Your notes

KS3 History: revision notes

The Second World War and the Holocaust

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Causes and early war

- Many Germans resented the Treaty of Versailles. The Great Depression helped Hitler and the Nazis come to power in 1933.
- Britain and France tried **appeasement**: giving in to Hitler's demands to avoid war (the Munich Agreement, 1938).
- Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, and Britain and France declared war on 3 September.
- In 1940, over 300,000 Allied soldiers were rescued from Dunkirk. The RAF won the Battle of Britain, and the **Blitz** bombed British cities until 1941.

The war spreads

- Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, bringing the USA into the war.
- The Soviet victory at Stalingrad (1942 to 1943) was a turning point. The Allies landed in Normandy on **D-Day**, 6 June 1944.
- Germany surrendered: **VE Day** was 8 May 1945. After atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, Japan surrendered.
- The home front: children were evacuated from 1939, food was rationed from 1940, and women worked in factories, on farms (the Land Army) and in the armed forces.

The Holocaust

- The **Holocaust** was the Nazis' **persecution** and murder of about six million Jews. Roma and Sinti people, disabled people and others were also murdered.
- **Persecution** grew step by step: boycotts of Jewish shops (1933), the Nuremberg Laws took away Jews' rights (1935), and Kristallnacht (November 1938) saw synagogues, shops and homes attacked.

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- During the war, Jews were forced into **ghettos**, shot in mass killings, and sent to **death camps** such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Wannsee Conference (1942) planned the "Final Solution".
- **Holocaust** Memorial Day is held on 27 January, the date Auschwitz was liberated in 1945.

Your notes

Key terms

Appeasement	Giving in to demands to avoid war.
Evacuation	Moving people, especially children, away from danger.
Blitz	The German bombing of British cities in 1940 and 1941.
Rationing	Limiting the amount of food and goods each person can buy.
D-Day	The Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944.
VE Day	Victory in Europe Day, 8 May 1945.
Holocaust	The Nazis' murder of about six million Jews and millions of others.
Persecution	Treating people cruelly because of who they are.
Ghetto	A closed area of a city where Jews were forced to live.
Death camp	A camp built to murder people, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. When did Germany invade Poland, starting the Second World War?
2. What was appeasement?
3. What happened at Dunkirk in 1940?
4. What was the Battle of Britain?
5. What was the Blitz?
6. Why were children evacuated in 1939?
7. What was D-Day?
8. What brought the USA into the war in December 1941?

Answers

1. 1 September 1939
2. Giving in to Hitler's demands to avoid war
3. Over 300,000 Allied soldiers were rescued from France
4. The RAF defending Britain against the German air force in 1940
5. The German bombing of British cities in 1940 and 1941
6. To keep them safe from bombing
7. The Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944

8. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor

What to do next

Practise 14 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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