

## World War II

### Key Events

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

### Key Vocabulary

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

### Evacuation

During World War II, over 3.5 million children, along with some of their teachers and helpers, mothers with very young children, pregnant women and people with disabilities, were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, where it was believed they would be safer from bombing. All evacuees had to take their gas mask, ration book and identity card. When they reached their destination, a billeting officer would arrange a host family for them.

Evacuation happened in waves, beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain and at the start of the Blitz.

### Rationing

Supply ships were targeted by German bombers and it was necessary to conserve as much food as possible. Rationing meant that each person was only allowed a fixed amount of foods. Ration books were issued, with coupons that showed people how much of each item they were allowed. Shopkeepers would remove or stamp the coupons when they were used. People were also encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' and grow as much of their own food as possible.



A ration book

Petrol, soap, clothing and timber were also in short supply. Clothing ration books were issued and people were encouraged to 'make do and mend'.

### How Did World War II Start?

The leader of Germany, Adolf Hitler, had plans to take over other countries. In March 1938, Germany invaded and **annexed** Austria, which made other countries worried. On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders signed a treaty called the Munich Agreement. This allowed Hitler to **annex** the Sudetenland (an area of **Czechoslovakia**) if he agreed not to invade anywhere else. However, in August 1939, Hitler broke the agreement and invaded the rest of **Czechoslovakia**, followed by Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Britain, France and Poland had made a pact to support each other, so Britain and France declared war on Germany.