**The Road to War (WWII)**

**At what point did World War 2 become inevitable?**

**Activity Plan**

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| **Enquiry question** | At what point did World War 2 become inevitable? |
| **Learning outcomes** | Students will be able to:* Place key events in the lead up to war in chronological order
* Identify the impact of key events in the progression towards global conflict (particularly whether events slowed or accelerated this progression)
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| **Step by Step activity** | 1. **Overview of *The War Clouds Gather* PowerPoint**

To begin, students should become familiar with the key events as discussed in the PowerPoint. This could be done through: * A teacher-led presentation of the slides to the class (this would be best if students have little or no background knowledge)
* Allowing students to independently explore the slides on Historiana
* Printing the slides, giving one to each student and asking them to arrange them in the correct order (e.g. on a classroom wall). Note: this option is likely to take up additional class time and extend the activity beyond one hour but it will reinforce student understanding of chronology.
1. **Students create a ‘road map to war’**

This task can be completed individually or in pairs. Students select **at least** 10 key events from the PowerPoint (you might ask them to include all 17) to represent in a visual road map on their large piece of paper.Distribute the printed templates or a large, blank piece of paper to each student/pair. If students are not using the template, at the top left corner of their paper they should write “1930” and at the bottom right corner they should write “September 1939”. Tell students that they will be representing the global journey to war on their roadmap. To do this, they will need to do two things:1. Label each of the key events in chronological order along the road (paying attention to the approximate distance between events). The label should include the **date** and **brief description** in their own words.
2. Draw an image on their roadmap that demonstrates what role they believe this event played on the road to war. Talk through the following examples with students before beginning:
* An event which slowed down the progression towards war might be represented by: an orange traffic light, a slow speed limit sign, a ‘school zone’
	+ Similarly, an event which was an obstacle to war might be represented by: a red traffic light, a speed hump, a ‘no through road’ sign, road works
* An event which sped up the progression towards war might be represented by: a green traffic light, a high speed limit sign, a speeding car
* An event which changed the direction of events might be represented by: a bend in the road or a fork in the road, etc.

Encourage students to be creative in finding ways to demonstrate the impact of events using the ‘road’ analogy.1. **Students select the point at which they believe war was inevitable**

Once their roadmap is complete, students should select the point along the road that they believe represents the moment that war became inevitable. Take some time to clarify with the students what is meant by ‘inevitable’ (how this is different to ‘imminent’, for example). Ask them to consider where events appear to accelerate at such a rate that war could no longer be prevented. They should clearly label this point on their roadmap.Students should justify their decision with clear arguments. They might do this by:* Writing a paragraph defending their choice
* Verbally justifying their choice during the sharing phase of the lesson (if time allows)
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| **Assessment** | * The final ‘road map’ that students produce will allow teachers to assess the extent to which students have identified the correct chronology and understood the impact of each key event. This could be enhanced by asking students to verbally explain and justify their choices if time allows.
* If there is no time for sharing, students should also submit a paragraph justifying their choice of the point at which war became inevitable.
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| **Extension Activities** | Student learning may be extended even further in this activity in several ways:* If students have selected their own events, rather than using all 17, ask them to justify their selection of which key events to mark on the road map. This could be done in writing or verbally.
* Once students have selected the point at which they believe war was inevitable, they should examine the period or event just prior to the point they have chosen. Ask students to suggest what actions might have been taken to prevent war at that point. Again, they could respond in writing or verbally.
* Students can analyse the reasons why events which they have marked as obstacles or points that slowed down the progression towards war were insufficient to prevent it. They might add brief explanatory notes to their road map or develop a separate written or verbal response to this.
* Students can conduct independent research and/or look through other materials on the “Interwar Years” on Historiana to find additional events to add to and enrich their roadmap.
* Discuss reasons why historians might differ in their interpretation of the point at which war became inevitable. This could begin with a comparison of the points chosen by the individuals/pairs in the class and the reasons they arrived at their conclusions.
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| **Resources** | To carry out this activity, you will need:* Powerpoint/Google Slides: ***The War Clouds Gather*** (available on [Historiana](https://historiana.eu/historical-content/key-moments/world-war-2/the-inter-war-years))
* Large paper, such as A3 or butcher’s paper
	+ There is a printable ***PDF Road Map To War Template*** that may be useful to get students started, but students can easily draw their own (more creative) road map
* Pens and pencils, including colours if available
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| **Prior knowledge** | No prior learning is essential, but students would benefit from having already studied events of the inter-World War period (prior to the 1930s) and having an understanding of the general political position of key nations in the 1930s, including: Germany, Japan, USA, USSR, UK, France, Italy. |
| **Additional Information** | This activity is estimated to take approximately 1 hour of lesson time. Ideally, students are also able to share and compare their final products in small groups or through short presentations to the class. This would extend the activity time beyond 1 hour. |