



Auckland College Knowledge Organiser – World War II



This unit of work will teach pupils all about **World War II**.

The pupils will learn when and why World War II began and find out about the key individuals and countries involved. In addition to this, they will:

- discover all about evacuation
- learn what it was like to live with food rationing and explore the contribution made by women to the war effort
- learn important facts about the Holocaust and investigate events that were key turning points in the war, such as the Battle of Britain and the German invasion of Russia.

Studying World War II will help pupils to develop their investigation and evaluation skills; learn to organise information chronologically and understand how past events have helped to shape the world we know today.

Key Vocabulary

Allies	The United Kingdom, France and Poland, later joined by other countries, including the USSR (Soviet Union), the United States of America and China.
Axis	The Axis Powers were originally Germany, Japan and Italy. Other countries joined them later.
Nazi party	A German political party with racist and anti-Jewish ideas, led by Adolf Hitler
atomic bomb	A very high-energy bomb made of radioactive material
annex	To take another country's land and make it part of your country
Czechoslovakia	A European country. Now two countries: the Czech Republic and Slovakia
propaganda	Information designed to promote a political idea or opinion
active service	Taking part in a military operation as part of the armed forces

World War II lasted for six years. It began on the 3rd September 1939 and ended on 2nd September 1945.

Over fifty million people were killed during World War II, which affected almost every country in the world.

The events of World War II have shaped the world we know today and will continue to impact on our future for a long time to come.





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Key Events

1939	1 st September	German troops invade Poland.
	3 rd September	Britain and France declare war on Germany.
1940	10 th May	The Battle of France begins.
	26 th May	Allied forces are evacuated from Dunkirk in France.
	10 th July	The Battle of Britain begins.
	7 th September	The Blitz begins.
1941	22 nd June	Germany invades the USSR (Soviet Union).
	7 th December	Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in the US.
1943	16 th and 17 th May	The Dambusters bombing raid is carried out.
1944	6 th June	The D-Day landings.
1945	7 th May	Germany surrenders to the Allies .
	6 th and 9 th August	The US drops atomic bombs on two cities in Japan.



Neville Chamberlain was the British prime minister at the time and he announced to Britain that they were at war with Germany on 3rd September, 1939.



Adolf Hitler was the Führer Leader of Nazi Germany.

He had plans to invade and occupy as many countries as he could to gain Lebensraum, claimed as German land for German people.

In 1938-1939 Hitler's troops had already annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia living space.

Britain and France had promised to protect Poland if it was also invaded, so when Hitler refused to withdraw the troops that had marched into the country on 1st September 1939, Britain and France reacted.

Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939.



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Hitler's Troops Invade Poland

This event, which happened on the **1st September, 1939**, sparked the beginning of World War II. Britain and France had promised to help Poland if Germany attacked them, so when Hitler refused to withdraw his troops, Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939.



The Battle of France

This event began on the **10th May, 1940**, after what seemed to many people, a slow start to the war on the Western Front. Germany's troops blazed through France and other West European countries using their blitzkrieg (lightning war) technique. Within six weeks, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were captured.



The Battle of Britain

This event began on the **10th July, 1940** when British ships in the English Channel were bombed by the German Luftwaffe. Mass bombing of airfields, harbours, radar stations and aircraft factories began in August 1940.



The Blitz

This event began on the **7th September, 1940** when the Luftwaffe turned their attention to the bombing of London and other cities, rather than the military targets they had previously focused on. London was bombed for fifty-seven consecutive nights and suffered extensive damage and the loss of thousands of civilian lives.



The Evacuation at Dunkirk

This event (code-named Operation Dynamo) began on the **26th May, 1940**. After sustaining a massive defeat against the Nazis in France, the Allies were forced to retreat to the beaches of Dunkirk. They were rescued by hundreds of small, wooden boats and then transferred to larger ships to sail across the channel to Dover.



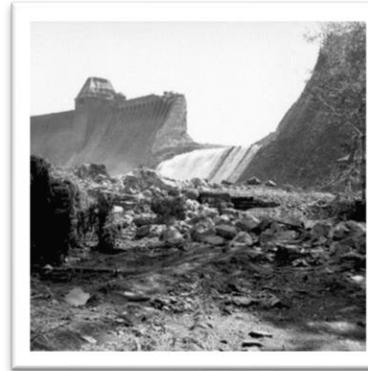
The German Invasion of Russia

This event, which was named Operation Barbarossa, began on the **22nd June, 1941**. At the beginning of the war, Hitler had signed a non-aggression pact with the Russian leader, Stalin. When Hitler broke this agreement and invaded Russia, Russia became one of the Allies and began to fight back against Germany.



Japan bombs Pearl Harbour in Hawaii

This event took place on the **7th December, 1941** when Japan bombed a US Naval base. Until this point, the US had opted to remain neutral in the war but this event prompted them to declare war on Japan the next day. On the 11th December, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.



The Dambusters Raid

This event, called Operation Chastise, took place on the 16th and **17th May, 1943**. Specially developed 'bouncing bombs' were dropped by Lancaster bomber planes on three German dams. This caused disruption to the manufacture of German war products and affected infrastructure in the area.



D – Day: The Normandy Landings

The term D-Day refers to a specific date for a planned operation: in this case the Allied attack on the beaches of Normandy, which took place on the **6th June, 1944** and was code-named 'Operation Neptune'. The Normandy landings were the first stage of 'Operation Overlord', which aimed (and eventually succeeded) to drive the Germans out of France. This was fully achieved on the 30th August, 1944.



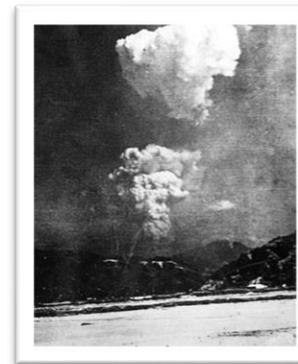
The Battle of the Bulge

This event, whose official name was The Ardennes Offensive, began on the **16th December, 1944**. It was an attempt by Hitler to try and split up the Allies and stop them advancing on Germany. After some initial success, lack of fuel and retaliation by the Allied air force soon halted the offensive.



The VE Day

VE Day stands for 'Victory in Europe Day'. Following the suicide of Hitler on 30th April, 1945, Germany surrendered to the West on the 7th May, 1945. **8th May 1945**, was the date the Allies celebrated the defeat of Nazi Germany (VE Day). VE Day is celebrated on the 8th May each year.



The USA drops Atomic Bombs on Japan

Although the war in Europe had come to an end, fighting continued in the Pacific. In an attempt to end the war as quickly as possible, the American president, Harry Truman, sanctioned the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities: Hiroshima on the 6th August, 1945 and Nagasaki on the 9th August, 1945. On the 14th August, 1945, Japan surrendered to the West. The moral debate as to whether the use of such a weapon was justified, still rages on today.





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Evacuation

Mostly children were evacuated but other evacuees included mothers with very young children, pregnant women, disabled people, teachers and helpers to look after the children.

Evacuation happened in distinct waves with the first wave of evacuations beginning on the 1st September, 1939, which was two days before Britain officially declared war on Germany. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain in June 1940 and at the start of the Blitz in September 1940.

On evacuation day, children travelled with their teacher or helper by train to their destination. All children had to wear an identity label and take their gas mask, ration book, identity card and food for the journey. Many children also took a suitcase containing clothes and personal items.

When they reached their destination, billeting officers were responsible for arranging for children to stay with host families. For many children this involved being selected out a line by their host. This was an upsetting experience for some children who felt unwanted or rejected.

At the start of the war, to many people in Britain, it seemed that not much was happening. As a result, some parents decided to bring their children home again. Some children were evacuated overseas and lived with host families in places as far away as Australia and Canada.



Allies and Axis Power

At the start of World War II, the Allies were the United Kingdom, France and Poland. These nations had made a pact to stand together against Hitler and the Axis Powers.

The Allies were soon joined by the British Commonwealth (South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and then the Soviet Union, the United States of America and China. Other Allies included British India, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia. In 1942, the Allies were officially named as the United Nations.

The Axis Powers were Germany, Japan and Italy, who made a pact to stand together in opposition to the Allies.

World War II Evacuation



During World War II, many people were evacuated from the cities to the countryside where it was believed they would be safer from bombing.