AMSCO Chapter 27

World War II

1. The Path to War
2. Hitler violates Treaty of Versailles beginning in 1935 when he creates an air force, begins conscription, and sends troops in to the demilitarized Rhineland.
3. France wanted to respond militarily, but Britain refused to back them up, beginning the policy of appeasement (giving in to another country’s demands in the hopes keeping the peace)
4. Axis Powers – Hitler’s goal of lebensraum led Germany to form alliances with Italy (Rome-Berlin Axis), then with Japan (Anti-Comintern Pact against communism)
5. Spanish Civil War – Hitler used aerial bomb on Guernica to support Spanish Nationalists, (first modern air force attack on civilian target) as a practice run for German air force in coming war
6. German-Austrian Unification – Hitler threatened invasion to force chancellor of Austria to give Austrian Nazi Party more power, allowing German troops to occupy Austria with no Resistance, joining the Third Reich in 1938
7. Czechoslovakia – Hitler wanted German-speaking Czech territory of the Sudetenland. Chamberlain (British prime minister) continued policy of appeasement, and Hitler realized British were not willing to fight. Hitler seizes ALL Czechoslovakia in 1939.
8. Conflict over Poland – Hitler wanted Polish port of Danzig; Great Britain decided no more appeasement, and, along with France, agreed to protect Poland from German attack
9. August 23, 1939, German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact pledging not to attack each other.
10. Hitler offered Stalin control of eastern Poland and Baltic states if Soviets standby German invasion of western Poland.
11. Germany invades Poland September 1, 1939, and Britain and France declare war on Germany, starting WWII.
12. Japan and Imperialist Policies
13. Japan, seeking natural resources, invades Manchuria in Sept 1931, in Mukden Incident
14. League of Nations condemned the invasion, and Japan quit the League, acquiring even more territory in Manchuria
15. In 1932, Japan establishes Manchukuo, puppet state with last Chinese emperor under Japanese control
16. Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedung ally themselves to fight off Japan. The Chinese lose against Japan at Nanging, the capital. Rape of Nanjing refers to the six week vicious attack by Japanese on the residents of Nanjing
17. New Order in East Asia – Japan’s goal to expand into China, Soviet Siberia (until German-Soviet treaty); US had put economic sanctions on Japan for invasion of Manchuria, Japan needed trade with US, so Japan began a plan to retaliate against US
18. Germany’s Early Victories and Challenges
19. Blitzkrieg – lightning war to quickly subdue Poland, using tank divisions supported by air force.
20. Germany and Soviets divided Poland by the end of September.
21. Hitler then attacked Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium and France. In France, Germany established the Vichy government under Marshall Henri Petain to run southern France for Germany
22. British-American Relations – Britain asks US for help, but US isolationist, and neutrality acts were in force
23. 1940, signing of Destroyers-for-Bases agreement – 50 American destroyers for 8 air and naval bases
24. 1941 Lend Lease – US lends war materials to Britain, and also establish Atlantic Charter, which set down basic goals for after the war, such as self government, no use of force, disarmament of aggressor nations (all later adopted by UN)
25. Battle of Britain – by 1940, Britain was last ally standing, Hitler’s Luftwaffe (air force) began bombing military and civilian targets, hoping to weaken the country
26. Hitler’s bombing of major British cities continued for months, but allowed British military bases to rebuild
27. British superior air force and radar downed German planes faster than they could be replaced, leading Hitler to postpone invasion of Britain
28. War on the Soviet Union – Hitler violated treaty with Soviets and invaded, hoping to eliminate Bolshevism, but also giving Britain a break
29. Hitler also invaded Greece and Yugoslavia, but the harsh Russian winter eventually beat Hitler, as the modern mechanized army could not withstand the cold
30. Battle of Leningrad lasted three years, and one million Soviet citizens died there.
31. Japan Overreaches
32. Japan attacks Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, then attacks US holdings in the Philippines, plus Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Burma and other Pacific islands
33. Japan claimed to be liberating these people from western colonizers, but they acted like conquerors
34. Japan believed Pearl Harbor would lead US to negotiate a peace with them, but rather it pushed the US to declare war on Japan; Hitler declared war on US days later, in defense of its ally Japan
35. Colonial armies – again fought for allies, especially 2.5 million in the Indian Army
36. Home fronts – total war mobilized all resources, including civilian workforce
37. US ramped up production of ships, tanks planes, landing craft, guns and ammo with no fear of attack on mainland American soil
38. American women once again work in factories and offices
39. Germany used forced labor, such as French citizens in Vichy territory and French prisoners of war, but treatment of workers was so terrible that production was low
40. Japan did NOT utilize women to work, based on principal, moved children out of cities that were being bombed, and successfully rationed food throughout war
41. Tide Turns in Europe
42. Dec 1941 US joins European front after Pearl Harbor
43. Allies in Africa were fighting Rommel, “desert fox” who led German troops trying to control Alexandria; Rommel finally defeated by British at Battle of Alamein
44. Germany also had control of Soviet Crimea by this time, and Soviets finally defeat Hitler’s Sixth Army at the Battle of Stalingrad, turning the tide against the Axis in Europe
45. Tide Turns in the Pacific Theater
46. US wins Battle of Coral Sea in the Pacific, then four Japanese aircraft carriers are destroyed in the Battle of Midway; allies also seize Guadalcanal
47. US General Douglas MacArthur used strategy of island hopping, gaining control of islands where Japan was weak and skipping over those where Japan was strong
48. Aircraft carrier technology enabled air support for battleships and raids on enemy ships and bases, submarines sank about 55% of Japanese merchant fleet, damaging supply lines
49. Last Years of the War
50. Allies identify Italy as weakest, and by June 4, 1944, regain control of Rome
51. June 6, 1944 is D-Day, when 150,000 allied forces storm the beaches of Normandy in France, establishing a base and marching to Paris, which was liberated in August
52. Battle of Bulge was Germany’s last push, in France, Belgium and Luxembourg; allies forces continued to bomb German supply lines, and allied forces crossed into Germany in March 1945
53. In the east, Soviets win the largest tank war in history at the Battle of Kursk, and begin moving westward through Ukraine, Baltics, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, hoping to beat the western front to Berlin
54. Victory in Europe – April 30, 1945, Hitler commits suicide in an underground bunker in Berlin (Mussolini was already dead); German officials surrender on May 8, designated Victory in Europe, or V-E day.
55. Victory over Japan – island hopping had not beaten Japan, US president Truman decides to drop two nuclear weapons on Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9); Japan surrenders on August 14, and September 2 becomes Victory over Japan, or V-J day
56. Casualties of War
57. The Nazis
58. Poles, Roma (Gypsies), disabled people, homosexuals removed from their homes, more than 7 million into forced labor camps
59. Hitler’s book, Mein Kampf, espoused his anti-Semitic philosophy, whose policies resulted in the Holocaust.
60. 1935 Nuremburg Laws banned Jews from certain professions, outlawed Jew-non-Jew marriage, and revoked German citizenship for Jews
61. 1938, Kristallnacht, Night of Broken Glass, most synagogues and many Jewish owned businesses were destroyed; Jews were relocated to ghettos
62. By 1942 the policy had shifted from relocating to actually eliminating all Jews in Germany, using the “final solution” which first used mass firing squads and later utilized gas chambers (approximately 6 million Jews killed)
63. The Japanese – Japan forced conquered peoples into forced labor programs in the military, public work projects and farming
64. The Allies – allied fire bombing of German cities caused extensive casualties in cities like Hamburg and Dresden; Tokyo was firebombed by the allies also
65. Nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki also caused great fear about the power of these weapons
66. Total casualties – estimated to exceed 40 million worldwide, with almost 20 million Soviets, then Germany, Poland, China and Japan; US lost about 290,000; civilian deaths due to aerial bombings and genocides, disease and starvation may have exceeded actual military deaths
67. The Big Three and the New World Order
68. US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, met at a series of conferences to determine postwar conditions
69. Nov 1943 Tehran Conference – Big three decide on how to end the war: Soviets would focus on freeing Eastern Europe from Germany, Britain and US would focus on Western Europe; Soviets would get to keep some part of Poland, which would make up the land by getting some from Germany
70. Yalta Conference – Feb 1945, Stalin clearly no longer trusted US and Britain; he wanted to establish a buffer zone of countries to protect Soviet Union from western Europe, Roosevelt wanted these countries to decide for themselves
71. Soviets agreed to join war against Japan in exchange for Japanese territory in the Kuril islands and several Chinese ports; UN in the works
72. Potsdam Conference July 1945, Harry Truman president of US after FDR’s death. Truman demanded free elections for Eastern Europe, and instead Stalin occupied region with Soviet troops