

## The Steps to War

Once Hitler had established power in Germany, he quickly began to rearm the country and take over surrounding territory. Italy and Japan also began to invade foreign territories to add to their empires. Reaction from other nations was cautious at first, but by September 1939, World War II had begun.



### Germany Rearms

Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany and immediately begins expanding the German army and air force beyond the limits set out in the Treaty of Versailles. The German military slogan is, "Today Germany. Tomorrow the world!"

### Mussolini Invades Ethiopia

Italy invades Ethiopia in Africa to expand its territory and to obtain the region's rich oil resources. Again the League of Nations takes no decisive action.

### Munich Agreement is Signed

Britain and France meet with Hitler and sign the **Munich Agreement**. They allow Germany to have the Sudetenland (the northwestern part of Czechoslovakia) because they believe it will save the world from war. This policy becomes known as "appeasement".

### Germany Annexes Austria

Nazi soldiers occupy Austria without a single shot being fired. Again, other nations make no attempt to stop Hitler's advance because they want to avoid another war.

### Hitler Occupies the Rhineland

German troops march into the Rhineland. By the Treaty of Versailles, German troops were forbidden from moving within 50 km of the Rhine River. No one stops the German advance.

### Hitler Invades Poland

Hitler demands that the Polish Corridor (awarded to Poland after the Treaty of Versailles) be handed back to Germany. Poland refuses. The Nazis launch a Blitzkrieg (lightning war) on Poland. Poland falls to the Nazi attack.

### Germany and Soviet Union Sign Non-aggression Pact

Germany signs a pact with the Soviet Union. The two countries promise not to fight each other in the event of a war. They also secretly agree to divide Poland between them. Hitler is now free to plan his moves against France and Britain in the west. He no longer has to fear an attack from the Soviet Union on the east.

### Hitler Occupies Czechoslovakia

Hitler had claimed the Sudetenland was his last demand for territory, but in March 1939 Nazi troops occupy all of Czechoslovakia.

### Rome-Berlin Axis Pact is Signed

Hitler signs a pact with Mussolini. Mussolini allows Hitler to take Austria and other territories in northern and central Europe. Hitler promises to let Mussolini take over southern Europe. Later in 1940, Japan joins the alliance. These countries are known as the **Axis Powers**.

### Britain and France Declare War

Britain and France realize there can be no more appeasement. They declare war on Germany. World War II begins.

### Canada Declares War on Germany



Hitler enters Austria triumphant.

September 1938

March 1938

1936

1935

1933

1931

October 1938

March 1939

August 1939

September 1 1939

September 3 1939

September 10 1939