

HISTORY · Y5–Y6

World War Two

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 History

Key vocabulary

1

Allied Powers

The countries that fought against the Axis. Main Allies: UK, France, Soviet Union, USA, Canada, Australia.

2

Axis Powers

Germany, Italy, and Japan — the three main countries that fought against the Allies.

3

Blitz

German bombing campaign against British cities, mainly 1940–1941. London, Coventry, and Liverpool were heavily bombed.

4

Evacuation

Moving children from cities to the countryside to protect them from bombing. Around 1.5 million children were evacuated in Britain.

5

Holocaust

The systematic murder of six million Jewish people (and millions of others) by the Nazi regime.

6

D-Day

6 June 1944. Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, beginning the liberation of Western Europe.

7

Rationing

Limiting how much of certain goods (food, fuel, clothing) people could buy. Introduced in Britain to make supplies last.



8

VE Day

Victory in Europe Day — 8 May 1945. Germany surrendered. The war in Europe ended.

9

VJ Day

Victory over Japan Day — 15 August 1945. Japan surrendered after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

10

Nazi

Member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Under Adolf Hitler, the Nazis controlled Germany from 1933–1945.

Timeline of key events

1939–1945

- 1939: Germany invades Poland. Britain and France declare war on Germany (3 September). World War Two begins.
- 1940: Germany invades France. Dunkirk evacuation — 330,000 Allied soldiers rescued from the beaches. Battle of Britain (RAF vs Luftwaffe). The Blitz begins.
- 1941: Germany invades the Soviet Union. Japan attacks Pearl Harbor (December) — USA enters the war.
- 1942–43: Turning points. Germany defeated at Stalingrad (Eastern Front). Allied victories in North Africa.
- 1944: D-Day landings in Normandy (6 June). Allied forces begin liberating Western Europe.
- 1945: Allied forces reach Berlin. Hitler dies (30 April). Germany surrenders — VE Day (8 May).
- 1945: Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima (6 Aug) and Nagasaki (9 Aug). Japan surrenders — VJ Day (15 Aug). War ends.

Home Front in Britain

Life for ordinary people during

- **EVACUATION:** children from cities were sent to live with families in the countryside. Some went to Wales, Scotland, and rural England.



- RATIONING: food, clothing, and petrol were rationed. People grew food in gardens and parks ('Dig for Victory').
- AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS: blackout curtains to hide light from bombers. Anderson shelters in gardens. Morrison shelters indoors.
- WOMEN'S WORK: with men away at war, women took on factory, farm, and transport jobs. The Women's Land Army worked on farms.
- PROPAGANDA: government posters encouraged people to 'Keep Calm and Carry On', save materials, and report suspicious activity.
- THE BLITZ: German bombing killed around 43,000 civilians in Britain. Many cities were heavily damaged.
- Community spirit was strong — people helped each other and continued daily life despite the danger and hardship.

Key figures

People who shaped the war

- WINSTON CHURCHILL (UK): Prime Minister from May 1940. Famous speeches inspired the British public ('We shall fight on the beaches...'). Led Britain through the war's darkest years.
- ADOLF HITLER (Germany): Nazi leader and Chancellor of Germany from 1933. His invasions of Europe started the war. Died in Berlin, April 1945.
- FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (USA): US President who led America into the war after Pearl Harbor. Died April 1945, weeks before VE Day.
- JOSEPH STALIN (Soviet Union): Leader of the USSR. The Eastern Front—where Germany fought the Soviet Union—was the war's largest and most deadly theatre.
- ANNE FRANK (1929–1945): Jewish girl who hid with her family in Amsterdam and kept a diary. Captured in 1944 and died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Her diary was published after the war.

