

Second World War Leaders



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The Second World War

The Second World War was fought by countries on two different sides, the Allies and the Axis Powers. Here are some of the countries on each side.

The Allies	The Axis Powers
Great Britain	Germany
The Soviet Union	Italy
France	Japan
The United States of America	Romania
India	Hungary
China	Bulgaria
Australia	
New Zealand	
Canada	

Some countries were **neutral**, including Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Allies and the Axis Powers

Here are some of the leaders from each side.

The Allies	The Axis Powers
<u>Neville Chamberlain</u>	<u>Adolf Hitler</u>
<u>Winston Churchill</u>	<u>Benito Mussolini</u>
<u>Franklin Delano Roosevelt</u>	<u>Tadeki Tojo</u>
<u>Joseph Stalin</u>	



Adolf Hitler

Side: Axis Powers
Country: Germany
Lived: 1889 – 1945

Did You Know...?

Hitler fought for the German Army in the First World War and won the Iron Cross First Class for bravery.



Hitler's Nationalist Socialist Party (the Nazi Party) won power in 1933. Their main beliefs were:

- Germany needed more land;
- all people who spoke German should live in one country and be ruled by one strong leader (Hitler himself was born in Austria);
- that certain groups of people were better than others and people of the Jewish faith weren't as good as others.

Adolf Hitler

Throughout the 1930s, Hitler built up Germany's armed forces and weaponry. He was known as a skilled **orator** which is one of the reasons for his huge popularity. Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939 led to the start of the Second World War.

Initially, the war went well for Hitler. However, in 1941 he made the mistake of starting war on a second **front** by invading Russia. Eventually, fighting a war across such a huge area caused Germany's defeat.

Realising the war was nearly at an end, Hitler went into hiding in his underground bunker in Berlin (the capital of Germany). There he married his long-term companion, Eva Braun on 30th April 1945. Rather than surrender to the Allies, Hitler took his own life.



Neville Chamberlain

Side: The Allies
Country: Great Britain
Lived: 1869 – 1940

Did You Know...?

Chamberlain came from a famous political family. His father and half-brother were also Members of Parliament.



Neville Chamberlain belonged to the Conservative Party and was an MP for two areas in Birmingham. Following the resignation of the previous Prime Minister, Chamberlain became Prime Minister in 1937. At this time, Germany was building up its army, navy and supply of weapons, as well as invading several areas. All of these things were against the peace terms set out at the end of the First World War. Chamberlain felt the best way to avoid another world war was something called appeasement. This meant allowing Hitler whatever he wanted in order to keep peace.

Neville Chamberlain

In 1938, Chamberlain flew to Germany to meet with Hitler. Both leaders signed a document called the Anglo-German agreement which stated the “symbolic desire of our two peoples never to go to war again”. On his return to Britain, Chamberlain declared that there would be “peace for our time”.

The invasion of Poland in September 1939 showed that Hitler had no intention of sticking to the terms of the Anglo-German agreement. As Britain had made a pact with Poland, the invasion meant that Britain and Germany were now at war.

With the war going badly, Chamberlain resigned in 1940. Chamberlain died on 9th November 1940, not long after his resignation.

Do you think Chamberlain was right to keep peace?

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Benito Mussolini



Side: Axis Powers
Country: Italy
Lived: 1883 – 1945

Did You Know...?

Mussolini was expelled from school for attacking another pupil.

Mussolini wanted to restore the Roman Empire. In March 1919, he started the Fascist Party. The Fascist Party's main beliefs were:

- that Italy should invade countries and make them part of their Empire;
- that white people (the 'Aryan race') were better than everyone else, particularly Jewish people.

Members of the Fascist Party wore all black and became known as 'Black Shirts'. They often became violent to people who disagreed with their beliefs.

Benito Mussolini

Mussolini was a dramatic [orator](#) which helped him gain popularity. In 1922, Mussolini took control of Italy and eventually became a [dictator](#). Just like Hitler was doing in Germany, Mussolini started to build up his country's armed forces and weapons. In 1936, Italy invaded Ethiopia in Africa. Like Hitler, Mussolini brought in anti-Jewish policies throughout the 1930s.

The Pact of Steel was a treaty signed in 1939 between Italy and Germany and in 1940 Italy entered the Second World War.

By 1943, Italy had suffered huge military defeats and on 23rd July of that year, Mussolini resigned. German forces rescued Mussolini before he could be arrested by the Allies. As the war neared its end and Allied forces captured more areas, Mussolini disguised himself as a German soldier on a [convoy](#) heading towards Austria. However, some Italian people recognised Mussolini and shot him.



Winston Churchill

Side: The Allies
Country: Great Britain
Lived: 1874 – 1965

Did You Know...?

Although Churchill lost the 1945 general election, he became prime minister again in 1951.



Churchill became prime minister following Chamberlain's resignation in 1940. Churchill had been in politics for a long time and was First Lord of the Admiralty (political head of the Royal Navy) during the Second World War. However, he made some military decisions that went badly. He resigned and actually went to fight in the war.

Churchill made lots of inspirational speeches that kept British morale high during the dark days of the Second World War.

Winston Churchill

Churchill was a strong wartime leader whose decisions helped the Allies achieve victory. However, he lost the general election in 1945.

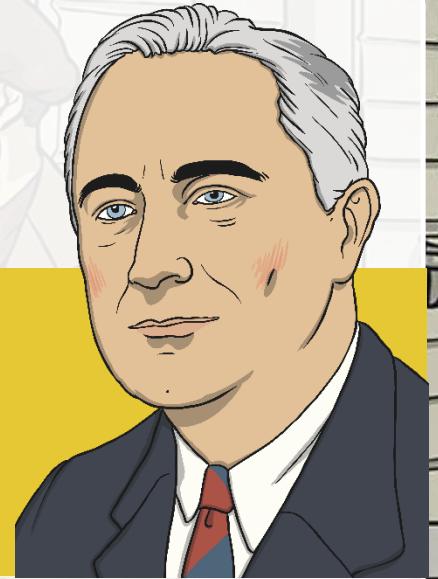
Churchill died in 1965 and was one of few non-[monarchs](#) to be given a special funeral called a state funeral. This was in recognition of how well he led the country during the Second World War.



“We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt



Side: The Allies
Country: United States
of America
Lived: 1882 – 1945

Did You Know...?

One of Roosevelt's distant cousins, Theodore Roosevelt, was also President.

Roosevelt (commonly known by his initials FDR) was from an important American family.

When he was 39, he developed polio, an illness which left him unable to walk. Determined to not allow his illness to defeat him, Roosevelt swam three times a week to help build up his strength. He was fitted with metal braces that kept his legs straight and enabled him to stand and he insisted that everyone around him remained cheerful to help with his recovery. Roosevelt needed a wheelchair for most things but was reluctant to let the public see him in one, in case they thought he wasn't up to being President.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Initially, the United States weren't involved in the Second World War. Although he felt the US should join, most American people were against it. It wasn't until Japan bombed Pearl Harbour (a US naval base in Hawaii) in December 1941, that the United States joined the Allies and were involved in the war.

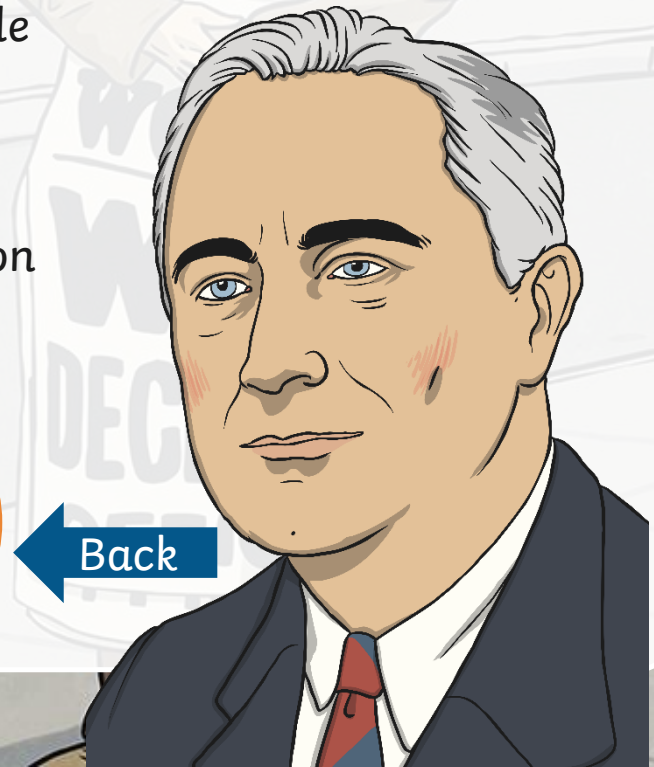
For the rest of the war, Roosevelt made many radio broadcasts, keeping the American people up to date with what was happening and making speeches that boosted [morale](#).

He died from his long-term health problems on 12th April 1945, before the end of the war.

Do you think Franklin Roosevelt was right to worry about what people thought of him being in a wheelchair?

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Joseph Stalin

Side: The Allies
Country: The Soviet Union
Lived: 1879 – 1953

Did You Know...?

Stalin's full name was Iosif (Joseph) Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili.



Stalin came from a very poor family and had a hard childhood. In the early twentieth century, Stalin joined a group called the Bolsheviks, who led the Russian Revolution in 1917. The revolution overturned the government and removed the Tsar (the Russian ruler) from power. The Tsar and his family were later killed by the Bolsheviks. In 1924, Stalin became leader of the Soviet Union.

Joseph Stalin

Stalin's alliance with the Allies was [controversial](#) because of two things:

- His policies – he introduced purges, where his enemies were either killed or sent to prison camps. He deliberately caused famines in parts of the Soviet Union to punish people. It is estimated that between 20 million and 40 million people were killed as a result of these policies.
- Originally, Stalin had made an alliance with Hitler. Stalin only joined the Allies after Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941. Despite this, the Soviet Union played a key role in the Allies' victory. Over three quarters of all German soldiers killed, died fighting the Soviet Union. 26 million Soviet people died in the war and lots of the country was destroyed.

Despite being Allies in the war, relations between Stalin and the USA and Great Britain were not good and eventually turned into the [Cold War](#).

Given the way Stalin led, do you think Great Britain were right to form an alliance with him?

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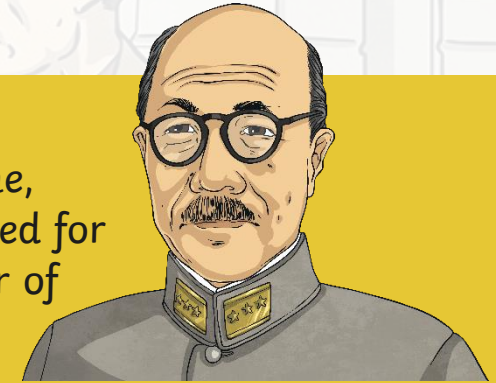
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Hideki Tojo

Side: Axis Powers
Country: Japan
Lived: 1884 – 1948

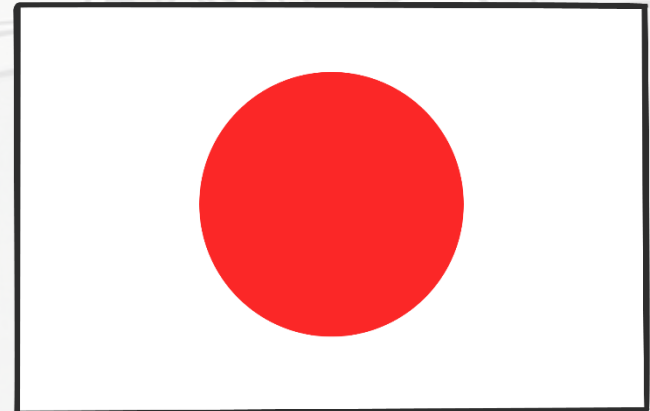
Did You Know...?

Japan also had an Emperor at this time, Emperor Hirohito. Hirohito was not tried for any war crimes and remained Emperor of Japan until his death in 1989.



Tojo's father was in the Japanese army and his mother was the daughter of a Buddhist priest.

From 1904 to 1905, Japan was at war with Russia. The war ended with a treaty which was overseen by the American President, Theodore Roosevelt.

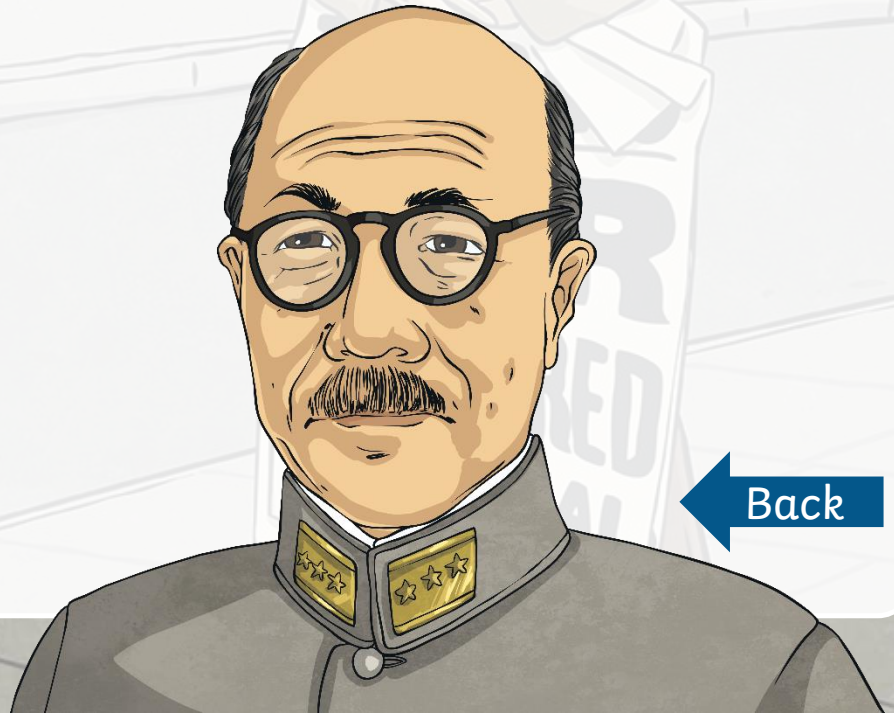


Hideki Tojo

Tojo served in the Japanese army and spent time in Switzerland and Germany.

He became Prime Minister of Japan in 1941. That same year, Tojo was part of the government conference that ordered one of the key events of the Second World War – Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbour in Hawaii (a part of the United States of America). This caused the USA to join the war on the side of the Allies.

After the war, Tojo was tried for war crimes. He was found guilty and executed in 1948.



Glossary

Cold War – A time of great tension and disagreement without actual open war.

controversial – Something that causes a disagreement or argument.

convoy – A group of vehicles travelling together.

dictator – A ruler with unlimited power who doesn't allow elections to vote in anyone else.

front – An area where a war is being fought.

monarch – A king, queen or head of state.

morale – The confidence of a group of people.

neutral – Someone who does not take sides.

orator – A person who is very good at making speeches.

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the word in
bold to go
back to that
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