Paths to War

Trace how economic crisis and failed cooperation increased the risk of conflict.

MWH.C.6.4 "Analyze the economic, social, and political conditions that resulted in World War II. Describe the various causes and consequences of the global economic collapse and evaluate how democratic and authoritarian governments responded to the..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two economic pressures, circle two government responses, and number two failures of international cooperation to trace how these conditions raised the risk of war.

When Crisis Crossed Borders

1 In 1929, falling U.S. stock prices helped trigger a global crash, but deeper weaknesses had built up: risky lending, uneven wealth, and debts left from World War I. As U.S. banks failed, they called in overseas loans; trade shrank as countries raised tariffs. Factories closed, families lost incomes, and fear of hunger strained trust in elected leaders. Some democracies, including the United States, expanded public jobs, bank rules, and social welfare programs. These steps did not end the Depression quickly, but they moved governments toward mixed economies, where private businesses operated alongside government action.

2 After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles imposed large reparations on Germany and limited its armed forces. These demands fed resentment, though they did not alone cause the next war. In the 1930s, Nazi Germany rebuilt its military and sent troops into the demilitarized Rhineland, violating the treaty. The League of Nations had no army and relied on members who often feared another war. Talks to reduce weapons failed as states doubted one another's promises. When Japan seized Manchuria and Italy invaded Ethiopia, weak international responses showed aggressors that collective security might not stop them.

3 Economic crisis and anger at ineffective governments gave authoritarian movements room to grow. In Italy, Mussolini's Fascists used violence and promises of order; in Germany, Hitler's Nazis used mass rallies, propaganda, and attacks on democratic institutions. Both silenced critics, and Nazi leaders blamed Jews for national troubles. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of citizenship and banned marriages between Jews and people classified as German. In Spain, Franco's forces, aided by fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, defeated the republic and built a dictatorship, though Franco's regime differed from Nazism. In Japan, military leaders gained power and pursued conquest without creating a European-style fascist party.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did U.S. bank failures spread economic trouble overseas, and what was one social effect of the Depression?

2. How did the response of some democracies to hardship differ from the response offered by Mussolini's Fascists?

3. Why did treaty violations and weak responses to invasions make another war more likely?

4. How did Nazi propaganda and two different forms of persecution help the regime hold power? Identify who each form of persecution targeted.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a democracy in 1932. Write a short policy memo proposing one economic step and one international step to lower the risk of war. Explain how each addresses a different cause in the passage, and identify one obstacle your plan might face.

Paths to War

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two economic pressures, circle two government responses, and number two failures of international cooperation to trace how these conditions raised the risk of war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did U.S. bank failures spread economic trouble overseas, and what was one social effect of the Depression?	**U.S. banks called in overseas loans, spreading financial pressure abroad. Families lost incomes as factories closed.**
2	How did the response of some democracies to hardship differ from the response offered by Mussolini's Fascists?	**Some democracies expanded public jobs and social welfare programs, while Mussolini's Fascists used violence and promised order.**
3	Why did treaty violations and weak responses to invasions make another war more likely?	**Germany violated military limits, while weak responses to Japan's and Italy's invasions suggested that other countries might not stop aggression.**
4	How did Nazi propaganda and two different forms of persecution help the regime hold power? Identify who each form of persecution targeted.	**Nazi propaganda blamed Jews for national troubles. The regime silenced political critics, while the Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of citizenship and restricted their marriages.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the cabinet: Fund public jobs and provide aid to families who have lost income. This could reduce desperation that makes promises of authoritarian order attractive while keeping businesses in private hands. Work with other League members to agree on inspections and a joint response to invasions, rather than relying on protests alone. A credible shared response could discourage leaders who assume treaties can be broken without consequences. The obstacle is that governments afraid of another war may refuse to commit troops or money.

Accept other proposals that connect an economic step and an international step to distinct causes in the passage. The Nuremberg Laws targeted Jews; the silencing of political critics was a separate form of repression.