Name ____________________________

Appeasement - Germany Before World War II
By Sharon Fabian

There is an expression that says, "hindsight is 20/20." It means that it is easy to see mistakes when you are looking back on something that has already happened. This is often what happens when people look back on the events that led up to World War II.

During the 1930's, people in Europe and America remembered the horrors of World War I very clearly. They knew that they did not want another war, but new conflicts were already beginning.

Germany had already begun to take aggressive actions. It had opened its first concentration camps. In 1937, it had attacked the town of Guernica, Spain. In 1938, it had invaded Austria.

Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, tried to negotiate with Adolf Hitler, the leader of Germany, in the hope of preventing another war. He gave in to some of Hitler's demands. This move was seen as a compromise that would prevent problems between the European countries from escalating into another war. It was called appeasement.

The agreements were praised for preserving "peace in our time." World leaders including the president of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada praised Chamberlain's diplomatic skills.

The most famous of the agreements between Chamberlain and Hitler was the Munich Pact of 1938. At that time, Hitler was demanding control of the German speaking part of Czechoslovakia called Sudetenland. Chamberlain of Great Britain and Edouard Daladier, the Prime Minister of France, agreed not to resist the German move into Czechoslovakia, and as a result, Czechoslovakia was split apart. Germany agreed not to invade any other areas. Soon, however, Germany broke the agreement and took over the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Then, in 1939, when Germany was about to invade Poland, Neville Chamberlain spoke before the British cabinet. He told them that Hitler had broken his parts of the agreements. He said that it was impossible to negotiate with Hitler any more.

Hitler invaded Poland, and World War II began.

Looking back on the policy of appeasement, many people today say that it just didn't work. It was just a way of giving in to a bully, and it didn't prevent World War II from happening.

At the time it was happening, however, people saw the policy very differently. Above all, they did not want to go to war again. European countries were burdened with high debts from the First World War. They had no wish to enter into another conflict. They wanted to concentrate on domestic projects, projects that would help the people in their own countries. They were thankful that Chamberlain had found a way to prevent war, at least for the present.

The United States, at that time, was hoping to avoid another conflict too. It was operating under the policy of isolationism. If European countries went to war, they could not expect the backing of the United States. This was one more reason to try to avoid another conflict.

At that time, too, many people did not yet recognize the threat posed by Nazi Germany.

Finally, many people felt that the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I had been unfair to Germany. It had taken away German lands. They saw Germany's attempt to take over part of Czechoslovakia as its way of getting back the land that rightfully belonged to Germany.

For all of these reasons, Europeans and Americans supported the idea of negotiating with the Germans. It was only many years later, after we had lived through what happened next, that people began to call the policy appeasement and to say that Europe and America were just giving in to a bully, which didn't even prevent another war.
### Questions

1. As used in this article, the word *appeasement* means ______.
   - A. giving in to a bully's demands
   - B. refusing to cooperate
   - C. an agreement that is followed
   - D. a fair compromise

2. The actions described in this article took place ______.
   - A. after World War II
   - B. during the Cold War
   - C. before World War I
   - D. between World War I and World War II

3. Popular opinion about the policy of appeasement ______.
   - A. was not the same after the war as it had been before the war
   - B. never changed
   - C. was very different in Europe than it was in the United States
   - D. said that it did not do enough to prevent war

4. Which happened first?
   - A. Germany took over Czechoslovakia.
   - B. World War II
   - C. Chamberlain negotiated with Hitler.
   - D. Europe had high war debts from World War I.

5. In the 1930's, the United States ______.
   - A. agreed with the policy of appeasement
   - B. did not want to become involved in another war
   - C. had a policy of isolationism
   - D. all of the above

6. As a result of the Munich Pact, Czechoslovakia ______.
   - A. joined the Soviet Union
   - B. sided with Great Britain
   - C. sided with the United States
   - D. was divided

7. Before World War II began, Germany had attacked or invaded ______.
   - A. Czechoslovakia
   - B. Spain
   - C. Austria
   - D. all of the above

8. In the Munich Pact, Great Britain and France agreed to ______.
   - A. Germany taking over part of Czechoslovakia
   - B. Germany taking over Poland
   - C. Germany taking over Spain
   - D. all of the above

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**Write about situations in which you think compromise is appropriate and situations in which you think compromise is not appropriate.**

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There are some similarities and some differences between the meanings of *appeasement* and *compromise*. Complete a Venn diagram to show your ideas about the meanings of the two words.