



WWII - ERA CONFERENCES

A popular topic for history questions is the various World War II era conferences that took place from 1938-1945. This study guide summarizes the major conferences, their participants, and their results. As with any study guide, this should not serve as a substitute for reading about the events themselves, but rather to encourage you to learn more about the topic.

Munich Conference – September 1938

- **Adolph Hitler** wants to annex the ethnically German region of Czechoslovakia, **Sudetenland**. Czech president **Edvard Benes** opposed this.
- Hitler and **Benito Mussolini** met with British PM **Neville Chamberlain** and French PM **Edouard Daladier** in Munich to negotiate a resolution.
- Resulting document, known as the **Munich Pact** (original version known as the Godesberg Proposal), gave control of the Sudetenland (and the rest of Czechoslovakia) to Hitler's Germany.
- Chamberlain proclaims "**Peace for our time**", but many criticize his **appeasement** of Hitler.

Atlantic Conference – August 1941

- Secret meeting (codenamed RIVIERA) between British PM **Winston Churchill** and US President **Franklin Roosevelt**.
- Took place aboard ships (*HMS Prince of Wales* and *USS Augusta*) anchored off the coast of **Newfoundland**
- Britain and the US discussed common vision for the post-WWII world (though the US had yet to enter the conflict). Resulting document named the **Atlantic Charter** after the fact by the British newspaper *Daily Herald*.
- Some of the eight points included "no territorial gains", "freedom from want and fear", "self-determination", and "lowering of trade barriers"



Casablanca Conference – January 1943

- Allied meeting (codenamed SYMBOL) at the **Anfa Hotel** in Casablanca, Morocco.
- **Roosevelt, Churchill**, and leader of the Free French **Charles De Gaulle** met to discuss Allied strategy for the war in Europe. Soviet head Josef Stalin was invited but was unable to attend due to the ongoing **Siege of Stalingrad**.
- Allies agreed to demand unconditional surrender and planned **Operation Husky**, the allied invasion of Sicily (to be followed by an invasion of the Italian mainland).

Cairo Conference – November 1943

- Allied meeting (codenamed SEXTANT) attended by **Roosevelt, Churchill**, and Chinese leader **Chiang Kai-shek** to address the Allies' strategy regarding Japan and plans for a post-war Asia.
- **Stalin** refused to attend because of China's participation.
- Resulting document (**Cairo Declaration**) called for stripping Japan of all lands taken since 1914 and the eventual independence of Korea.

Tehran Conference – November 1943

- Allied meeting (codenamed EUREKA) attended by **Roosevelt, Churchill**, and **Stalin**. The meeting took place two days after the end of the **Cairo Conference**.
- Meeting planned final Allied strategy against Nazi Germany.
- **Operation Overlord** (D-Day invasion of France) was planned.
- The USSR agreed to enter the war against Japan upon the defeat of Germany
- **Turkey** was encouraged to enter the war on the side of the Allies
- The “Big Three” agreed in principle to formation of a post-war “**United Nations**”

Bretton Woods Conference – July 1944

- Took place at the Mount Washington Hotel in **New Hampshire**
- Meeting of representatives of all 44 Allied nations to discuss the post-war economic landscape. Of particular concern was currency exchange rates.
- Established the International Monetary Fund (**IMF**), the **World Bank**, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (**GATT**).
- **John Maynard Keynes** represented Britain.



Dumbarton Oaks Conference – August 1944

- Meeting held at a mansion in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC
- Conference discussed the **United Nations**, specifically who would be invited to join, and the formation of the **UN Security Council**
- American delegation was led by **Edward Stettinius**
- Discussions regarding the formation of the UN were continued at **Yalta** and finalized at the **San Francisco Conference** (where the UN Charter was written).

Yalta Conference – February 1945

- Allied Meeting (codenamed ARGONAUT) at the **Livadia Palace** in the Crimean Black Sea resort town of Yalta.
- **Roosevelt, Churchill** and **Stalin** met to discuss the post-war reorganization of Europe.
- Of particular interest was the partitioning of Germany. Eventually the sides agreed to a plan that would divide Germany into 4 occupied zones, with the city of Berlin also divided into four zones.
- The Nation of Poland would be reorganized under the directive of the USSR; USSR would gain territory in Poland, which, in turn, would gain territory from Germany.
- **Stalin** agreed to declare war on Japan 90 days after peace with Germany.

Potsdam Conference – July 1945

- Allied meeting at the **Cecilienhof Palace** in Potsdam, just outside of Berlin.
- US President **Harry Truman, Churchill** and **Stalin** met to discuss the punishment of Nazi officials and the end of the war against Japan. During the meeting, Churchill was replaced by newly elected PM **Clement Attlee**.
- By Potsdam, Germany had been defeated, Roosevelt had died, and Stalin had taken over most of Eastern Europe.
- At Potsdam, the Allies agreed to war crimes tribunals (later held at **Nuremberg**), and a demand for unconditional surrender from Japan.
- At the conference, **Truman** also made a vague reference to a “powerful new weapon” to **Stalin** (atomic bomb). The atomic bombs would be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki less than a month later.
- Most see Potsdam as a precursor to the coming **Cold War**.

