Aggression and Response

Read how nations reacted as war spread.

MWH.C.6.5.A "Describe aggression by the Axis powers (e.g., Italy's invasion of Ethiopia; Germany's militarization, the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939, annexation of Austria, and attack on Poland; Japanese invasion of China..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each Axis action that threatened another country, and circle each response by other nations or the League of Nations. Number the underlined actions in the order they happened.

When Aggression Met Hesitation

1. In 1935, Italian troops crossed into Ethiopia, one of Africa's few independent states. Italy's dictator, Benito Mussolini, wanted to expand his empire. Ethiopian forces resisted, but Italian aircraft used poison gas, and Italy occupied the country in 1936. The League of Nations, whose members included Britain and France, condemned the invasion and imposed economic sanctions. Those measures excluded oil and did not stop Italy. Britain and France avoided war with Italy. Their choice showed a troubling pattern: leaders opposed aggression in words but hesitated to risk a larger conflict to stop it.

2. Japan's war in China brought another test. In 1937, Japanese forces launched a full-scale invasion of China. After capturing Nanjing that December, Japanese troops killed large numbers of Chinese civilians and disarmed soldiers and committed widespread sexual violence. This atrocity became known as the Nanjing Massacre. Chinese forces continued fighting the invasion. Britain and France did not declare war on Japan, while the United States condemned the violence but also stayed out of the fighting. China faced a long war as other nations limited their initial response mainly to protests rather than military action.

3. Germany's actions sharpened the crisis in Europe. In 1936, Adolf Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland, where treaties prohibited German forces. Britain and France did not intervene. In 1938, Germany annexed Austria, again without a military response from those countries. In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Stalin-Hitler Pact, promising not to attack each other; a secret agreement divided parts of Eastern Europe into zones of control. Germany invaded Poland on September 1. Britain and France, which had pledged to defend Poland, declared war on Germany two days later, although they could not quickly stop the invasion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Describe Italy's aggression in Ethiopia and the initial response from the League of Nations, Britain, and France.

2. Describe Japan's actions in China, including what happened at Nanjing. How did China's response differ from Britain and France's?

3. What did Germany do in the Rhineland and Austria, and how did Britain and France respond to each action?

4. What did the Stalin-Hitler Pact promise, and how did Britain and France respond after Germany invaded Poland?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of 4 to 5 sentences comparing aggression by two different Axis powers. Describe each action, compare the initial responses by other nations, and explain how the response to Germany's attack on Poland marked a change.

ANSWER KEY

Aggression and Response

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.6.5.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each Axis action that threatened another country, and circle each response by other nations or the League of Nations. Number the underlined actions in the order they happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Describe Italy's aggression in Ethiopia and the initial response from the League of Nations, Britain, and France.	**Italy invaded Ethiopia and used poison gas. The League condemned the invasion and imposed sanctions that excluded oil; Britain and France did not go to war with Italy.**
2	Describe Japan's actions in China, including what happened at Nanjing. How did China's response differ from Britain and France's?	**Japan invaded China, and its troops killed civilians and disarmed soldiers and committed widespread sexual violence at Nanjing. China kept fighting, while Britain and France did not declare war on Japan.**
3	What did Germany do in the Rhineland and Austria, and how did Britain and France respond to each action?	**Germany sent troops into the Rhineland in violation of treaties and annexed Austria. Britain and France did not respond militarily to either action.**
4	What did the Stalin-Hitler Pact promise, and how did Britain and France respond after Germany invaded Poland?	**Germany and the Soviet Union promised not to attack each other. After Germany invaded Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, while Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937. The League of Nations imposed limited sanctions on Italy, but Britain and France did not fight either invader. China kept fighting Japan, while other nations mainly protested its actions. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany, a stronger response than they had made to the earlier attacks.

Accept accurate comparisons using any two Axis powers in the passage. Students should distinguish resistance by the invaded country from the initial actions of Britain, France, the League of Nations, or the United States.