# **Second World War (1939-1945): Causes and Consequences**

**Causes of Second World War (1939-1945)**

**(1) Humiliation by the Treaty of Versailles**

* War indemnity.
* The provision for disarming Germany.
* Saar coal mine to France for 15 years.
* Polish corridor was given to Poland.
* City of Danzing was made free.

**(2) Growth of Fascism and Nazism**

* Mussolini (Italy) and Hitler (Germany) strongly glorified war and violence.
* While West was fighting communism, Germany and Italy started massive militarization.

**(3) Rise of Japan**

* Imperialism.
* Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis (1936).

**(4) Neglect of minority interests**

* New countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria were formed after the First World War. While drawing boundaries the interests of minority groups in each of these countries were neglected.

**(5) Military Alliance**

* **Allies** – Britain, France, USA, USSR and China vs **Axis Powers** – Germany, Italy and Japan
* Leaders – Churchill (Britain), Roosevelt (USA), Stalin (USSR)

**(6) Germany’s attack on Czechoslovakia**

In-spite of the Munich Pact between Germany and Britain (1938), Germany re-attacked and sized Czechoslovakia.

**(7) Immediate Cause : Germany’s invasion of Poland (1st September 1939)**

* Germany annexed Polished corridor and Danzig city. The sudden attack on Poland is known as Blitzkrieg (lightning war).
* Brtiain and France declared war on Germany.

**Course of the War**

* World War II officially began on September 1, 1939.
* Germany conquered – Poland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland and France.
* **Battle of Britain** – Germany vs Britain (air battle; German Air force =Luftwaffe).
* **Battle of Stalingrad** – Germany vs USSR. (Operation of Barbaressa (1941 = Attack on Yugoslavia and Greece; Russia countered attack on Moscow with Scorched Earth Policy).
* Atlantic Charter (August 1941) – Between Churchil (UK) and Roosevelt (USA).
* **Pearl Harbor Attack** (7th December 1941) – Japan on USA.
* Italy vs UK in Africa (1942) – Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, British Somaliland, Eritrea.
* France was conquered by Germany in 1940, but British and American troops liberated France in 1944.
* Atom bomb – Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**Consequences of Second World War**

* End of colonialism and imperialism.
* End of dictatorship in Germany and Italy.
* Germany was divided into West Germany and East Germany. **West Germany**was controlled by Britain, France and USA. **East Germany** by USSR. (Read more about the re-union of Germany in 1989 when you check our post about the [fall of the Berlin wall](https://www.clearias.com/fall-of-the-berlin-wall-1989/)).
* Strengthening of nationalist movements in Africa and Asia. (**From Britain** – India, Myanmar, Egypt, Sri Lanka; **From America** – Philippines; **From France** – Indo-China; **From Dutch** – Indonesia)
* 5 crore deaths (2.2 crore soldiers and 2.8 crore civilians)
* Economics problems – Unemployment, low growth etc.
* Emergence of two power blocks – USA and USSR. This resulted in cold war.
* Emergence of third world Countries.
* UNO was set up in 1945.