

1922 October	Benito Mussolini, Europe's fascist dictator, comes to power in Italy
1933 January	Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party come to power in Germany; Hitler declares that he will undo the treaty of Versailles and restore Germany to its place as a major European power
1935 March	Hitler announces that Germany will begin to rearm in defiance of the limits imposed on the size of the German military by the Treaty of Versailles
1935 October	Italy invades Abyssinia and defies the League of Nations
1935 September	the Nuremberg laws are passed in Germany and deprive the Jews of German citizenship

1936 July	the Spanish civil war begins; both the German and Italian governments provide military aid to the fascist General Franco; the war is used by Hitler and Mussolini to test some of their new weapons
1936 March	the German army occupies the Rhineland on Hitler's orders; according to the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, the Rhineland was meant to be a demilitarised 'buffer zone' between France and Germany; Britain and France take no action
1936 October-November	Italy and then Japan sign diplomatic agreements with Hitler; this was the beginning of the Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo axis that became known by 1937 as axis alliance
1937 November	at the Hossbach conference, Hitler holds a high-level meeting to set out plans for the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia
1938 March	anschluss with Austria; Hitler again successfully defies the Treaty of Versailles when the German army marches peacefully into Austria and makes it part of the German Reich

1938 September

the Sudetenland crisis; Hitler falsely claims that Germans living in the Sudetenland, a part of the newly created state of Czechoslovakia, are being victimised by the Czech government and threatens war; the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, intervenes and, at the Munich conference, the Sudetenland becomes part of Germany; this is the most well-known aspect of the appeasement policy

1939 August

Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact; Hitler and Stalin sign a non-aggression pact that removes the immediate threat of war on two fronts for Germany and paves the way for the invasion of Poland

1939 January

Germany takes the remainder of Czechoslovakia; following the gains made at the Munich conference and, breaking promises regarding the security of the rest of Czechoslovakia, Hitler orders the German army to invade; the British and French protest but do not act

1939 March

Britain and France promise to support Poland in case of attack; the British and French finally appear to be ready to take action in the face of repeated aggression by Germany but there is little that they can actually do to help Poland

1939 September

the German army attacks Poland on 1 September; Britain and France declare war on Germany on 3 September after an ultimatum demands the withdrawal of German forces from Poland; the Second World War begins; Poland surrenders on 27 September after coming under attack from both Germany and the Soviet Union

1940 April	Germany invades Denmark and Norway
1940 August	the Battle of Britain, the planned destruction of Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) as a prelude to Operation Sealion, the German invasion of Britain, begins and continues until September when plans for an invasion are postponed
1940 January	in Britain food rationing of butter, bacon and sugar begins
1940 June	Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of the British army from the channel port of Dunkirk, is completed, following the success of the German blitzkrieg; Mussolini enters the war on Germany's side on 10 June; France surrenders on 22 June
1940 May	Germany invades Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France; Winston Churchill replaces Chamberlain as Britain's prime minister

1940 September

the blitz, the German bombing of London and other major British cities, begins

1941 December

the United States of America enters the Second World War, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and Hitler declares war on the USA

1941 February

the Germans provide troops to support the Italians against the British in North Africa and General Erwin Rommel is given command of the German Afrika Korps

1941 June

the beginning of the Russian campaign, Operation Barbarossa, as Germany attacks the Soviet Union

1941 September

the siege of Leningrad begins and does not end until January 1944

<p>1942 August</p>	<p>the battle of Stalingrad begins; the first German bid to take Stalingrad is launched but the Germans are forced back from the city by the end of the year and the German 6th army is forced to surrender in early 1943</p>
<p>1942 January</p>	<p>the holocaust; plans for a 'final solution' to the Jewish 'problem' are drawn up at the Wannsee conference</p>
<p>1942 November</p>	<p>Operation Torch, a landing of mainly American forces takes place in the west coast of North Africa</p>
<p>1942 October-November</p>	<p>battle of El Alamein results in a major victory for Britain's General Montgomery and the 8th army against the German Afrika Korps</p>
<p>1943 July</p>	<p>the allied invasion of Sicily begins on 10 July; the battle of Kursk, the largest tank battle in history between the Germans and the Soviet red army takes place on the eastern front</p>

1943 May

the German army in North Africa is finally defeated by combined British and American forces in May

1943 September

the allied invasion of Italy begins

1944 December

the battle of the bulge, a brief and failed German attempt to halt the advance of allied armies in the west, begins on 16 December

1944 June

D-day, the allied invasion of France with landings along the Normandy coast begins on 6 June; German v-1 missile attacks on London begin on 13 June; these attacks are followed in September by attacks by the larger v-2 rockets

1944 May

the Soviet red army drives the Germans out of the Crimea

1944 September

the Soviet red army continues its advance and crosses into Bulgaria

1945 April

the Soviet red army captures Vienna; Hitler commits suicide on 30 April

1945 March

allied forces in the west cross the Rhine into Germany on 7 March

1945 May

the Soviet red army captures Berlin on 2 May; Germany surrenders on 7 May, and 8 May is declared VE day (victory in Europe day)

1945 November

Nuremberg war crimes trials and the prosecution of leading Nazis begins on 10 November