The Blitz
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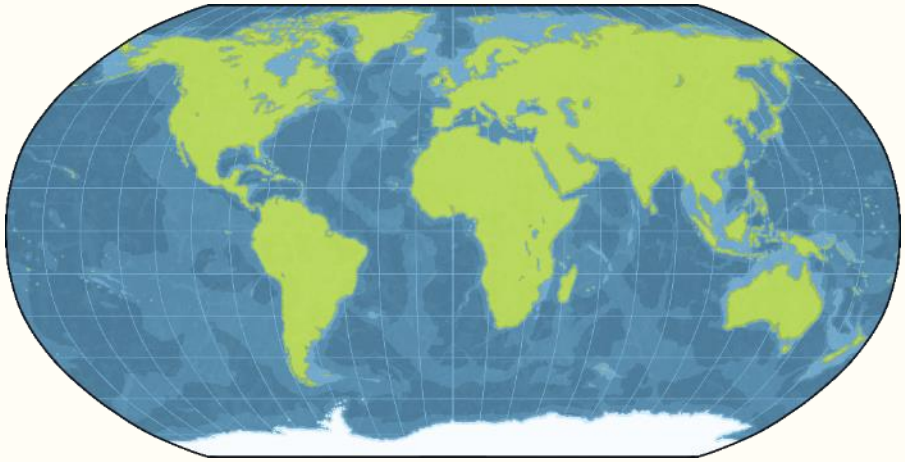
Second World War

1939 to 1945

The Second World War was fought in Europe, Russia, North Africa and in Asia and involved 61 countries.



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Second World War

1939 to 1945 The war was fought between two groups of countries.

Axis Powers	VS	Allies
Germany		Britain
Italy		France
Japan		Australia
		Canada
		New Zealand
		India
		China
		USA
		USSR

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How Did the Second World War Begin?

Adolf Hitler was in charge of Germany; he wanted his country to control Europe. Japan wanted to control Asia and the Pacific.

In 1937, Japan attacked China and in 1939 Germany *invaded* Poland. This is how the Second World War began.

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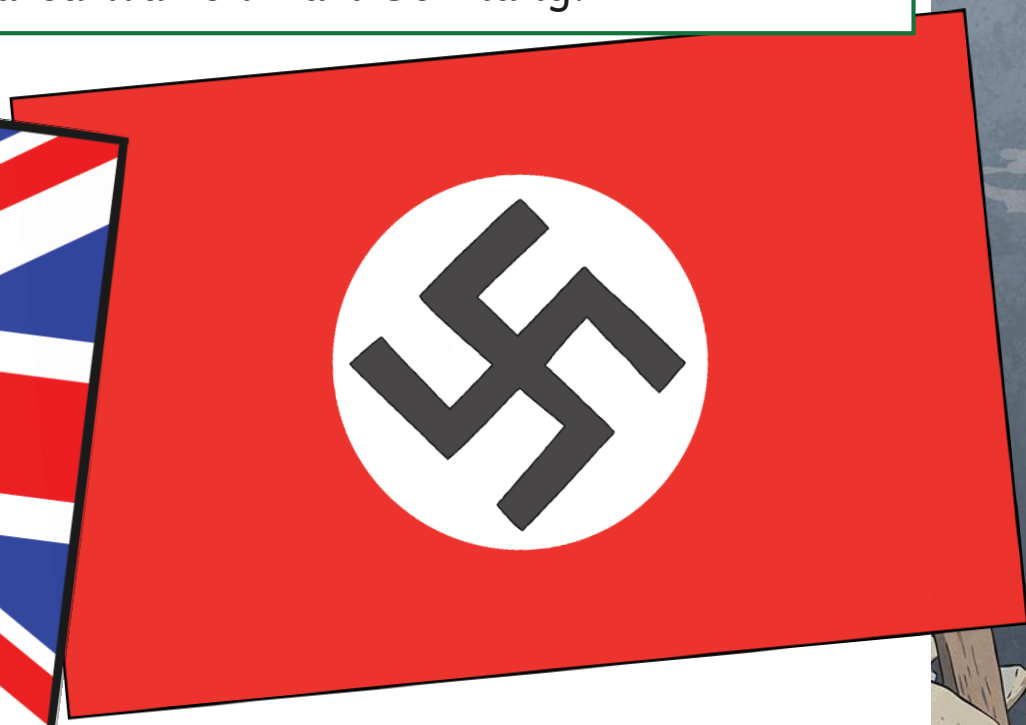
How Did the Second World War Begin?

After Nazi Germany invaded Poland, the leaders of Britain and France said they would help Poland. They told Adolf Hitler that German soldiers must leave Poland immediately. However, Hitler ignored their instruction and so on 3rd September 1939, Britain declared war on Nazi Germany.



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What Does Blitz Mean?

The word Blitz is short for the German word 'Blitzkrieg', which means 'lightning war'.

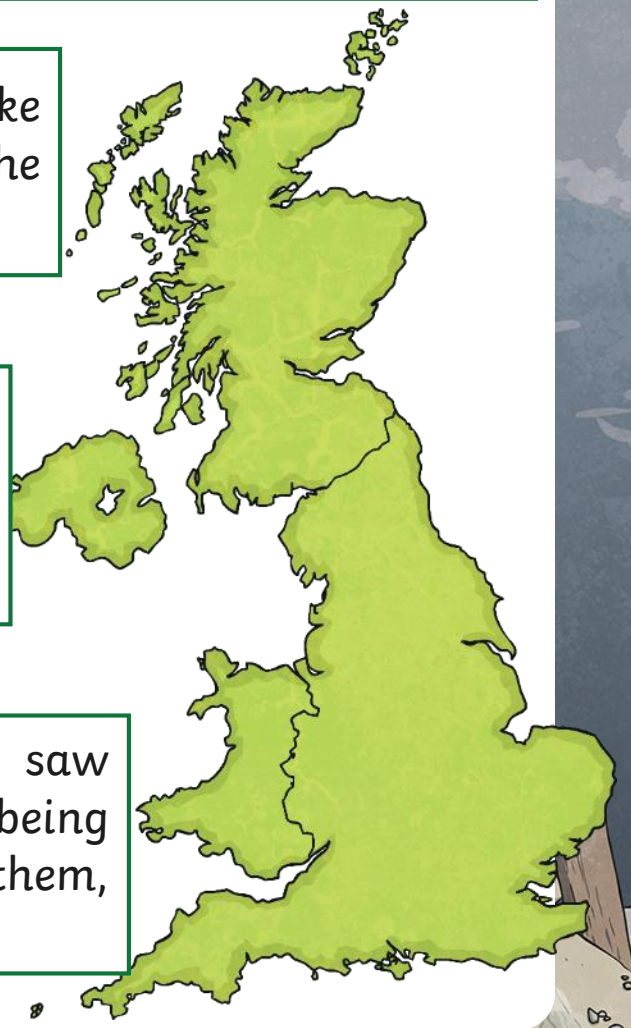
From September 1940 until May 1941, Germany began air raids in which they bombed parts of Britain at night-time. They decided to concentrate on bombing London and on 7th September 1940, London's first night of the Blitz took place, killing over 2000 people.

Why Were the Germans Bombing?

The Germans wanted to damage industrial areas, like factories and ports, so that it made it harder for the British to move weapons to fight them.

They didn't just stop at London. They bombed many other places throughout the country. They also bombed areas where people lived and thousands of people were killed.

Adolf Hitler thought that if the people of Britain saw others being killed and that their country was being destroyed, they would give up and stop fighting them, allowing Germany to take control of their country.



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Staying Safe Shelters

Some people built Anderson shelters in their gardens. These were made from strong steel sheets with soil over the top. There would often be a bench inside where people could sleep and a small entrance at one end.

Staying Safe Shelters

From 1941 onwards, people could have a Morrison shelter which was kept indoors. It looked like a cage with steel mesh around the sides and a thick sheet of steel on the top. People would sleep inside it, although it was quite squashed.

The Morrison shelter was very strong and even if the ceiling collapsed above, usually the people inside would be safe.

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Staying Safe

There were also public shelters which were made of brick. They were often dark and smelly.

People in London spent the nights in the underground shelters, sleeping on the platforms.

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Staying Safe

Children were evacuated and had to leave their parents. They were sent to live in the countryside where they were safer from the raids than in the cities.

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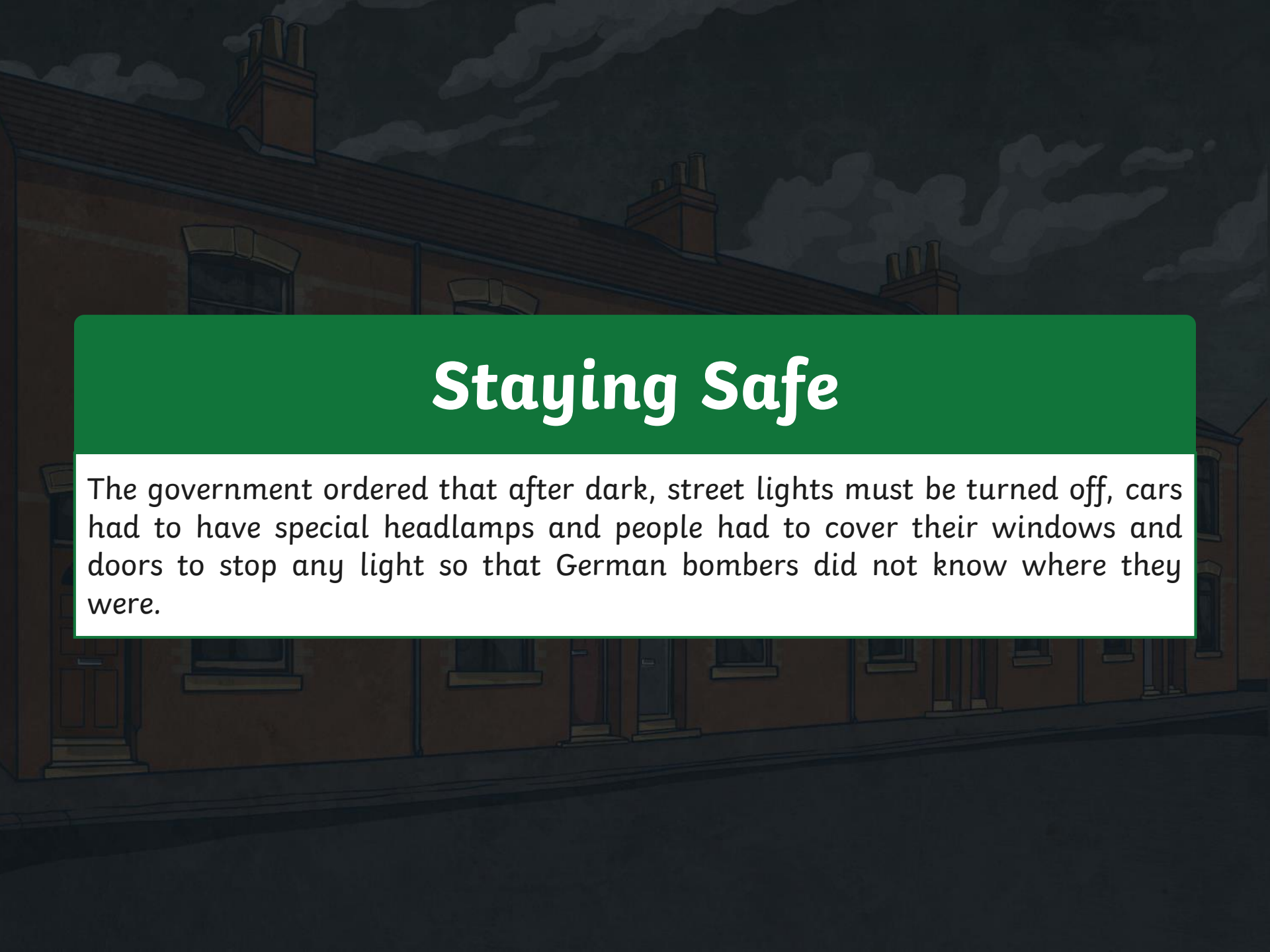


Staying Safe

The government ordered that after dark, street lights must be turned off, cars had to have special headlamps and people had to cover their windows and doors to stop any light so that German bombers did not know where they were.

Life During the Blitz

Thousands of people lost their lives during the Blitz and thousands more were seriously injured.

Shelters were cold and uncomfortable, which meant that people did not sleep well.

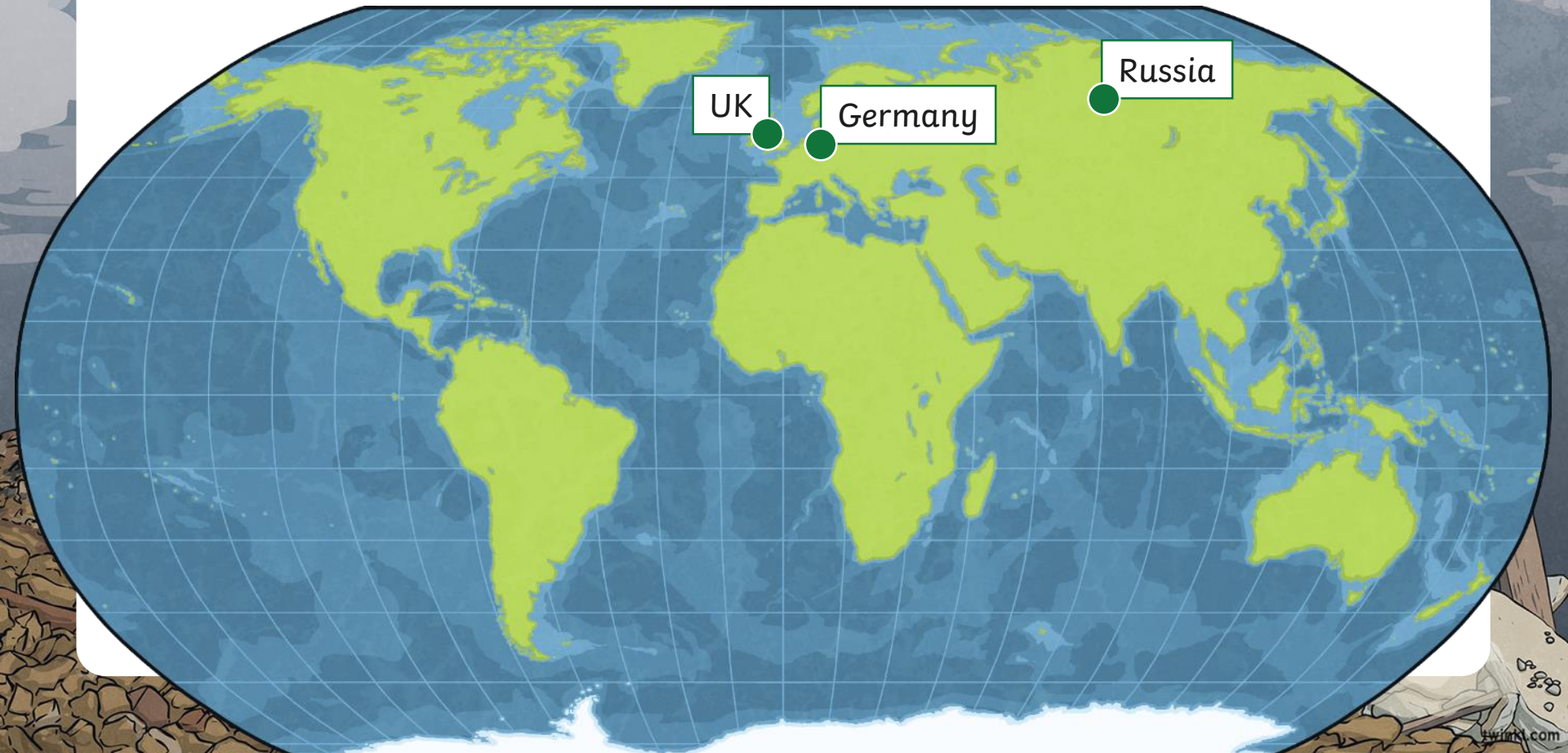
The emergency services, such as the fire fighters and ambulance crews, had to try to save people while bombs were being dropped around them and buildings were collapsing.

Sometimes, unexploded bombs would be left in the streets and had to be made safe before anyone could go near them.

Crime rates rose sharply and many places were looted during blackouts.

Why Did the Raids Stop?

The Blitz ended on 16th May 1941 when the German bombers were ordered to fly to Russia. Germany was planning to invade Russia next.



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