Chapter 19

Section 2  World War II Begins
Chapter Objectives

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• Explain why Hitler was able to take over Austria and Czechoslovakia.

• Describe the early events of the war and why Britain was able to resist the Nazis.
Guide to Reading

Main Idea

World War II officially began with the Nazi invasion of Poland and the French and British declaration of war on Germany in September 1939.

Key Terms and Names

- **Anschluss**
- **appeasement**
- **blitzkrieg**
- **Maginot Line**
- **Winston Churchill**
- **Battle of Britain**
“Peace in Our Time”

• In February 1938, Adolf Hitler threatened to invade Austria unless Austrian Nazis were given important government posts.

• In March 1938, Hitler announced the **Anschluss**, or unification, of Austria and Germany.
“Peace in Our Time” (cont.)

- Hitler claimed the Sudetenland, an area of Czechoslovakia with a large German-speaking population.

- Czechs strongly resisted Germany’s demand for the Sudetenland.

- France, the Soviet Union, and Britain threatened to fight Germany if it attacked Czechoslovakia.
“Peace in Our Time” (cont.)

- At the Munich Conference on September 29, 1938, Britain and France, hoping to prevent another war, agreed to Hitler’s demands in a policy known as **appeasement**.

- In March 1939, Germany sent troops into Czechoslovakia, bringing the Czech lands under German control.
“Peace in Our Time” (cont.)

- Hitler demanded the return of Danzig—Poland’s Baltic Sea port.
- He also wanted a highway and railroad across the Polish Corridor.
- These demands convinced the British and French that appeasement had failed.
“Peace in Our Time” (cont.)

- In May 1939, Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland by the German army.
- On August 23, 1939, Germany and the USSR signed a nonaggression treaty, with a secret agreement to divide Poland.
Why did Britain and France agree to Hitler’s demands for the Sudetenland?

They hoped that they could give Hitler the Sudetenland in exchange for peace. Also, this bought Britain time to get ready for war. Some thought Hitler’s demand that all German-speaking regions of Europe be united with Germany was reasonable.
The War Begins

• On September 1, 1939, Germany and the USSR invaded Poland.

• On September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany—starting World War II.

• The Germans used a blitzkrieg, or lightning war, to attack Poland.

• The Polish army was defeated by October 5.
The War Begins (cont.)

- On April 9, 1940, the German army attacked Norway and Denmark.
- Within a month, Germany overtook both countries.
The War Begins (cont.)

• After World War I, the French built a line of concrete bunkers and fortifications called the Maginot Line along the German border.

• When Hitler decided to attack France, he went around the Maginot Line by invading the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

• The French and British forces quickly went into Belgium, becoming trapped there by German forces.
The War Begins (cont.)

• By June 4, about 338,000 British and French troops had evacuated Belgium through the French port of Dunkirk and across the English Channel, using ships of all sizes.

• On June 22, 1940, France surrendered to the Germans.

• Germany installed a puppet government in France.
Why did France fall to the Germans?

When Hitler decided to attack France, he went around the Maginot Line by invading the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The French and British forces quickly went into Belgium, becoming trapped there by German forces. These forces escaped to Britain through the French port of Dunkirk and across the English Channel.
Britain Remains Defiant

- Hitler thought that Britain would negotiate peace after France surrendered.
- He did not anticipate the bravery of the British people and their prime minister, Winston Churchill.
- On June 4, 1940, Churchill delivered a defiant speech that rallied the British people and alerted the United States to Britain’s plight.
Britain Remains Defiant (cont.)

• To invade Britain, Germany had to defeat the British air force.

• In the **Battle of Britain**, the German air force, *the Luftwaffe*, launched an all-out air battle to destroy the British Royal Air Force.

• After German bombers bombed London, the British responded by bombing Berlin, Germany.
Britain Remains Defiant (cont.)

- The Royal Air Force was greatly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe, but the British had radar stations and were able to detect incoming German aircraft and direct British fighters to intercept them.
How did the British stop the German forces from invading Britain?

Winston Churchill delivered a defiant speech, which rallied the British people. The British air force bombed Berlin, Germany, after the Germans bombed London. The British hid in subway tunnels when the German’s bombed London. Although the Royal Air Force was greatly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe, the British had radar stations that were able to detect incoming German aircraft and direct British fighters to intercept them.
Checking for Understanding

**Define** Match the terms on the right with their definitions on the left.

1. accepting demands in order to avoid conflict  
   - A. appeasement

2. name given to sudden violent offensive attacks the Germans used during World War II; “lightning war”  
   - B. blitzkrieg
Explain why Hitler was able to take over Austria and Czechoslovakia.

 Britain and France gave in to Hitler’s demands.
Continuity and Change  How did the policy of appeasement affect France and Great Britain?

France was not prepared for a German attack, and Britain was left to fight alone.
Critical Thinking

Evaluating  Why were the British able to prevent the Germans from invading their country?

A  Britain was an island, with a strong air force, navy, and radar stations.
Analyzing Photographs  Study the photographs on pages 593 and 594 of your textbook. How do they reflect the British resolve to “never surrender”?

The photographs show British desire to continue with their daily routines and activities in spite of devastation.
Why was Austria easier for Hitler to annex than Czechoslovakia?

The Austrians spoke German and had an authoritarian government. The Czechoslovakians spoke several languages and had a democratic government and allies.
A POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

During the late 1930s, Europe’s leaders tried to buy peace by giving in to Hitler’s demands. They had several reasons to believe that Hitler could be satisfied and war avoided:

1. The consequences and evidence of World War I still remained, and the leaders wanted to avoid another brutal conflict.

2. Some thought that the unification of all German-speaking regions of Europe with Germany was a reasonable demand.

3. Many people assumed that the Nazis would be more interested in peace once they acquired more territory.

Directions: Answer the following question based on the information.

Which of the following statements is NOT a reason given for Europe’s appeasement policies?

A  The Nazis were only interested in obtaining more territory.

B  The Nazis indicated a strong desire to avoid military confrontation.

C  Europe was still recovering from the destruction of World War I.

D  Many Europeans thought all German-speaking people should be in one country.