

Curriculum Overview

In this unit, pupils will explore the causes, events, and impact of World War II, developing both their historical knowledge and skills. They will investigate why the war began, learning about the political and social conditions that led to conflict, and will examine the key powers, including the Allies and the Axis. Pupils will study life during the war on the home front, including rationing, evacuees, and the role of women, understanding how ordinary people adapted to wartime conditions. They will explore the experiences of those affected by The Blitz, considering how communities coped with bombing and disruption. Pupils will also analyse propaganda and consider how it influenced public opinion and morale.

Key Historical Skills

- Asking and answering historical questions.
- Using primary and secondary sources (letters, posters, photos).
- Identifying causes, consequences, and significance.
- Making connections between events, people, and ideas.
- Presenting findings in discussions, writing, or projects.

The Blitz

The Blitz was part of Germany's wider strategy of Blitzkrieg, or "lightning war," which used fast-moving tanks, planes, and infantry to quickly overwhelm enemies. From September 1940 to May 1941, German planes bombed British cities like London, Coventry, and Liverpool to destroy industry and weaken morale. Despite heavy destruction and civilian casualties, the Blitz failed to break British resistance, and the country remained determined to fight.



Key Vocabulary

- **Allies** – Countries that fought against the Axis powers, including the UK, USA, USSR, and France.
- **Axis** – Countries that fought against the Allies, including Germany, Italy, and Japan.
- **Blitz** – The German bombing campaign against British cities, especially London, during WWII.
- **Home Front** – Life in Britain during the war, including how civilians lived and worked.
- **Rationing** – Controlling and limiting the amount of food and goods people could buy.
- **Evacuees** – Children sent away from cities to the countryside to keep them safe from bombing.
- **Propaganda** – Posters, leaflets, films, and other media used to influence people's opinions or encourage support for the war.
- **Air raid** – An attack by enemy aircraft dropping bombs.
- **Civil Defence** – Efforts to protect civilians, such as air raid shelters, fire watching, and first aid.
- **Victory** – The successful end of the war for the Allies.
- **Conscription** – The process of compulsory enlistment in the armed forces.
- **Evacuation** – The organized movement of people from dangerous areas to safer ones.
- **Occupation** – When enemy forces control a country or area.
- **Treaty of Versailles** – The peace agreement after World War I that affected events leading to WWII.
- **Invasion** – When one country attacks and enters another country by force.

Why Did World War 2 Begin?

The war began in 1939 when Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war in response, marking the start of their involvement. The conflict was caused by Germany's desire to expand territory, overturn the Treaty of Versailles, and spread Nazi ideology.

WHY THE WAR BEGAN

TREATY OF VERSAILLES



The Treaty of Versailles unfairly punished Germany

RISE OF HITLER



Hitler became dictator and wanted to build a great German Empire

INVASION OF POLAND



Germany invaded Poland in 1939, starting the war