

Unit 5: Crisis and Change
Lesson F: The Failure of Democracy and Return of War
Student Resource: Historical Interpretation — Causes of World War II Directions

Historical Interpretation – Causes of World War II Directions

In this activity, you will write a historical interpretation that explains the causes of World War II. Like a historian, you will investigate and consider all of the evidence, draw your own conclusions about the most important causes of the war, and support your interpretation with evidence from primary and secondary sources. Your interpretation will answer the question:

What caused World War II?

- Think about the role of the Treaty of Versailles and expansionism.
- Think about the role and effectiveness of appeasement.
- Think about the effectiveness of the League of Nations.
- Think about which cause(s) were most important in causing the war.

A historical interpretation includes judgments about what happened in the past based on evidence. In your interpretation you must consider the relationship between the causes and make a judgment about why the war began.

There is a lot of evidence to consider, so you will conduct your investigation and develop an interpretation with two independent activities and two jigsaw activities. The steps are:

1. Individually complete the **Background Reading: Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations**.
2. In groups, read your assigned timeline and share to complete the **World War II Timeline Graphic Organizer**.
3. In groups, analyze your assigned documents and share to complete the **Historical Interpretation Document-Based Evidence Graphic Organizer**.
4. Individually, use **Writing the Historical Interpretation** to plan and write your own interpretation of the causes of World War II.