**Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**When Did World War II Start?**

**Directions:** Below is a chronology of major WWII events that influenced certain countries to join the war. Read the timeline, highlight or annotate any notes. Then on a separate sheet of paper, write a response to the following question: **When did World War II start?** Use evidence from the timeline and/or notes to support your date. Also, explain why not any of the other dates. Consider the guiding questions below to help you formulate your position. *Your response should be at least half a page. Be prepared to discuss.*

**Background:** This exercise is meant to develop your perspective and opinions. World War II was yet another war that involved numerous **belligerents** (nations or people engaged in war or conflict) all around the world. Though it is commonly accepted or taught in schools that WWII started on September 1, 1939 with the Nazi invasion of Poland, some belligerent nations were already at war while others were not involved until later. This brings the main questions to you: **When did World War II start? Under whose perspective/point-of-view?** What is your opinion on that matter? Would you agree with the common consensus or argue/support another date? On what basis? Chronological date? National affiliation? Major conflict? Or something else?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** |
| **August 22, 1910** | The **Empire of Japan** annexes the **Korean Empire**. Korea effectively becomes a colony of Japan until the end of World War II. |
| **March 1, 1919** | Korean resistance movement, known as the **March 1st Movement**, protests against Japanese colonial rule. Over 2 million Koreans stages protests throughout the country. They were put down by the Japanese police force and army, sometimes resulting in massacres. This would spark the beginning of the Korean Independence Movement, resisting Japanese rule. |
| **October 1922** | **Benito Mussolini** takes power in Italy after **March on Rome**. The Fascist Party would eventually dominate the rest of Italy. |
| **September 1, 1931** | **Mukden Incident**. The **Imperial Japanese Army** (**IJA**) stages an event used as a pretext to invade northeastern China, known as Manchuria. Japanese officers detonated some dynamite close to a railway owned by Japan. The IJA uses that an excuse to launch a full-scale invasion and occupied Manchuria. Six months later, the puppet state of **Manchukuo** would be established. League of Nations protests against Japanese actions. |
| **January – February 1933** | **Adolf Hitler** becomes Chancellor of Germany. **Reichstag Fire** event in February results in granting Hitler near-dictatorial powers. The establishment of **Nazi Germany** begins to take place. |
| **February 24, 1933** | Imperial Japan withdraws from the League of Nations. |
| **October 14, 1933** | Nazi Germany withdraws from the League of Nations. |
| **October 3, 1935** | Mussolini exploits weakness of the League of Nations by invading Ethiopia, starting the **Second Italo-Ethiopian War**. Ethiopia comes under the control of Fascist Italian military occupation. |
| **March 7, 1936** | **Remilitarization of the Rhineland**. The German Army marches into the Rhineland, remilitarizing the region in violation of the Treaty of Versailles (1919). |
| **July 1936 – April 1939** | **Spanish Civil War**. Fascist and Republican forces clash. Italy and Germany sends military aid. Germany tests **blitzkrieg** tactics. Great Britain and France do not intervene. |
| **July 7, 1937** | **Marco Polo Bridge Incident**. A battle occurs near Beijing between the IJA and the Republic of China’s National Revolutionary Army. Japan would begin a full-scale invasion of China, starting the **Second Sino-Japanese War**. |
| **March 12, 1938** | **Anschluss**, a union between Austria and Germany. The German Army marches into Austria and annexes it. |
| **December 13, 1937** | Fascist Italy withdraws from the League of Nations. |
| **September 30, 1938** | Nazi Germany demands **Sudetenland** from Czechoslovakia. Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and France meet at the **Munich Conference** and appeases Hitler by allowing the annexation of Sudetenland without consulting Czechoslovakia. |
| **March 19, 1939** | Nazi Germany annexes the rest of Czechoslovakia. |
| **August 23, 1939** | Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signs a non-aggression pact, known as the **Nazi-Soviet Pact**. |
| **September 1, 1939** | **Invasion of Poland**. Poland refuses Nazi Germany’s demands for the return of former German territory. Hitler invades Poland. |
| **September 3, 1939** | **Great Britain and France declare war on Germany for invading Poland.** |
| **September 17, 1939** | Soviet Union invades Poland without formal declaration of war. |
| **October 1939 – April 1940** | **Phoney War**. Great Britain and France mobilize their militaries, but this period saw no major offensive while Nazi Germany continued expanding in Eastern and Central Europe. Some Eastern European countries call this the “*Western betrayal*.” |
| **April 1940** | Nazi Germany invades Norway and Denmark. Norway falls after 2 months. Denmark falls in 6 hours. |
| **May 1940 – June 1940** | **Fall of France**. Nazi Germany invades France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Italy declares war on France and invades from the south. France falls. **Vichy France**, a Nazi puppet government, is established. Italy starts advancing on North Africa. |
| **July 1940 – October 1940** | **Battle of Britain**. Nazi Germany starts bombing Great Britain by air. Great Britain manages to resist by gaining air superiority. |
| **Summer 1940** | In responses to Japanese expansionism, the U.S. Pacific Fleet is relocated from San Diego to Hawaii to “restrain Japanese influence.” U.S. begins transitioning from a neutral country to one preparing for war. |
| **September 2, 1940** | The U.S. and Great Britain signs the **Destroyer for Bases Agreement**. The U.S. would transfer 50 naval destroyers to the Royal Navy for land rights for bases in Britain possessions. |
| **September 1940** | Germany, Italy, and Japan enters into a formal military alliance, forming the Axis Powers. Italy continues advancing on North Africa. Japan takes over French Indochina, threatening the Philippines, a U.S. territory. |
| **March 11, 1941** | The U.S. passes the **Lend-Lease Act**, allowing the president to sell, lease, or lend military equipment and supplies to governments/nations (Allies) deemed vital to the security of the United States. Extended to China in April and the Soviet Union in October. |
| **June 22, 1941** | **Operation Barbarossa**. Nazi Germany invades the Soviet Union, breaking the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. The **Eastern Front** opens up. |
| **August 15, 1941** | **Atlantic Charter**. **Winston Churchill** and **FDR** draft up the Atlantic Charter, a statement that defined the Allied goals for a post-war world. It is a pivotal piece that led to the creation of the United Nations after the war. It is not an official statement since the United States is officially neutral. |
| **December 7, 1941** | **Attack on Pearl Harbor**. Negotiations break down between Imperial Japan and the United States. Japan launches a preemptive surprise attack on the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Pacific Fleet becomes heavily damaged. About 2,400 Americans perished. |
| **December 8, 1941** | **U.S. Declaration of War**. FDR delivers speech to Congress, regarding Pearl Harbor. Congress passes formal declaration of war against Japan, starting the **Pacific War**. U.S. officially enters World War II. |