

Road to War

Trace how political and economic forces helped lead to World War II.

8.6a "Worldwide economic depression, militant nationalism, the rise of totalitarian rule, and the unsuccessful efforts of the League of Nations to preserve peace contributed to the outbreak of war in Europe and Asia."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of depression, militant nationalism, totalitarian rule, and failed peace efforts. Circle three dated acts of aggression and number them chronologically.

Conditions That Led to War

- ① During the 1930s, the worldwide Great Depression brought unemployment, hunger, and fear to many countries. People who had lost savings or jobs often doubted elected governments that seemed unable to solve the crisis. In Germany, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party promised jobs, national strength, and a reversal of the Treaty of Versailles. Their militant nationalism claimed Germans were superior and deserved more land. These promises helped Hitler gain support, while Nazi violence and propaganda weakened democratic opposition.
- ② After becoming chancellor in 1933, Hitler turned Germany into a totalitarian state. His government controlled newspapers, schools, police, and political life, and it punished opponents. Italy's dictator Benito Mussolini and Japan's military leaders also promoted expansion. In 1936, Germany sent troops into the Rhineland, violating the Treaty of Versailles. In 1938, Germany took Austria and then demanded part of Czechoslovakia. These aggressive steps increased the danger of war in Europe.
- ③ The League of Nations was created after World War I to settle disputes and protect peace, but it had no army and depended on members to act together. When Japan seized Manchuria in 1931, the League criticized Japan but did not stop it. When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, League sanctions were too weak. These failures showed aggressors that international protests might not bring forceful consequences. Japan began a full-scale war against China in 1937. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war, beginning World War II in Europe.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How did the Great Depression help the Nazi Party gain support in Germany?

2 Give two ways Hitler's totalitarian government controlled people or political life.

3 What did the League of Nations fail to do when Japan seized Manchuria and Italy invaded Ethiopia? What message did these failures send to aggressors?

4 What happened after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining how the Great Depression, militant nationalism, totalitarian rule, and the League of Nations' failures helped create conditions for Germany's invasion of Poland and war in Europe. Include at least one specific detail from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of depression, militant nationalism, totalitarian rule, and failed peace efforts. Circle three dated acts of aggression and number them chronologically. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Great Depression help the Nazi Party gain support in Germany?	The depression caused unemployment, hunger, and fear, so many people doubted elected governments. Nazi promises of jobs and national strength appealed to them.
2	Give two ways Hitler's totalitarian government controlled people or political life.	It controlled newspapers, schools, police, and political life, and it punished opponents. Any two of these are acceptable.
3	What did the League of Nations fail to do when Japan seized Manchuria and Italy invaded Ethiopia? What message did these failures send to aggressors?	The League did not stop Japan and imposed sanctions on Italy that were too weak. Aggressors learned that international protests might not bring forceful consequences.
4	What happened after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939?	Britain and France declared war on Germany, beginning World War II in Europe.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Great Depression made many Germans distrust elected government, so Nazi promises of jobs and strength attracted support. Militant nationalism helped Hitler build a totalitarian state that controlled political life and punished opponents. After the League failed to stop Japan and Italy, aggressors learned that protests might be weak, and Germany invaded Poland in 1939, starting war in Europe.

Accept accurate explanations that connect all four factors in a logical chain and include a passage detail. Students may state that League failures encouraged aggressors generally, rather than claiming the League directly caused the invasion of Poland.