Causes of World War II
Political and economic conditions in Europe following World War I led to the rise of fascism and to World War II.
The rise of fascism and its dictators threatened peace in Europe and Asia.
As conflict grew in Europe and Asia, American foreign policy evolved from neutrality to direct involvement.
Causes of World War II
Political instability and economic devastation in Europe resulting from WWI caused...
1. Worldwide depression...
2. High war debt owed by Germany...
3. High inflation...
4. Massive unemployment
Rise of Fascism
What is “Fascism”? Fascism is a political philosophy in which total power is given to a dictator and individual freedoms are denied.
During the 1930s, nations led by fascist dictators were trying to expand power and territory.
1. Germany

Adolf Hitler
came to power in 1933 and formed the Third Reich and the Nazi party.
Adolf Hitler

- **Promised** to return Germany to its former glory
- **Regain territory** lost after WWI
- **Rebuilt** military (*violated* treaty of Versailles)
- **Blamed Jews** for defeat in WWI (*he also blamed the Bolsheviks*)
- 1936 – signed treaty with Mussolini from Italy forming “**Berlin-Rome Axis**” Japan joined Axis power in 1940
2. Italy - Benito Mussolini
...seized power of Italy, banned all opposing political parties and invaded Ethiopia (1935) and conquered Albania (1939)
3. Japan – Hirohito
...the military, led by his general Hideki Tojo, took control of Japan
First, Japan invaded Manchuria and China...
…and it also invaded French Indochina – another region rich in resources
These **dictators** led the countries that became known as the **Axis Powers**
The Allies
Democratic nations – US, Great Britain and Canada (as well as Russia) were known as the Allies
...The **Soviet Union** joined the Allies after being invaded by Germany
Allied leaders included...
...Franklin D. **Roosevelt** and later Harry S. **Truman** of the United States...
...Winston Churchill of Great Britain...
...and Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union
In his quest for power, Hitler tried to unite Germanic people in all of Europe by taking land from other countries.

Britain and France tried to appease Hitler by allowing some land to be taken, but warned him not to take more.
‘Remember... One More Lollypop, and Then You All Go Home!’
War Beings (con’t)

• When Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. *Thus began WWII!*

• Germany continued to invade and take lands including a large part of France.

• Germany tried to take Britain in 1940, but Britain’s Royal Air Force held them back.
HITLER OPENS WAR
BOMBS POLISH CITIES
BRITAIN, FRANCE MOBILIZE
AS POLAND CALLS FOR AID

Italy Again Proposes Five-Power Mediation In Nazi-Polish Dispute

Roosevelt In Plead Against Horrors

Reich Annexes Danzig; Attacks Polish Border; Blames Warsaw Army

France Calls All Men To Colors

Scratches At Naragansett

BULLETINS

Dickinson Urges Speech on Marshal

Poland Attacked By Land And Air
A Neutral United States
American isolationism still felt from WWI and the Great Depression
• In 1935, Congress passed the first “Neutrality Act.” It did not allow the US to sell weapons to warring nations.

• Isolationists hoped that laws such as this one would keep the country out of war in Europe.
The U.S. began to give **economic** aid to the Allies...
Lend-Lease Program

- In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act and FDR got permission to lend or lease weapons.

- This program allowed sales of weapons or loans to “any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the U.S.”
The US now had direct involvement in the war. The US helped by tracking German subs and escorting British ships. In 1941, Germans sank a US destroyer – undeclared war.
A Day That Will Live in Infamy
Rising tensions developed between the U.S. and Japan...
...because of Japanese aggression in the Pacific. The US stopped exporting sales and gas in Japan, then seized all Japanese property in the US.
On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. at **Pearl Harbor** in Hawaii without warning...
...and approximately 2,400 Americans died
President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan.
December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt – Dec. 08, 1941
Congress declared war on Japan on December 08, 1941.

America enters the war [history.com video](http://history.com/video)
Germany declared war on the United States