

NAZI-SOVIET PACT 1939

C → B → A → A* JUDGE

DESCRIBE GRADE C

- Poland was Hitler's next target.
- In April Hitler demanded the return of the port of **Danzig** and the **Polish Corridor**.
- Britain and France signed an alliance with Poland; Poland refused Hitler's demands.
- Hitler's policy of **Lebensraum** involved conquering territory east of Germany, including the USSR. Because of his hatred of communism he would almost certainly attack the USSR.
- Poland was as much afraid of an invasion from the USSR as it was from Germany
- The future of Poland now depended on the attitude of the Soviet Union.
- Britain and France reluctantly opened talks with Stalin, the Soviet leader, but were very surprised when the **Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact** was signed on 23 August 1939.
- The **world was shocked** when, on 23 August 1939, the two countries signed the **Nazi-Soviet Pact**.

EXPLAIN GRADE B

- This Pact guaranteed that the Soviets and Germany would not fight each other in the event of war in Europe.
- In **secret** both powers agreed to divide up Polish territory should war occur.
- Both countries agreed not to attack each other and through a series of secret clauses they **divided Poland** between them. Germany was to attack Poland from the west, the USSR to attack from the east.
- Hitler was sure Britain and France would not carry out their promise to Poland - why should they, they had backed down over Czechoslovakia? He felt free to attack Poland.
- Why did the USSR sign the Pact? Their leader, **Stalin**, appeared to run out of patience with Britain's failure to sign an agreement with them. He had been annoyed when left out of the discussions at Munich and was suspicious that Britain and France were trying to direct Hitler's attention to the east and away from the west.

CAN YOU SPELL?

Nazi-Soviet Pact	<i>Lebensraum</i>
Non-Aggression	Stalin

ASSESS RESULTS GRADE A

- Freed up Hitler to invade Poland - he knew that Britain couldn't do anything to defend Poland (he invaded 9 days later).
- Hitler's attack on Poland was inevitable.
- Hitler presumed that the pact would prevent Britain from opposing his attack on Poland. He thought Britain would back down as it had at Munich, especially as Danzig was German & the Polish Corridor separated Germany from East Prussia.
- Ended Britain's hopes of an alliance with Russia to stop Hitler - people in Britain realised that nothing would stop Hitler now but war.
- Improved morale of British people for war - showed Hitler as an opportunist and a trickster, who could never be trusted.
- The anger at Russia was to become a cause of the Cold War.
- The Nazi-Soviet Pact brought war closer.
- The **German army invaded Poland on 1 September 1939**.
- Chamberlain tried to get them to withdraw and hold a peace conference.
- This failed, and on 3 September Britain declared war on Germany, followed shortly after by France.



RENDEZVOUS