The 1930s were hard times. Many people were willing to give up rights to leaders who promised them a better future. In Europe and Asia, some countries moved toward totalitarianism.

Benito Mussolini took control of Italy in 1922. Under fascism, Mussolini restored order and improved the economy. In Germany Adolf Hitler used anger over World War I to gain power. His Nazis took control in 1933.
Joseph Stalin became dictator of the Soviet Union in 1929. Stalin ruled by fear and scare tactics. He killed or jailed millions. In Japan military leaders slowly took over the government. Then in 1931 Japan invaded northern China.

GERMANY EXPANDS
Hitler rebuilt the military in Germany. His goal was to start a new empire. In 1936 he joined Italy and Japan to form the Axis Powers. Hitler took over part of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Although Britain and France were allied with Czechoslovakia, they chose appeasement. But British admiral Winston Churchill warned that the policy would fail.

In 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union made a secret pact to split Poland between them. Germany attacked Poland and won, starting World War II. The Allied Powers declared war on Germany.

In 1940 Germany conquered much of Europe, including France. Great Britain stood alone. With the new technology of radar, the British Royal Airforce was able to stop an invasion of Britain.

THE UNITED STATES JOINS THE WAR
Most Americans wanted to stay out of the war in Europe. In 1941 the Lend-Lease Act was passed to allow the president to aid any nation vital to U.S. defense. The United States began sending supplies to Britain and other allied countries.

The United States also decided to act against Japanese imperialism. This angered Japan. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the naval fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan. Then Germany declared war on the United States. The United States joined the Allies, entering another world war.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY
Critical Thinking: Making Judgments Explain why you believe that the United States should or should not have helped the Allies through the Lend-Lease Act.
### DIRECTIONS
Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. Who maintained control of the Soviet Union by killing and imprisoning his political enemies?

   ________________________________

2. What alliance fought Great Britain and the United States in World War II?

   ________________________________

3. Who blamed Jewish people, intellectuals, and Communists for Germany’s problems after World War I?

   ________________________________

4. What law provided aid to the Allies before the United States had entered the war?

   ________________________________

5. Under what political system is the government seen as more important than individuals?

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