Hitler's Foreign Policy

Nazi Germany
What we will learn today

When he came to power, Hitler made no secret that he wished to tear up the Treaty of Versailles, the harsh peace settlement forced upon Germany after World War I.

In this presentation you will learn:
- what Hitler aimed to do
- how he set about doing it
- what the results of his actions were.

You will also consider:
- why the international community was so unwilling to stand up to Hitler, and
- who was most to blame for the outbreak of World War II.
Introduction: Germany in Europe

- **Austria** – 8 million German speakers, many of whom wanted to join with Germany.
- **The Rhineland** – this was demilitarized under the Treaty of Versailles to protect France and Belgium.
- **Polish Corridor** – this split Germany in two, and left many Germans under foreign rule.
- **The Sudetenland** – richest part of Czechoslovakia. Contained 3 million German speakers. It had been part of the Austrian Empire.
1. What do you think Hitler’s objectives will be?
2. How do you think he will justify these actions?
As far as Hitler was concerned, German foreign policy needed to get itself out of a RUT (Rearm, Unite, Territory).
German Rearmament
Click on a date on the left and then click on the event that occurred in that year to link them.
Remilitarizing the Rhineland

After the Treaty of Versailles, the Rhineland remained part of Germany.

However, to protect France, it was demilitarized – Germany was banned from putting troops there.

But in 1936, Hitler took a massive gamble and ordered his army to march into the Rhineland.

Hitler only had 30,000 fully equipped troops, and was so nervous that he gave them secret orders to withdraw if they faced any opposition!

Hitler is now openly breaking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. What do you think the Allies should do, and why?
Despite his fears, not a single country stood up to Hitler when he marched into the Rhineland. Why?
Uniting All German People

1. Austria – the Anschluss

2. Czechoslovakia – the Sudetenland
1. Austria: the Anschluss

Hitler was keen to incorporate the German-speaking country of **Austria** into the Third Reich. Hitler himself was an Austrian by birth.

Uniting with Austria was forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, so Hitler would have to proceed carefully.
Hitler's methods

1934: Hitler attempts to take control of Austria, but backs off when threatened by the Italian leader __________.

1935: __________ Pact: Italy, Britain and France form an alliance against Hitler.

1935: Anglo-German __________ Agreement: Germany persuades Britain to sign an arms deal. __________ and Italy feel betrayed and the Stresa
The Anschluss

Taking control of Austria

Leader of Germany

Leader of Austria
Over 3 million Germanic people lived in the Sudetenland – part of Czechoslovakia. Many wanted to join with Germany.

The Czechs realized that giving in would mean losing out:

(a) **militarily** – their border defences.

(b) **economically** – their industrial resources (factories and raw materials).

(c) **politically** – their independence.
Events of 1938

The Sequence of Events, 1938

- April 1938
- 15 September 1938
- 22 September 1938
- 29 September 1938
Occupation of the Sudetenland

Czech border guards left their posts on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 1938, and German tanks rolled across the frontier unopposed.

Considering Hitler’s actions so far, do you think he will abide by the Munich Agreement?

Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London.
Seizing Foreign Territory

1. Czechoslovakia

2. Poland
1. Czechoslovakia

On March 16 1939, Hitler broke the Munich Agreement and invaded western Czechoslovakia. Hungary and Poland divided the rest of the country between them.

Hitler made no attempt this time to justify his actions by saying that he was simply uniting German speakers into the Reich. This was *invasion*, pure and simple.

Britain and France pledged to resist any further German expansion.

Unfortunately, by this time Italy had become a strong ally of Germany, and the USSR was angry with France and Britain for not inviting her to the Munich Conference.
The appeasement policy

Critics said that Chamberlain’s policy of ‘appeasement’ (giving in to Hitler’s demands when possible) encouraged aggression and made war more likely. Chamberlain disagreed.

Place Chamberlain's reasons in order of which you find the most compelling.

1. Hitler only wants to absorb other German-speaking people.
2. Britain is too weak to fight now - we need time to rearm.
3. Hitler could be a useful ally against communist Russia.
4. Hitler is feeling threatened by Russia and France.
5. Versailles was too harsh on Germany and should be revised.
2. Poland

In August 1938 Hitler signed the **Nazi-Soviet Pact** with communist Russia.

The pact stated that Germany and Russia would not fight each other. They also secretly agreed to attack **Poland** and divide it between them.

This meant that Hitler could invade Poland and reclaim the land that had been taken from Germany to make up the Polish Corridor, without worrying that the USSR would attack.

The following month, Hitler launched a massive attack upon Poland which he called ‘**Blitzkrieg**’ (lightning war).

France and Britain declared war on Germany. **World War II** had begun.
Press next to explore the international relationships leading up to World War II.