

## The War Begins

### START OF WORLD WAR II

We learnt that back in Europe, the ambitious Hitler was busy strengthening the German military forces. His intense desire to make Germany strong and powerful led him to attack and conquer his neighbours hungrily. When he attacked Poland in 1939, Britain intervened and demanded Hitler to withdraw his troops. Failing to achieve an agreement, Britain declared war on Germany. The war eventually grew to become the Second World War.

### WAR IN EUROPE

In 1938, Hitler started his territorial expansion plan. He conquered Austria and then Czechoslovakia in 1939. Britain and France did not take any action against Germany for they remembered the horrors of World War I. They hoped that Hitler would be satisfied with his conquest and stop invading other lands. However, this was not the case. Hitler planned to invade Poland next.

The German troops invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. The British demanded Germany to withdraw its troops from Poland. Being refused of the demand, Britain declared war on Germany. As the war continued, more European countries were drawn into it. One by one, Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium fell into the Germans' clutches. France was conquered in June 1940.

Winston Churchill was Britain's wartime Prime Minister. He was one of the great leaders of the Allies. A determined man, he made several encouraging speeches to encourage the British to fight on during the war.

Winston Churchill (centre)

For almost a year, Britain fought alone against Germany and Italy. Russia only joined Britain when Germany invaded it in June 1941. Later