Road to War

Trace how expansion and responses to it shaped a global conflict.

9-12.US2.15 "Explain the events and actions that led to World War Two, including the rise of fascism and totalitarianism, appeasement, and European and Japanese Imperialism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions by Germany, Italy, and Japan, then circle the responses of other countries. Number two places where one event helped lead to another so you can explain how war spread.

When Expansion Met Little Resistance

1. After World War I, economic hardship and anger over the peace settlement helped extremist movements gain support in Europe. In Italy, Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party took power in 1922. It crushed political opposition and promised to restore national strength. In Germany, the Great Depression increased support for Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party. Hitler became chancellor in 1933, then built a totalitarian state that controlled public life and punished dissent. He blamed Germany's problems on the peace settlement and falsely blamed Jews. These regimes used propaganda and force to unite supporters behind leaders who demanded more territory.

2. Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, seeking an empire in Africa. The League of Nations condemned the attack but did not stop it. Hitler also tested whether other countries would resist expansion. In 1936, German troops entered the Rhineland, a region where the peace settlement had barred them. Britain and France did not intervene. Germany then annexed Austria in March 1938. That September, Hitler demanded the Sudetenland, a region of Czechoslovakia. At Munich, British and French leaders agreed to let Germany take it, hoping this concession would prevent war. This policy of appeasement left Czechoslovakia without a voice in the decision.

3. Japan's military leaders also sought resources and territory. Japanese forces seized Manchuria in 1931 and launched a wider invasion of China in 1937. The League of Nations criticized the seizure of Manchuria, but its response did not reverse it. In Europe, appeasement failed to end Hitler's demands: Germany occupied the rest of the Czech lands in March 1939. Germany invaded Poland that September, and Britain and France declared war. European expansion had led to war in Europe, while Japan's war in China continued in Asia. In December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into World War II.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did conditions after World War I help leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler gain support, and what did they do with that support?

2. How did the responses to Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and Germany's move into the Rhineland affect attempts to limit expansion?

3. Why did the Munich agreement fail to prevent war in Europe?

4. How did Japan's actions expand the conflict in Asia and eventually bring the United States into World War II?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 95 word memo to British leaders in September 1938 proposing a response to Germany's demand for the Sudetenland other than giving in. Use an earlier event in Europe or Asia to support your proposal, and identify one risk.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions by Germany, Italy, and Japan, then circle the responses of other countries. Number two places where one event helped lead to another so you can explain how war spread. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did conditions after World War I help leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler gain support, and what did they do with that support?	**Economic hardship and anger over the peace settlement helped extremist movements gain support. Mussolini and Hitler used power to crush opposition and promote demands for national strength and territory.**
2	How did the responses to Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and Germany's move into the Rhineland affect attempts to limit expansion?	**The League condemned Italy's invasion but did not stop it, while Britain and France did not intervene in the Rhineland. Neither response halted expansion.**
3	Why did the Munich agreement fail to prevent war in Europe?	**Britain and France let Germany take the Sudetenland in hopes of preventing war, but Germany later occupied the rest of the Czech lands and invaded Poland. Britain and France then declared war.**
4	How did Japan's actions expand the conflict in Asia and eventually bring the United States into World War II?	**Japan seized Manchuria and launched a wider invasion of China. Its attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 brought the United States into the war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

British leaders should refuse to approve Germany's demand for the Sudetenland without Czechoslovakia's agreement. They should consult Czechoslovak leaders and work with France to warn that further German expansion will meet a united response. Earlier, Britain and France did not intervene when German troops entered the Rhineland, and Germany continued expanding. A clear, joint warning might make Hitler reconsider the cost of taking more territory. The risk is serious: Germany might attack anyway, forcing Britain and France to decide whether to fight.

Accept other historically grounded proposals that address the Sudetenland demand, use a specific earlier event from the passage, and explain a plausible risk. A proposed response need not be guaranteed to prevent war.