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Germany Invades Poland

In 1939, the Nazis ruled Germany. Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader of Germany, said that Germans were a superior race. He said that Germans had the right to conquer inferior groups such as the Slavs of Poland. He wanted to invade and take over Poland. However, the Nazis wanted to be sure that, if their invasion started another war, Germany would win this time. They did not want a repeat of World War I.



So, they made careful preparations.

The Nazis made an agreement, known as the "Pact of Steel" with their ally, Italy. Germany and Italy agreed to support each other in the event of war.

Germany also made a secret agreement with the Soviet Union. This was known as a "non-aggression pact." It was an agreement between the two countries not to go to war against each other. This was important to Germany because it did not want to fight a war on two fronts as it had before. However, the Nazi-Soviet pact went further than that. It also included secret deals in which Germany and the Soviet Union decided how they would divide up Poland between their two countries.

With this agreement in place, Nazi Germany could invade Poland without fear of losing. On September 1, 1939, the invasion began. Germany attacked Poland from the west, beginning with a *blitzkrieg*, the famous Nazi "lightning war," which was a massive air attack. German pilots bombed targets in Poland including military posts, airfields, railroad depots, factories, and cities. That initial attack was followed up within hours by a huge invasion of tanks and troops. The troops moved in from the north and the south to surround the Polish forces.

Poland fought back, but its army was no match for the German invasion. Poland's allies also responded. On that same day, September 1, Great Britain and France gave Hitler an ultimatum. Their ambassadors took a message to Germany. It said that the invasion must stop, or they would declare war on Germany. With the invasion still in full force two days later, on September 3, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II began.

The United States decided to remain neutral, but other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, joined the war on the side of the Allies.

On September 17, the Soviet Union joined the German invasion, and it invaded Poland from the east.

In Poland, the situation continued to worsen. Germany took over the capital city of Warsaw. Troops paraded through the city in their Nazi uniforms, boots, and helmets. Citizens of Poland were forced to quarter German

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troops in their houses. Polish Jews faced more and more restrictions.

By the end of September, Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland as they had originally planned in their secret agreement. The country of Poland ceased to exist.

By the end of World War II, millions of Polish citizens, including most Polish Jews, had been forced into concentration camps. Millions of Polish citizens had been killed.

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Questions

- _____ 1. The German invasion of Poland was the event that started _____.
A. World War I
B. the Cold War
C. World War II
D. the Great Depression
- _____ 2. Germany invaded Poland on _____.
A. September 1, 1939
B. September 3, 1939
C. September 1, 1942
D. September 3, 1942
- _____ 3. Germany made agreements with _____.
A. neither
B. the Soviet Union
C. both
D. Italy
- _____ 4. Great Britain, France, and other countries entered the war on Poland's side.
A. false
B. true
- _____ 5. After the Allies entered the war in support of Poland, Poland defeated Germany.
A. false
B. true
- _____ 6. The word *blitzkrieg* means _____.
A. German war
B. tank attack
C. disagreement
D. lightning war
- _____ 7. At the time of World War II, Germany was led by the _____.
A. Nazis
B. Polish
C. British
D. Jews

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- _____ 8. Which happened first?
- A. Great Britain declared war.
 - B. Germany signed a secret agreement with the Soviet Union.
 - C. Germany invaded Poland.
 - D. The United States declared war.

- ☐ Write about several reasons why Germany was able to take over Poland.
- ☐ Do a little research to find out which country mentioned in this article changed sides during the war. Write about that country and why it changed sides.

[illegible]