreement with Hitler in 1935, allowing Germany to increase its navy to up to 35 per cent of the size of the British navy. The French were angry with Britain about this, but there was little they could do. Through the rest of the 1930s Hitler ploughed more and more spending into armaments (see Sources 6 and 7).

SOURCE 7

	Warships	Aircraft	Soldiers
1932	 (30)	 (36)	 (100,000)
1939	 (95)	 (8,250)	 (950,000)

German armed forces in 1932 and 1939.

Think!

- Fill out the first row of your 'Versailles chart' on page 53 to summarise what Hitler did about rearmament.
- What factors allowed Hitler to get away with rearming Germany? Look for:
 - the impact of the Depression
 - the Treaty of Versailles
 - the League of Nations
 - the actions of Britain and France.

The Saar plebiscite

The Saar region of Germany had been run by the League of Nations since 1919 (see page 32).

In 1935 the League of Nations held the promised plebiscite for people to vote on whether their region should return to German rule. Hitler was initially wary as many of his opponents had fled to the Saar. The League, however, was determined that the vote should take place and Hitler bowed to this pressure. So it seemed that the League was being firm and decisive with Hitler. The vote was an overwhelming success for Hitler. His propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels mounted a massive campaign to persuade the people of the Saar to vote for the Reich. Around 90 per cent of the population voted to return to German rule. This was entirely legal and within the terms of the Treaty. It was also a real morale booster for Hitler. After the vote Hitler declared that he had 'no further territorial demands to make of France'.

SOURCE 8

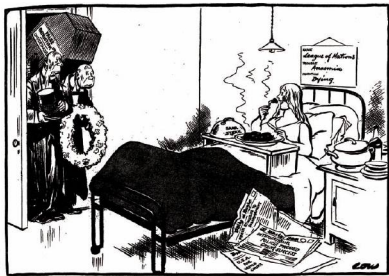


Following the plebiscite in 1935, people and police express their joy at returning to the German Reich by giving the Nazi salute.

Source Analysis

- 1 Explain in your own words what is happening in Source 8. For example, who are the people on horseback? Why are people saluting?
- 2 Do you trust Source 8 to be an accurate portrayal of the feelings of the people of the Saar in January 1935?
- 3 What is the message of the cartoon in Source 9? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge.

SOURCE 9



A British cartoon published in January 1935, soon after the Saar plebiscite. The figure in bed is the League of Nations.

SOURCE 10



The Rhineland.

SOURCE 11



An American cartoon entitled 'Ring-Around-the-Nazi!' published in March 1936 showing the encirclement of Germany by France and the USSR.

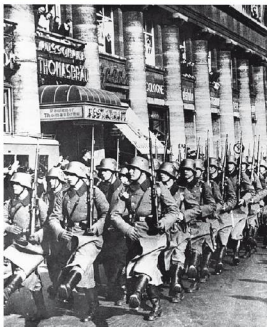
Remilitarisation of the Rhineland

In March 1936, Hitler took his first really big risk by moving troops into the Rhineland area of Germany. The Rhineland was the large area either side of the River Rhine that formed Germany's western border with France and Belgium.

The demilitarisation of the Rhineland was one of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It was designed to protect France from invasion from Germany. It had also been accepted by Germany in the Locarno Treaties of 1925. Hitler was taking a huge gamble. If he had been forced to withdraw, he would have faced humiliation and would have lost the support of the German army (many of the generals were unsure about him, anyway). Hitler knew the risks, but he had chosen the time and place well.

- **France** had just signed a treaty with the USSR to protect each other against attack from Germany (see Source 11). Hitler used the agreement to claim that Germany was under threat. He argued that in the face of such a threat he should be allowed to place troops on his own frontier.
- Hitler knew that many people in **Britain** felt that he had a right to station his troops in the Rhineland and he was fairly confident that Britain would not intervene. His gamble was over France. Would France let him get away with it?

SOURCE 12



German troops marching through the city of Cologne in March 1936. This style of marching with high steps was known as goose-stepping.

Think!

Fill out row 2 of your 'Versailles chart' on page 53 to summarise what happened in the Rhineland.

SOURCE 13

At that time we had no army worth mentioning . . . If the French had taken any action we would have been easily defeated; our resistance would have been over in a few days. And the Air Force we had then was ridiculous – a few Junkers 52s from Lufthansa and not even enough bombs for them . . .

Hitler looks back on his gamble over the Rhineland some years after the event.

SOURCE 14

Hitler has got away with it. France is not marching. No wonder the faces of Göring and Blomberg [Nazi leaders] were all smiles.

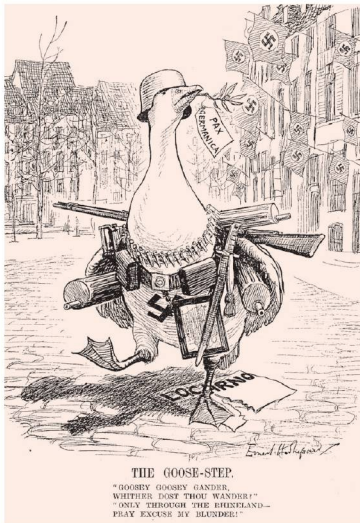
Oh, the stupidity (or is it the paralysis?) of the French. I learnt today that the German troops had orders to beat a hasty retreat if the French army opposed them in any way.

Written by William Shirer in 1936. He was an American journalist in Germany during the 1930s. He was a critic of the Nazi regime and had to flee from Germany in 1940.

As the troops moved into the Rhineland, Hitler and his generals sweated nervously. They had orders to pull out if the French acted against them. Despite the rearmament programme, Germany's army was no match for the French army. It lacked essential equipment and air support. In the end, however, Hitler's luck held.

The attention of the League of Nations was on the Abyssinian crisis which was happening at exactly the same time (see pages 44–47). The League condemned Hitler's action but had no power to do anything else. Even the French, who were most directly threatened by the move, were divided over what to do. They were about to hold an election and none of the French leaders was prepared to take responsibility for plunging France into a war. Of course, they did not know how weak the German army was. In the end, France refused to act without British support and so Hitler's big gamble paid off. Maybe next time he would risk more!

SOURCE 15



A British cartoon about the reoccupation of the Rhineland, 1936. Pax Germanica is Latin and means 'Peace, German style'.

Source Analysis

- 1 Does Source 11 prove that Hitler was correct when he argued that Germany was under threat? Explain your answer.
- 2 What do Sources 13 and 14 disagree about? Why might they disagree about it?
- 3 Why has the cartoonist in Source 15 shown Germany as a goose?
- 4 Look at the equipment being carried by the goose. What does this tell you about how the cartoonist saw the new Germany?
- 5 Would you regard reoccupation of the Rhineland as a success for Hitler or as a failure for the French and the British? Explain your answer by referring to the sources.

Source Analysis ▼

1 What can we learn from Source 16 about:

- ◆ What happened at Guernica?
- ◆ The views of French people on Guernica?
- ◆ The views of the magazine which published the photograph and caption?

2 Use your thinking in Question 1 to write an answer to the question:

How useful is Source 16 to a historian studying the Spanish Civil War?

SOURCE 16



A postcard published in France to mark the bombing of Guernica in 1937. The text reads 'The Basque people murdered by German planes. Guernica martyred 26 April 1937'.

Focus Task

What were the consequences of the failure of the League in the 1930s?

In Chapter 2 you studied the failures of the League of Nations in the 1930s. You are now in a position to evaluate the impact of those failures on Hitler's actions.

- 1 Look back over pages 54–58. Look for evidence that the weakness of the League of Nations in the 1930s allowed Hitler to achieve what he did.
- 2 Write a paragraph describing the effect of each of the following on Hitler's actions:
 - ◆ the Manchurian crisis
 - ◆ the failure of disarmament
 - ◆ the Abyssinian crisis.

The Spanish Civil War

In 1936 a civil war broke out in Spain between supporters of the Republican government and right-wing rebels under General Franco. A civil war in a European state would have been an important event anyway, but this one became extremely significant because it gained an international dimension.

Stalin's USSR's supported the Republican government (in the form of weapons, aircraft and pilots). Thousands of volunteers from around 50 countries joined International Brigades to support the Republicans. At the same time, Hitler and Mussolini declared their support for General Franco. He seemed to be a man who shared their world view.

The governments of Britain and France refused to intervene directly although France did provide some weapons for the Republicans. Germany and Italy also agreed not to intervene but then blatantly did so. Mussolini sent thousands of Italian troops, although officially they were 'volunteers'. Germany sent aircraft and pilots who took part in most of the major campaigns of the war. They helped transport Franco's forces from North Africa to Spain. Later they took part in bombing raids on civilian populations in Spanish cities (see Source 16 for example). Thanks partly to Hitler's help the Nationalists won the war and a right-wing dictatorship ruled Spain for the next 36 years.

The conflict had important consequences for peace in Europe. It gave combat experience to German and Italian forces. It strengthened the bonds between Mussolini and Hitler. Historian Zara Steiner argues that Britain's non-intervention in Spain convinced Hitler that he could form an alliance with Britain or persuade them (and France) to remain neutral in a future war. At the same time the devastating impact of modern weapons convinced Chamberlain and many others that war had to be avoided at all costs. Thus, the Spanish Civil War further encouraged Hitler in his main plan to reverse the Treaty of Versailles. At the same time, the USSR became increasingly suspicious of Britain and France because of their reluctance to get involved in opposing fascism.

Militarism and the Axis

When he wrote his memoirs in later years Winston Churchill described the 1930s as a 'Gathering Storm'. Many shared his gloomy view. Hitler and Mussolini had shown that their armed forces were effective and that they were ready to use them. Mussolini had triumphed in Abyssinia and was aggressively trying to assert his authority in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

Meanwhile in the east Japan was under the control of hardline nationalist commanders such as General Tojo. They also had the support of business leaders in Japan. They wanted to extend Japan's empire across Asia so it could compete with other world powers, particularly the United States. In 1937 the Japanese took their next big step with the invasion of China. Some historians regard this as the first campaign of the Second World War.

Hitler and Mussolini saw that they had much in common with the military dictatorship in Japan. In 1936, Germany and Japan signed an Anti-Comintern Pact, to oppose Communism. Comintern was the USSR's organisation for spreading Communism to other countries. In 1937, Italy also signed it. The new alliance was called the Axis alliance.

Think!

Complete row 3 of your 'Versailles chart' on page 53, summarising what Hitler did about Austria.

Source Analysis ▼

Work in pairs. Take either Source 17 or Source 18.

1 For your source work out:

- which character in the cartoon represents Mussolini and which Hitler
- what your cartoon suggests about the relationship between Hitler and Mussolini
- what is the cartoonist's opinion of the *Anschluss*. Find details in the source to support your view.

2 Compare your answers with your partner's and discuss any points of agreement or disagreement.

3 Write your own paragraph in answer to this question: How far do Sources 17 and 18 agree about the *Anschluss*?

Anschluss with Austria, 1938

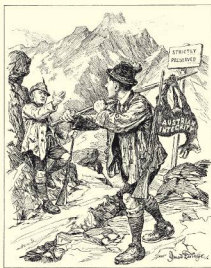
With the successes of 1936 and 1937 to boost him, Hitler turned his attention to his homeland of Austria. The Austrian people were mainly German, and in *Mein Kampf* Hitler had made it clear that he felt that the two states belonged together as one German nation. Many in Austria supported the idea of union with Germany, since their country was so economically weak. Hitler was confident that he could bring them together into a 'greater Germany'. In fact, he had tried to take over Austria in 1934, but on that occasion Mussolini had stopped him. Four years later, in 1938, the situation was different. Hitler and Mussolini were now allies.

There was a strong Nazi Party in Austria. Hitler encouraged the Nazis to stir up trouble for the government. They staged demonstrations calling for union with Germany. They caused riots. Hitler then told the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg that only *Anschluss* (political union) could sort out these problems. He pressurised Schuschnigg to agree to *Anschluss*. Schuschnigg appealed for some kind of gesture of support such as threatening sanctions against Hitler or issuing a strong statement. France and Britain failed to provide this support so Schuschnigg felt he had no option but to call a plebiscite (a referendum), to see what the Austrian people wanted. Hitler was not prepared to risk this — he might lose! He simply sent his troops into Austria in March 1938, supposedly to guarantee a trouble-free plebiscite. Under the watchful eye of the Nazi troops, 99.75 per cent voted for *Anschluss*.

Anschluss was completed without any military confrontation with France and Britain. Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, felt that Austrians and Germans had a right to be united and that the Treaty of Versailles was wrong to separate them. Britain's Lord Halifax had even suggested to Hitler before the *Anschluss* that Britain would not resist Germany uniting with Austria.

Once again, Hitler's risky but decisive action had reaped a rich reward — Austria's soldiers, weapons and its rich deposits of gold and iron ore were added to Germany's increasingly strong army and industry. Hitler was breaking yet another condition of the Treaty of Versailles, but the pattern was becoming clear. The Treaty itself was seen as suspect. Britain and France were not prepared to go to war to defend a flawed treaty.

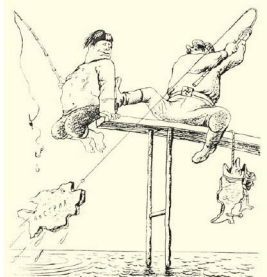
SOURCE 17



GOOD HUNTING
Mussolini: "All right, Adolf - I never heard a rifle."

A British cartoon commenting on the *Anschluss*.

SOURCE 18



A Soviet cartoon commenting on the *Anschluss* showing Hitler catching Austria.

Trusting Hitler

British arms

Make a stand!

Fear of Communism

The USA

The Soviet Union

Memories of the Great War

The British empire



Hitler's allies



German arms

The Treaty of Versailles

Economic problems

Focus Task

Why did Britain and France follow a policy of Appeasement?

The cards on page 60 show various arguments that were advanced for or against Appeasement. Study the cards, then:

- Sort them into arguments for and arguments against Appeasement. If there are any you are not sure about leave them aside as you can come back to them.
- On each card write a 'for' or 'against'.
- Sort the cards into those that:
 - would have been obvious to British and French leaders at the time
 - would only be clear with hindsight.
- Make notes under the following headings to summarise why Britain followed a policy of appeasement:
 - military reasons
 - economic reasons
 - fear
 - public opinion
- Use your notes to write a short paragraph to explain in your own words why the British government followed a policy of Appeasement.

Think!

Most people in Britain supported the policy of Appeasement. Write a letter to the London *Evening Standard* justifying Appeasement and pointing out why the cartoonist is wrong.

Your letter should be written in either 1936 or 1938 and it will need to be different according to which source you pick. You can use some of the arguments from the Focus Task on page 53 in your letter.

Revision Tip

Make sure you can explain:

- what Appeasement was
- two examples of Appeasement in action.

Be sure you can describe:

- one reason why Chamberlain followed the policy of Appeasement
- one reason why people criticised the policy.

One of the most famous critics was David Low, cartoonist with the popular newspaper the London *Evening Standard*. You have seen many of Low's cartoons in this book already. Low was a fierce critic of Hitler, but also criticised the policy of Appeasement. Source 19 shows one of his cartoons on the issue, but if you visit the British Cartoon Archive web site you can see all of Low's cartoons.

SOURCE 19



A cartoon by David Low from the London *Evening Standard*, 1936. This was a popular newspaper with a large readership in Britain.

Source Analysis

Fill out a table like this to analyse Source 19. On page 64, fill out a second column to analyse Source 27 in the same way.

	Source 19	Source 27
Date published		
Critical or supportive?		
Of what/whom?		
How can we tell?		
Why was the cartoon published at this time?		

The Sudetenland, 1938

After the Austrian *Anschluss*, Hitler was beginning to feel that he could not put a foot wrong. But his growing confidence was putting the peace of Europe in increasing danger.

SOURCE 20



Central Europe after the *Anschluss*.

SOURCE 21

I give you my word of honour that Czechoslovakia has nothing to fear from the Reich.

Hitler speaking to Chamberlain in 1938.

Czech fears

Unlike the leaders of Britain and France, Edvard Beneš, the leader of Czechoslovakia, was horrified by the *Anschluss*. He realised that Czechoslovakia would be the next country on Hitler's list for takeover. It seemed that Britain and France were not prepared to stand up to Hitler. Beneš sought guarantees from the British and French that they would honour their commitment to defend Czechoslovakia if Hitler invaded. The French were bound by a treaty and reluctantly said they would. The British felt bound to support the French. However, Chamberlain asked Hitler whether he had designs on Czechoslovakia and was reassured by Hitler's promise (Source 21).

Hitler's threats

Despite what he said to Chamberlain, Hitler did have designs on Czechoslovakia. This new state, created by the Treaty of Versailles, included a large number of Germans – former subjects of Austria-Hungary's empire – in the Sudetenland area. Henlein, who was the leader of the Nazis in the Sudetenland, stirred up trouble among the Sudetenland Germans and they demanded to be part of Germany. In May 1938, Hitler made it clear that he intended to fight Czechoslovakia if necessary. Historians disagree as to whether Hitler really meant what he said. There is considerable evidence that the German army was not at all ready for war. Even so the news put Europe on full war alert.

Preparations for war

Unlike Austria, Czechoslovakia would be no walk-over for Hitler. Britain, France and the USSR had all promised to support Czechoslovakia if it came to war. The Czechs themselves had a modern army. The Czechoslovak leader, Beneš, was prepared to fight. He knew that without the Sudetenland and its forts, railways and industries, Czechoslovakia would be defenceless.

All through the summer the tension rose in Europe. If there was a war, people expected that it would bring heavy bombing of civilians as had happened in the Spanish Civil War, and in cities around Britain councils began digging air-raid shelters. Magazines carried advertisements for air-raid protection and gas masks.

Think!

Write a series of newspaper headlines for different stages of the Sudetenland crisis, for example:

- ♦ March 1938
- ♦ May 1938
- ♦ early September 1938
- ♦ 30 September 1938.

Include headlines for:

- ♦ a Czech newspaper
- ♦ a British newspaper
- ♦ a German newspaper.

SOURCE 22

How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing. I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul.

From a radio broadcast by Neville Chamberlain, September 1938.

Profile

Neville Chamberlain



- Born 1869.
- He was the son of the famous radical politician Joseph Chamberlain.
- He was a successful businessman in the Midlands before entering politics.
- During the First World War he served in the Cabinet as Director General of National Service. During this time he saw the full horrors of war.
- After the war he was Health Minister and then Chancellor. He was noted for his careful work and his attention to detail. However, he was not good at listening to advice.
- He was part of the government throughout the 1920s and supported the policy of Appeasement towards Hitler. He became Prime Minister in 1937, although he had little experience of foreign affairs.
- He believed that Germany had real grievances – this was the basis for his policy of Appeasement.
- He became a national hero after the Munich Conference of 1938 averted war.
- In 1940 Chamberlain resigned as Prime Minister and Winston Churchill took over.

SOURCE 23



Digging air raid defences in London, September 1938.

Crisis talks

In September the problem reached crisis point. In a last-ditch effort to avert war, Chamberlain flew to meet Hitler on 15 September. The meeting appeared to go well. Hitler moderated his demands, saying he was only interested in parts of the Sudetenland – and then only if a plebiscite showed that the Sudeten Germans wanted to join Germany. Chamberlain thought this was reasonable. He felt it was yet another of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles that needed to be addressed. Chamberlain seemed convinced that, if Hitler got what he wanted, he would at last be satisfied.

On 19 September the French and the British put to the Czechs their plans to give Hitler the parts of the Sudetenland that he wanted. However, three days later at a second meeting, Hitler increased his demands. He said he 'regretted' that the previously arranged terms were not enough. He wanted all the Sudetenland.

SOURCE 24

The Sudetenland is the last problem that must be solved and it will be solved. It is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe.

The aims of our foreign policy are not unlimited . . . They are grounded on the determination to save the German people alone . . . Ten million Germans found themselves beyond the frontiers of the Reich . . . Germans who wished to return to the Reich as their homeland.

Hitler speaking in Berlin, September 1938.

To justify his demands, he claimed that the Czech government was mistreating the Germans in the Sudetenland and that he intended to 'rescue' them by 1 October. Chamberlain told Hitler that his demands were unreasonable. The British navy was mobilised. War seemed imminent.

The Munich Agreement

With Mussolini's help, a final meeting was held in Munich on 29 September. While Europe held its breath, the leaders of Britain, Germany, France and Italy decided on the fate of Czechoslovakia.

On 29 September they decided to give Hitler what he wanted. They announced that Czechoslovakia was to lose the Sudetenland. They did not consult the Czechs, nor did they consult the USSR. This is known as the Munich Agreement. The following morning Chamberlain and Hitler published a joint declaration (Source 26) which Chamberlain said would bring 'peace for our time'.

SOURCE 25

People of Britain, your children are safe. Your husbands and your sons will not march to war. Peace is a victory for all mankind. If we must have a victor, let us choose Chamberlain, for the Prime Minister's conquests are mighty and enduring – millions of happy homes and hearts relieved of their burden.

The *Daily Express* comments on the Munich Agreement, 30 September 1938.

SOURCE 26

We regard the Agreement signed last night . . . as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again. We are resolved that we shall use consultation to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to assure the peace of Europe.

The joint declaration of Chamberlain and Hitler, 30 September 1938.

SOURCE 28

By repeatedly surrendering to force, Chamberlain has encouraged aggression . . . our central contention, therefore, is that Mr Chamberlain's policy has throughout been based on a fatal misunderstanding of the psychology of dictatorship.

The *Yorkshire Post*, December 1938.

Consequences

Hitler had gambled that the British would not risk war. He spoke of the Munich Agreement as 'an undreamt-of triumph, so great that you can scarcely imagine it'. The prize of the Sudetenland had been given to him without a shot being fired. On 1 October German troops marched into the Sudetenland. At the same time, Hungary and Poland helped themselves to Czech territory where Hungarians and Poles were living.

The Czechs had been betrayed. Beneš resigned. But the rest of Europe breathed a sigh of relief. Chamberlain received a hero's welcome back in Britain, when he returned with the 'piece of paper' – the Agreement – signed by Hitler (see Profile, page 63).

SOURCE 27



A GREAT MEDIATOR

John Bull, 'I've known many Prime Ministers in my time, but never one who worked so hard for peace as the first of such modern ones.'

A British cartoon published in 1938 at the time of the Munich Agreement.

John Bull represents Britain. You can find many more cartoons about the Agreement at the British Cartoon Archive website.

SOURCE 29

We have suffered a total defeat . . . I think you will find that in a period of time Czechoslovakia will be engulfed in the Nazi regime. We have passed an awful milestone in our history. This is only the beginning of the reckoning.

Winston Churchill speaking in October 1938. He felt that Britain should resist the demands of Hitler. However, he was an isolated figure in the 1930s.

Source Analysis

- Study Sources 25–29. Sort them into the categories:
 - those that support the Munich Agreement
 - those that criticise the Munich Agreement.
- List the reasons why each source supports or criticises the agreement.
- Imagine you are a teacher setting a test.
 - Which of Sources 25–29 would work well for an 'Are you surprised?' question?
 - Which of Sources 25–29 would work well for a 'How useful is this source?' question?

Explain your answers.

Triumph or sell-out?

What do you think of the Munich Agreement? Was it a good move or a poor one? Most people in Britain were relieved that it had averted war, but many were now openly questioning the whole policy of Appeasement. Even the public relief may have been overstated. Opinion polls in September 1938 show that the British people did not think Appeasement would stop Hitler. It simply delayed a war, rather than preventing it. Even while Chamberlain was signing the Munich Agreement, he was approving a massive increase in arms spending in preparation for war.

Think!

Complete row 4 of your 'Versailles chart' on page 53.

The end of Appeasement

Czechoslovakia, 1939

Although the British people welcomed the Munich Agreement, they did not trust Hitler. In an opinion poll in October 1938, 93 per cent said they did not believe him when he said he had no more territorial ambitions in Europe. In March 1939 they were proved right. On 15 March, with Czechoslovakia in chaos, German troops took over the rest of the country.

SOURCE 30



The take-over of Czechoslovakia by 1939.

SOURCE 31



German troops entering Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, in March 1939.

Think!

- 1 Choose five words to describe the attitude of the crowd in Source 31.
- 2 Why do you think that there was no resistance from the Czechs?
- 3 Why do you think Britain and France did nothing in response to the invasion?

There was no resistance from the Czechs. Nor did Britain and France do anything about the situation. However, it was now clear that Hitler could not be trusted. For Chamberlain it was a step too far. Unlike the Sudeten Germans, the Czechs were not separated from their homeland by the Treaty of Versailles. This was an invasion. If Hitler continued unchecked, his next target was likely to be Poland. Britain and France told Hitler that if he invaded Poland they would declare war on Germany. The policy of Appeasement was ended. However, after years of Appeasement, Hitler did not actually believe that Britain and France would risk war by resisting him.

The Nazi–Soviet Pact, 1939

Look at your ‘Versailles chart’ from page 53. You should have only one item left. As Hitler was gradually retaking land lost at Versailles, you can see from Source 31 that logically his next target was the strip of former German land in Poland known as the Polish Corridor. He had convinced himself that Britain and France would not risk war over this, but he was less sure about Stalin and the USSR. Let’s see why.

Stalin’s fears

Stalin had been very worried about the German threat to the Soviet Union ever since Hitler came to power in 1933. Hitler had openly stated his interest in conquering Russian land. He had denounced Communism and imprisoned and killed Communists in Germany. Even so, Stalin could not reach any kind of lasting agreement with Britain and France in the 1930s. From Stalin’s point of view, it was not for want of trying. In 1934 he had joined the League of Nations, hoping the League would guarantee his security against the threat from Germany. However, all he saw at the League was its powerlessness when Mussolini successfully invaded Abyssinia, and when both Mussolini and Hitler intervened in the Spanish Civil War. Politicians in Britain and France had not resisted German rearmament in the 1930s. Indeed, some in Britain seemed even to welcome a stronger Germany as a force to fight Communism, which they saw as a bigger threat to British interests than Hitler.

Stalin’s fears and suspicions grew in the mid 1930s.

- He signed a treaty with France in 1935 that said that France would help the USSR if Germany invaded the Soviet Union. But Stalin was not sure he could trust the French to stick to it, particularly when they failed even to stop Hitler moving his troops into the Rhineland, which was right on their own border.
- The Munich Agreement in 1938 increased Stalin’s concerns. He was not consulted about it. Stalin concluded from the agreement that France and Britain were powerless to stop Hitler or, even worse, that they were happy for Hitler to take over eastern Europe and then the USSR.

SOURCE 32



A Soviet cartoon from 1939. СССР is Russian for USSR. The French and the British are directing Hitler away from western Europe and towards the USSR.

Stalin’s negotiations

Despite his misgivings, Stalin was still prepared to talk with Britain and France about an alliance against Hitler. The three countries met in March 1939, but Chamberlain was reluctant to commit Britain. From Stalin’s point of view, France and Britain then made things worse by giving Poland a guarantee that they would defend it if it was invaded. Chamberlain meant the guarantee as a warning to Hitler. Stalin saw it as support for one of the USSR’s potential enemies.

Negotiations between Britain, France and the USSR continued through the spring and summer of 1939. However, Stalin also received visits from the Nazi foreign minister Ribbentrop. They discussed a rather different deal, a Nazi–Soviet Pact.

Stalin’s decision

In August, Stalin made his decision. On 24 August 1939, Hitler and Stalin, the two arch enemies, signed the Nazi–Soviet Pact and announced the terms to the world. They agreed not to attack one another. Privately, they also agreed to divide Poland between them.

Source Analysis

- 1 What do Sources 32 and 33 agree about?
- 2 Which source do you most trust to tell you about the reasons Stalin signed the Pact?

SOURCE 33

It will be asked how it was possible that the Soviet government signed a non-aggression pact with so deceitful a nation, with such criminals as Hitler and Ribbentrop . . . We secured peace for our country for eighteen months, which enabled us to make military preparations.

Stalin, in a speech in 1941.

Why did Stalin sign the Pact?

It was clear what Hitler gained from the Pact. He regarded it as his greatest achievement. It gave him half of Poland and ensured he would not face a war on two fronts if he invaded Poland. He had promised the Russians they could have the rest of Poland as well as the Baltic states but he never intended to allow Stalin to keep these territories.

It is also clear what Stalin gained from it. It gave him some territory that had once been part of Russia, but that was not the main point. The real benefit was time! Stalin did not expect Hitler to keep his word. He knew he was Hitler's number one target. But he did not trust Britain and France either. He did not think they were strong enough or reliable enough as allies against Hitler. He expected to have to fight Hitler alone at some point. So it was important to get his forces ready. So what he most needed was time to build up his forces to protect the USSR from the attack he knew would come.

Consequences

The Pact cleared the way for Hitler to invade Poland. On 1 September 1939 the Germany army invaded Poland from the west, where they met little resistance. Britain and France demanded he withdraw from Poland or they would declare war. After the experience of the past three years Hitler was certain Britain and France would not actually do anything about this. If he was planning ahead at all, then in his mind the next move would surely be an attack against his temporary ally, the USSR. However Hitler was in for a surprise. Britain and France kept their pledge. On 2 September they declared war on Germany.

Focus Task A

How important was the Nazi-Soviet Pact?

These statements suggest different reasons why the Nazi-Soviet Pact is important.

A. It showed that 'internationalism' had been completely abandoned.	B. It freed Hitler from the problem of a two-front war, which helped him to conquer Poland and most of Western Europe in 1939-40.	C. It exposed Britain and France's hope that Nazi Germany and the USSR would fight each other rather than them.
D. It showed that Britain feared Stalin's USSR as much as Hitler's Germany.	E. It gave Stalin time to build up forces for future war with Germany.	F. It gave Hitler the confidence to defy Britain and France and attack Poland.

- 1 In groups decide which statements fit best under each of these headings

The Nazi Soviet Pact was important because...	
...it demonstrated important aspects of international relations at this time.	...it had direct military and political consequences.

- 2 Now take one comment from each column and explain:

- a) how the Nazi-Soviet Pact led to this consequence
- b) whether this would have happened anyway, even without the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

Focus Task B

What were the long-term consequences of the peace treaties of 1919-23?

- 1 You have been filling out your Versailles chart. Now fill out the final row about what Hitler did about Poland.
- 2 'Germany's bitterness about the Treaty of Versailles was the cause of Hitler's aggressive foreign policy.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer carefully.

Focus Task

Was the policy of Appeasement justified?

The right policy at the right time.

The wrong policy, but only with hindsight.

A betrayal of the people of Czechoslovakia.

A risky policy that purchased valuable time.

- 1 Work in pairs or groups. Collect evidence from pages 60–69 to support each of the above views.
- 2 Choose one viewpoint that you most agree with and write some well-argued paragraphs to explain your choice:
 - a) what the viewpoint means – in your own words
 - b) what evidence there is to support it
 - c) what evidence there is against it and why you have rejected that evidence
 - d) your conclusion as to why this is a good verdict.

Think!

- 1 What is Source 34 trying to say about the policy of Appeasement?
- 2 Make a list of the reasons why Appeasement has generally been seen in negative terms.
- 3 Churchill once remarked to President Roosevelt 'History will judge us kindly because I shall write the history'. Read Source 35. How should this affect our viewpoints on Appeasement?

SOURCE 35

The Gathering Storm has been one of the most influential books of our time. It is no exaggeration to claim that it has strongly influenced the behaviour of Western politicians from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush.

... It is a good tale, told by a master story-teller, who did, after all, win the Nobel prize for literature; but would a prize for fiction have been more appropriate?

Professor John Charmley of the University of East Angles writing about Churchill's account of the 1930s called *The Gathering Storm*.

Was Appeasement justified?

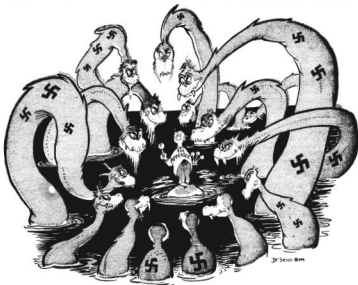
Chamberlain certainly believed in Appeasement. In June 1938 he wrote in a letter to his sister: 'I am completely convinced that the course I am taking is right and therefore cannot be influenced by the attacks of my critics.' He was not a coward or a weakling. When it became obvious that he had no choice but to declare war in 1939 he did.

On page 60 you studied the main reasons Chamberlain followed this policy and the reasons why people opposed him. However, remember that Chamberlain was not alone. There were many more politicians who supported him in 1938 than opposed him. It looked pretty clear to them in 1938 that the balance fell in favour of Appeasement.

Yet when Hitler broke his promises and the policy did not stop war, the supporters of Appeasement quickly turned against the policy, some claiming that they had been opposed all along. Appeasers were portrayed as naïve, foolish or weak – Source 34 is one of hundreds of examples which parody the policy and the people who pursued it. Historians since then and popular opinion too have judged Chamberlain very harshly. Chamberlain's 'Peace for our time' speech is presented as self-deception and a betrayal. Chamberlain and his cabinet are seen as 'second-rate politicians' who were out of their depth as events unfolded before them. On the other hand the opponents of Appeasement such as Winston Churchill are portrayed as realists who were far-sighted and brave.

SOURCE 34

'Remember . . . One More Lollypop. and Then You All Go Home!'



A cartoon by the American artist Dr Seuss published on 13 August 1941 (before the USA entered the Second World War).

It really has been a very one-sided debate. Yet this debate matters because the failure of Appeasement to stop Hitler has had a profound influence on British and American foreign policy ever since. It is now seen as the 'right thing' to stand up to dictators. You will find an example of this in Chapter 7 when you study the Gulf War. This is a lesson that people have learned from history. One of the reasons why people study history is to avoid making the same mistakes from the past but before we leap so quickly to judgement on this issue, let's run this argument through two different checks.

SOURCE 36

So how did my pre-emptive strategy stand up to a computer stress test? Not as well as I had hoped, I have to confess. The *Calm & the Storm* made it clear that lining up an anti-German coalition in 1938 might have been harder than I'd assumed. To my horror, the French turned down the alliance I proposed to them. It also turned out that, when I did go to war with Germany, my own position was pretty weak. The nadir [low point] was a successful German invasion of England, a scenario my book rules out as militarily too risky.

Professor Niall Ferguson in an article for the *New York Magazine*, 16 October 2006.

Think!

Study graphs A–C in Source 37.

- What evidence do they provide to support the view that Britain's armed forces caught up with Germany's between 1938 and 1939?
- What evidence do they provide to oppose this view?

Check 1: If Chamberlain had stood up to Hitler in 1938 what would have happened?

The historian Professor Niall Ferguson of Harvard University has set out some 'counter-factual' scenarios – suggesting what might have happened if particular policies were followed. In particular, he has argued that confronting Hitler in 1938 instead of appeasing him 'would have paid handsome dividends. Even if it had come to war over Czechoslovakia, Germany would not have won. Germany's defences were not yet ready for a two-front war.'

Professor Ferguson then had the chance to test his scenario by playing a computer game! *The Calm & the Storm* is a powerful simulation which allows users to make decisions and then computes the possible impact of those decisions. You can read his conclusions in Source 36.

Professor Ferguson believes that using computer simulations could help leaders of the future make key decisions in times of crisis. Maybe you don't trust a computer game to teach you anything about history? But you might trust some hard statistics. So try check 2.

Check 2: Did Appeasement buy time for Chamberlain to rearm Britain?

One of the strongest arguments for Appeasement was that in 1938 Britain simply was not equipped to fight a war with Germany. So did Appeasement allow Britain to catch up?

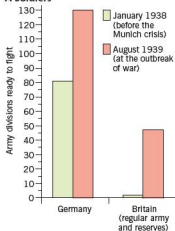
In the 1960s British historian AJP Taylor argued that Chamberlain had an exaggerated view of Germany's strength. Taylor believed that German forces were only 45 per cent of what British intelligence reports said they were.

But Taylor was writing in 1965 – not much help to Chamberlain in the 1930s. Britain had run down its forces in the peaceful years of the 1920s. The government had talked about rearmament since 1935 but Britain only really started rearming when Chamberlain became Prime Minister in 1937. Chamberlain certainly thought that Britain's armed forces were not ready for war in 1938. His own military advisers and his intelligence services told him this.

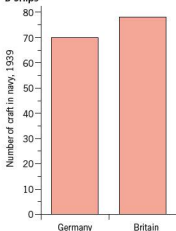
So did Appeasement allow Britain the time it needed to rearm? Source 37 will help you to decide.

SOURCE 37

A Soldiers

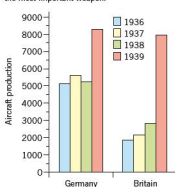


B Ships



C Aircraft

In the 1930s, aircraft were generally seen as the most important weapon.



The armaments build-up in the 1930s.

Focus Task

Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?

You have covered a lot of material in the last two chapters. In this task you are going to make sure that you have the important events and developments clear in your mind.

- 1 Work in groups of six. Each take a blank sheet of paper and write a heading like the ones on the right. On your sheet summarise the ways in which this factor helped to bring about the war.
- 2 Now come back together as a group and write your own summary of how the war broke out. You can use this structure, but set yourself a word limit of 75 words per paragraph, less if you can.

1 Treaties after the First World War particularly the Treaty of Versailles

2 The failures of the League of Nations

3 The worldwide economic Depression

4 The policy of Appeasement

5 The Nazi-Soviet Pact

6 Hitler's actions and particularly his foreign policy

Paragraph 1:

(This is the place to explain how resentment against the Versailles Treaty brought Hitler to power in the first place and guided his actions in the 1930s.)

Paragraph 2:

(Here you should explain how the failure of the League encouraged Hitler and made him think he could achieve his aims.)

Paragraph 3:

(Here you should explain how the Depression was an underlying cause of the failure of the League, Japan's aggression and Hitler's rise to power.)

Paragraph 4:

(Here you should briefly describe what Appeasement was, and how instead of stopping Hitler it encouraged him. You could also point out the links between Appeasement and the Depression.)

Paragraph 5:

(Here you should explain how the Nazi-Soviet Pact led to the invasion of Poland and how that in turn led to war. You could also point out that these short-term factors probably could not have happened if there had not been a policy of Appeasement.)

Paragraph 6:

(Here you should comment on Hitler's overall responsibility. How far do you agree that Hitler wanted war, planned for it, and if so does that mean he caused the war?)

Paragraph 7:

(Here you should indicate which factor(s) you think were most important. This is where you should bring in any of the factors you discussed in stage 5 of the Focus Task.)

There were important long-term factors which help to explain why war broke out in 1939. One factor was the Versailles Treaty. It was important because ...

The failure of the League of Nations in the 1930s also contributed towards the outbreak of war. This was because ...

Economic factors also played an important role. The worldwide economic Depression ...

Another factor which helps to explain the outbreak of war was the policy of Appeasement. Appeasement ...

There were also key short-term factors which actually sparked off the war. One of these was ...

Some people describe the Second World War as Hitler's war. I think this is a GOOD/POOR description because ...

All of these factors played important roles. However, [INSERT YOUR CHOICE OF FACTOR(S)] was / were particularly important because ...

Chapter Review Focus Task

Reaching a judgement

Almost there! In the last task you wrote a clear explanation of the various reasons why peace collapsed by 1939. Unfortunately, this is not enough! You also need to be able to compare the importance of these reasons (or factors) and see the links between them. For example, if you were asked this question:

'The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 was more important than the policy of appeasement in causing the Second World War.'
How far do you agree with this statement?

what would you say? Most students find it hard to explain what they think and end up **giving information about each factor** (describing events) rather than **making a judgement and supporting it**. This review task helps you to overcome this problem.

Factor 1: The Treaty of Versailles

- ♦ **Critical?** Versailles and the other Treaties created a situation in Europe which made war inevitable. It was only a matter of time before Germany tried to seek revenge, overturn the Treaty and start another war. Many commentators felt at the time that it was only a question of when war might come not **whether** it would.
- ♦ **Important?** The Treaties contributed to the tensions of the time but they did not create them. Politicians in the 1930s could have defended the treaties or changed them. It was political choices in the 1930s which caused war not the treaties.

Factor 3: The worldwide economic Depression

- ♦ **Critical?** The Depression critically weakened the League of Nations. It destroyed the spirit of international cooperation which had built up in the 1920s and set countries against each other. Without the Depression leading to these problems there could not have been a war.
- ♦ **Important?** The Depression was certainly important – it made Japan and Italy invade Manchuria and Abyssinia. It brought Hitler to power in Germany and started German rearmament. However it is linked to all the other factors – it did not cause the war in itself. Even with the Depression Hitler could have been stopped if Britain and France had had the will to resist him. The Depression did not make war inevitable.

Factor 5: The Nazi-Soviet Pact

- ♦ **Critical?** Although Hitler thought that Britain and France would not fight him he was not sure about the Soviet Union. So the Soviet Union was the only country that stood in the way of his plans. Without the Nazi-Soviet Pact Hitler would not have taken the gamble to invade Poland and war would never have begun.
- ♦ **Important?** The Pact allowed Hitler to invade Poland, but war was already inevitable before that – due to Hitler's actions and his hatred of Communism. Hitler had made clear his plans to take land from the USSR. Plus which it was the policy of Appeasement that drove Stalin to sign the Pact because he thought he could not rely on the support of Britain or France to oppose Hitler.

Stage 1: Understand and evaluate each factor

There are six major factors. The cards analyse why each one might be seen as:

- ♦ a **critical** factor (i.e. the war probably would not have happened without it) or just
 - ♦ one of several **important** factors (i.e. the war could still possibly have happened without it).
- a) Read the cards carefully to make sure you understand the arguments.
 - b) For each of the 'killer sources' 1-6 (on page 72) decide whether this supports the argument that this factor was critical or just one of several important factors.

Factor 2: The failure of the League of Nations

- ♦ **Critical?** The League of Nations' job was to make sure that disputes were sorted out legally. In the 1920s it created a spirit of cooperation. But, in Manchuria 1931 and Abyssinia 1935-36 the League completely failed to stand up to aggression by Japan and Italy. This encouraged Hitler's aggression from 1936 onwards since he believed no one would try to stop him.
- ♦ **Important?** The League never really fulfilled the role of peacekeeper – even in the 1920s it gave in to Italy over Corfu. The failure of the League in the 1930s was important because it encouraged Hitler but even if the League had been stronger Hitler would still have tried to overturn the Treaty of Versailles and to destroy Communism.

Factor 4: The policy of Appeasement

- ♦ **Critical?** Appeasement was critical because it made Hitler think he could get away with anything. Britain and France could have stopped Hitler in 1936 when he marched troops into the Rhineland but their nerve failed. From this point on Hitler felt he could not lose and took gamble after gamble. As a result of appeasement he did not even believe Britain would fight him when he invaded Poland in 1939.
- ♦ **Important?** The policy of Appeasement only came about because, without the USA, the League of Nations, and its leading members, Britain and France, were not strong enough to keep peace. The Depression so weakened Britain and France that they did not have the money to oppose Hitler. The policy of appeasement would not have been followed without these other factors.

Factor 6: Hitler's actions

- ♦ **Critical?** There could have been no war without Hitler. It was Hitler's vision of Lebensraum, his hatred of Communism and his determination to reverse the Versailles settlement which led to war. He consciously built up Germany's army and weapons with the intention of taking it to war. At each stage of the road to war from 1936 to 1939 it was Hitler's beliefs or actions or decisions that caused the problem.
- ♦ **Important?** Hitler was the gambler. He only did what he could get away with. So without the weakness of the League of Nations, or the reluctance of Britain, France, or the Soviet Union to stand up to him; without the flawed Treaties; without the economic problems of the 1930s Hitler would not have got anywhere. He would have been forced to follow a more peaceful foreign policy and there would have been no war.

Stage 2: Investigate connections between factors

From Stage 1 it should be clear to you that these factors are connected to each other. Let's investigate these connections.

- Make six simple cards with just the factor heading.
- Display your cards on a large sheet of paper and draw lines connecting them together. Some links are already mentioned on the cards on page 71 but you may be able to think of many more.
- Write an explanation along each link. For example between 'the policy of Appeasement' and 'The Nazi-Soviet Pact' you might write:
'The policy of Appeasement helped cause the Nazi-Soviet Pact. It alarmed Stalin so that he felt he had to make his own deal with Hitler thinking that France and Britain would just give him whatever he wanted.'
- Take a photo of your finished chart.

Stage 3: Rank the factors

Which of these factors is most important? In Stage 2 you will already have started to draw your own conclusions about this. It will be really helpful when you come to answering questions about relative importance if you have already decided what you think! Remember there is no right answer to which is most important but whatever your view you must be able to support it with key points and with evidence. So:

- Take your cards and put them in a rank order of importance.
- To justify your order, in the space between each card you need to be able to complete this sentence:
'X was more important than Y because...'

Stage 4: Compare two factors

Back to the question we started with:

'The Nazi Soviet Pact of 1939 was more important than the policy of Appeasement in causing the Second World War.' How far do you agree with this statement?

With all the thinking that you have done you should have already made up your mind on what you think, but to help you structure and support your argument you could complete a chart like this. NB if you can include the killer source in your written answer all the better.

	Reasons more important	Reasons less important
Policy of Appeasement		
Nazi-Soviet Pact		

Killer sources and quotations**SOURCE 1**

When war came in 1939, it was a result of twenty years of decisions taken or not taken, not of arrangements made in 1919.

Historian Margaret Macmillan writing in 2001

SOURCE 2

The failure of the World Disarmament Conference not only crushed the hopes of many supporters of the League of Nations and the disarmament movements but also strengthened the ranks of those who opted for appeasement or some form of pacifism. Pressures for collective action gave way to policies of self-defence, neutrality and isolation. Against such a background, the balance of power shifted steadily away from the status quo nations in the direction of those who favoured its destruction. The reconstruction of the 1920s was not inevitably doomed to collapse by the start of the 1930s. Rather, the demise of the Weimar Republic and the triumph of Hitler proved the motor force of destructive systemic change.

Historian Zara Steiner writing in 2011

SOURCE 3

If new accounts by historians show that statesmen were able to use the League to ease tensions and win time in the 1920s, no such case appears possible for the 1930s. Indeed, the League's processes may have played a role in that deterioration. Diplomacy requires leaders who can speak for their states; it requires secrecy; and it requires the ability to make credible threats. The Covenant's security arrangements met none of those criteria.

Historian Susan Pedersen writing in 2007

SOURCE 4

We turn our eyes towards the lands of the east . . .

When we speak of new territory in Europe today, we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to her. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way for us here. Colonisation of the eastern frontiers is of extreme importance. It will be the duty of Germany's foreign policy to provide large spaces for the nourishment and settlement of the growing population of Germany.

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1923

SOURCE 5

The vindictiveness of British and French peace terms helped to pave the way for Nazism in Germany and a renewal of hostilities. World War 2 resulted from the very silly and humiliating punitive peace imposed on Germany after World War I.

Historian George Kennan writing in 1984

SOURCE 6

By repeatedly surrendering to force, Chamberlain has encouraged aggression... our central contention, therefore, is that Mr Chamberlain's policy has throughout been based on a fatal misunderstanding of the psychology of dictatorship.

The Yorkshire Post, December 1938.

SOURCE 7

The effects of the depression encouraged not only the emergence of authoritarian and interventionist governments but led to the shattering of the global financial system. Most European states followed 'beggary-neighbour' tactics. Germany, Hungary, and most of the East European states embarked on defensive economic policies – often at cost to their neighbours.

Historian Zara Steiner writing in 2011

Exam Practice

See pages 168–175 and pages 316–319 for advice on the different types of questions you might face.

- 1 (a) What was the policy of Appeasement? [4]
(b) What was the significance of the Munich Agreement of 1938? [6]
(c) 'Appeasement was a wise policy that delayed war until Britain was ready.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Keywords

Make sure you know what these terms mean and are able to define them confidently.

Essential

- ◆ Anschluss
- ◆ Anti-Comintern Pact
- ◆ Appeasement
- ◆ Bolshevism
- ◆ Communism
- ◆ Lebensraum
- ◆ Mein Kampf
- ◆ Rearmament
- ◆ Remilitarisation
- ◆ Spanish Civil War
- ◆ Sudetenland
- ◆ The Munich Agreement
- ◆ The Nazi–Soviet Pact
- ◆ The Polish Corridor

Useful

- ◆ Conscripted
- ◆ Mobilised
- ◆ Radical
- ◆ 'The November Criminals'

Chapter Summary

The collapse of international peace

- 1 The late 1920s had been a time of hope for international relations with a series of agreements that seemed to make the world a more peaceful place with countries co-operating and trading with each other.
- 2 The Great Depression of the 1930s led to political turmoil in many countries and the rise of the dictators such as Hitler in Germany. Hitler formed alliances with other right-wing regimes in Italy and Japan.
- 3 Germany was still unhappy about its treatment under the Treaty of Versailles and Hitler set out to challenge the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, first of all by rearming Germany (secretly from 1933, then publicly from 1935).
- 4 He also challenged the Treaty, for example by sending troops into the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland in 1936.
- 5 The League of Nations and Britain and France did not try to stop Hitler doing these things. This policy was called Appeasement – giving Hitler what he wanted in the hope he would not ask for more.
- 6 The most famous act of Appeasement was over the Sudetenland – an area of Czechoslovakia that Hitler wanted to take over.
- 7 In the Munich Agreement (October 1938) Britain and France let Hitler have the Sudetenland as long as he did not try to take over the rest of Czechoslovakia. When Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia in early 1939 it marked the end of the policy of Appeasement and they told Hitler that any further expansion would lead to war.
- 8 Although Hitler was very anti-Communist and saw Stalin and the USSR as his enemy he signed a Pact with Stalin in 1939 to not attack each other but to divide Poland between them.
- 9 When Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939 Britain declared war on Germany.
- 10 Hitler's foreign policy played a major role in causing the Second World War but historians argue that there were other very important factors that contributed as well, particularly the economic Depression, the failures of the League of Nations and the unfairness of the post-First World War peace treaties.