

Aggressors Invade Nations

Each answer requires
A Paragraph
on a separate piece of paper.

Please do not simply copy
the information from the
reading.

Japan Seeks an Empire

Why did Japan wish to expand?

Military leaders took control of Japan during the Great Depression. They wanted to solve the country's economic problems by foreign expansion.

In 1931, the Japanese army *invaded* Manchuria, a province of China. Manchuria was rich in coal and iron. These were valuable resources for the Japanese economy. Other countries spoke in protest in the League of Nations but did nothing else. Japan ignored the protests. In 1933, it pulled out of the League.

Four years later, Japan invaded China. The powerful Japanese army swept Chinese fighters aside. It killed tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers in the city of Nanjing. In spite of these losses, Chinese forces—both the nationalists of the

government and Communist rebels—continued to resist Japan.

1. What territories did Japan invade?

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European Aggressors on the March

What European nations were aggressors?

Italy's Mussolini also wanted to expand. He dreamed of an Italian empire in Africa. In 1935 he ordered the invasion of Ethiopia. His troops won an easy victory. Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia, pleaded with the League of Nations to

help. The League did nothing. By giving in to Mussolini in Africa, Britain and France hoped to keep the peace in Europe.

Hitler made moves also. He broke the Versailles Treaty by rebuilding Germany's army. In 1936, he sent troops into an area along the Rhine River between Germany and France that the treaty had forbidden the Germans to enter. The French and British again responded with **appeasement**—giving in to keep the peace.

The German movement into the Rhineland marked a turning point in the march toward war. Also in 1936, Hitler signed an alliance with Mussolini and with Japan. These three nations came to be called the **Axis Powers**.

In 1936, civil war broke out in Spain. The army, led by General **Francisco Franco**, revolted against a government run by liberals and socialists. Hitler and Mussolini sent aid to the army, which was backed by Spanish Fascists. The Soviet Union sent aid to the government. In early 1939, the government's resistance to the army collapsed. Francisco Franco became Spain's Fascist dictator.

2. What places did Germany and Italy invade?

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Democratic Nations Try to Preserve Peace

Why did the world's democracies fail to stop the aggression?

At this time, many Americans resisted accepting the nation's new role as a world leader. They believed that the United States should follow a pol-

icy of **isolationism**. Isolationism was the belief that political ties with other countries should be avoided. This, it was thought, would keep the country out of another foreign war.

In March 1938, Hitler moved his troops into Austria. He made it part of the **Third Reich**, or German Empire. This action broke the Versailles Treaty again. France and Britain once more did nothing.

Later that year, Hitler demanded that Czechoslovakia give up a part of its land to Germany. Czechoslovakia refused. The **Munich Conference** was held in September 1938 to solve the problem. At this meeting Germany, France, Britain, and Italy agreed to allow the Germans to take the land. In return, Hitler promised to respect the new borders of Czechoslovakia. A few months later, however, he took the entire country.

In the summer of 1939, Hitler made a similar demand of Poland. That nation also refused to give up land. Britain and France now said that they would protect Poland. But Hitler believed that they would not risk going to war. At the same time, he signed an agreement with Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. The two countries promised never to attack one another.

The Axis Powers were moving unchecked at the end of the decade. The whole world was waiting to see what would happen next. It seemed that war would break out.

3. What happened at the Munich Conference?

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