The violence of World War I was only a prelude to greater violence to come as improvements in technology made more deadly weapons possible. In this chapter, you will learn how the prosperity of the 1920s was followed by the Great Depression and the rise of totalitarian dictators in Europe. These dictators deliberately launched World War II, the greatest explosion of violence the world has ever seen, in an attempt to establish global domination. The war was fought on four oceans and three continents. As many as 70 million people lost their lives in the horrendous conflict before the dictators were finally defeated. World War II resulted in the atomic bomb, the United Nations, and the end of imperialism in Africa and Asia.


**Essential Questions**

- What were the major causes of the Great Depression?
- What factors allowed the rise of totalitarian dictators like Mussolini and Hitler?
- What were the main causes of World War II?
- How were the allies able to defeat the dictators and win the war?

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**Important Ideas**

A. The world experienced a short recession immediately following World War I. The later 1920s were generally a period of global prosperity.

B. Overproduction and speculation led to the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. The interrelationship of loans and debts helped the depression spread from the U.S. to Europe and then to the rest of the world.

C. Fascism was a political ideology that developed after World War I. Started in Italy by Benito Mussolini, fascists believed in extreme nationalism, glorified violence, opposed socialism and democracy, and encouraged blind obedience to a strong leader who expressed the national will. In Germany, Adolf Hitler became leader of a fascist party known as the Nazis. Hitler was strongly anti-Semitic and blamed Jews for Germany’s defeat in World War I.

D. Mussolini came to power in Italy in 1922, where he created a totalitarian state. In Germany, millions of workers lost their jobs in the Great Depression. Members of the middle classes, working classes and farmers turned to the Nazi Party. In 1933, Germany’s leaders appointed Adolf Hitler as Chancellor. Blaming Communists for starting the Reichstag fire, he took on emergency powers.

E. Hitler and Mussolini pursued an aggressive foreign policy aimed at expansion. Italy invaded Ethiopia. Hitler annexed Austria and part of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France yielded to Hitler’s demands in the policy of appeasement. In September 1939, Hitler attacked Poland, starting World War II.

F. Germany introduced a new form of rapid warfare — the blitzkrieg — using tanks, aircraft, and trucks. Nazi Germany quickly conquered all of Western Europe except Britain. Winston Churchill of Britain refused to surrender. In 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Later that year Germany’s ally, Japan, led by Hideki Tojo, attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

G. The Soviets stopped the Nazi advance at Stalingrad. In 1944, Britain and the United States landed troops in Normandy. In 1945, Germany surrendered.

H. Japan surrendered in August 1945, after the United States dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I. The war brought untold devastation. World leaders founded the United Nations in 1945 in a new effort to promote world peace.
Social Studies Terminology in This Chapter

- Totalitarianism
- Joseph Stalin
- Great Depression
- Fascism
- Benito Mussolini
- Weimar Republic
- Adolf Hitler
- Nazi Party
- Gestapo
- Appeasement
- Blitzkrieg
- Allied / Axis Powers
- Normandy Landing
- Holocaust
- Nuremberg Trials
- Hideki Tojo
- Pearl Harbor
- Winston Churchill
- Albert Einstein
- Atomic Bomb
- United Nations

The World in Prosperity and Depression

Europe in 1919 differed in many significant ways from before the World War I. The former imperial governments of Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Turkey were gone. New states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Baltic states had emerged. Russia was in the midst of a civil war.

Reconstruction and Prosperity

The first years after the war were not easy ones. Peoples in Central Europe suffered from famine caused by a wartime blockade of foodstuffs. Returning soldiers faced unemployment. A major flu epidemic in 1919 killed as many people as the war itself. Farms, cities, and railroad lines had been torn up in the fighting. Europeans spent the next five years rebuilding and recovering from the war. Based on the Treaty of Versailles, Germans had to make huge reparations payments for the war to France and Britain, slowing German economic recovery. Germany printed extra money to pay the debt, triggering hyper-inflation. Workers were known to collect their wages in suitcases, then spending them immediately.

The United States emerged from the war as the world’s greatest economic power. During the war, Britain and France had purchased war goods from the United States on credit. Now they were deeply in debt. Americans faced a brief recession when the war ended, but American consumers soon began buying mass-produced goods made in American factories. One of the most important factors promoting American prosperity was the invention of the automobile. Cars first came into widespread use in the United States and Europe after the war. When Ford produced its 10th million Model T in 1924, nine out of every ten cars in the entire world were Fords.

The Ford Model T put the entire world on “wheels.”
Consumers in both America and Europe also benefited from new electric appliances like the vacuum cleaner, refrigerator, and toaster. They went to the movies and listened to the radio for the first time. Americans invested some of their wealth overseas, especially in Germany. American prosperity spread to Europe by the late 1920s. As Europeans began once again buying goods from their colonies, prosperity spread further to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The 1920s also saw the expression of new values, partly as an outcome of the war. Women had worked in place of men during the war, and now received the right to vote in the United States, Great Britain, and other countries. They enjoyed greater freedom than ever before. More women also pursued a higher education.

Fragile new democracies were also emerging in the 1920s, like the Weimar Republic in Germany. Socialist Parties came to power in several countries for the very first time.

**THE GREAT DEPRESSION**

In 1929, the bubble burst. A stock market crash in New York started a chain reaction that sent the world economy into the Great Depression. A depression is an economic downturn in which large numbers of businesses fail and workers are unemployed.

The prices of stocks started falling and nothing could hold them up, as people scrambled to sell. People who lost money in the stock market stopped spending. American banks and investors recalled their loans from Europe, and the depression quickly spread world-wide. As many as 40 million people were soon unemployed in the United States, Germany, Japan and other industrialized countries. Farmers in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America could no longer sell their cash crops.

**WHAT FACTORS CAUSED THE GREAT DEPRESSION?**

Economists point to several reasons why the Great Depression occurred. Part of the prosperity was due to stock market and real estate over speculation. Investors borrowed money to invest in order to make a quick profit. Another problem was overproduction. At first, there was a great demand for new products, but soon production of consumer products became greater than people had money available to buy. The interrelationship of loans and debts between Europe and America ensured that the recession would quickly spread.
Most government leaders reacted poorly. Many stopped spending, tightened credit and cut off international trade. This only served to make the recession worse. Moreover, people had no safety net, such as unemployment insurance or social security, if they lost their jobs and savings. In the United States, Franklin Roosevelt was elected President in November 1932. His New Deal plan attempted to put many people to work in public works projects.

The Rise of Fascism

Fascism refers to a new political system that appeared in Europe in the disturbed conditions after World War I. The term is taken from the political party formed by Benito Mussolini in Italy, but it is used by historians to identify similar systems such as Nazism in Germany. Most varieties of European fascism shared the following characteristics:

- **Nationalism.** Fascists were extreme nationalists, who believed that the highest value was the nation. They took this belief to extremes, claiming that their nation was superior to others. Fascists were also strongly opposed to Communism.

- **Unity of All Social Classes.** Fascists felt a single national party should unite all classes. They also believed that the strong had a natural right to dominate the weak. They opposed worker unions and strikes.

- **All-Powerful Leaders.** Fascists believed that a single all-powerful leader, like Mussolini or Hitler, could best represent the national will and lead the nation.

- **Extreme Militarism.** Fascists used violence to defeat their political opponents and prepared to use war for national expansion. Fascists saw war as a glorious experience.

The Roots of Fascism

Several earlier currents of European thought — such as anti-Semitism, racism, and Social Darwinism — had helped prepare the way for the rise of fascism:

- **Anti-Semitism.** Hatred of Jews, or anti-Semitism, was common among some Europeans. Jews frequently faced prejudice and persecution. Their unique beliefs and customs made them easy targets in times of social unrest and economic difficulty. This was especially true in the late 1800s, when Jews were blamed by many for the disruptions caused by the rapid industrialization of Europe.
Racism. This is a form of contempt for people of other races. European racism was strengthened by the experiences of overseas imperialism and by the spirit of nationalism.

Social Darwinism. Racism and anti-Semitism were made respectable by applying Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to human society. Social Darwinists believed that all human groups competed for survival and that stronger groups had the right to succeed over weaker groups, who deserved to die out.

THE OLD ORDER COLLAPSES
Old Europe had been shaken to its core by World War I. Immense political changes had taken place — new countries had been created, and old ruling families had lost their former power. Often, the people running the government in the new European democracies were unaccustomed to holding political power.

Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm II was forced out when the war was lost. The new German democratic republic, known as the Weimar Republic, was weak. Many landowners, industrialists, military leaders, and professionals opposed it. They would have preferred to give all political power to a single leader rather than to entrust it to the common people. They feared that German socialists might follow the example of Soviet Russia. They also blamed the leaders of the Weimar Republic for accepting the Treaty of Versailles.

U.S.S.R. The Soviet Communists had demonstrated how to build a totalitarian state, controlling all aspects of life. When Lenin died in 1924, Joseph Stalin succeeded him as leader of the Soviet Union. Stalin quickly moved to eliminate other rivals in a series of "purges," accusing them of disloyalty to Communist ideals. Once in power, Stalin set about making changes in Soviet society and establishing a totalitarian state. Opponents were sent to icy gulags in Siberia. Stalinstarved the Ukraine into submission in 1928 to pursue his collectivization of agriculture. Many Europeans feared that Communism would spread. This fear led some in Europe to support extremist anti-Communist leaders like Mussolini and Hitler.

Italy. Following World War I, Communists were making inroads in the Italian government. The growing "Red Menace" frightened Italian industrialists, landlords and other property holders. Italians were tired of constant strikes and riots and were ready to submit to a strong leader. Fear of revolution and the desire for national glory were exploited by a new political group, the Fascists, led by Benito Mussolini, a former socialist. Mussolini copied many Bolshevik practices while denouncing their ideas.
Like the Bolsheviks, Mussolini had a party newspaper, a party organization, and a private army of party members known as the "Black Shirts." Members pledged absolute obedience to their leader. In 1922, Mussolini took power after the Fascist "March on Rome." He passed laws controlling the press; unions were abolished; strikes were outlawed. New organizations were supposed to ally owners and workers together. He used violence against opponents, murdering opposition leaders. Within three years, Italy had become a totalitarian state.

THE NAZI RISE DICTATORSHIP IN GERMANY

In Germany, the socialist leaders of the democratic Weimar Republic were blamed for signing the Treaty of Versailles, which forced Germany to pay crippling reparations to Britain and France. To pay the debt, the government printed large amounts of money, leading to a soaring German inflation in 1923. Common items came to cost millions of German marks, and middle class families saw their life savings wiped out.

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC COLLAPSES

By the late 1920s, the Weimar Republic created a new currency and achieved some measure of stability. This ended when the Great Depression spread from the United States to Germany in 1930. Six million Germans lost their jobs — more than one-third of the workforce. The leaders of the Weimar government could not agree on how to cope with this economic catastrophe. In the elections, the farmers, the unemployed, and members of the middle class turned to the more radical solutions offered by both the Communists and the Nazi Party.

RISE OF THE NAZI (NATIONAL SOCIALIST) PARTY

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) was the leader of the Nazi Party. An electrifying speaker, Hitler spelled out his radical ideas in his book Mein Kampf (My Struggle):

Condemnation of the Weimar Republic. Hitler blamed Germany's humiliation at Versailles on Weimar leaders. He urged Germans to abandon democracy and return Germany to glory under a strong leader.

Aryan Race. Hitler believed that Germans were a superior "Aryan" race that should rule the world. He planned to eventually wipe out Slavic peoples like the Poles to make room for German settlers in Eastern Europe.

Anti-Semitism. Hitler called the Jews an "evil race" that should be destroyed for causing Germany's defeat in the war. He saw Communism as a Jewish plot to control the world.
An important part of Nazi beliefs was fanatical loyalty and obedience to their “Führer,” or leader, Adolf Hitler.

THE NAZIS COME TO POWER
The Nazis built up their power with a private army of “Brown Shirts” made up of former soldiers and unemployed workers. They beat up political opponents and Jews, and staged rallies and parades. When the Great Depression hit Germany, support for the Nazi party increased. Although not a majority, they became the largest party in the Reichstag (legislature). With this support, Hitler was appointed chief minister in 1933. Conservatives thought they could control Hitler, but he acted quickly to secure complete control.

Hitler and his fellow Nazis were determined to bring down the republic and establish dictatorial rule in Germany. They did everything they could to create chaos, using violence and murder. Martial law was proclaimed in Berlin. The Reichstag building was burned down, possibly by the Nazis themselves. Hitler blamed the Communists for the fire and used the incident to take emergency powers, becoming an absolute dictator whose will was law.

GERMANY UNDER NAZI CONTROL
In the following months the Nazi Party, like the Fascists in Italy, took over every aspect of German social, economic, and political life. The army took a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler. Hitler also murdered his rivals within the Nazi Party. Under Hitler’s “New Order,” the following changes took place in Germany:

**Human Rights Violations.** People were arrested and executed without trial. Rival political parties, unions, and independent newspapers were closed and replaced by pro-Nazi ones.

**Economic Changes.** Hitler made use of public works projects like building highways and military rearmament to secure full employment. Economic prosperity returned to Germany.

**Persecution of Jews.** Jews were thrown out of government jobs. Jews lost their citizenship, were forced to wear yellow stars on their clothes, and were barred from marrying other Germans. Jewish shops were vandalized and synagogues were burned down. Later, Jews would be forced into special ghettos and concentration camps.

**Secret Police.** Newspapers, radios, and films blared out Nazi propaganda. No other sources of information were permitted except those under Nazi control. The Gestapo (secret police) arrested suspected opponents, who were thrown into concentration camps where they were mistreated, tortured, and killed. Dachau, the first such camp, opened outside Munich in 1938.

Many Germans admired Hitler because he restored full employment, told Germans they were a superior race, overturned the humiliations of the Versailles Treaty, and restored German military power. Hitler's opponents were arrested, killed or went into hiding. They were terrorized by the Gestapo (secret police). Propaganda played as great a role as terror in the early success of Nazism. Young children were enrolled as “Hitler Youths”; all art and theater was directed towards celebrating Nazism; and no other ideas were tolerated.
While Hitler used government agencies to create public works projects and rearm Germany, President Franklin Roosevelt in the United States also increased public spending and introduced massive public works projects. He pushed Congress for the creation of new government programs and social security to help combat the Great Depression and get American workers back to work. In the Soviet Union, Stalin used terror tactics similar to those used by Hitler. However, the Soviets did not suffer from the Great Depression since they lacked a free market economy.

**World War II (1939-1945)**

The rise of Fascist dictators in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere made the outbreak of a new war almost inevitable. These dictators glorified war and laid plans for national expansion. However, the war was postponed for several years while the dictators built up their armaments. Meanwhile, Japan launched a war in East Asia in 1931.

**The Origins of World War II**

*World War II* could be seen as a resumption of the war that had ended in 1918. Hitler sought revenge from Britain and France for Germany’s humiliating defeat. His claims for territories in Eastern Europe were apparently meant to satisfy German nationalist desires. But in fact, his vision of a new world order went far beyond earlier German territorial ambitions.

Hitler planned to enslave whole populations and to exterminate others. *World War II* became a struggle to the death for mastery of the world. The devastating effects of new weapons and the linkage of German desires in Europe with Japanese ambitions in Asia made this the most destructive war in history. *World War II* transformed the entire world just as World War I had earlier transformed Europe.

The following events led to the outbreak of war in Europe. Hitler and Mussolini began taking aggressive steps. Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. Hitler helped Francisco Franco, another fascist dictator, in Spain. Then Hitler demanded Austria and a part of Czechoslovakia that had many German nationals living there. Britain and France hoped to avoid war and appeased Hitler at a conference in Munich. Hitler next demanded Danzig in Poland, but the Poles — now backed by Britain and France — refused to give in.
League of Nations Fails. The League relied on its members to help each other to prevent another war. Hitler, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, rebuilt his armed forces. The League could do nothing to stop Hitler because its member states refused to take action. They feared any such steps might lead to war.

Appeasement. Hitler next claimed territories where Germans lived. He annexed (took) Austria early in 1938. Then Hitler claimed part of Czechoslovakia where a large number of Germans lived. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met with Hitler in Munich and tried appeasement (granting concessions to an aggressor). Hoping to avoid war, Chamberlain agreed to Hitler’s demand for western Czechoslovakia.

Invasion of Poland. In 1939, Hitler made new demands for part of Poland. This time, Britain and France refused to give in. Hitler made a secret deal with Stalin to keep the Soviet Union out of the war. Germany then invaded Poland, starting World War II. Stalin took part of Eastern Poland.

THE WAR IN EUROPE

Hitler’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 started the war.

THE NAZI BLITZKRIEG AND THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Improvements in the automobile engine and other technologies again made new forms of warfare possible. The German army developed the blitzkrieg — the use of planes, tanks, and motorized troop carriers to advance rapidly into enemy territory. The Nazis quickly overran Poland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France and much of North Africa. By the end of 1940, Germany controlled most of Western Europe — only Britain held out.

Hitler hoped to overcome British resistance by bombing London and other British cities from the air. Winston Churchill, the new British Prime Minister, rallied British resistance. Churchill, a brilliant orator, inspired the British people with his stirring public broadcasts. The use of radar, the bravery of the British air force, and Britain’s island location helped defend Britain from German air attacks. Hitler was unable to defeat the British.
GERMANY INVADERS THE SOVIET UNION

By 1940, Hitler had conquered all of Western Europe except Britain. Hitler now turned his attention to the east. According to Hitler, Germany needed to expand eastwards. His racial theories, outlined in Mein Kampf, made him look down on Slavs, including Russians. In 1941, Hitler betrayed Stalin by launching a surprise attack on the Soviet Union. At first, the German army appeared to be successful. But the winter of 1941 was one of the coldest on record. German trucks and tanks froze before they could reach Moscow. Then the Soviets gradually pushed the Germans back. The Soviets bore the brunt of fighting Germany for most of the war. The turning point came when the Germans were defeated at Stalingrad. Soviet military and civilian wartime losses amounted to 21 million dead.

THE UNITED STATES ENTERS THE WAR

In December 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on American ships at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Hitler quickly joined Japan by declaring war on the United States. As a result, Hitler was now opposed by the Allied Powers — Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. Germany was helped by Italy and Japan, together known as the Axis Powers. The Allied Powers decided to first concentrate on defeating Germany in Europe, before turning their full strength against Japan. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill developed a strong wartime partnership and waged a joint campaign.

THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust refers to the attempted genocide of the Jews of Europe during World War II. Genocide is an effort to murder an entire people or nationality.

★ The Final Solution. After the outbreak of the war, Hitler decided to execute all European Jews under the cover of the war. He called his plan the “Final Solution.” At first, Jews were marched out of towns and machine gunned next to open trenches they were forced to first dig themselves, or gassed in trucks.

★ Concentration Camps. Later, large concentration camps like Auschwitz were built all over Europe. Jews from throughout Nazi-controlled Europe were sent to these camps in cramped railroad cattle cars. When they arrived in the camps, most were killed with poison gas and their bodies burned in large ovens. Some were spared to do the work of running the camp. These inmates were half-starved and subjected to inhumane conditions.
**Human Toll.** It is estimated that six million Jews, two-thirds of those living in Europe, were killed in the Holocaust. Six million gypsies, Slavs, political prisoners, elderly and mentally-disabled people also died in Nazi concentration camps.

THE WAR IN EUROPE ENDS

Despite Stalin’s protests, the United States and Britain delayed opening a second front in Europe. Finally, on **D-Day** in June 1944, allied troops landed in **Normandy**, in Northern France. This was the largest amphibious assault in history. The tide of war now turned in favor of the allies. The Soviet Union had greater manpower than Germany, and the United States had greater manufacturing capability. British and American forces pushed through France and Germany: to the east, the Soviet army advanced through Poland and Eastern Germany.

In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill met in the Atlantic and issued a vision for post-war Europe known as the **Atlantic Charter**. It promised self-determination to all peoples and future disarmament.

**Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin** met together at Teheran (1943) and again at **Yalta** (1945). Roosevelt and Churchill obtained a promise from Stalin that free elections would be held in the countries of Eastern Europe, then occupied by the Soviet army. By 1945, Soviet, British, American and French troops occupied all of Germany. Hitler preferred the destruction of his country to witnessing its surrender. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide. Soon after, German military leaders surrendered.

NUREMBERG TRIALS

Although Hitler escaped prosecution by committing suicide, several of the most important Nazi leaders were tried and convicted by an international tribunal at Nuremberg for “crimes against humanity.” The **Nuremberg Trials** revealed to the world the full extent of Nazi atrocities — the use of slave labor, medical experiments on humans, forced starvation, and genocide. The trial reaffirmed that not just a country, but its individuals were accountable for violations of international law. Germany itself was divided into separate zones and occupied by the four victorious Allied Powers.
ACTING AS AN AMATEUR HISTORIAN

Read one of the opening statements of the prosecution at the military trial at Nuremberg. Then answer the question that follows:

"Germany became one vast torture chamber. Cries of its victims were heard round the world and brought shudders to civilized people. I am one who received most atrocity tales with suspicion and [doubt]. But the proof here will be so overwhelming that I predict these defendants will only deny personal responsibility. The elements of the German population which were both decent and courageous were [reduced to nothing]. Those which were decent but weak were intimidated. The Nazis not only silenced discordant voices, they [impressed upon] and practiced the [leadership principle] which centralized control of the Party over the lives and thoughts of the German people. This German State is incomprehensible to my people [the American public]. . . .

The prosecutor said these Nazi leaders did not deserve mercy. Do you agree?


THE WAR IN ASIA

Just as German ambitions had triggered the war in Europe, Japan’s aggressive designs led to war in Asia. Japan’s late 19th century industrialization was remarkably successful. But Japanese leaders needed raw materials and markets for their industries. They also wished to replace European imperialism in Asia by the imperialism of an Asian power.

Japan’s military began to influence Japanese national policy during the 1930s. Japanese military leaders glorified traditional samurai beliefs of martial discipline and loyalty. They set Japan on a policy of expansion in Asia. They successfully invaded Manchuria, a northern province of China, in 1931. They then set up a puppet government in Manchuria. Japan next went on to invade the rest of China in 1937. Its army committed atrocities against civilians in Shanghai and other Chinese cities.
JAPAN IN WORLD WAR II

Japanese leaders saw the war in Europe as an opportunity to gain control of mainland Asia. Japan took advantage of the conflict by occupying French Indochina. Only the United States was in a position to prevent Japan’s expansion.

When the United States threatened to blockade the shipment of oil supplies unless Japan gave up some of its conquests, Japanese leaders decided on a surprise attack. In 1941, Hideki Tojo, a general from the Manchurian campaign, was appointed Prime Minister. Tojo and other Japanese leaders convinced Emperor Hirohito to attack the United States. Japanese leaders hoped for a short war, after which they planned to negotiate a treaty with the United States that would give them control of East Asia.

★ Pearl Harbor (1941). To carry out this strategy, Japan launched a massive surprise air attack from aircraft carriers on the U.S. fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. More than 2,400 Americans were killed in this attack.

★ The War in Asia and the Pacific (1941–1943). Japanese leaders badly miscalculated the ability of the United States. The quick war they had hoped for dragged on for four years. At first, the Japanese achieved sweeping victories on the Asian mainland and in the Pacific. They invaded and occupied the Philippines, Hong Kong, Borneo, the Solomon Islands, Java, and Singapore.

★ The Tide Turns against Japan (1943–1945). The tide began to turn in 1943 when the United States regained naval superiority in the Pacific at the Battle of Midway. American forces began “island-hopping” — liberating Pacific islands from Japanese control one at a time. Japanese armies were slowly forced to retreat back to their home islands. After Germany was defeated in 1945, the United States turned its full strength on Japan.

THE ATOMIC BOMB ENDS THE WAR (1945)

A German Jewish physicist, Albert Einstein, played a key role in developing the atom bomb. In 1905, Einstein published several papers claiming space and time were relative and that a large amount of energy could be released from a small amount of matter. After Hitler came to power, Einstein fled Germany to come to the United States. During the war, Einstein feared that Nazi Germany was developing an atomic weapon.
Einstein wrote a letter urging President Roosevelt to support research into an “extremely powerful bomb of a new type.” Due to his letter, Roosevelt authorized the Manhattan Project. Leading scientists gathered in New Mexico to develop an atomic bomb. In August 1945, after the sudden death of Roosevelt, President Truman authorized the use of the new atomic bomb against Japan. Truman hoped to prevent the high casualties expected in a land invasion of Japan. On August 6, 1945, an American atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Fearing additional attacks, Japanese leaders convinced the emperor to surrender. World War II finally came to an end.

THE U.S. OCCUPATION OF JAPAN (1945–1952)

American General Douglas MacArthur, who had led the Pacific campaign, was assigned the task of rebuilding post-war Japan. Under his leadership, important reforms made Japan less imperialistic and less aggressive. Japan lost its overseas empire and was stripped of its army and navy. Its leaders were put on trial and punished: Tojo was executed. Meanwhile, Japan’s people were given a democratic constitution. Emperor Hirohito was allowed to remain on the throne, but his powers were drastically reduced.

Complete the graphic organizer by describing three main causes of World War II in Europe and Asia.
World War II was a global conflict whose destruction was unparalleled: as many as seventy million people died, and much of Europe and Asia lay in ruins. Germany, Italy, and Japan were occupied and turned into democratic nations. The collapse of European power hastened the end of imperialism in Asia and Africa. Some estimates place the cost of the war at more than two trillion dollars. Although the United States had shouldered the bulk of Allied costs in the war, its distance spared it from the destruction faced by other Allied and Axis powers.

THE UNITED NATIONS

The League of Nations had proved to be a failure. Churchill and Roosevelt decided to launch a new international peace-keeping organization in 1945, known as the United Nations (U.N.). The U.N. Charter establishes its purpose to maintain peace in the world, while encouraging friendship and cooperation. Members agree to give up the use of force, except in self-defense. The U.N. also seeks to eliminate hunger, disease, and ignorance. The U.N. has a Security Council, made up of the leading powers, responsible for ensuring peace and deterring aggression. The Security Council can apply economic sanctions or use military power to resolve disputes. The U.N. also has a General Assembly which includes all member nations. It makes recommendations to the Security Council.

ACTING AS AN AMATEUR HISTORIAN

Use the Internet to research one of the individuals you read about in this chapter and describe the role that person played in WWII: Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, Francisco Franco, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Hideki Tojo, Emperor Hirohito, Douglas MacArthur, or Albert Einstein.
Complete the graphic organizer below by describing some of the changes that were brought about as a result of World War II.

**IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II**

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**CHAPTER STUDY CARDS**

**Fascism**

A political system developed in Italy, Germany, Spain and other nations following W.W. II.

☆ **Main Characteristics**
  - **Extreme Nationalism.** Belief a country should unite behind its national leaders.
  - Glorified violence and racism.
  - **Devotion to Party Leader.** An all powerful leader was seen as embodying the true ideals of the nation.
  - Saw democratic governments as being feeble and weak.
  - **Totalitarianism.** A dictator or political party controls all aspects of life.

**Nazism (National Socialism)**

☆ Hitler became Nazi Party leader; attacked the Weimar Republic as weak; attacked Versailles Treaty as too harsh on Germany.

☆ Wrote Mein Kampf, where he stated that Germans were a superior race and Jews were the major cause of Germany's problems.

☆ Nazi Party seized power in 1933:
  - Eliminated all political rivals.
  - Restricted Jews in business and education.
  - Began a massive rebuilding of military.
  - Public projects to stimulate economy.
  - Used terror with Gestapo (secret police).
  - Built concentration camps.
Key Events of World War II

★ Worldwide conflict between:
   • Axis Powers (Italy, Germany, Japan)
   • Allied Powers (Britain, U.S., Russia)
★ League of Nations was too weak to maintain world peace.
★ Hitler marched into Austria and seized it.
★ Britain and France appeased Hitler, giving him a large part of Czechoslovakia.
★ Hitler-Stalin Pact. Non-aggression pact. This allowed Hitler to invade Poland in 1939, which began World War II.
★ Germans conquered Western Europe using lightning attacks, called blitzkriegs.
★ Britain held out in Battle of Britain.

Key Events of World War II (Cont’d)

★ Germany invaded Russia (1941).
★ Japanese Aggression.
   • Japan attacked China (1937).
   • Launched a surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor (1941).
★ Holocaust. Six million Jews killed in concentration camps, such as Auschwitz.
★ Normandy landings in France in 1944 opened a second front against Germany.
★ Germany surrendered in 1945.
★ Nuremberg Trials. Nazi leaders were put on trial for war crimes and genocide.

CHECKING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Directions: Put a circle around the letter that best answers the question.

Use the diagram and your knowledge of social studies to answer the following question.

1. Which ideology best completes this graphic organizer?
   A. socialism
   B. communism
   C. fascism
   D. democracy

   First, EXAMINE the question. This question tests your ability to interpret a concept map and your knowledge of political ideologies. RECALL what you know. You should recall that the fascists glorified violence, encouraged blind loyalty to a leader, and used terror against opponents. APPLY what you know. Choices A and D do not have these characteristics. Choice B also lacks some of these characteristics at least in theory. The best answer is Choice C, since this concept map describes the most essential characteristics of fascism.

   Now try answering some additional questions on your own.

2. What did Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, Italy’s attack on Ethiopia, and Germany’s blitzkrieg in Poland have in common?
   F. They were examples of military aggression.
   G. They were plans to preserve the balance of power.
   H. They illustrated the policy of appeasement.
   J. They were attempts at protecting ethnic minorities.
Use the passage and your knowledge of social studies to answer the following question.

“In this period my eyes were opened to two menaces which I had previously scarcely known, and whose importance for the existence of the German people I did not understand: Marxism and Jewry. Once, as I was strolling through the city, I encountered [a figure] in a black caftan and black hair. Is this a Jew?.... The longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinizing its features, the more my first question assumed a new form: Is this a German? In a short time I was made more thoughtful than ever by my rising insight into the activity carried on by the Jews in certain fields. Was there any form of filth ..., particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it?”

— adapted from Adolf Hitler’s, Mein Kampf

3 What was a direct effect of the prejudices expressed in this passage?
A Nazi Germany introduced social programs to help workers.  
B Germany promoted greater freedom of religious belief.
C Japanese and Italian leaders agreed to ally with Nazi Germany.
D Millions of European Jews, including children, were murdered during the Holocaust.

4 One motive behind Japan’s policy of imperialism in the early 20th century was —
F a lack of local natural resources
G a plan to end unequal treaties
H the need to spread their religious beliefs
J the desire to spread communism

5 The Nuremberg trials are considered an important development in the rule of law because they —
A brought an end to genocide
B condemned the use of nuclear weapons against innocent civilians
C ruled on provisions for the postwar occupation of Germany
D established principles of responsibility for violations of human rights

6 Fascism in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s can best be described as —
F laissez-faire capitalism that promoted free enterprise
G a type of economic system that stressed a classless society
H a program of humanistic ideals emphasizing individual dignity
J a political system that glorified the nation above the individual

7 Which was a major cause of the Great Depression of the 1930s?
A speculation on the stock market in the 1920s
B investment in roads, bridges, and other infrastructure
C new global competition in manufacturing
D the spread of new consumer goods such as radios and automobiles
Use the timeline and your knowledge of social studies to answer the following question.

8 Which development was next to occur after this series of events?
   F Manchuria became a protectorate of Japan.
   G Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan.
   H The Japanese fleet was destroyed.
   J The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

9 What was one reason why totalitarian dictatorships gained power in Europe between World War I and World War II?
   A Famine and AIDS had spread throughout Europe.
   B Trade was banned between Western and Eastern Europe.
   C New democracies failed to meet the needs of many people.
   D Monarchies were reinstated in many nations.

10 Based on the information in this diagram, which factor gave rise to Nazi power in Germany?
   F global prosperity and trade
   G success of the Weimar Republic
   H political and economic instability
   J expansion of Germany’s colonial empire

11 The harsh conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles after World War I helped lay the foundations for the —
   A Bolshevik revolution in Russia
   B rise of Nazism in Germany
   C rise of militarism in Japan
   D rise of Benito Mussolini in Italy

12 One similarity between Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini is that both —
   F opposed social change
   G glorified violence
   H supported communism
   J rejected militarism

13 “He warned his countrymen about Hitler, rallied his nation against German assaults, refused to surrender when faced with an invasion, and worked closely with President Roosevelt.” Which world leader is best described by these characteristics?
   A Benito Mussolini
   B Hideki Tojo
   C Joseph Stalin
   D Winston Churchill