

# History: The 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1945



## World War One 1914-18

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was divided into two rival camps: the **Triple Alliance** of Germany, Austria and Italy, and the **Triple Entente** between Britain, France and Russia. When the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, the conflict exploded with the Austrian declaration of war to Serbia, Russia entering the conflict to support Serbia, and Germany to support Austria. When Germany invaded the neutral territory of Belgium, in order to attack France, Britain declared war to Germany in the same year. In Britain there was enthusiasm for what was thought as a right war to fight for democracy and freedom. In 1916 the government introduced conscription for all the men between 18 and 41 because so many people had died on the battlefields. After the first year, the war stopped to be a war of movement and became a war of trenches and huge numbers of people were killed by machine guns, barbed wire, gas and shells. Most of the battles took place in Europe, some others took place in the Middle East and Africa. In 1918, Germany asked for an armistice, and the Peace Treaty was signed in Paris in 1919. The monarchies of Germany, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire fell.

## Interwar period 1920s-1930s

Political instability, economic depression and social unrest led to the establishment of totalitarian government in Germany, Italy and Spain.

## World War Two 1939-45

With the help of Italy, Germany wanted to gain control of Europe. Thus, in 1939 it invaded Poland, and Britain and France declared war to Germany. In 1940 the Germans attacked and invaded many European countries, included France, and bombed London and other British cities, but unsuccessfully. The situation changed with the landing of the Allies in Normandy. The war ended in 1945 when Germany surrendered, but the loss of lives had been enormous.



## World War One 1914-18

The USA entered the conflict in 1917 to support the Allies. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points Speech to the Congress in 1918 was taken as a basis for peace negotiations at the end of the war.

## The Roaring Twenties 1920-29

Between 1920 and 1929, the US enjoyed a period of prosperity thanks to improvements in technology, in the arts and entertainment. However, it was also the period of **Prohibition**: the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment of the US Constitution had declared alcohol illegal. This led to the proliferation of crime related to illegal methods to transport and sell alcohol. The most important gangster of the period was Al Capone.

## The Great Depression and the New Deal 1929-1938

Black Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1929, the day of the **Wall Street Crash**, changed everything. The crash was due to excessive speculation. In 1932 **Franklin D. Roosevelt** became president and in 1933 he launched the **New Deal** with an intensive social-economic reform program. The plan worked in part and, in 1938, 6 million people had a job again.

## World War Two 1939-45

The USA entered the conflict in 1941 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor's naval base. At the Conference of Casablanca in 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill and De Gaulle decided to force Germany to surrender. The Normandy Invasion began on **D-Day**, June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 with general Eisenhower, who liberated Paris on August 25<sup>th</sup>. In 1945 the concentrations camps were liberated with the help of the Russian Army Japan surrendered after the launch of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Germany soon after.



*D-day, landing in Normandy*



*President F.D. Roosevelt*



**1** Watch the video on the causes and effect of WW1, and complete the summary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2gqpgStsXs>

World War One was also called the **1** ..... War. It lasted from **2** ..... to **3** ..... It has been defined "The War to **4** ..... all wars". It **5** ..... the world in which we live today: monarchies crumbled and new **6** ..... were born. Soldiers were killed in an unprecedented **7** ..... In **8** ....., France declared war to **9** ..... and was defeated. It lost Alsace and **10** ..... and was humiliated. Otto von **11** ..... consolidated the new German state into a powerful **12** ..... called the Second Reich.



**2** Watch the video on the prefabricated harbour at Arromanches, in Normandy and decide if these statements are true or false.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW05wpZGG14>

1. Arromanches is considered a miracle of military strategy. ....
2. Unfortunately nothing remains of the harbour. ....
3. The Mulberry Harbour contributed to the successful invasion of Europe by the Allies. ....
4. Allied troops waited on the coasts of Normandy. ....
5. The French ports were occupied by the Germans. ....
6. The prefabricated harbours were built at Dover. ....
7. New powerful ships were put in a circle around Arromanches. ....
8. The harbour was meant to last for 19 days only. ....
9. Today, it is possible to see the ruins of the prefabricated harbour. ....
10. The journeys across the Channel to transport the various parts of the harbour lasted one year. ....



**3** Read a summary table on the causes and effects of the Great Depression and complete it with the correct extra information provided. Then, practise describing the causes and effects of the Great Depression.

Causes	Effects
1. Living on credit: .....	1. Breadlines and soup kitchens: .....
2. Bad farming practices: .....	2. Hoovervilles: .....
3. Failure of key industries: .....	3. Dust Bowl: .....
4. Trade barriers: .....	4. Lack of jobs: .....
5. Poor investments: .....	5. Suicide rate increase: .....
6. The Wall Street Crash: .....	6. Loss of desire to go to college: .....
	7. Lifelong thriftiness: .....



- a. Some areas turned into desert because of lack of rain and too much farming.
- b. Farmers did not rotate crops.
- c. Foundation industries such as mining and textile industries were not doing well.
- d. People bought a lot of useless things and paid in instalments.
- e. People did not see the prospect of a job career or even getting married and starting a family.
- f. People had no hope and were psychologically depressed.
- g. People lost their houses and had to live in poor shelters called Hoovervilles with reference to President Hoover.
- h. People started to save money because they did not want to be poor again.
- i. Unemployed people had no food, so free cheap meals were provided.
- j. The streets were full of people who could not find a job.
- k. There was a peak, then a sudden drop and banks were forced to close down.
- l. There were high import taxes to protect American production.
- m. With no money left to invest in business activities the situation was critical.