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Europe in Crisis: The World Wars in Europe
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Concept Question Solutions

Europe in Crisis: Class 6 – Germany Ascending

- 1 Which of the following countries suffered the most because of the Great Depression? France, Germany or the USSR.
 - Germany. France was able to stave off the effects of the depression for a few years because much of their economy was internal, based on rebuilding efforts. The USSR had withdrawn from global economics, and was pursuing rapid industrialization through Stalin's five-year plans. Germany's economy, though, was very dependent on the American economy. The German economy was propped up in the 1920s by American investors through the Dawes plan. When the American economy collapsed in 1929, the German economy collapsed too. Germany experienced unemployment rates around 20%.
- 2 What did Hitler mean when he referred to "living space?"
 - Hitler believed that Germany needed more land so they would have more space for the German people to live and grow food. He proposed taking this space from the Slavs, who he believed were unworthy of the rich land they held. Many Slavic countries, like Poland and Czechoslovakia bordered prewar Germany.
- 3 World War II starts when Germany invades Poland. What two countries did Germany take over before Poland?
 - Austria (the *Anschluss*, in March 1938) and Czechoslovakia (when Hitler went to support the Germans of the Sudetenland in September 1938).
- 4 Where was the Maginot Line built?
 - The Maginot Line was built on the French-German border in the 1930s.
- 5 What year did Hitler invade Poland?
 - 1939 (September 1, 1939, to be exact).
- 6 Give two reasons why the British and French did not go to war in after the invasion of Poland, despite their promise to defend Poland (there are many possible answers).
 - Wanted to wait until the British and French built up their military more.
 - Hoped that the British blockade would starve the Germans into submission.
 - Feared a repeat of WWI. Did not want to see millions of young men die in Northern France in a bloody stalemate *again*.
 - France, Germany's neighbor fears German reprisals.
- 7 What military strategy did the Germans use during WWII?
 - Blitzkrieg warfare
- 8 What is the use of tanks in Blitzkrieg warfare? Why was German use of tanks revolutionary?
 - Before, tanks were used as little more than a strong piece of artillery. The German took advantage of tanks' speed and strength by using them to punch holes in the enemy's line. Once the tanks made these holes, the enemy was divided into small groups, which could be encircled and destroyed by the slow-moving infantry.
 - Tanks also allowed the German army to advance quickly over rough terrain. For example, during WWII, Germany was able to advance through the Ardennes Forest in Belgium, which was supposedly impassible.
- 9 What year did Germany invade France? Was Germany successful?
 - 1940 (May 14, 1940, to be exact). Yes, Germany was successful in invading France – the French surrendered within six weeks.
- 10 In this year, who had a bigger army – the Germans, or the combined forces of the British and the French?

- The combined forces of the British and the French
- 11 Where was the Battle of Britain fought?
 - The Battle of Britain was an air battle, fought mainly in the airspace above Britain and the English Channel.
- 12 Who was Britain's leader during WWII?
 - Winston Churchill
- 13 What year did Germany invade the USSR?
 - 1941 (June 22, 1941, to be exact).
- 14 Given the size of the German economy and the Soviet economy in 1941, who would you predict would win a war of attrition?
 - The USSR – they had more resources and manpower, and would be able to fight longer than the Germans.
- 15 What were some misconceptions the Germans had about the Soviet Union?
 - Believed Soviet soldiers were inherently inferior because they were Slavs.
 - Believed the Soviet Union was on the brink of a rebellion because of Stalin's purges. Thought the USSR was unstable, and therefore easy to conquer.
- 16 In 1941, the US enters the war in Europe. Why?
 - After Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on December 7, 1941, the US declared war on Japan. Hitler, who was sure that Germany would be next, jumped the gun, and declared war on the US.