A lot of events throughout the world led to the beginning of World War 2. Below are some of the main causes of World War 2.

**World War 1**

Many parts of the world were in turmoil after World War 1. Countries had changed borders, places destroyed and people on both sides wanted revenge for all the chaos caused.

**Treaty of Versailles**

The Treaty of Versailles ended World War I between Germany and the Allied Powers. Because Germany had lost the war, the treaty was very harsh against Germany. Germany was forced to "accept the responsibility" of the war. The treaty required that Germany pay a huge sum of money called reparations.

The problem with the treaty is that it left the German economy in ruins. People were starving and the government was in chaos and many wanted to change this and make Germany strong again.

**Japanese Expansion**

In the period before World War II, Japan was growing rapidly. However, as an island nation they did not have the land or the natural resources to sustain their growth. Japan began to look to grow their empire in order to gain new resources. They invaded Manchuria in 1931 and China in 1937. Japan had taken over Korea, Manchuria, and a significant part of China before World War 2 began.

**Fascism**

With the economic turmoil left behind by World War 1, some countries were taken over by dictators who formed powerful fascist governments. The first fascist government was Spain which was ruled by the dictator Franco. Then Mussolini took control of Italy. These dictators wanted to expand their empires and began to look for new lands to conquer. Italy invaded and took over Ethiopia in 1935. Adolf Hitler would emulate Mussolini in his takeover of Germany.

(Fascism means that one person or group of people have all the power and they are not accepting of other people's views or differences).

**Hitler and the Nazi Party**

In Germany, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power. The Germans were desperate for someone to turn around their economy and restore their national pride. Hitler offered them hope. In 1934, Hitler was proclaimed the "Fuhrer" (leader) and became dictator of Germany.

Hitler resented the restrictions put on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. While talking about peace, Hitler began to rearm Germany. He allied Germany with Mussolini and Italy. Then he looked to restore Germany to power by expanding his empire. He first took over Austria in 1938. When the League of Nations did nothing to stop him, Hitler became bolder and took over Czechoslovakia in 1939.

**Appeasement**

After World War 1, the nations of Europe were weary and did not want another war. When countries such as Italy and Germany became aggressive and began to take over their neighbors and build up their armies, countries such as Britain and France hoped to keep peace through "appeasement." This meant that they tried to make Germany and Hitler happy rather than try to stop him. They hoped that by meeting his demands he would be satisfied and there wouldn't be any war. As part of their appeasement policy, Britain and France agreed to let Hitler have part of Czechoslovakia in the Munich Agreement. Czechoslovakia had no say in the deal. The Czechoslovakians called the agreement the "Munich Betrayal."

Unfortunately, the policy of appeasement backfired. It only made Hitler bolder. It also gave him time to build up his army.

**Great Depression**

The period before World War II was a time of great economic suffering throughout the world called the Great Depression. Many people were out of work and struggling to survive. This created unstable governments and worldwide turmoil that helped lead to World War II. Because of the Great Depression, many countries were experiencing strong fascist and communist movements including France and Great Britain prior to the war.

**Germany Invaded Poland**

On 1st September 1939, over a million Nazi troops then invaded Poland. The UK and France had promised to help the Poles if they were attacked so gave Hitler an ultimatum (final demand) by threatening war if his troops did not withdraw by 3rd September. Hitler ignored this threat and so war was declared.

**Nazi-Soviet Pact**

Stalin the leader of the Soviet Union - which formed between Russia and other countries - made an agreement with Hitler that he would not invade Germany.

Hitler probably would not have gone to war in 1939 if he had been faced with fighting Britain, France and Russia. Stalin gave Hitler the green light for war.

**Questions:**

Which do you think are the most significant causes? Can you order them?

Are there any links between the causes? Would one have not happened if it were not for another?

Can you show the links and any extra research you have done on a poster entitled ‘The Causes of WW2’. You can add pictures and colour to present your information clearly.

What would a person in the Philippines in 1939 say is the most important cause of the war? Was it different to your opinion?