World War II - The Axis Powers

The Allied Powers and the Axis powers fought each other in WWII. The major Axis Powers were Germany, Italy, and Japan.

The Forming of the Axis Powers

The alliance began to form in 1936. First, on October 15, 1936 Germany and Italy signed a friendship treaty that formed the Rome-German Axis. It was after this treaty that Italian dictator Benito Mussolini used the term Axis to refer to their alliance. Shortly after this, on November 25, 1936, Japan and Germany both signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, which was a treaty against communism.

An even stronger alliance was signed between Germany and Italy on May 22, 1939 called the Pact of Steel. This treaty would later be called the Tripartite Pact when Japan signed it on September 27, 1940. Now the three main Axis Powers were allies in WWII.
Leaders of the Axis Powers - The three main countries of the Axis Powers (dictatorships):

- **Germany: Adolf Hitler** - Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and Fuhrer in 1934. He was a ruthless dictator who hated Jewish people. He wanted to purge Germany of all weak people. He also wanted to take control of all of Europe.

- **Italy: Benito Mussolini** - Mussolini was supreme dictator of Italy. He founded the concept of a fascist government where there is one leader and one party that has total power. He was an inspiration to Adolf Hitler.

- **Japan: Emperor Hirohito** - Hirohito reigned as Emperor of Japan from 1926 until 1989. He remained Emperor after the war. The first time his subjects heard his voice was when he announced Japan's surrender on the radio.

Other leaders and generals in the war:

Germany:

- **Heinrich Himmler** - Himmler was second in command to Hitler. He commanded the Gestapo police and was in charge of the concentration camps.

- **Hermann Goering** - Goring held the title Prime Minister of Prussia. He was commander of the German air force called the Luftwaffe.

- **Erwin Rommel** - Rommel was one of Germany's smartest Generals. He commanded their army in Africa and then the German army during the Invasion of Normandy.

- **Joseph Goebbels** – Goebbels was a politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945. He was one of Adolf Hitler's close associates and most devoted followers, and he was known for his skills in public speaking and was revered for his deep, virulent antisemitism, which was evident in his publicly voiced views. He advocated progressively harsher discrimination, including the extermination of the Jews in the Holocaust.

Italy:

- **Victor Emmanuel III** - He was King of Italy and the head of the Italian Army. In reality he did whatever Mussolini told him to do until Mussolini was removed from power.

- **Ugo Cavallero** - Commander of the Italian Royal Army during World War II.

Japan:

- **Hideki Tojo** - As Prime Minister of Japan, Hideki Tojo was a major supporter of the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy.

- **Isoroku Yamamoto** - Yamamoto was thought to be the best war strategist and commander of the Japanese armed forces. He was commander of the Japanese Navy and a leader in the attack on Pearl Harbor. He died in 1943.

- **Osami Nagano** - A Fleet Admiral in the Japanese Navy, Nagano was a leader in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Other countries in the Axis Alliance:

- **Hungary** - Hungary became the fourth member of the Tripartite Pact. Hungary played a large role in the invasion of Russia.
• **Bulgaria** - Bulgaria started out on the Axis side of the war, but after being invaded by Russia ended up on the side of the Allies.

• **Romania** - Similar to Bulgaria, Romania was on the side of the Axis Powers and helped to invade Russia. However, by the end of the war they changed sides and fought for the Allies. Finland - Finland never signed the Tripartite Pact, but fought with the Axis countries against Russia.

Interesting Facts

• The Pact of Steel was first called the Pact of Blood, but they changed the name thinking the public would not like it.

• Mussolini was often called "Duce", or leader. Hitler picked a similar name in German called "Fuhrer".

• At their peak during World War II, the Axis Powers ruled much of Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

• Some people in Italy called the Italian Empire the New Roman Empire. The Italians conquered Ethiopia and Albania prior the break out of World War II. They were the first major power to surrender to the Allies.

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the following questions. You should have already annotated the reading. When you are finished, submit the assignment to Canvas. Do not share answers with you classmates.

1) Which of the following countries was NOT a member of the Axis Powers?
   a. Germany  
   b. Japan  
   c. Italy  
   d. France  
   e. Hungary

2) Who was the dictator of Italy that installed a fascist regime?
   a. Adolf Hitler  
   b. Benito Mussolini  
   c. Joseph Stalin  
   d. Ugo Cavallero  
   e. Emperor Hirohito

3) Of the major Axis Powers, which leader remained in power for many years after the war?
   a. Hideki Tojo  
   b. Yamamoto  
   c. Adolf Hitler  
   d. Benito Mussolini  
   e. Emperor Hirohito

4) What title did Adolf Hitler take in 1934 that meant leader?
   a. Dictator  
   b. King  
   c. Fuhrer  
   d. Emperor  
   e. Minister
5) What was the job of German leader Heinrich Himmler in the government?
   a. He was in charge of the concentration camps
   b. He was in charge of the Gestapo police
   c. He was second in command after Adolf Hitler
   d. All of the above
   e. None of the above

6) Which of the major Axis Powers was the first to surrender to the Allies?
   a. Italy
   b. Germany
   c. Japan
   d. They all surrendered together
   e. None of the above

7) What was the document that all three Axis powers signed in 1940? It was later signed by Hungary.
   a. The Pact of Blood
   b. The Axis of Evil
   c. The Axis Agreement
   d. The Pact of Steel
   e. The Tripartite Pact

8) True or False: The Axis Powers at one point ruled much of Europe, Southeast Asia, and North Africa.
   a. TRUE
   b. FALSE

9) What Scandinavian country did not sign the Tripartite Pact, but did fight with the Axis powers against Russia?
   a. Denmark
   b. Finland
   c. Iceland
   d. Sweden
   e. Norway

10) What brilliant German general commanded the German army during the Invasion of Normandy?
    a. Erwin Rommel
    b. Hermann Goring
    c. Heinrich Himmler
    d. Walter Model
    e. Erich Raeder

Works Cited:
Adapted from: http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/ww2_axis_powers.php