

World War II

Lesson 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. During the 1930s, totalitarian governments rose to power in Europe and Japan.
2. German expansion led to the start of World War II in Europe in 1939.
3. The United States joined the war after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Key Terms and People

totalitarianism political system in which the government controls every aspect of citizens' lives

Benito Mussolini fascist Italian dictator who ruled from 1922 to 1943

fascism political system in which the government is seen as more important than individuals

Adolf Hitler politician and World War I veteran who took advantage of public anger to become chancellor of Germany in 1933

Nazis National Socialist Party members; controlled Germany from 1933 to 1945

Joseph Stalin Communist dictator of the Soviet Union who gained control in 1928

Axis powers World War II alliance of Germany, Italy, and Japan

appeasement policy of avoiding war by giving in to demands

Winston Churchill British prime minister during World War II

Allied powers alliance between Great Britain and France in 1939, and later, the Soviet Union and the United States

Lend-Lease Act law allowing the president to aid any nation vital to U.S. defense

Pearl Harbor U.S. naval base in Hawaii attacked by Japan on December 7, 1941

Lesson Summary

THE RISE OF TOTALITARIANISM

The 1930s were hard times. Many people were willing to give up rights to leaders who promised them a better future. In Europe and Asia, some countries moved toward **totalitarianism**.

Why did totalitarian leaders gain support in Europe and Asia after World War I?

Lesson 1, *continued*

Benito Mussolini took control of Italy in 1922. Under **fascism**, Mussolini restored order and improved the economy.

In Germany **Adolf Hitler** used anger over World War I to gain power. His **Nazis** took control in 1933.

Joseph Stalin became dictator of the Soviet Union in 1929. Stalin ruled by fear and scare tactics. He killed or jailed millions.

In Japan military leaders slowly took over the government. Then in 1931 Japan invaded northern China.

GERMANY EXPANDS

Hitler rebuilt the military in Germany. His goal was to start a new empire. In 1936 Germany joined Italy and Japan to form the **Axis powers**. Hitler took over part of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Although Britain and France were allied with Czechoslovakia, they chose **appeasement**. But British admiral Winston Churchill warned that the policy would fail.

In 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union made a secret pact to split Poland between them. Germany attacked Poland and won, starting World War II. The **Allied powers** declared war on Germany.

In 1940 Germany conquered much of Europe, including France. Britain stood alone. With new radar technology, the British Royal Air Force was able to stop an invasion of Britain.

What countries were included in the Axis powers?

Underline the name of the new technology that helped the British prevent a German invasion.

THE UNITED STATES JOINS THE WAR

Most Americans wanted to stay out of the war in Europe. In 1941 the **Lend-Lease Act** was passed to allow the president to aid any nation vital to U.S. defense. The United States began sending supplies to Britain and other Allied countries.

Lesson 1, *continued*

The United States also decided to act against Japanese imperialism. This angered Japan. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the naval fleet at **Pearl Harbor** in Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan. Then Germany declared war on the United States. The United States joined the Allies, entering another world war.

Why did the United States enter World War II?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Make Judgments Explain why you believe that the United States should or should not have helped the Allies through the Lend-Lease Act.

Adolf Hitler	Axis powers	Joseph Stalin	Pearl Harbor
Allied powers	Benito Mussolini	Lend-Lease Act	Winston Churchill
appeasement	fascism	Nazis	

DIRECTIONS Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. Who maintained control of the Soviet Union by killing or jailing millions?

2. What alliance fought Britain and the United States in World War II?

3. Who used anger over what happened after World War I to gain power in Germany?

Lesson 1, *continued*

4. What law provided aid to nations vital to the defense of the United States before the United States had entered the war?

5. Under what political system is the government seen as more important than individuals?
