Y6 – WW2

Key vocabulary

Allies	The United Kingdom, France and Poland later joined by USSR (soviet union), United States of America and China
Axis	The Axis powers were originally Germany, Japan and Italy. Other countries joined them later.
Nazi Party	A German political party with racist and Anti-Jewish ideas led by Adolf Hitler.
Atomic bomb	A very high energy bomb made of radioactive material.
Annex	To take another country's land and make it part of your country.
Czechoslovakia	A European country. Now two countries, Czech Republic and Slovakia
Propaganda	Information designed to promote a political idea or opinion.
Active service	Taking part in a military operation as part of the armed forces.

Evacuation

During WWII, over 3.5 million children, along with some of their teachers, mother with very young children , pregnant women and people with disabilities were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, where it was believed they would be safer from the bombing. All evacuees had to take with them their gas masks, ration book and identity card. When they reached their destination, a billeting officer would arrange a host family for them.

Evacuation happened in waves, beginning on 1st September 1939. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain and at the start of the Blitz.

How did WWII start?

The leader of Germany, Adolf Hitler, had plans to take over other countries. In March 1938, Germany invaded and annexed Austria, which made other countries worried. On 29th September 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders signed a treaty called the Munich agreement. This allowed Hitler to annex Sudentenland (an area of Czechoslovakia) if he agreed not to invade anywhere else. However, in August 1939, Hitler broke the agreement and invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, followed by Poland on the 1st September. Britain, France and Poland had made a pact to support each other, so Britain and France declared war upon Germany.

Important People

Adolf Hitler	Sir Winston Churchill
Leader of Germany and the Nazi Party	Prime minister from the middle of 1940

Rationing

Supply ships were targeted by German bombers and it was necessary to conserve as much food as possible. Rationing meant that each person was only allowed a fixed amount of foods. Ration books were issued with coupons that showed people how much of each item they were allowed. Shopkeepers would keep or stamp the coupons when they were used. People were also encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' and grow as much as they could at home.

Petrol, soap, clothing and timber were also in short supply. Clothing ration books were also issued and people were encouraged to 'make do and mend'.

Role of the women

Before the war most women stayed at home and didn't go to work. Those who did work were paid less than men and were generally restricted to 'women's jobs', such as nursing or working as a shop assistant. However, when men were called up for active service, women were needed to do jobs such as making weapons, driving buses and trains or working in engineering or shipbuilding. Some joined the armed forces themselves.

After the war, many women lost their jobs. However their experiences led them to campaign for equal working rights and pay so they could carry on leading more independent lives.

The Holocaust

The Holocaust is the term for the killing of over 6 million Jewish People before and during WW2, organised by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Even before the war, they wanted to blame the Jews for the problems in Germany and used propaganda to promote widespread public hatred of them. Jewish people were openly bullied, persecuted, abused and discriminated against.

Many Jews were sent to concentration camps where they were forced to work like slaves. Many died through infection, starvation or exhaustion. Others were sent to death camps where they were killed in gas chambers. This form of mass killing is called genocide.

Propaganda Posters

Key events

1st September 1939

Germany invades Poland

10th May 1940

Battle of France begins

7th September 1940

The Blitz begins

6th June 1944

The D-Day landings

6th and 9th August 1945

The US drops atomic bombs on 2 cities in Japan.

3rd September 1939

Britain and France declare war on Germany.

10th July 1940

Battle of Britain begins

7th December 1941

Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in the US

7th May 1945

Germany surrenders to the Allies