Great Britain and France wanted peace after World War I. But Adolf Hitler wanted war. He wanted Germany to rule the world. The other Axis Powers wanted to rule the world with Germany. Italy wanted to rule land in Europe and Africa. Japan wanted to rule Asia. Later, other countries would join the Axis Powers.

Great Britain and France were called the Allies. The Allies did not want to fight in another war. This is why the two nations allowed Hitler to conquer Austria and Czechoslovakia. Hitler promised that he would not conquer any more nations. He broke that promise. In 1939 Germany invaded Poland. This time the Allies said that they would fight for Poland. Great Britain and France declared war against Germany.

World War II had begun.

Hitler salutes his soldiers as they march into Poland in 1939.
The German army was strong. They conquered Poland in a few weeks. Then the German soldiers conquered northern Europe. In 1940 they attacked France. British soldiers and French soldiers fought the Germans in France.

Soon the Allies realized that France would be conquered. The British soldiers and French soldiers who were fighting there did not want to be captured. Great Britain sent hundreds of ships and small boats to Dunkirk, France, to help the soldiers escape. Thousands of soldiers went to Great Britain in the boats. These Allied soldiers would continue to fight against Hitler.

Germany conquered France. By 1940 the Axis Powers had conquered most of Europe. Then Adolf Hitler decided to conquer Great Britain. The prime minister of Great Britain was Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill said that Great Britain would never surrender to Hitler. Churchill was a strong leader. He gave the people of Great Britain hope that they could defeat the Germans.

The German fight against Great Britain was called the **Battle of Britain**. German airplanes dropped bombs on British cities. Germany **bombed** Great Britain for many months. Many people were killed. Many buildings were destroyed. But the British were brave. They did not surrender to the Germans. Great Britain’s Royal Air Force shot down more than 2,000 German planes. Finally in 1941, the Germans stopped attacking Great Britain from the air. The battle was over. But World War II continued.

Other nations became involved in World War II. Six of these nations joined the Axis Powers. By the end of the war, almost 50 nations had joined the Allies. But the Axis Powers were very strong. They conquered most of Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. The Axis nations were winning World War II.

Then Hitler decided that the Soviet Union was an enemy. Hitler also wanted oil and wheat from the
The Axis Powers conquered most of Europe during World War II. Was Yugoslavia an area under Axis control?

Soviet Union. In 1941 Germany attacked the Soviet Union. This attack forced the Soviets to fight against the Germans. So the Soviet Union joined the Allies.

At first, the Germans won many battles in the Soviet Union. But the Soviets fought back. They remembered how they had fought Napoleon in 1812. They had burned their own farms and houses to defeat Napoleon. The Soviets did almost the same thing during World War II. They decided to burn everything the Germans might use. The Soviets burned houses, factories, and food. Then winter came. The weather was very cold. Snow covered the land. The Germans did not have enough food or warm clothing. Many Germans died. Then at the **Battle of Stalingrad** in 1943, the last Germans in the Soviet Union surrendered.

There was also fighting in the Atlantic Ocean. German submarines sank many ships that carried food, weapons, and other supplies to the British. But World War II brought new technology. Some of this new technology helped the Allies locate many of the German submarines that were underwater. When
On December 7, 1941, the Japanese dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor. The event brought the United States into World War II.

the submarines came up to the top of the water, the Allies dropped bombs on them from airplanes.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, the United States was a neutral nation. It did not want to fight in World War II. But Americans helped the Allies in other ways. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the President of the United States. He had American factories make weapons, tanks, and planes. American farmers grew extra food. The United States sent the food and weapons to Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and other Allies.

Americans hoped that they would not have to fight in World War II. But in 1941 General Hideki Tojo became the main military leader of Japan. On December 7, 1941, Tojo ordered Japanese soldiers to attack Pearl Harbor in the Pacific Ocean. Pearl Harbor was a large American naval base in Hawaii. The Japanese destroyed American ships and planes. They killed more than 2,000 Americans.

The people in the United States were very angry. They knew it was time for war. The next day, the United States declared war against Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war against the United States. Americans would help the Allies fight against the Axis Powers in Asia and in Europe.

Nations all over the world were now fighting in World War II. The war would continue for four more years. Who would win World War II? How would the war end? Read the next chapter to find out.
Using Vocabulary

**Analogies** An analogy compares two pairs of words. The words in the first pair are alike in the same way as the words in the second pair. For example, Great Britain is to Allies as Germany is to Axis Powers. Use the words in dark print to best complete the sentences. The first one is done for you.

**bomb  naval base  Battle of Britain  World War II**

1. Central Powers is to World War I as Axis Powers is to  

2. Airport is to airplane as  is to navy ships.

3. Japan is to the attack on Pearl Harbor as Germany is to the

4. Submarine is to ship underwater as  is to exploding weapon.

Read and Remember

**Write the Answer** Write one or more sentences to answer each question.

1. What did Hitler do that caused World War II to begin?

2. What happened at Dunkirk, France?

3. How did the British win the Battle of Britain?

4. How did the Soviets stop the German soldiers from conquering the Soviet Union?
5. How did the United States help the Allies while it was a neutral nation?

6. Why did the United States enter World War II?

Skill Builder

**Reading a Bar Graph**  A bar graph shows facts using bars of different lengths. The bar graph below shows how many soldiers different countries sent to fight in World War II. The bar graph also uses colors to show whether the nations were part of the Allies or part of the Axis Powers. Study the bar graph. Then write the answer to each question.

![Bar Graph: Number of Soldiers in World War II](image)

1. What color are the bars that show Allied nations? 

2. Which country sent the fewest soldiers to the war? 

3. Which country sent the most soldiers? 

4. About how many soldiers did Great Britain send to the war? 

5. About how many total soldiers did the three Axis Powers send?