

Year 9 Knowledge Organiser: Turning Points in the Second World War

What do I need to know?

- ✓ Why and how did the Second World War begin?
- ✓ What were the key turning points in the Second World War and why they can be seen as turning point?

Why and how did the Second World War begin?

1935 Rearmament

Hitler broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles by increasing the German army to 550,00 men and creating an air force.

1936 Remilitarisation of the Rhineland

Hitler sent 30,000 troops into the Rhineland. This again broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

1938 Anschluss with Austria

Hitler sent the German army into Austria claiming he was helping to restore order after a series of riots. He then reunited Germany and Austria which was forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles.

1938 Occupation of the Sudetenland

Hitler claimed that the Czechoslovakian government was mistreating the Germans who lived in the Sudetenland and was prepared to send in the German army to protect them.

1938 Munich Agreement

Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister persuaded the Czechoslovakians to give Hitler the Sudetenland to avoid a war, but Britain and France promised to protect the rest of Czechoslovakia.

1939 Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France did nothing to stop him, but they promised to protect Poland if he tried to invade.

1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact

Hitler and Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Publicly they agreed not to fight each other; secretly they agreed to invade Poland and split it between them.

1939 Invasion of Poland

The German army invaded Poland on 1st September 1939. Britain asked the Germans to leave but they refused. Britain and France kept their promise to Poland and declared war on Germany.

KEY VOCABULARY

Appeasement	Giving in to demands made by Hitler to avoid war
Rearmament	When a country begins to build up its armed forces and weapons
Remilitarisation	Rearming an area that had previously been disarmed e.g. Putting soldiers into an area they had not been allowed in before.
Invasion	When one country used its army to enter and take control of another country by force.

Was appeasement a mistake?

No because ...

- Britain reduced the size of her army after the First World War and needed time to build up her armed forces.
- Most people could remember the effects of the First World War. They would agree to anything to avoid war.



Yes because ...

- Each time Hitler got away with an act of aggression, he became more confident that Britain and France would never act.
- Every time Hitler took land, Germany grew stronger and more difficult to defeat. It gained soldiers, weapons and raw materials.
- The use of appeasement made Britain and France look weak.

KEY VOCABULARY

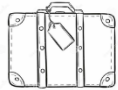


Turning point	An event or moment in history that leads to a decisive change (usually with positive results).	Evacuation	The action of moving people from a place of danger to a place of safety.
Occupation	When a country uses its army to establish control of land or another country.	Retreat	When an army moves back or withdraws from fighting the enemy.

What were the key turning points in the Second World War?

1. Evacuation – was it a success?

In September 1939, the British government began the evacuation of people, mainly children from British cities in an attempt to protect them from German air raids.



Yes because ...

- It was well organised - the transport system of the entire country was taken over for 4 days to evacuate 1,500,000 people.
- The health of many children improved because of better food and fresh air in the countryside.
- Many lives were saved as a result – 1,500,000 were evacuated.

No because ...

- Some evacuees ended up in villages that were expecting pregnant women.
- Some potential foster families tried to avoid taking in evacuees.
- Some children were exploited by those who took them in e.g. made to work hard on farms.
- By January 1940, many parents had brought their children home as no bombs were dropped during 'The Phony War.'



2. Dunkirk – was it a triumph or a disaster for the British?

In June 1940, the British and French armies retreated from the advancing German army. They became stranded on the beaches of Dunkirk. It looked as though all would be killed or taken prisoner. Operation Dynamo was launched to rescue British and French soldiers from the beach at Dunkirk.



A triumph because ...

- More than 338,000 men were brought back to Britain from the beaches of Dunkirk.
- The rescue of British and French soldiers meant that the war could continue to be fought.
- It was a propaganda victory for the British – the government turned a military defeat into a positive.

A defeat because ...

- The Germans captured 1200 field guns, 1250 anti-aircraft guns, 11,000 machine guns and 75,000 vehicles.
- The beaches at Dunkirk were attacked by the German air force; 68,000 men were lost.
- The morale of the army was low after Dunkirk.



3. The Battle of Britain – was it a turning point?

By July 1940, Nazi Germany occupied most of Europe. Operation Sea Lion was the code name for the German attempt to take over Britain; to do this they needed to destroy the RAF (British air force) . Throughout the summer of 1940, German and British pilots fought each other in the skies above southern England. Britain won.



It was a turning point because ...

- The German air force had failed to destroy the RAF in time for an invasion to take place.
- Short of planes and pilots the RAF held off the Luftwaffe. If the Luftwaffe had won Britain would have been invaded and conquered.
- Britain was able to carry on fighting and played a key role in events such as D-Day that led to eventual German defeat.
- Germany had been defeated for the first time in the war. It made victory seem possible.

September 1939 – April 1940
The Phony War

September 1940
Evacuation of children to the countryside

June 1940
Evacuation of Dunkirk

Summer 1940
Battle of Britain

September 1940
The Blitz begins



KEY VOCABULARY



Turning point	An event or moment in history that leads to a decisive change (usually with positive results).	Allies	Countries who work together. In the Second World War the Allied Powers were Britain, France, the USSR and the USA.
Surrender	Giving into an enemy and letting them win or take control.	Liberation	Freeing a country or a person from unfair or cruel treatment

4. Operation Barbarossa – was it a turning point?

In June 1941, the German army invaded the USSR getting as far as Moscow. However, the Soviet army destroying anything that might be of use to the Germans and a harsh Russian winter slowed the German advance. At the Battle of Stalingrad, 100,000 German soldiers surrendered. Gradually, with Russian troops fighting in conditions they were used to, the German army was forced out of the USSR and back towards Germany.



It was a turning point because ...

- This was the first time that the Germans had been forced to retreat in large numbers.
- The USSR took the full force of the German army, giving Britain and the USA time to build up their forces.
- The strength of the German army was reduced with almost 775,000 casualties and many German soldiers being captured.



5. Pearl Harbor – was it a turning point?

For the first two years of the war, the USA was not involved in the fighting. However, it did lend Britain supplies of food and weapons. This changed when Japan, an ally of Germany, launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, hoping to cripple the American Pacific Fleet that was stationed there. In under two hours, on the morning of 7th December 1941, Japan sank 18 warships, destroyed 177 planes and killed over 2300 men.



It was a turning point because ...

- The attack brought the US into the war. Many US soldiers fought in Europe and on D-Day.
- American military forces were crucial in the Allied victory against Germany and Japan. They had a major influence on the war.



7. Was the dropping of the atomic bomb justified?

By June 1945, the war was over in Europe. However, the USA was still fighting the Japanese in the Pacific. To force the Japanese to surrender the USA dropped two atomic bombs, the first on Hiroshima and the second on Nagasaki.



Yes because ...

- The USA believed Japan would never surrender.
- The USA could have invaded but it would have led to huge loss of American lives.

No because ...

- There were alternatives e.g. invasion of Japan leading to supply shortages.
- Japan was seeking peace talks before the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.



6. D-Day – was it a turning point?

On 6 June 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord. It's aim was to liberate Western Europe from Nazi Germany's control. Allied troops successfully stormed Normandy's beaches. Less than a week later, the beaches were fully secured. By the end of August 1944, the Allies had liberated Paris, and the Germans had been removed from north-western France. They had won the Battle of Normandy.



It was a turning point because ...

- Western Europe was liberated from Nazi control – the Allies now had a way to send troops to fight the German army in Europe.
- The Germans had to split their army to fight Russia in the East and the Allies in the West.
- Less than a year later the Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany'.

June 1941
Operation Barbarossa

December 1941
Attack on Pearl Harbor

June 1944
D-Day

August 1945
Dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan

