Yang Kyoungjong who had been forcibly conscripted in turn by the Imperial Japanese army, the Red Army and the Wehrmacht, is taken prisoner by the Americans in Normandy June 1944
WHAT IS THIS OPTION ABOUT?

• **PRINCIPAL FOCUS:** Students investigate *key features and issues* in the history of the conflict in Europe 1935-1945.

• *Essay questions for the Trial and HSC Examinations will be drawn from the list of key features and issues, not the content list.*

• **Key features and issues:**
  • Causes of the conflict.
  • Aims and strategies of the allied and axis powers.
  • Turning points of the war.
  • Impact of war on civilians.
  • Origins, nature and impact of The Holocaust.
  • Reasons for the allied victory.
Students learn about:

1. Growth of European tensions
   • Dictatorships in Germany and Italy
   • The League of Nations and collapse of collective security: Abyssinia, the Spanish Civil War
   • Britain, France and the policy of appeasement: an assessment
   • Significance of the Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

2. Course of the European war
   • German advances: the fall of Poland, the Low Countries and France
   • The air war and its effects: The Battle of Britain and the Blitz, the bombing of Germany
   • Operation Barbarossa, the Battle of Stalingrad and the significance of the Russian campaign
   • Battle of El Alamein and the significance of the conflict in North Africa to the European War

3. Civilians at war
   • Social and economic effects of the war on civilians in Britain and EITHER Germany OR the Soviet Union
   • Nazi racial policies: the Holocaust and the persecution of minorities

4. End of the conflict
   • ‘D’ Day and the liberation of France
   • Russian counter offensives 1944
   • Final defeat 1944–1945
   • Nuremberg War Crimes trials
In 2010 the examiners asked the following:

• Assess the effectiveness of the League of Nations to the maintenance of peace in Europe to 1939. 

(Growth of European tensions) OR

• Evaluate the significance of ‘D’ Day and the liberation of France in bringing about the end of the conflict in Europe by 1945. 

(End of the conflict)

In both the Trial and HSC exam you will be expected to write a response in which you will be able to support all of your arguments with the most relevant examples and it will be assumed that those examples will be specific (to an event, development, individual – i.e. not waffle), accurate (the right name, the right date, the right city...) and detailed (several piece of information for each examples). Most importantly you will answer the question which the examiners have set not one which you would like to write!
1. CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

Dictatorships in Germany and Italy:

Nature of the dictatorship: Adolf Hitler.  
Nature of the dictatorship: Benito Mussolini.  
Significance of FOREIGN POLICY.  
   German-Italian alliance.

Causation (Foreign Policy):  
   WWI and Versailles  
   Rise / fear of communism  
   Failure of League of Nations  
   Role of appeasement  
Significance of Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.
Britain, France and the policy of appeasement: an assessment:

• Neville Chamberlain.
• Interwar French politics.
• 1935: Anglo-German Naval Agreement.
• 1936: Remilitarisation of the Rhineland.
• 1938: Sudetenland / Munich Conference.
• March 1939: Italian invasion of Albania.
• March 1939: The fall of Prague.
• March 1939: Guarantee to Poland.
• Appeasement vs. German foreign policy.
The League of Nations and the collapse of collective security:

- Collective security?
- Stresa Front
- Abyssinia
- Hoare-Laval pact
- Spanish Civil War
- Collective security vs. German and Italian foreign policy
# 2. AIMS AND STRATEGIES OF THE ALLIED AND AXIS POWERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Span (1935-1945)</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allies in 1939 / Allies in 1941</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Axis in 1939 / Axis in 1943</strong></td>
<td>Aims And Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Axis war aims:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Germany 1935-1939;1939-1941;1942-1945&lt;br&gt;Italy from 1938-1939; 1939-1943; 1943-1945</td>
<td>German Foreign Policy: contra-Versailles&lt;br&gt;<strong>Grossdeutsch, Lebensraum</strong>&lt;br&gt;Pact of Steel&lt;br&gt;Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact&lt;br&gt;1000 – year Reich: expansion and conquest&lt;br&gt;Genocide&lt;br&gt;<strong>Gotterdammerung</strong>&lt;br&gt;The new Roman Empire: Failure to expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Allied war aims:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Britain and France 1939-1940&lt;br&gt;Britain 1940-42&lt;br&gt;Britain and USA 1942-1944&lt;br&gt;Britain, USA and France 1944-1945</td>
<td>Guarantee to Poland&lt;br&gt;Preserving France&lt;br&gt;Sheer survival&lt;br&gt;Liberation&lt;br&gt;Germany’s defeat; the division of Germany&lt;br&gt;Prosecution of war criminals (Nuremburg)&lt;br&gt;Denazification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Axis strategies:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1939-1941; 1942-1945</td>
<td>Blitzkrieg&lt;br&gt;Air war; bombardment&lt;br&gt;Targeting industry and war production&lt;br&gt;Brutalisation of civilian populations (death and repression)&lt;br&gt;Recruitment&lt;br&gt;Forced labour&lt;br&gt;Killing POWs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. TURNING POINTS OF THE WAR

21 June 1941:
Operation Barbarossa:
*Drang nach Osten* –
drive towards the east –
begins

Battle of Stalingrad:
1942-1943

Battle of El Alamein (2nd)
1942

The campaign in North Africa,
1942-1943
### 4. IMPACT OF WAR ON CIVILIANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>USSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerial bombardment; Blitz</td>
<td>Aerial bombardment; ‘strategic bombing’ – Cologne, Hamburg, Dresden (fire storms)</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evacuation of children, women</td>
<td>Direct attacks on civilians; civilian death. Material destruction. Displacement. Evacuation</td>
<td>Direct attacks on civilians; civilian death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct attacks on civilians; civilian death</td>
<td>Shortages, rationing and the black market</td>
<td>Material destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-RP (air-raid protection) wardens; Blackout</td>
<td>Volksstrum</td>
<td>Shortages / starvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material destruction</td>
<td>The Rationalisation Decree</td>
<td>Siege of Leningrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortages, rationing and the black market</td>
<td>Internal purging/ punishing of those lacking loyalty</td>
<td>Civilian resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Forced labour (foreign workers)</td>
<td>Great Patriotic War (propaganda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1 and V2 rockets</td>
<td>Women in the workforce</td>
<td>Stalingrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda – ‘dig for victory’; ‘make do and mend’</td>
<td>Refugees from eastern Germany (1945)</td>
<td>Race war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>Resistance (White Rose; Stauffenberg)</td>
<td>Women and labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941: Lend Lease Act (economic support, USA)</td>
<td>Deportation (German Jews and Gypsies)</td>
<td>Women and military service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women: WVS (Women’s Voluntary Service, 1938); National Service Act no.2, 1941; WRENS etc; Women’s Land Army; labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 5. ORIGINS, NATURE AND IMPACT OF THE HOLOCAUST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1933-1937:**  
Nazi attack on civil rights of German Jews. | Ghettoisation; Einsatzgruppen; death camps; forced labour; medical experiments, death marches. | Numbers killed; numbers displaced; refugees; effect on culture and community in Europe. |
| **1938-1941:**  
Intensification of persecution; expanding to include Jews in occupied territories. | Role of Hitler (see historiography); role of other individuals; role of Wehrmacht and SS; collaboration.  
Judenräte, Sonnderkommando, resistance.  
The persecution of others (non-Jewish victims of Nazism). | Nuremberg; UN Convention on Genocide.  
Memory and memorialisation. |
| **June 1941:**  
Operation Barbarossa. | | |
| **January 1942:**  
Wannsee Conference – *Endlösung.* | | |
6. Reasons for the Allied Victory

Alliances and resources:

1939-1941 Germany/Italy are able to match the combined resources of both Britain and France by May 1940 Britain stands alone (with help from her Empire and US Lend/Lease programme.

1941-1945 Balance of power shifts with USA entering the war and Germany invading Russia. The industrial might of Britain/Russia/USA would eventually outmuscle Germany/Italy and Japan.

Strategy: Allied successes:

Strategic bombing campaign;
D-Day invasions.
Axis failures: Blitzkrieg (Operation Barbarossa); capture of resources (USSR and Nth Africa).

The Eastern front:

Operation Barbarossa;
Stalingrad; Moscow and Leningrad;
production and resources;
the Russian Offensives.

Nazi Germany:

Hitler (and military command; and apocalyptic vision);
the Home-front;
the Holocaust;
resistance (in Germany and in German occupied territories).
Practice Questions
While practicing questions is the best way to study for your exams this assumes a number of steps have already been fulfilled for this to be an effective mode of study.

Now you have the notes to study the key features. You can go to past HSC questions and plan answers, try writing essays with and without notes, even try timed essays.

You should already have a basic knowledge of the period 1935-1945 – this includes the key dates, personalities and significant events – this means you have made notes about the chronological events, you understand their relative importance and you know who are the key characters and the contribution they make.

You now need to add some depth to your understanding. You can do this by including in your notes references to sources both primary and secondary (historiography). You should develop a point of view regarding the key features. You need to develop a broad view.
HSC Questions

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:
- demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding relevant to the question
- communicate ideas and information using historical terms and concepts appropriately
- present a sustained, logical and cohesive response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| • Addresses the question asked, making a clear judgement based on a sophisticated and sustained argument, which demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the issue(s) raised in the question  
• Presents a logical, cohesive and well-structured response drawing on a clear identification of relevant key features  
• Supports interpretation with detailed, relevant and accurate historical information and makes use of appropriate terms and concepts | 21–25 |
| • Addresses the question asked with a sound attempt at a judgement and/or an argument, which demonstrates a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the issue(s) raised in the question  
• Presents a well-structured response drawing on relevant key features  
• Provides detailed, relevant and accurate historical knowledge and makes use of appropriate terms and concepts | 16–20 |
| • Addresses the question asked with a relevant but largely narrative or descriptive response which may contain implied understanding of the issue(s) raised in the question  
• Presents a structured response, with some identification of the key features  
• Provides adequate, relevant and accurate historical knowledge incorporating some historical terms | 11–15 |
| • Presents a narrative or descriptive response, which is largely relevant but may be generalised AND/OR incomplete  
• Presents a simple response, with some mention of relevant key features  
• Provides limited, relevant historical knowledge incorporating some historical terms | 6–10 |
In 2011 the examiners asked the following:
Assess the effectiveness of the League of Nations to the maintenance of peace in Europe to 1939.

(In better responses, candidates made a clear judgement, based on a sustained and cohesive assessment, on the effectiveness of the League of Nations to maintain peace in Europe up until 1939. These candidates provided detailed and accurate historical information about key events that clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the League in the time period.

In weaker responses, candidates provided a narrative account of events leading up to World War Two. These candidates used only limited historical information, often dealing with the League’s involvement outside Europe or before 1935.)

OR

Evaluate the significance of ‘D’ Day and the liberation of France in bringing about the end of the conflict in Europe by 1945.

(In better responses, candidates addressed the question with a clear evaluation of the significance of D-Day and the liberation of France up until the end of conflict in Europe in 1945. These candidates dealt substantially with both D-Day and the liberation of France and made a judgement on their significance before considering other factors. These candidates clearly identified relevant key features, supported their argument with detailed, accurate historical information, and used terms and concepts appropriately.

In weaker responses, candidates either focused on the reasons for the Allied victory or provided narratives of key events, such as Operation Barbarossa, and dismissed the significance of the liberation of France in ending the conflict. These responses contained limited historical knowledge.)
Question 21 — Option B: Conflict in Europe 1935–1945

(a) How significant were the Battle of Stalingrad and the Russian campaign in leading to the Allied victory in the European War?

OR

(b) Assess the impact of Nazi racial policies on civilians during the European War.

(a) Better responses contained a sophisticated and sustained argument to assess the significance of the Battle of Stalingrad and the Russian campaign in leading to the allied victory in the European War. These responses linked the Russian campaign to its impact on Germany and later developments in the war. Weaker responses either included a narrative account of the events on the Eastern Front, or demonstrated only limited historical information that might incorporate some historical terms.

(b) In better responses, candidates broke down the term ‘civilians’ into ‘Jewish civilians’, ‘Gypsy civilians’, ‘Slav civilians’, ‘homosexual civilians’, etc and assessed the impact of Nazi racial policies on those groups during the European War. This then made possible a sophisticated and sustained response to the question. Weaker responses tended to describe Nazi racist policies since 1933, and did not focus on the specifics during the period of the European War. Other weaker responses focused on the wider issue of the impact of the war on civilians, including in Britain. The weakest responses contained limited historical information or did not address the question.
HSC Questions

(a) To what extent was the policy of appeasement responsible for the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939?

- Better responses addressed the question with a sophisticated and sustained evaluation of appeasement as a cause for the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939. These responses supported their arguments with accurate and detailed historical evidence, linking appeasement to aggressive dictatorships, failure of the League of Nations and collective security. Weaker responses provided a description or narrative of the events leading up to the outbreak of World War II. Sometimes these weaker responses failed to address appeasement at all.

OR

(b) Assess the significance of the conflict in North Africa to Allied victory in the European War.

- The better responses presented a sophisticated and sustained argument to assess the significance of the conflict in North Africa to Allied victory in the European war. These responses linked the importance of the North African conflict to future key developments in the war. Factors such as Allied morale, key resources and the Suez Canal were discussed in some detail. Weaker responses either provided a narrative of the events in North Africa or a prepared response on the reason for Allied victory in the European war.
Causes of WW II

“Does this mean that the Soviet Union stands completely aside from these events...?

Of course not; no-one can suggest that we are locked into the struggle for imperialist interests. We remain foreign to the idea of conquering anyone’s territory; furthermore, we are indifferent to the fact that one Power rather than another exploits this or that colony, takes hold of this or that foreign market, subjugates this or that weak state. But Germany is not merely looking to re-establish its rights trampled underfoot by the Versailles Treaty, to re-establish the frontier of the Reich’s pre-war frontiers. Its foreign policy is based on unlimited aggression and even goes so far as to talk of subordinating to the so-called German race every other race and nationality. It is openly conducting a furiously anti-Soviet policy, suspiciously raising memories of the time when the Teutonic Order dominated the Baltic region; it has wild dreams about conquering the Ukraine and even the Urals. And who knows what other dreams obsess it?”

Litvinov would not be rewarded for his insight into the nature of Hitler’s dictatorship, his ambitions or the potential brutality of a German war for territory, rather he would be replaced by Molotov who, though less capable than Litvinov, was also less likely to recommend that the USSR get involved in defending the continent against Hitler and Nazi Germany. It was Molotov, therefore, who would sign the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939.
CAUSES OF WWII

Historiography
This is an ongoing issue which you need to be aware of and be able to incorporate.
In your notes (p.27) you have an extract from the historian Niall Ferguson (2007) who argues that Nazi and Italian ambition were driven as much by economics as it was by ideology or racial grounds.

On the other hand A.J.P. Taylor (1964) believed Hitler had no long term plan, no blueprint for taking over Europe (for what ever reason). When war broke out in 1939 it was the result of the failure of diplomacy.

Richard Overy (1987) believes not that war was inevitable but the situation in Europe was unstable because of the difference between the existing international system (LON/Appeasement) and the reality of power. He believes Hitler was able to take advantage of this instability to promote his own interests which eventually led to war.
Richard Evans sees Hitler as the dominating figure who led Germany into war.

*It was without question Hitler, personally, who drove Germany towards war the moment he became Reich Chancellor, subordinating very other aspect of policy to this overriding aim.*

In his recent book Antony Beevor argues that Hitler from the outset planned for war. *“He intended to achieve his goal of European domination in a single lifetime.”*
CAUSES OF WWII CONTINUED

The Role of Individuals
EH Carr believed that History is as a result of sweeping forces over which individuals have little control – the force of determinism.
Carr sees such forces as

• The nature and influence of inter-war pacifism especially in France and Britain
• The growth of right wing parties and governments. Not just Italy and Germany but in Poland, Hungary and Austria.
• The failure of internationalism. Exemplified by the actions of Japan in Manchuria and Italy in Abyssinia
• The Depression which provided the opportunity for Hitler’s ultimate rise to power. That is not to say he gained power because of the depression but without the depression he may have never had the opportunity to become chancellor.
• The depression was also significant in the failure of internationalism and collective security. The economic consequences of the depression led governments taking actions which focused on national rather than international events (tariff barriers), local issues (unemployment) rather international issues (Japan’s invasion of Manchuria).
Nazi-Soviet Non Aggression Pact (August 1939)
To say this came out of left field is an under statement!
The signing of this pact gave Hitler what he wanted the
green light to invade Poland.
The question arises what did Russia get out of the pact.
1. Stalin was involved in skirmishes with Japan.
2. The open British distrust of USSR, its hesitancy
   and lack of serious negotiations
3. Stalin gained new spheres of influence initially
   eastern Poland later (1940) the Baltic States and
   parts of Finland

From Stalin’s perspective, it provided respite and opened
up the enticing prospect of Europe’s capitalist powers,
Germany, France and Britain, fighting a war of mutual
destruction between themselves.

Richard Evans The Third Reich in Power p.693

Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (left), Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (center),
and Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov (right) at the signing of the nonaggression
pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Moscow, Soviet Union, August 1939.
— Wide World Photo
The Role of France and Britain
The aggression of the Axis powers cannot be denied and certainly they contributed to the war with their aggressive foreign policy. But the lack of action by France and Britain certainly contributed to rather than halting this aggressive foreign policy. Why?
Both France and Britain were democracies and therefore were susceptible to public opinion which was against involvement in armed conflicts. Both governments had more immediate issues to deal with – depression which led to social dislocation. Leading elements within both countries admired the work of the new dictators and the success they had achieved. German rearmament could be justified as a barrier against USSR. The general agreement that the terms of Versailles had been too harsh and unfair. For Britain a stronger Germany helped the balance of power in Europe. Despite WWI historically France was always suspect.

Édouard Daladier
Prime minister of France
1938-1940 (later charged with treason by Vichy government)
AIMS AND STRATEGIES OF AXIS POWERS

They develop and change over time.

1. Between **1935-1942** – relate to foreign policy of both Italy and Germany. For Germany this was *Grossdeutsch* and *Lebensraum* for the Italians it was to turn the Mediterranean into an Italian Sea.

2. It also revolved around the need for resources. In particular oil reserves in the Ukraine and Caucasus and in the Middle East (along with access to Suez)

**1942-1944**

The German aim is dominated by its ideology in particular the final solution. In many ways this conflicts with the Russian campaign. By this time Italy has become a minor player, especially after Germany had to rescue the situation firstly in Greece and more significantly in North Africa.

**1945** survival v destruction

German strategy revolved around *Blitzkrieg* – this strategy relied upon on a fast campaign which moved forward (rather than static) this enabled the German Wehrmacht to continue to live off the land. There is a myth that Germany possessed overwhelming motorized forces – while it did have some units which were highly effective. For operation Barbarossa the Germans and her allies used 3 million soldiers, 3580 tanks, 7184 artillery guns, 1830 planes and 750000 horses.

This strategy failed at Stalingrad and Moscow when the army stopped moving and a war of attrition began. Germany was not prepared to fight a defensive war – her industrial capacity would always make this difficult.

In the later year’s Hitler began to rely on ‘wonder’ weapons – like the V1 and V2 and the ME 262.
AIMS AND STRATEGIES OF ALLIED POWERS

Like the Axis powers the Allies aims also changed over time. The key being Hitler’s invasion of USSR and his declaration of war on USA.

This brought together the three allies with a resource capacity (including manpower of which the Germans and Italians would be unable to match.

For Britain and France in 1939 the aims is to prevent further German expansion, followed quickly by the defense of France and finally the survival of Britain.

The entry of the USA into the war and Roosevelt’s promise to ‘deal’ with Hitler first leads to the allies taking the initiative firstly through strategic bombing and secondly in North Africa and Italy. The Russian’s job was to keep Germany busy in the East (although they frequently asked for a second front in France to relieve the pressure).

From 1943 onwards the allied war aims were centered on what to do with Germany when the war ended.

Allied strategies used to achieve these:

- Strategic bombing/air superiority
- Unified and effective command
- Industry and war production
- Mobilisation of all civilians to aid the war effort
- Offensives in both the east and west to push back the German forces (encircle Germany)
TURNING POINTS

Operation Barbarossa

22 June 1941- Germany launched it’s largest version of the Blitzkrieg ever – its aim was to obliterate the Red Army in 6 weeks (after 3 weeks the Red Army lost 2 million men) BUT after 6 weeks the Red Army was still fighting. Germany was now committed (men, machinery and industrial production) to a war rather than a campaign.

The German army is now involved in conflicts in eastern Europe, the southeast (Yugoslavia) and Mediterranean (Greece/Crete) and North Africa. They had occupying forces committed in Poland, France, Denmark. The German air force was still heavily involved in the bombing campaign over Britain.

Russian tactics of destroying everything as they retreated denied Germans of vital resources which were necessary to keep moving forward. The supply lines back to Germany were long and open to disruption.

Hitler in December 1941 became commander in chief of armed forces. He was erratic and prone to ideological rather than tactical decisions (he also decided to declare war on USA).

Stalin had ordered the relocation of Russia’s industrial base into central Russia where it was safe from German air attacks and from which the massive amount of guns and machines which would give the Red Army an overwhelming superiority.
TURNING POINTS

Battle of Stalingrad June 1942-February 1943

In June 1942 Hitler redistributed his 5 German armies. One to Leningrad, one to Stalingrad and three to the Caucasus. German strategy went from sequential attacks to simultaneous offensives. September rather than withdrawing the army at Stalingrad to winter quarters he ordered an all out attack. 80% of the city was reduced and by early November most of the city was taken. General Zhukov planned a counter attack which saw the Germans trapped in the city, they held out to February when against Hitler's direct orders they surrendered. Of the 250,000 Germans 90,000 were captured and 150,000 died from wounds or weather.

• For Hitler the loss was not only material but symbolic, he had publicly sworn to hold the city.
• There was a growing disenchantment with Hitler from among the officer elite.
• This was the most significant defeat/reversal which the German army had experienced – it lifted Russian (other allies) morale and lowered those Germans on the Eastern Front.
• 75% of German casualties occurred on the Eastern Front.
• While the German army would continue to try an ‘win’ in the East its attack had been stalled (including the acquisition of important resources in the Ukraine) it was now drawn into a war of attrition and brutality.
• Richard Evans – it was in the end on the eastern front …. That the fortunes of war were decided.
German involvement in North Africa was not something which Hitler had planned for, he in fact was forced to send German forces to rescue his ally Mussolini who in late 1940 launched an attack out of Italian territory aimed at capturing Suez. By January 1941, things were not going well by March of that year 45,000 Italians had been captured. Hitler supported his ally by sending Erwin Rommel with what was to be known as the Africa Korps (100,000 men and 600 tanks).

While helping his ally Hitler also recognised the importance of Suez to the British supply line and Egypt as an entry point into the oil rich areas of Persia and the possibility of joining up with his troops in southern Russia.

The end result was less prosaic for Hitler. At the 2nd Battle of El Alamein Montgomery was able to destroy 30% of Rommel’s forces who was forced to engage in a fighting retreat, to make matters worse American troops landed in Algeria and the German forces were trapped.
TURNING POINTS

North Africa/El Alamein

While not as significant as the Russian campaign (4 German divisions in North Africa v 190 divisions in USSR) the campaign provided a significant boost for the British and their new allies the Americans.

"Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat." Winston Churchill

- It marked the end of German aggression in the Mediterranean.
- The Suez was safe as where the oil fields.
- The British and Americans demonstrated the new cooperation and coordination which was to be seen more fully in June 1944.
- Taken into account with Stalingrad, the allies believed they had turned the corner.
- Success in North Africa was to lead to the invasion of Sicily and later Italy which was to further draw away German troops from France and the Eastern front.

Other Turning Points
- Battle of the Atlantic swings in allies favor.
- Air superiority over western Europe which allows for the invasion and strategic bombing campaign.
- Is there a single turning point or is it a combination of events?
REASONS FOR ALLIED VICTORY

Like turning points is there a single reason for victory or is it a combination of allied successes and German mistakes which eventually leads to the end of the war in Europe?

The Russians

Soviet offensives January to December 1944.
This sees the siege of Leningrad broken (January 1944), the defeat of German army group North (February), mid March Soviet forces are poised to enter Romania, by April Crimea is free of German Forces.

June 22 1944 – Operation Bagration – all out assault against Army Group center across Byelorussia towards Poland. Over 1 million men, 6000 tanks and 2000 aircraft. Soviets advance and German soldiers are shown no mercy (300,000 Germans dead captured or wounded).
July Soviets threaten Baltic states – by October they fall to Soviet forces.

July Soviet forces enter Poland, September they enter Romania and Bulgaria and by October they enter East Prussia.
REASONS FOR ALLIED VICTORY

The D-Day Landings
6/6/1944 – Allies land 326,000 men in Normandy by August Paris is freed followed closely by Brussels and Antwerp. However, the success are not without some setbacks, the attempt to take the bridges over the Rhine (Operation Market Garden) at Arnhem end in disaster and for a short period of time December 1944 to January 1945 in the Ardennes it looked as if a German counter attack would split the British and American forces. This attack by the last of the German army in western Europe would mark it’s last offensive action from now on it would be fighting a rearguard action with teenagers and old men.

By January 1945 the German Empire had shrunk to Western Prussia, Czechoslovakia, western Hungary, Slovenia and Northern Italy.

Hitler
How much blame does Hitler take for losing the war?
• Should he have continued with operation Sea-Lion?
• Was the Russian invasion wise – was it well planned – could it have been rescued?
• Why declare war on USA – why not leave them alone to fight the Japanese?
• Did ideology detract form a German victory? Could precious resources (eg rolling stock be better used to transport men and materials to the eastern front rather than Jews to the camps), could Hitler have allowed more German women into the workforce sooner?
REASONS FOR ALLIED VICTORY

Overwhelming superiority in men, resources and industry

Once the allies had been united was it inevitable that the combined industrial might of Britain, Russia and the USA would supply more guns, tanks and planes than the German economy?

Albert Speer despite achieving miracles in production was always never going to match the allied output.

Prior to WWI it was already believed that the wars of the future would be fought in the factories. The ability of the allies to mobilize it’s civilian population and put it on a war footing was significant.

Importantly for both USA and USSR the means of production were far away from the war. Both Britain and more significantly Germany experienced the difficulties of maintaining production while being bombed.

The allies were able to work more cooperatively than the axis counterparts. In many ways Germany was hamstrung with Italy as an ally it brought few resources to the fight.

Lastly the most significant piece of military hardware in WWII was the airplane – both for strategic (long range bombers) and offensive (fighter planes) duties. The capacity to control the air would give that side a tremendous advantage in the ground fighting. To do so you needed the industrial capacity.

Interestingly Germany did have that capacity but tactical decisions made by Hitler had a serious consequence – no long range bombers, too many models, halting the jet plane programme in 1943.