



History

World War II

Key Events



Aim

- I can describe what happened during some key events from World War II and order events on a timeline.

Success Criteria

- I can describe some of the key events of World War II.
- I can order events from World War II onto a timeline.
- I can explain why a specific World War II event was a key turning point in the war.

Key Events in World War II



World War II lasted for six years. It began on the 3rd September 1939 and ended on 2nd September 1945.

Over fifty million people were killed during World War II, which affected almost every country in the world.

The events of World War II have shaped the world we know today and will continue to impact on our future for a long time to come.



Key Events in World War II



Talk to your partner.

Look at the **World War II Events Cards**.

What do you know about each event?

Why are these events particularly significant?

Can you put them into chronological order?

What other events from World War II do you know about?



Key Events in World War II



Hitler's Troops Invade Poland



German tanks in Poland

This event, which happened on the **1st September, 1939**, sparked the beginning of World War II. Britain and France had promised to help Poland if Germany attacked them, so when Hitler refused to withdraw his troops, Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939.

Key Events in World War II



The Battle of France



British Soldiers in France

This event began on the **10th May, 1940**, after what seemed to many people, a slow start to the war on the Western Front. Germany's troops blazed through France and other West European countries using their blitzkrieg (lightning war) technique. Within six weeks, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were captured.

Key Events in World War II



The Battle of Britain



Spitfires in the Battle of Britain

This event began on the **10th July, 1940** when British ships in the English Channel were bombed by the German Luftwaffe. Mass bombing of airfields, harbours, radar stations and aircraft factories began in August 1940.

Key Events in World War II



The Blitz



Bomb damage during the Blitz

This event began on the **7th September, 1940** when the Luftwaffe turned their attention to the bombing of London and other cities, rather than the military targets they had previously focused on. London was bombed for fifty-seven consecutive nights and suffered extensive damage and the loss of thousands of civilian lives.

Key Events in World War II



The Evacuation at Dunkirk



Evacuated troops arrive in
Dover from Dunkirk

This event (code-named Operation Dynamo) began on the **26th May, 1940**. After sustaining a massive defeat against the Nazis in France, the Allies were forced to retreat to the beaches of Dunkirk.

They were rescued by hundreds of small, wooden boats and then transferred to larger ships to sail across the channel to Dover.

Key Events in World War II



The German Invasion of Russia



German troops in Russia, June 1941

This event, which was named Operation Barbarossa, began on the **22nd June, 1941**. At the beginning of the war, Hitler had signed a non-aggression pact with the Russian leader, Stalin. When Hitler broke this agreement and invaded Russia, Russia became one of the Allies and began to fight back against Germany.

Key Events in World War II



Japan bombs Pearl Harbour in Hawaii



Pearl Harbour

This event took place on the **7th December, 1941** when Japan bombed a US Naval base. Until this point, the US had opted to remain neutral in the war but this event prompted them to declare war on Japan the next day. On the 11th December, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

Key Events in World War II



The Dambusters Raid



Damage caused to the Möhne Dam

This event, called Operation Chastise, took place on the 16th and **17th May, 1943**. Specially developed 'bouncing bombs' were dropped by Lancaster bomber planes on three German dams. This caused disruption to the manufacture of German war products and affected infrastructure in the area.

Key Events in World War II



D-Day: The Normandy Landings



British troops arriving
in Normandy

The term D-Day refers to a specific date for a planned operation: in this case the Allied attack on the beaches of Normandy, which took place on the **6th June, 1944** and was code-named 'Operation Neptune'. The Normandy landings were the first stage of 'Operation Overlord', which aimed (and eventually succeeded) to drive the Germans out of France. This was fully achieved on the 30th August, 1944.

Key Events in World War II



The Battle of the Bulge



A British tank guards a bridge

This event, whose official name was The Ardennes Offensive, began on the **16th December, 1944**. It was an attempt by Hitler to try and split up the Allies and stop them advancing on Germany. After some initial success, lack of fuel and retaliation by the Allied air force soon halted the offensive.

Key Events in World War II



VE Day



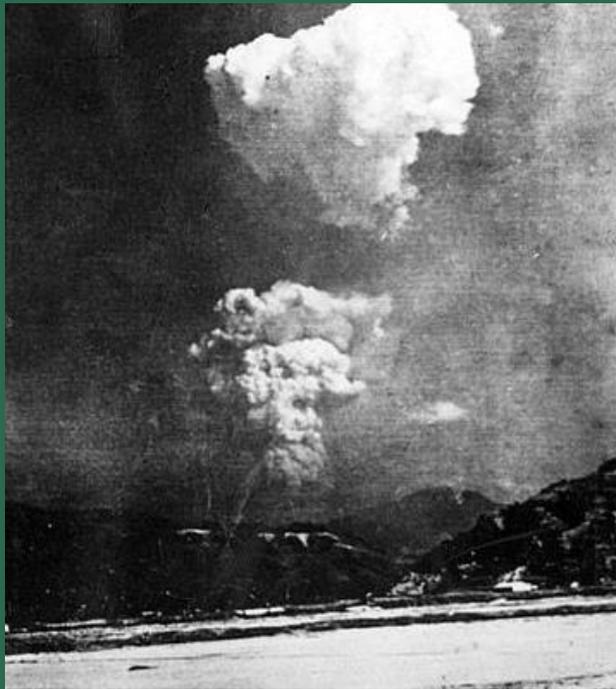
Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, waves to crowds in London in 1945

VE Day stands for 'Victory in Europe Day'. Following the suicide of Hitler on 30th April, 1945, Germany surrendered to the West on the 7th May, 1945. **8th May 1945**, was the date the Allies celebrated the defeat of Nazi Germany (VE Day). VE Day is celebrated on the 8th May each year.

Key Events in World War II



The USA Drops Atomic Bombs on Japan



Smoke from the Hiroshima Bomb

Although the war in Europe had come to an end, fighting continued in the Pacific. In an attempt to end the war as quickly as possible, the American president, Harry Truman, sanctioned the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities: Hiroshima on the **6th August, 1945** and Nagasaki on the **9th August, 1945**. On the 14th August, 1945, Japan surrendered to the West. The moral debate as to whether the use of such a weapon was justified, still rages on today.

The official end of the war was on the 2nd September, 1945 when Japan formally surrendered.

World War II Timeline



Complete the World War II Timeline Activity Sheet to order and describe key events from the war.

An illustration of a young girl with curly brown hair and freckles, wearing a blue t-shirt. She is holding a white worksheet with a yellow pencil in her right hand. The worksheet is titled 'World War II Timeline' and features a timeline with eight empty boxes for dates and descriptions. The background is a light green wall.

World War II Timeline

Match the dates to the correct information. When you have finished, cut out the cards and place them on the timeline. There is one spare card. Can you add your own event?

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Turning Points



Your teacher will ask you to research about a particular event from World War II. Work with the other children in your group to investigate the following question:

To what extent was this event a turning point in the war?

A turning point represents a moment in time when a decision made affects the outcome of a whole course of events. So, a turning point of the war is one where the overall direction and eventual outcome of the war was changed (perhaps potential victory swung a certain way).



The World War II Turning Point Investigation Activity Sheet will help you to structure and organise your investigation.

Debate



What was the key turning point in World War II?



Think about each of the events you have learnt about. Use your **Turning Points Key Facts Activity Sheet** and listen to the opinions of others to help you decide.

Consider:

Which events do you think were the most significant?

Is there a specific event that you consider to be the main turning point in the war?

Reflection



Complete the **World War II KWL Grid** that you began in lesson 1 to include details of your learning throughout this series of lessons.

Think about each lesson you have completed:

- The Outbreak of War;
- Evacuation;
- Rationing;
- The Role of Women;
- The Holocaust;
- Key Events.



Try to include key facts and details from each lesson.

Is there anything else you would still like to know?

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