Deals Before War

How two agreements helped Hitler pursue expansion

TOT.C.6.2 "Analyze Hitler's use of the Munich Pact to expand German territory and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to ensure the Soviet Union's neutrality."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what Hitler gained or expected to gain from each pact. Number the details that explain how each agreement helped him get it.

Agreements and Expansion

1. In September 1938, leaders from Germany, Britain, France, and Italy met in Munich. Adolf Hitler demanded the Sudetenland, a border region of Czechoslovakia with many ethnic German residents. He threatened war if Germany could not take it. Czechoslovakia, whose land was at stake, was not allowed to negotiate at the meeting. Britain and France hoped that granting Hitler this territory would prevent a wider war. The Munich Pact gave Germany the Sudetenland without a battle against Britain or France. Hitler gained land and border defenses while other powers treated his demand as a settlement rather than an invasion.

2. The agreement did not end Hitler's expansion. In March 1939, German forces occupied the Czech lands that remained, showing that his aims went beyond uniting German speakers. Poland was another target, but attacking it risked a war on two fronts. The Soviet Union lay to Poland's east. Hitler wanted to keep Soviet forces from fighting Germany while he moved against Poland. British and French leaders had promised to defend Poland's independence. If Germany invaded, Hitler could face those powers in the west. A deal with the Soviet Union could reduce the danger of fighting enemies on both sides at once.

3. On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In public, each country promised not to attack the other. A secret agreement divided parts of Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence, including a plan to split Poland. This bargain gave Hitler reason to expect the Soviet Union would not fight Germany as he invaded Poland from the west on September 1. Soviet troops entered Poland from the east on September 17. Unlike the Munich Pact, which transferred territory to Germany with Britain and France's consent, this pact helped Hitler avoid Soviet opposition while launching an invasion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Czechoslovakia's absence from the Munich meeting help Hitler gain the Sudetenland?

2. How did Hitler's actions in March 1939 challenge the idea that the Munich Pact had settled his territorial demands?

3. How did the public promise and the secret plan in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact both help Hitler move against Poland?

4. Compare the obstacle to expansion that each pact helped Hitler overcome.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word advisory memo dated late September 1939 that warns a leader against one mistaken assumption about agreements with Hitler. Use a detail from each pact to show how he used the agreements differently to advance his plans.

ANSWER KEY

Deals Before War

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.6.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what Hitler gained or expected to gain from each pact. Number the details that explain how each agreement helped him get it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Czechoslovakia's absence from the Munich meeting help Hitler gain the Sudetenland?	**Leaders of other countries agreed to give Hitler the Sudetenland while Czechoslovakia could not negotiate against losing its territory.**
2	How did Hitler's actions in March 1939 challenge the idea that the Munich Pact had settled his territorial demands?	**He occupied the remaining Czech lands, showing that his expansion went beyond the Sudetenland and his stated aim of uniting German speakers.**
3	How did the public promise and the secret plan in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact both help Hitler move against Poland?	**The promise not to attack reduced the risk of Soviet forces fighting Germany. The secret plan to split Poland gave both governments a stake in its conquest.**
4	Compare the obstacle to expansion that each pact helped Hitler overcome.	**The Munich Pact let Hitler take the Sudetenland without fighting Britain or France for it. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact reduced the risk that Soviet forces would fight Germany during its invasion of Poland.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To a leader considering another deal with Hitler: Do not assume a signed agreement will limit his demands. At Munich, Britain and France accepted his takeover of the Sudetenland, but he occupied the remaining Czech lands months later. The pact with the Soviet Union served a different purpose: its public promise of nonaggression reduced the danger of Soviet resistance when Germany invaded Poland. Its secret plan to divide Poland also showed that the two governments expected conquest, not peace. Judge his plans by what his forces do, not just what he signs.

Accept different warnings if the memo uses accurate details from both pacts and distinguishes territorial gain at Munich from reduced Soviet opposition during the invasion of Poland. Do not accept claims that the Soviet Union stayed out of Poland.