

Britain at war

War is a period of intentional actions, including armed fighting, between two or more countries or groups to force the enemy to adhere to their will.



Life changed for people in Britain. Food was scarce. Rationing was introduced towards the end of the war, leading to long queues at shops, hoarding, protests and strikes. People were worried about their safety as Zeppelins, and later German Gotha planes, carried out air raids over cities. Women took on roles traditionally done by men, such as working in factories or on the land.



Causes of World War I

There were several long-term causes of the First World War.

- Countries had previously made alliances because war seemed likely. Britain had signed a treaty to protect Belgium and was allied with France and Russia. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy were allies.
- Germany had an **imperialist** desire to **conquer** other countries.
- Countries including Germany, France, Russia and Britain practised **militarism**, growing their armies and developing weaponry.
- **Nationalism** was widespread in Europe, and the leading powers each believed their country was superior.

The short-term trigger was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian Nationalist on 28th June 1914. This resulted in Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia.

Causes of World War II

The **Treaty of Versailles** had devastated Germany. By the 1930s, unemployment and poverty in Germany were widespread. Adolf Hitler became Germany's leader in 1933 and claimed his Nazi Party would restore German pride and save the economy. He then invaded the surrounding countries. Britain and France tried appeasement rather than challenging this expansion. On **1st September 1939**, German forces invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany.



End of the First World War

The First World War ended on 11th November 1918, when Germany surrendered. Several factors brought about the Allied Powers' victory, including the United States declaring war on Germany after German submarines sank American ships. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles held Germany responsible for the war and ordered Germany to pay vast amounts in reparations. The devastation this caused to Germany played a part in the outbreak of the Second World War.



End of the Second World War

The Second World War ended on 2nd September 1945, when Japan formally surrendered. Many factors brought about the end of the war. The Allied Powers' D-Day invasion on 6th June 1944 resulted in Allied troops liberating Paris and Brussels. The Battle of the Bulge failed to break the Allied line.

Vocabulary

Alliance	A group of countries who have agreed to work together because of shared aims.
Appeasement	Giving the opposing side something they have demanded to prevent further disagreement.
Colony	A nation controlled by another country.
Conscription	Forcing people by law to join the armed services.
Genocide	The deliberate killing of large numbers of people for a particular nation or ethnic group, with the aim of destroying that nation or group.
Imperialism	The desire to conquer and colonise other countries.
Militarism	The belief that it is necessary to build up and use strong armed forces to gain power, money and land.
Reparation	Payment made by a defeated country after a war to pay for damages it caused another country.
Stalemate	A situation in which neither side can get an advantage, and no action can be taken.