

ACS INDEPENDENT 2025 Y4 HISTORY P1 PRELIM

Suggested Answers

1a)	Study Source A. What does the advertisement's message reveal about British attitude and its role in the world? Explain your answer.	5m
L1	Misunderstands/paraphrase with no inference/describes source.	1m
L2	Inference unsupported. I can infer that the British were condescending and prejudiced towards the non-Europeans.	2m
L3	Inference/s supported and explained. Award 3m for 1 inference and 4m for 2 inferences. Attitude: I can infer that the British had a <u>negative attitude</u> as they were <u>condescending and prejudiced</u> towards the non-Europeans. This is evident in Source A where the British <u>perceived the people in 'the dark corners of the earth'</u> as backward and unrefined as they lacked the "virtues of cleanliness". Role in the world: The fact that the British saw it as their <u>White Man's burden/moral duty to bring civilisation (bring 'lightening')</u> to 'the dark corners of the earth' / to reform/teach the non-Europeans meant that they perceived the people there to be inferior/undeveloped and viewed them with disdain.	3-4m
L4	Inference supported and explained with <u>source evidence and in context</u>. Award 5m only if inferences address both attitude and role in the world. L3 + This was the common attitude of the British at the time as the fact that <u>the soap manufacturers used the British's heightened sense of superiority to promote their brand of soap must mean that this was how the British must have felt</u> and thus reflective of the British attitudes towards the people in dark corners of the world/SEA/the colonies.	4-5m

b)	Study Sources B and C. How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer.	6m
L1	Mismatch	1m
L2	No BOC, Valid comparison but with no evidence/Difference in provenance only. Source B is by a Singaporean historian while Source C was by a British historian hence, they have different viewpoints.	2m
L3	<p>Similarity and/or difference in content explained. (Award 3m max if only evidence provided but no explanation, 4m for 1 analysis and 5m for both Sim and Diff)</p> <p>Both sources are <u>similar in showing that the British foreign policy changed from non-intervention to intervention in the 1870s.</u></p> <p>Source B: British foreign policy had long been based on non-commitment... Several forces were at work, both in Southeast Asia and in Britain itself to bring about a change in British foreign policy." This shows that the British was shifting towards a forward movement to expand its influence.</p> <p>Source C: "The decision made by Lord Kimberley in 1873 to take some action in Malaya, and if necessary to intervene in the affairs of the states..." This means that due to circumstances, the British non-intervention policy changed.</p> <p>Both sources <u>are different in showing the reasons for the change in British foreign policy.</u></p> <p>Source B: "...In Britain was growing the imperial idea that it was the role of the British empire to lead the world in the arts of civilization, to bring light to the dark places, to teach the true political method... and act as trustee for the weak." This means that the reason for British intervention/change in British foreign policy was due to the sense of superiority the British felt in their duty to lead the rest of the world.</p> <p>Source C: This source shows the reason for the change in British foreign policy was the "fear of foreign – specifically German- intervention.". the newly formed Germany was expanding its empire and there was concern that they would target the territories in Asia/SEA, blocking British economic interests.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Possible to argue that the sources are similar in the reasons for British intervention/change in British foreign policy: To build empire/imperialistic spirit/not losing out to foreign rivals.</p>	3-5m

L4	<p>Explains similarity/difference in purpose. (Award 5m only if impact/evidence lacking in purpose explanation).</p> <p>The purpose of both sources is similar in that they aim to explain the shift in British policy towards intervention in Malaya in the 1870s,</p> <p>The purpose of Source B is <u>to explain the shift in British foreign policy in the 1860s–1870s from non-commitment to active imperialism in Southeast Asia</u> by analyzing both external pressures and internal ideological motivations. Written by a Singaporean historian in 1965—a time of decolonization and national reflection—it was likely intended for students and readers examining colonial history. The historian highlights evidence such as European rivalry (Dutch in Indonesia, French in Indochina) and Britain's growing belief in its civilizing mission ("to bring light to the dark places"), aiming to show how these factors justified and drove imperial expansion, and <u>to encourage critical understanding of the colonial mindset and its impact on the region.</u></p> <p>The purpose of Dr. Cowan's 1961 source is to <u>explain the primary motive behind Britain's decision to intervene in Malaya in the 1870s</u>. As a British historian writing in the early 1960s, Cowan was part of a scholarly movement reassessing imperial history during the era of decolonization. Aimed at academic readers, his message is that British policy was driven not by local conditions or economic interests, but by fear of foreign—specifically German—intervention, as seen in his clear statement of this cause. Cowan intended to challenge older, simplistic interpretations and <u>encourage a more critical understanding of British imperialism as shaped by European geopolitical rivalries.</u></p> <p>Thus, while both sources aim to interpret the causes of British involvement, Cowan focuses narrowly on geopolitical rivalry with Germany, while the Singaporean historian offers a broader interpretation that also critiques Britain's ideological justifications for empire.</p> <p>Accept other valid answers including possible differences in purpose analysis.</p>	5-6m
c)	<p>Study Source D. Why did Sir Andrew Clarke write this letter to the Earl of Carnarvon? Explain your answer.</p>	5m
L1	Inference in general/misinterpretation/no purpose	1m
L2	<p>Answer based on valid message/impact, unsupported / context. The context was growing unrest in Perak and Britain's reconsideration of its policy of non-intervention.</p>	2m
L3	<p>Answers on valid message or valid impact, supported.</p> <p>Clarke's main message, supported by statements like "require to be treated much more like children" and calls for an officer to "control" revenue and expenditure, was that appointing a Resident was necessary for orderly government.</p>	3-4m

	His intended impact was to persuade London to approve a system of indirect rule in Perak under British oversight.	
L4	<p>Explains message with evidence, context and intended impact. Award 4m only if impact/evidence/context about the time is lacking.</p> <p>Sir Andrew Clarke wrote this letter in 1873 to the Earl of Carnarvon to convince him that the Malays were ineffective in ruling Perak. As Governor of the Straits Settlements, Clarke was responding to Sultan Abdullah's request for help and used the letter to argue that Malays required British "teaching" and supervision. The context was growing unrest in Perak and Britain's reconsideration of its policy of non-intervention. Clarke's main message, supported by statements like "require to be treated much more like children" and calls for an officer to "control" revenue and expenditure, was that appointing a Resident was necessary for orderly government. His intended impact was to persuade London to approve the need for formal British intervention in Perak.</p> <p>Accept other valid answers.</p>	5-6m
d)	<p>Study Sources E and F.</p> <p>How far does Source F prove that Source E is wrong about the state of internal stability in the Malay states? Explain your answer.</p>	6m
L1	Inference unsupported/ misinterpretation/describes source only.	1m
L2	Proves/does not prove through limited analysis of provenance.	2m
L3	<p>Proves/does not prove content analysis, supported with source evidence.</p> <p>Source F proves that Source E's claim that there was no threat to stability or "major bloodshed," is wrong by describing extensive internal conflicts corroborated by contextual knowledge. Source E says conflict was limited to a power struggle over Larut's tin. It claims no threat to citizens or political stability and calls "civil war" and "anarchy" myths created by British officials. This can be seen from the source "no threat to the citizens of Perak, no major bloodshed and certainly no anarchy..." and "myths invented... to justify their intervention."</p> <p>However, Source F paints a picture of widespread, multi-faceted chaos and describes all Malay states as conflict-ridden. This can be seen from the source "quarrels among the Chinese...", "incessant attacks of pirates..." and "The turbulence of the native states was a constant menace to peace..."</p>	3m
L4	<p>Proves/does not prove content analysis, supported with source evidence and cross reference to CK or another reliable source/Background Information</p> <p>Award 5m for a well-developed answer (1 CR)</p> <p>Source F proves that Source E's claim that there was no threat to stability or "major bloodshed," is wrong by describing extensive internal conflicts corroborated by contextual knowledge. Source E says conflict was limited to a power struggle over Larut's tin. It claims no threat to citizens or political stability and calls "civil war" and</p>	4-5m

	<p>“anarchy” myths created by British officials. This can be seen from the source “no threat to the citizens of Perak, no major bloodshed and certainly no anarchy...” and “myths invented... to justify their intervention.”</p> <p>However, Source F paints a picture of widespread, multi-faceted chaos and describes all Malay states as conflict-ridden. This can be seen from the source “quarrels among the Chinese...”, “incessant attacks of pirates...” and “The turbulence of the native states was a constant menace to peace...”</p> <p>Based on contextual knowledge, Source F is true. The Larut Wars between Chinese secret societies (Ghee Hin and Hai San) were violent and destabilizing. European observers at the time reported widespread insecurity and difficulty in collecting revenues. Furthermore, there were British concerns about pirate raids disrupting trade.</p>	
L5	<p>Proves/does not prove purpose analysis/critical analysis of provenance. Award 5m only if evidence/impact is lacking.</p> <p>Written by Sir Frank Swettenham in 1906 for a colonial newspaper, it aimed to justify British rule and portray intervention as necessary. Swettenham had been personally involved in the colonial administration and had vested interest in portraying the Malay states as incapable of governing themselves without British help. <i>The British had strong commercial motivations to secure the tin trade and British narratives of chaos and “civilizing mission” were standard propaganda to legitimize empire.</i> Its intended impact was to defend the system of Residents by depicting Malays as unfit to govern themselves as seen from the source which states “Every Malay state was torn by conflicts between the rival claimants...”. This bias means Source F likely exaggerated instability to legitimize imperial control as seen from “The turbulence of the native states was a constant menace to peace...”. Therefore, while Source F provides some evidence challenging Source E’s claim of complete stability, its colonial purpose makes it a questionable source that cannot fully disprove Source E’s argument.</p> <p>Accept other valid answers.</p>	5-6m
e)	<p>Study all the sources. “The British intervened in Malaya to help the local people.” How far do the sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.</p>	8m
L1	Inference unsupported or misreading of source	1m
L2	Yes or No, supported by valid source use. Students must explain the evidence provided from each source. Merely quoting evidence will result in the lowest mark in the band.	2-4m
L3	Yes and No, supported by valid source use. Award 5m for 1 yes and no and an additional mark for each subsequent valid source up to a maximum of 7m. Students must explain the evidence provided from each source. Merely quoting evidence will result in the lowest mark in the band.	5-7m

Sources agree, referring to Sources B, D and F.

Source B: “to bring light to the dark places, to teach the true political method... and act as trustee for the weak.” This means that the British justified their intervention by claiming they had a civilising mission. They presented themselves as enlightening the local people, teaching them proper government and law, and protecting them because they were supposedly too weak or backward to rule themselves well. By acting as a “trustee,” Britain claimed it was taking responsibility for the welfare of local societies, guiding them towards what they considered “civilised” standards of governance and progress.

Source D: “...the Malays, like any other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children, and to be taught... Such teaching can only be done by an officer living on the spot...” This means that the British argued intervention was necessary because they saw Malays as incapable of governing themselves without guidance. They believed Malays needed close supervision and education, similar to how children are taught. The solution proposed was to send a British Resident who would live in the Malay state, study local conditions carefully, and advise the rulers directly on how to govern properly. This was framed as helping Malays become better administrators and maintaining order.

Source F: “Every Malay state was torn by conflicts between the rival claimants” and “The turbulence of the native states was a constant menace to peace”. This means that the British justified intervention as restoring peace and stability in a region they claimed was in chaos. They argued that Malay states were divided by internal disputes over succession, violent conflicts among rival leaders, and other disorder that threatened safety and trade. By stepping in, the British claimed they were helping the locals by stopping violence, bringing order, and protecting everyone from the dangers of civil war and unrest.

Sources disagree with the statement as the British had other intentions for intervention as seen from Sources B, C, D and E.

Source B: “there was a general forward movement by the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Indochina, a movement that was symptomatic of the new imperialistic spirit which was beginning to be felt at that time.” This means that the British were motivated by imperial rivalry and competition. They wanted to secure their own influence in the Malay states to block the expansion of other European powers like the Dutch and French. Their intervention was about protecting and expanding British imperial interests in Southeast Asia to avoid losing ground to their rivals.

Source C: “The decision made by Lord Kimberley in 1873 to take some action in Malaya... was provoked... by fear of foreign – specifically German- intervention.” This means that Britain’s decision to intervene was driven by strategic fear of Germany gaining a foothold in Malaya. Rather than acting purely to help Malay rulers or people, Britain wanted to prevent Germany from threatening British power and trade routes in the region. Their real intention was to protect their own geopolitical interests against European competition.

	<p>Source D: The British Resident "...to make himself personally acquainted with every portion of the country and thus fitting himself for the post of political advisor when the time for the opening up of the country arrives. ...watching the collection of the revenue and controlling its expenditure will form no insignificant part of a Resident's duties..." This means that Britain's plan for Residents was not just to help Malays govern better but to gain detailed knowledge of the country for future economic exploitation ("opening up the country"). By controlling revenue and spending, Britain intended to dominate Perak's economy, ensuring British interests and profits. This shows clear economic motives behind intervention.</p> <p>Source E: "It is essential to reiterate that there had never been a genuine 'civil war' among the Perak Malays in 1870s until the interference from external parties, which had ulterior motives."... "the 'civil war' and 'anarchy' are just myths invented especially by the British colonial officials to justify their intervention." This means that the British exaggerated or invented claims of disorder as a pretext to intervene. According to this source, their ulterior motive was to extend their control and influence over Perak under the false justification of stopping chaos. The British used these "myths" to legitimise colonial rule that served their own strategic and economic interests.</p>	
	<p>For L2 and L3 award a bonus of 1m for use of contextual knowledge to question a source in relation to its reliability, sufficiency, etc.</p> <p>Source D is unreliable. The phrase "the Malays, like any other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children" shows that Clarke held a colonial, Eurocentric view of the Malays. He questions the capabilities of Malay rulers or society. However, based on contextual knowledge, the conflict in Perak was not due to Malay inability to govern, but rather due to a succession dispute (between Sultan Abdullah and Sultan Ismail) and the economic rivalry over tin between Ngah Ibrahim and other Chinese secret societies.</p> <p>OR Sultan Abdullah's letter to Clarke in 1873 was a request for support, not a surrender of full administrative power. This contradicts what Clarke has written in the letter. Britain's plan for Residents was not just to help Malays govern better but to gain detailed knowledge of the country for future economic exploitation ("opening up the country"). By controlling revenue and spending, Britain intended to dominate Perak's economy, ensuring British interests and profits. This shows clear economic motives behind intervention, thus making the source unreliable.</p> <p>Accept other valid answers. Sources that cannot be used here are E and F.</p>	+1

Essay LORMS (Levels of Response Marking Scheme)

Levels	Descriptors	Marks
L1	<p>Identifies/Describes given or other reasons (Award 1 mark for identifying one reason, 2 marks for identifying 2 or more.)</p> <p>Award 2 marks for describing one reason and 3 marks for describing 2 or more.)</p>	1 – 3 marks
L2	<p>Explains given reason OR other reasons (Award 4 marks for an explanation of given reason OR other reason, and an additional mark for additional reasons/ supporting detail, to a maximum of 5 marks.)</p>	4 – 5 marks
L3	<p>Explains given reason AND other reasons (Award 6 marks for an explanation of given AND other reason, and additional mark(s) for further supporting detail or reason, to a maximum of 8 marks (which include given reason).)</p>	6 - 8 marks
	<p>Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of <u>the relative importance of different reasons</u>.</p> <p>The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2).</p>	
	<p>i.e. for L3 Explains given reason AND other reasons Response can get up to 8 marks through two routes.</p> <p>(a) 2 explained reasons that are well-developed with depth of treatment OR (b) 3 explained reasons - with breadth of coverage but less depth of treatment</p> <p>Valid Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Award additional 2 marks •Total marks to be awarded: Marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks 	

2) France colonized Vietnam to support the work of their missionaries." How far do you agree?

France began colonizing Vietnam in the mid-19th century, initially claiming to protect persecuted Catholic missionaries. However, its long-term commitment was driven more by economic interests, imperial rivalry, and racial ideology. This essay argues that missionary protection was only a trigger, not the main motive for colonization.

One valid reason for French intervention was to protect Catholic missionaries. Since the 17th century, French missionaries had operated in Vietnam, but under the Nguyễn dynasty, they were viewed as a threat to the Confucian social order. Persecution of Christians intensified in the 1840s and 1850s, providing France with a moral justification for military action. The execution of missionaries was used to rally domestic support and frame colonization as a religious duty. Thus, missionary protection was a short-term cause for initial intervention, particularly the attacks on Da Nang and Saigon in the 1858–1862 campaign.

France's ideological motives were a key reason for its colonisation of Vietnam, as they provided moral and political justification for imperial expansion. Many French leaders embraced the "White Man's Burden" and the civilising mission, believing it was their duty to bring Western culture, religion, and governance to "backward" societies. The French introduced Western education, legal systems, and their language while undermining traditional Vietnamese customs and institutions. By framing colonisation as a moral duty, France gained support for its imperial project and rationalised long-term occupation, even as economic exploitation and political repression were the real outcomes.

Economic interests were even more critical in sustaining colonization. Economic interests were a key factor in France's colonisation of Vietnam because the colony provided both resources and strategic trade opportunities. France initially sought trading bases to access the lucrative Chinese market, eventually shifting focus from southern to northern Vietnam due to its proximity to China and the rich resources available there. Vietnam offered valuable raw materials such as tin, iron, zinc, coal, and later rubber and rice, which were essential for fuelling France's navy and industries. The colony also became a captive market for French manufactured goods, particularly after the economic depression of 1873 increased the need for overseas markets. To maximise profit, the French developed roads, railways, and ports—not to aid the Vietnamese population but to extract and export resources efficiently. Over time, these economic benefits far outweighed the initial religious justification of protecting missionaries, making economic motives central to sustaining French rule.

Political and strategic motives were an important reason for France's colonisation of Vietnam, as imperial expansion served both national interests and international prestige. After France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), acquiring colonies was seen as a way to restore national pride and demonstrate France's strength on the global stage. The race for colonies in the late 19th century also pushed France to compete with Britain, its main rival in Southeast Asia, especially as Britain expanded into Burma. Fear of German interest in the region further encouraged France to secure Vietnam before other European powers could. Vietnam's location gave France a strategic base in Southeast Asia, allowing it to extend influence into Laos and Cambodia and eventually form French Indochina. By linking colonial conquest to national recovery and security, political motives played a key role in driving and sustaining France's colonisation of Vietnam.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, while the protection of Catholic missionaries provided an immediate justification for France's initial intervention in Vietnam, it was not the main reason for long-term colonisation. Missionary persecution acted as a short-term trigger, but once France had secured its foothold, economic interests became far more significant. The extraction of raw

materials, access to new markets, and strategic trade opportunities not only sustained French rule but also aligned with France's broader imperial ambitions. Compared to the temporary role of missionary protection, economic motives were the most important factor, as they ensured that France remained committed to the colonisation of Vietnam for decades.

3. “The League of Nations failed to achieve collective security in the 1920s because it did not have an army.” How far do you agree?

The League of Nations, created after World War I to maintain peace through collective security, failed in the 1920s due to several weaknesses. While lacking its own army was a major issue, the absence of key powers, weak member commitment, and structural flaws were more fundamental causes of its failure.

The lack of a standing army made it very difficult for the League to enforce its decisions. When a member state broke international rules or committed aggression, the League could only impose moral condemnation or economic sanctions. Without military power, these measures were often ineffective. For instance, when Vilna was seized by Poland in 1920, the League failed to act decisively because it relied on member states to provide troops, and none were willing. Similarly, the League could not compel Greece to withdraw from Bulgaria in 1925 and had to rely on negotiation. This demonstrated that without military force, the League's authority could be easily ignored.

However, another key reason for the League's failure was the absence of major world powers. The United States never joined, despite President Wilson being the League's main architect. As a result, the League lacked global backing and resources. Additionally, Germany was excluded until 1926, and the USSR was not admitted until 1934. This weakened the League's credibility and its ability to act as a truly global peacekeeper. Without the cooperation of key powers, collective security was impossible to uphold, regardless of whether the League had an army.

The League also failed due to a lack of political will from its own member states. Britain and France, the two main powers in the League, were both exhausted from World War I and focused on protecting their own national interests. They were reluctant to commit troops or enforce sanctions unless their own security was at stake. For example, when Italy invaded Corfu in 1923, the League was hesitant to take strong action because Italy was a powerful member, and Britain and France did not want to provoke it. This demonstrated that collective security broke down when members prioritised self-interest over cooperation.

Finally, the League's decision-making structure slowed down and weakened its responses. The League operated on the principle of unanimous decision-making in its Council and Assembly, meaning that a single member could block action. This made it difficult to respond swiftly and effectively to crises. Even if the League had an army, this structural flaw would have delayed or prevented action in many cases, limiting its ability to maintain peace.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the League's lack of an army clearly undermined its ability to enforce collective security, as shown in cases like Vilna and Corfu. However, the absence of major world powers was ultimately more significant, as it deprived the League of both legitimacy and the resources needed to act effectively. Without the participation of the United States, Germany, and the USSR in its early years, the League could not uphold collective security even if it had military forces. Therefore, while the lack of an army was a serious weakness, the absence of key powers was the most fundamental reason for its failure in the 1920s.

4. British failure to check Hitler's growing power led to war in Europe in 1939." How far do you agree?

The 1939 outbreak of war in Europe is often blamed on Hitler's aggression, but British foreign policy, especially appeasement, also enabled his actions. While Hitler's ambitions were the main cause, Britain's failure to challenge him early gave Nazi Germany the time and confidence to pursue war.

Possible factors:

Policy of Appeasement/Failure to check Hitler's growing power encouraged German aggression: Under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Britain repeatedly allowed Germany to break the Treaty of Versailles without consequence. When Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936, Britain did nothing, signalling weak opposition. In 1938, the Munich Agreement permitted Germany to annex the Sudetenland, hoping it would satisfy Hitler's demands. Instead, Hitler took over all of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Britain's policy of appeasement convinced Hitler that the Allies lacked the will to stop him, emboldening further territorial expansion and making war more likely.

Britain's failure to check Germany's growing military power was a key factor leading to the outbreak of war in Europe. Throughout the 1930s, Nazi Germany rapidly rebuilt its armed forces in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler re-established the Luftwaffe in 1935, creating a powerful air force that had been banned after World War I. He also expanded the size of the German army far beyond the treaty's limits and developed modern tanks and submarines, transforming Germany into a formidable military power within a few years. Despite clear evidence of this aggressive rearmament, Britain was slow to respond. The British government relied heavily on diplomatic efforts and appeasement, partly because the public was deeply scarred by the losses of World War I and strongly opposed another conflict. This hesitation meant Britain delayed strengthening its own military forces and improving defences like the Royal Air Force (RAF) until it was too late. By failing to confront Germany early, Britain allowed Hitler to build confidence and momentum, enabling him to pursue aggressive territorial expansion without fear of immediate military retaliation. This lack of early resistance ultimately emboldened Nazi Germany and made the outbreak of war in 1939 far more likely.

Hitler's aggressive expansionist foreign policy was the root cause of the outbreak of war in Europe. In *Mein Kampf*, he clearly outlined his ambitions to gain *Lebensraum* ("living space") in Eastern Europe, destroy communism, and overturn the Treaty of Versailles, which he viewed as a national humiliation. These ideological goals drove a series of deliberate actions to expand German territory and power. For example, the Anschluss with Austria in 1938 was a clear step toward uniting all German-speaking peoples under one Reich, fulfilling Hitler's nationalist dreams regardless of international opinion or treaties. Following this, his demands for the Sudetenland and eventual occupation of Czechoslovakia further demonstrated his determination to dismantle the post-World War I order and build a dominant Germany. The invasion of Poland in 1939 was the decisive act of aggression that triggered World War II, reflecting Hitler's long-term plan to expand eastward and establish German supremacy. Hitler's expansionism aimed at reshaping Europe according to Nazi principles, and this uncompromising ambition made conflict inevitable.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact was a crucial factor that directly led to the outbreak of war in Europe. Signed in August 1939, the agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union shocked the world by including a secret protocol to divide Eastern Europe between the two powers, effectively removing the threat of a two-front war for Hitler. This pact gave Hitler the strategic confidence to invade Poland, knowing that the USSR would not intervene against him. In response, Britain and France, who had promised to protect Polish sovereignty, were forced

to declare war on Germany after the invasion. While British and French guarantees aimed to deter aggression, it was ultimately Hitler's decision, enabled by the security the pact provided, that triggered the start of World War II.

The ineffectiveness of the League of Nations in the 1930s, particularly during the Abyssinian Crisis, undermined international peace and encouraged aggressive powers like Nazi Germany. When Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935, the League failed to take strong action; its economic sanctions were limited and excluded key resources like oil, and major powers such as Britain and France were reluctant to confront Italy directly. This showed the League's inability to enforce collective security or deter aggression, damaging its credibility. Seeing the League's weakness, Hitler was emboldened to pursue his expansionist aims, believing that Britain and France would similarly avoid confrontation. The failure to check Italy's aggression thus contributed to the breakdown of the international order and paved the way for the outbreak of war in Europe.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, while British failure to check Hitler's growing power through appeasement and delayed rearmament significantly enabled Nazi Germany's aggressive expansion, it was ultimately Hitler's own expansionist ambitions and strategic decisions that were the most important causes of war. Britain's policy of appeasement and military hesitation gave Hitler the time and confidence to break treaties and build up his forces, making conflict more likely. However, without Hitler's ideological drive for Lebensraum, his calculated invasions, and the security gained from the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the outbreak of war in 1939 may have been avoided or delayed. Thus, British weaknesses were important contributory factors, but Hitler's aggressive foreign policy and strategic choices remain the primary reasons for the start of World War II in Europe.