

The Road to World War II: 4 Dictatorships

WebQuest Description: Understand the origins of World War II by tracing the growth of fascist powers. What were the elements that led to the greatest war in our history?

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Totalitarianism, Hitler, Stalin, Nero, Hirohito

Published On: 2008-02-16 19:27:26

Last Modified: 2008-02-16 19:36:57

WebQuest URL: <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=7324>

Introduction

World War II was the most devastating war ever fought. It was a total war, fought in nearly all regions of the world, with upwards of 60 million total military and civilian casualties. The causes of World War II were rooted in World War I and the political and economic events of the interwar period. The economic depression that occurred throughout the world in the 1920's and 30's paved the way for dictators to rise to power. In this WebQuest you will be studying one of four countries that was ruled by a dictatorial leader in the interwar period and how they led the world to war in 1939. To fully understand the cause of World War II, you must look at the important events leading up to the conflict. The outbreak of World War II came about because of many factors; the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I, the Great Depression, and a long history of imperial countries disrespecting the sovereignty of smaller nations led to a hostile international environment. This WebQuest asks you to examine the countries of Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan in the years following World War I. You will examine the events following 1918 that led these countries, and the entire world, into World War II. You will see what political, economic and social conditions led each of these countries to be led by dictatorial leaders, and how the policies of each led to war.

Tasks

In this project it will be your job to fully research the reason these leaders were able to rise to power following World War I. Each person in your group will explore one of the countries ruled by dictatorial leaders. Group members will share their information with each other once they have completed their research. Each group member will then write a newspaper article describing the conditions in the country in the years before World War II, how these conditions allowed a dictatorial government to come to power, and finally, what conditions were like and what these governments did once they were in power.

Process

Step 1: Your teacher will be assigning you into groups of four. Each person in a group will be assigned to either Germany, Russia, Italy or Japan. Each group member will then become an "expert" on this country in the Interwar Period. Step 2: Then, explore the resources provided below for your country and take notes on all of the information that you find. As you research your country, make sure to take thorough notes while filling in your worksheet. Try to use at least two sources for each section. This will enable you to have a more complete view of your country, its leader and the leader's actions and the role all of these played in the coming of World War II. Step 3: Once everyone has had a chance to completely research their respective country and completely fill out their worksheet, they will share their "expertise" on their country with the other members of the group. Other group members will fill out the remaining sections of their worksheets on the three countries they did not research. Resources

- Biographies - Each of the leaders of the four countries took different paths to power, and there were some differences in their styles of leadership. Germany: Adolf Hitler, Italy: Benito Mussolini, Russia: Josef Stalin, Japan: Emperor Hirohito, Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, History Channel's Biography
- Economy- You are interested in discovering how the economies of each country were fairing before the war. The economy of each country is important because it influences both the feelings of ordinary citizens and the actions taken by the government. For example, during a period of economic stability or economic growth, citizens are more likely to be content with their government and the world. Therefore, they are not likely to agitate for or support a war. This does not mean though, that a poor country will always want to go to war. Because, if a government has very little money it is difficult to organize and sustain an army. Your job is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the economies of the Germany, Italy, Russia (Soviet Union) and Japan prior to World War II. Some of the information you should look for includes: unemployment rates, percentage of people that are homeless, average salary, a country's Gross National Product or GNP, and the rate of inflation. Also, find out why the economy was the way it was. Each of these countries had been involved in World War I, but the outcomes of the war was different for each. Germany: German Economy(1933-39), Economic Recovery, Pre-War and Post-War Economy, Reparations Italy: Economy in Fascist Italy Russia: Stalin's Five Year Plan, Collectivization of Agriculture Japan: Japan's Economy in the 1930's, Economic Depression, Economic Recovery
- Political Environment - You are interested in learning about the governments of the Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan. The structure and role of the government in the daily lives of its citizens is important in understanding the actions of those citizens. For example, if a government does not allow its citizens to speak freely in public forums, then it is unlikely that the citizens will ever be able to influence the workings of the government. Also, it is important to understand who actually controls the everyday workings of the government. Is there a group of people that oversee the laws of the country, or is only one person in charge? Your job is to find out how the government operates. This information will be very important to you when completing your article because it will allow you to understand the actions taken by each country in

the years leading up to World War II. Some of the information you should look for includes (these are just suggestions, you may find different information that may help you, don't limit your search just to these areas): Who has the right to vote; what percentage of people in the country have the right to vote? Is the press controlled by the government, are the people encouraged to voice their opinions to the government? Who is the ultimate leader of the country, who has the final say in the government? Is there a parliament or legislative body, how much power do they have? What role does the military have in the government? How did the leader come to power? What actions does the leader use to stay in power and limit his opposition? Germany: Hitler's Rise to Power, National Socialist Party, Hitler Biography, Nazi Party, Treaty of Versailles, Weimar Republic, Italy and Germany Italy: Rise and Fall of Mussolini, Mussolini's Road to Dictatorship, Italy's Foreign Policy, Italy and Germany Russia: Stalin's Rise to Power, Stalin's Purges, Stalin's Use of Terror Japan: Japan, Manchuria & the League of Nations, Foreign Policy towards China Social Aspects of country - You are interested in learning about the culture and different ways of life that were found in Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan in the years before World War II. A country's culture is important because it lets others know what the people of that country value. The beliefs and feelings of ordinary citizens can strongly influence the actions of government. Your job is to discover what life was like in your country in the 1920's and 1930's. Treatment for different groups was oftentimes very different. Some of the information you should look for includes: the religious beliefs of citizens of each country, beliefs about racial differences, resentment towards other countries because of past conflicts, customs or traditions specific to that country, and any other information that would help to describe the people and social life of each country. Germany: Hitler, Women in Germany, Women and Children Under Hitler Italy: Life in Mussolini's Italy, Women and Youth Under Mussolini Russia: Life in Stalin's Russia, Women's Life Under Stalin Japan: Conflict with China, Buddhism, Shinto, Nationalism Step 4: Once all students have filled in the section for each country on their worksheets, the "experts" for each country will report their findings and the class will discuss each country. The "experts" and the teacher will answer any questions from other students. Step 5: You will then write a news article about your country. You will play the role of a news reporter on January 1, 1939. Your article will tell the reader about your country during the Interwar period up until this date. You will write about the leader and their rise to power, the effects of World War I on the country, the economic conditions of the country, and the general welfare of the people of your country. Your article should completely tell the story of your country in the years between World War I and World War II. Remember, a news article was contain: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW. Your article must be at least one full page in length.

Evaluation

Category and Score	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Very Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Accuracy	5 points Few to none of the facts are accurate; the article is not at all structured, and very difficult to understand.	7 points Some of the facts are correct, but there are a number of mistakes; the article is logical at times, but not easy to follow.	9 points Most of the facts are correct, but there are a few mistakes; parts of it are confusing.	10 points The facts included in your article are accurate and factual; the article makes sense.	%50
Integration of Information	5 points There is information from only one of the sections.	7 points There is information from two of the sections included in the article.	9 points There is information from three of the sections included in the article.	10 points There is information from all four resource sections included in the article (biography, economy, political, social)	%50
				Total Score	%100

Conclusion

As you have now explored the different dictatorial governments that rose to power in the years following the Great War, you can start to see how World War II came about and see how its roots were firmly planted in World War I. As history does often repeat itself, you will see in future lessons how the victors of World War II took various steps to eliminate a third world war.

Teacher Page

Whe use of WebQuests in the classrooms enables you to reach more students than a traditional lecture would. This activity can engage different learning styles and will help you keep your class, as a whole, interested in class. This activity also serves to teach your students how to use technology in a positive way. Most students know how to surf the internet, and many can use computers for entertainment purposes (games, chat rooms, etc.), but this activity will introduce to many that the internet can be used for legitimate research. In the last few years, the internet has become a useful tool for research and students should be taught how to properly implement it into their studies. Allow for ample time with the Computers for research. If you students are not familiar with using the Internet for research, I would advise you to spend some time prior to this WebQuest orienting them. Guide them through their first day exploring web sites. Remind students that they should not spend too much time searching and no time writing. If it is possible, I would recommend that the students are required to turn something in at the end of each day. If you

have the resources, you may want to have your students put their articles on-line, on a school sponsored web site.

Standards

Credits

Other