

History Level 10

Chapter 3 — Australians in the world wars, 1914–1945

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Why the world wars began

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–9) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable primary sources (parts 4 and 8), six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2); the contested terms fascism and appeasement carry the CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 1 fallback definitions before use; the WWI responsibility debate and the appeasement debate are steelmanned on both sides (Rules 4–5), and the marking note states that assessment rewards the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion reached (Rule 5). All dates, quotations and statistics carry source lines in the table below (D4). VC2HH10K13 carries no First Nations elements and is not named in §2A; none may be authored in later, including as context or a caption.**

Curriculum alignment (VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-E1ab_29-07-2026.csv) — codes only:

VC2HH10K13 — Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Investigation: Australians at war (1914–1945)

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10K13.E01 · VC2HH10K13.E02 · VC2HH10K13.E03 · VC2HH10K13.E04 · VC2HH10K13.E05.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section maps the causes of both wars: militarism, alliances and imperialism (with nationalism, per .E02) for World War I; the interwar bridge — the Russian Revolution, the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Depression — then the rise of fascism; and for World War II the road of aggression — Manchuria, the Spanish Civil War, Abyssinia, Austria, Munich, Poland, China and Pearl Harbor. Australia enters both wars as a dominion of the British Empire; the reasons Australians fought and Menzies’s 1939 speech belong to Section 3B, cross-linked here, not taught here. Skills cross-links: the inquiry question “Why did World War I begin?” (7A), the WWI responsibility and appeasement debates (7F), cause concepts and causal webs (8B), significance criteria (8C).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
long-term cause	a cause that builds up over many years before an event
short-term trigger	the event that sets a tense situation alight
militarism	the belief that a country should keep strong armed forces and be ready to use them
alliance	an agreement between countries to support one another, especially in war
imperialism	one country extending its power over other countries and peoples, often by taking colonies
nationalism	pride in and loyalty to one’s own nation
ultimatum	a final set of demands, backed by a threat of what will follow if they are refused
mobilisation	calling up and organising an army ready for war
neutrality	the state of not taking sides in a war
reparations	payments a defeated country is made to pay for the damage of a war
dictator	a ruler who holds complete power, not limited by elections or law
depression	a severe slump in economic activity across many countries
annexation	one country taking a territory and declaring it its own

Word	Gloss used in this section
fascism	defined in the contested-terms box in part 7
appeasement	defined in the contested-terms box in part 8
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
interpretation	a historian's argued answer to a contested historical question

Contested terms handled per CONTESTED_TERMS.md: *fascism* (part 7) and *appeasement* (part 8) use the Rule 1 fallback wording — the curriculum uses both terms without defining them. Rule 4 symmetry is applied twice: the WWI responsibility debate (part 5) and the appeasement debate (part 8) each steelman both positions at equal depth.

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; original artifacts only, D4; collections consulted 2026-08-25 where noted):

Referent	Source line
Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, Sarajevo, 28 June 1914; Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student, links to the Serbian-based secret society “Unification or Death” (the Black Hand)	Records of the Sarajevo trial of October 1914, held in the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, 23 July 1914 (48-hour deadline); Serbian reply, 25 July 1914	Diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna; printed in the official document collections of the July Crisis published by the signatory governments after 1918
Sir Edward Grey’s judgement on the ultimatum; his “lamps” remark of 3 August 1914	Sir Edward Grey, <i>Twenty-Five Years, 1892–1916</i> (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), vol. 2
The alliance system: Dual Alliance (1879), Triple Alliance (1882), Franco-Russian Alliance (1894), Entente Cordiale (1904), Anglo-Russian Convention (1907)	Treaty instruments held in the archives of the signatory states, including The National Archives, Kew, and the French diplomatic archives
German Navy Laws (1898, 1900); HMS <i>Dreadnought</i> , launched 10 February 1906	German naval statutes held in the German Federal Archives; Admiralty records, The National Archives, Kew
French three-year military service law (August 1913); German army expansion law (July 1913)	Military service statutes of the French Third Republic and the German Empire, held in national archives
First Moroccan Crisis (1905); Second Moroccan Crisis (1911); Bosnian annexation (1908); Balkan Wars (1912–1913)	Diplomatic records of the crisis conferences, held in the archives of the states involved
Treaty of Versailles, signed 28 June 1919; Article 231 quoted in part 6	Original treaty held in the French diplomatic archives; printed in the <i>League of Nations Treaty Series</i> , vol. 1
Reparations set at 132 billion gold marks, 5 May 1921	London Schedule of Payments, Inter-Allied Reparations Commission records, The National Archives, Kew
Russian Revolution: abdication of Tsar Nicholas II (March 1917); Bolshevik revolution led by Lenin (7 November 1917); Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3 March 1918)	State records of the former Russian Empire held in the Russian state archives; contemporary press
Wall Street crash, October 1929; German unemployment reaching about 6 million by early 1933; Nazi Party Reichstag vote shares — 2.6% (1928), 18.3% (1930), 37.3% (July 1932)	Stock-exchange records held in the US National Archives; German labour statistics and Reichstag election returns held in the German Federal Archives

Referent	Source line
Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany, 30 January 1933; Reichstag fire, 27 February 1933; Enabling Act, 23 March 1933	Records of the German Reich held in the German Federal Archives
League of Nations, founded 1920; Japan leaves 1933; Italy leaves 1937; the USSR joins 1934	League of Nations records held at the United Nations Library and Archives, Geneva (retrieved 2026-08-25)
Japanese invasion of Manchuria from 18 September 1931; Lytton Report, October 1932	League of Nations, <i>Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Sino-Japanese Dispute</i> (the Lytton Report), 1932
Italian invasion of Abyssinia, 3 October 1935; Emperor Haile Selassie's address to the League, Geneva, 30 June 1936	League of Nations records, Geneva; newsreel recordings of the 1936 address held in film archives
Spanish Civil War, 17 July 1936 – 1 April 1939; bombing of Guernica, 26 April 1937	Spanish state records; reporting of the bombing in <i>The Times</i> , 28 April 1937
Anschluss (annexation of Austria), 12–13 March 1938; Munich Agreement, 29–30 September 1938; German occupation of Prague, 15 March 1939	German state records held in the German Federal Archives; Munich Agreement text held in The National Archives, Kew
Neville Chamberlain's broadcast, 27 September 1938; statement outside 10 Downing Street, 30 September 1938	BBC recordings held at the BBC Written Archives Centre; <i>The Times</i> , 1 October 1938 (retrieved 2026-08-25)
Winston Churchill's judgement on Munich — “You were given the choice between war and dishonour...”	Winston S. Churchill, <i>The Gathering Storm</i> (London: Cassell, 1948)
Japanese full-scale war in China from the Marco Polo Bridge incident, 7 July 1937	Japanese and Chinese state records held in national archives
Nazi–Soviet non-aggression pact, 23 August 1939	Treaty text published by the Allied governments after 1945, held in The National Archives, Kew
German invasion of Poland, 1 September 1939; British and French declarations of war, 3 September 1939	British declaration of war, The National Archives, Kew; Polish state records
Attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941 (Hawaiian time)	US Navy records held in the US National Archives
Fritz Fischer's and Christopher Clark's interpretations of WWI responsibility	Fritz Fischer, <i>Germany's Aims in the First World War</i> (1961; English ed. 1967); Christopher Clark, <i>The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914</i> (London: Allen Lane, 2012)
Australia at war as a dominion of the British Empire from 4 August 1914 and 3 September 1939	Australian War Memorial, Encyclopedia, entries on Australia and the outbreak of each war (retrieved 2026-08-25)

1. The big question

Between 1914 and 1918, and again between 1939 and 1945, the world fought two wars larger than any before them. Millions died in each. This section asks one question and refuses the easy answer: **what caused World War I, and what caused World War II?**

Historians never accept “the war just happened”. They sort causes into types, and this section uses two:

- A **long-term cause** is a cause that builds up over many years before an event. In 1914, the great powers had been building up armies, alliances and rivalries for decades.
- A **short-term trigger** is the event that sets a tense situation alight. In 1914, that was a murder in a city called Sarajevo. A trigger only works because the long-term causes have made the situation ready to burn.

To keep track of so many causes, historians draw a **concept map** — a diagram that joins each cause to the event it helped bring about. You will build concept maps of both wars in part 9.

You will also meet **primary sources** — records made at the time being studied, such as a government's ultimatum or a leader's speech — and **secondary sources** — later accounts built from primary sources, such as a historian's book. Both wars are still debated, and the debates themselves are part of the story.

2. The four long-term forces behind World War I

By 1914, four forces had made a great European war thinkable. Historians group them under four words: **militarism**, **alliances**, **imperialism** and **nationalism**. Each is defined here at first use, because each is a subject term with a precise meaning.



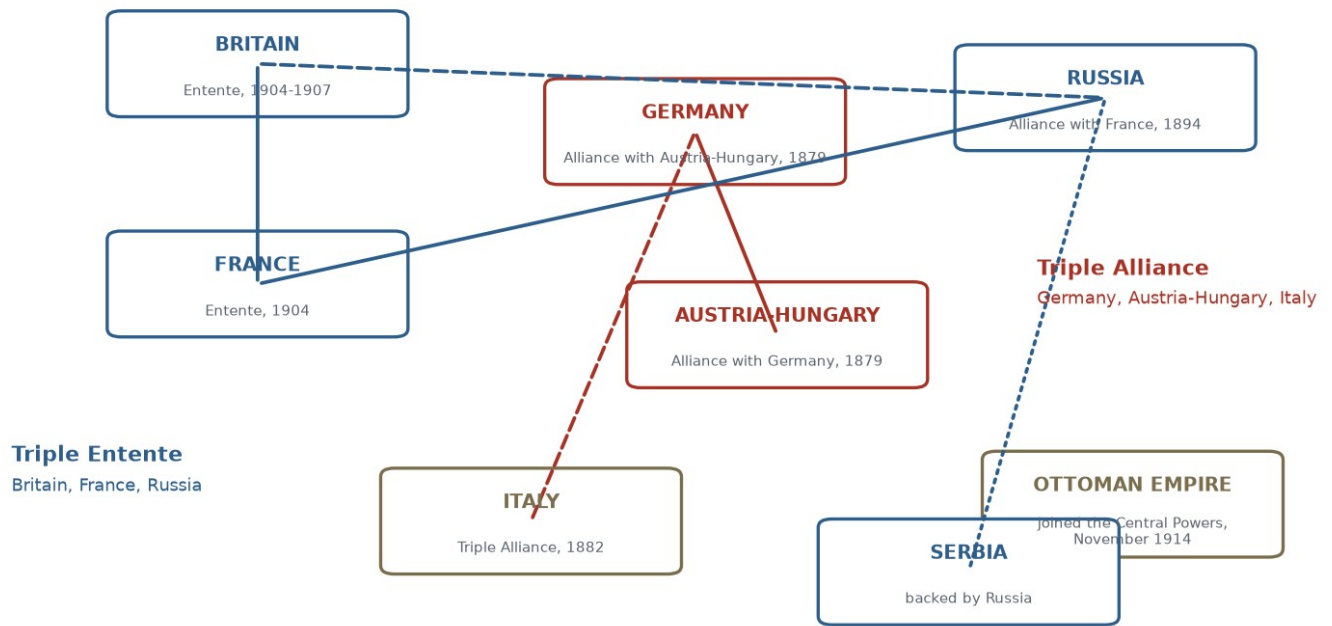
Four cards for the long-term forces behind World War I. Militarism: arms races and armies ready for war. Alliances: rival blocs that turned one quarrel into a war of all. Imperialism: rivalry over colonies, markets and prestige. Nationalism: pride, rivalry and the demand for national power, strongest in the Balkans.

Militarism is the belief that a country should keep strong armed forces and be ready to use them. Between 1898 and 1914 the great powers did exactly that. Germany passed Navy Laws in 1898 and 1900 to build a great battle fleet. Britain answered by launching HMS *Dreadnought* in February 1906, the most powerful warship afloat, and a race began in which each side built new warships to match the other. On land, France and Germany lengthened military service and grew their armies; Germany's army law of July 1913 and France's three-year service law of August 1913 were the last steps before the war. Armies also drew up detailed plans for mobilisation — calling up and organising soldiers ready for war. By 1914, many leaders believed that if a crisis came, whoever mobilised first would win. That belief made every crisis more dangerous.

An **alliance** is an agreement between countries to support one another, especially in war. The **alliance system** was the web of such agreements that split Europe into two armed camps. The map below shows them in 1914.

The alliance system in 1914

A schematic layout - positions are approximate, not a real map.



Italy stayed neutral in 1914 and joined the Entente in May 1915. Dashed and dotted ties were looser than firm war promises. Two armed camps meant one quarrel could become a war of all.

A schematic map of the European alliance system in 1914. One bloc, the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, is set against the other, the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia. Notes mark that Italy stayed neutral in 1914 and joined the Entente in 1915, and that the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers in November 1914.

The two camps formed slowly. Germany and Austria-Hungary made the Dual Alliance in 1879; Italy joined them in 1882 to form the **Triple Alliance**. France, worried by German power, made an alliance with Russia in 1894, and settled its rivalries with Britain in the **Entente Cordiale** of 1904; Britain and Russia reached their own agreement in 1907. Britain, France and Russia then worked together as the **Triple Entente**. The danger of the system was simple: a quarrel between two countries could drag in all their friends. In 1914, it did. Two notes matter for later: Italy stayed neutral when the war began and joined the Entente side in May 1915, and the Ottoman Empire joined Germany and Austria-Hungary in November 1914.

Imperialism — one country extending its power over other countries and peoples, often by taking colonies — was a third force. You met it in Section 1A. By 1900 the European powers had carved up most of Africa and much of Asia, and the rivals kept colliding. Germany tested the French hold on Morocco twice, in 1905 and 1911, and each crisis left more anger and more suspicion. Austria-Hungary annexed the Balkan province of Bosnia in 1908, outraging Serbia and Russia. Imperialism fed the arms race too: fleets were needed to guard empires.

Nationalism — pride in and loyalty to one's own nation — was the fourth force, and the most explosive in the Balkans, the region of south-east Europe that contemporaries called "the powder keg of Europe". France had lost the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany in 1871 and wanted them back. Many Slavic peoples of the Balkans wanted freedom from the old empires — Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire — and looked to Serbia and Russia for support. The Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 redrew the region's borders and left fresh grievances. Nationalism made compromise feel like shame, and war feel like duty.

Task A (scaffolded). Copy the four words into your book. Under each one, write one specific fact from this part of the section — a law, a ship, a date or a place — that proves the force was real.

3. Six weeks in July: the short-term triggers

On **28 June 1914**, in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, Archduke Franz Ferdinand — heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary — and his wife Sophie were shot dead. The killer was Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student connected to a secret society based in Serbia. Austria-Hungary decided that Serbia must be punished, and Germany promised to stand by Austria-Hungary whatever it did — a promise historians call the “blank cheque”.

On **23 July 1914**, Austria-Hungary sent Serbia an **ultimatum** — a final set of demands, backed by a threat. You will read it closely in part 4. The figure below shows what happened next, over six weeks.

The July Crisis: six weeks to war

28 June - 4 August 1914. Each step narrowed the choices left.



Mobilisation plans made speed seem decisive: once the great powers began to call up their armies, each side feared being left behind. The invasion of neutral Belgium brought Britain into the war on 4 August 1914.

A timeline of the July Crisis, from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 to Britain declaring war on Germany on 4 August 1914. Events shown: the ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July, the Serbian reply on 25 July, Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia on 28 July, Russian mobilisation on 30 July, Germany declaring war on Russia on 1 August and on France on 3 August, the German invasion of Belgium on 4 August, and Britain declaring war on Germany on 4 August.

Read the timeline in order and notice two things. First, the **mobilisation** plans took over: once Russia began to mobilise in support of Serbia, Germany’s war plan demanded a fast strike west against France before turning east against Russia, so the pressure to act first grew by the day. Second, each step narrowed the choices left. By early August, the crisis had become a European war.

The trigger that brought Britain in was **the invasion of Belgium**. Belgium was a **neutral** country — it had promised not to take sides in a war — and its neutrality had been guaranteed by an international treaty since 1839. Germany asked Belgium for free passage on 2 August, Belgium refused, and German troops invaded on **4 August 1914**. Britain declared war on Germany the same day, saying it was defending Belgian neutrality.

Where was Australia? In 1914, Australia was a young nation — federated only in 1901 — and a dominion of the British Empire. When Britain was at war, Australia was at war. The first Australian troops sailed within months. Why so many Australians volunteered is the story of Section 3B.

Task B (scaffolded). From the timeline, list the events of 23 July, 28 July, 1 August, 3 August and 4 August in order, each in one short sentence. Then answer: which event turned the crisis from an eastern European quarrel into a war involving France?

4. Worked inquiry 1 — reading the ultimatum

Read this source, then follow the three questions. It is a **primary source** — a record made at the time — reproduced here in modern words.

ULTIMATUM

Austria-Hungary to Serbia, 23 July 1914 - reproduced in modern words

1. Suppress all publications that stir up hatred against the Austro-Hungarian state.
2. Dissolve all societies and groups that work against the unity of Austria-Hungary, including the society named Narodna Odbrana.
3. Remove from the army and the government the officials that the Austro-Hungarian government names.
4. Accept representatives of the Austro-Hungarian government taking part, inside Serbia, in the investigation of the assassination of 28 June.

Serbia was given 48 hours to answer. The Serbian government replied on 25 July, accepting most demands but refusing the fourth as written; Austria-Hungary broke off relations the same day and declared war on 28 July 1914.

Source: diplomatic documents held in the Austrian State Archives, Vienna.

A framed reproduction, in modern words, of the main demands of the ultimatum sent by Austria-Hungary to Serbia on 23 July 1914: suppress publications hostile to Austria-Hungary, dissolve nationalist societies, remove officials named by Austria-Hungary, and accept Austro-Hungarian representatives taking part in the investigation of the assassination inside Serbia — all within 48 hours.

Question 1 — What does it say? Find the demand that let Austria-Hungary act *inside* Serbia itself. *Modelled answer:* the last demand — that Austro-Hungarian representatives take part in the investigation on Serbian soil. That demand asked Serbia to let a foreign power do police work inside its own borders.

Question 2 — What does it reveal? What does the 48-hour time limit tell you about what Austria-Hungary expected Serbia to do? *Modelled answer:* such a short deadline gave Serbia no real time to think or to ask other powers for help; it suggests Austria-Hungary wanted a reason to go to war, not a settlement.

Question 3 — What are its limits? The British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey read the ultimatum and wrote later that it was “the most formidable document I have ever seen addressed by one state to another” (Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 1925). What does the ultimatum NOT tell us that a historian would still need to find out? *Modelled answer:* it shows only Austria-Hungary’s side — not Serbia’s reply, not Russia’s or Germany’s plans, and not what ordinary people in either country wanted. One document, however strong, is one voice.

This is the pattern of source analysis used all through this book: say what it says, then what it reveals, then what it leaves out.

5. Who was responsible? A debate that never closed

In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles declared that Germany and its allies had caused the war. You will meet the exact words in part 6. But historians have argued about the question for a century, and the debate itself is a lesson in how history works: **an interpretation is a historian’s argued answer to a contested question, built from evidence.**

Who was responsible for World War I?

One question, three argued answers - an interpretation is built from evidence.

Answer	The claim	Its strongest evidence	Its strongest objection
The Treaty of Versailles, 1919	The victors' verdict, written into Article 231: Germany and her allies caused the war.	Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium; the blank cheque given to Austria-Hungary; the rush to declare war.	It was written by the winning side, and it served the purpose of making Germany pay.
Fritz Fischer, 1961	German leaders knowingly risked a great war in July 1914 and pushed for it; Germany bears the main responsibility.	German war aims set out in official papers; the speed of Germany's declarations of war on Russia and France.	Other powers armed and planned too; fear of encirclement was real in Berlin.
Christopher Clark, 2012	Responsibility was shared: every great power armed, allied and believed its own fears. The leaders walked into war like sleepwalkers.	Austria-Hungary's plan to crush Serbia; Russia mobilised first; France backed Russia; no leader stopped the machine.	It spreads the blame so widely that the choices made in Berlin risk being lost from view.

Both modern historians - Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (1961; English edition 1967), and Clark, *The Sleepwalkers* (2012) - argue from the same events. The difference is what each weighs most.

A table comparing three answers to the question “Who was responsible for World War I?”: the verdict written into the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the argument of Fritz Fischer in 1961, and the argument of Christopher Clark in 2012, each with its strongest evidence and its strongest objection.

The two modern positions, at their strongest:

- **The case that Germany bears the main responsibility.** The historian Fritz Fischer argued in *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (1961; English edition 1967) that German leaders knowingly risked a great war in July 1914 and pushed for it. The evidence is real: the “blank cheque” to Austria-Hungary, the rush to declare war on Russia and France, and the invasion of neutral Belgium. Germany’s leaders chose the steps that made a general war likely.
- **The case that responsibility was shared.** The historian Christopher Clark argued in *The Sleepwalkers* (2012) that all the great powers helped cause the war. Each armed, each made alliance promises, and each believed its own fears about the others. Austria-Hungary wanted to crush Serbia, Russia mobilised first against Austria-

Hungary, France backed Russia, and no leader managed to stop the machine. In this reading, the powers walked into the war like sleepwalkers, none of them seeing the whole disaster coming.

Both positions are argued from the same set of events. The difference is what each historian weighs most: the decisions made in Berlin, or the fears and plans of every capital. When you take a side in part 10, you will be marked on the strength of your reasoning and evidence, not on which side you choose.

6. The bridge between the wars, 1919–1933

World War I ended on **11 November 1918**. The peace that followed did not make a second war certain — but it made one easier. Four developments in the years between the wars — the interwar years — form a bridge from one conflict to the next: the Russian Revolution, the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Depression, and Hitler’s rise to power with the Nazi Party.

The bridge between the wars

Four developments carried Europe from 1918 towards 1939.



Built to keep the peace, the League failed its two tests - Manchuria 1931 and Abyssinia 1935.

A bridge diagram with four supports carrying the years 1919 to 1933 from World War I to World War II: the Treaty of Versailles and its impact on Germany, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and fear of communist revolution, the Great Depression after 1929, and the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party from 1933. A cracked support is labelled the League of Nations and its weaknesses.

The Treaty of Versailles. Signed on **28 June 1919**, the treaty punished Germany. Its most resented clause was Article 231, the so-called “war guilt” clause:

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage ... as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

(Treaty of Versailles, Article 231, 28 June 1919.)

The treaty also stripped Germany’s defences: the army was cut to 100,000 men, there was to be no air force, and the Rhineland — the zone along Germany’s western border — was to be demilitarised, with no German troops stationed there.

The Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919

Key terms, and the grievance each one left in Germany.

Term	What it said	The grievance it created
Article 231, the war-guilt clause	Germany had to accept responsibility for causing the war and its damage.	Seen as a national insult; the legal hook for the payments that followed.
Reparations	Set in 1921 at 132 billion gold marks.	Called impossible; the Weimar government that signed was blamed for them.
Armed forces limited	Army cut to 100,000 men; no air force; the navy reduced; the Rhineland demilitarised.	Germany could not defend its own borders; pride and fear grew together.
Territory lost	Alsace-Lorraine to France; land in the east to the new Poland; all overseas colonies taken; union with Austria forbidden.	Millions of German speakers lived outside the new borders; every loss fed the demand to reverse the treaty.

Germans were not allowed to negotiate the terms, and many called the treaty a dictated peace.

Politicians who promised to tear it up gained a ready audience.

A table of the key terms of the Treaty of Versailles and their impact on Germany: the war-guilt clause, reparations set at 132 billion gold marks in 1921, the army limited to 100,000 men with no air force, the demilitarised Rhineland, lost territory including Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish corridor, and the ban on union with Austria. Each row names the German grievance it created.

The table above lists the other main terms and the grievances they created. **Reparations** — payments a defeated country is made to pay for the damage of a war — were set in 1921 at 132 billion gold marks, a sum many Germans called impossible. Germans called the treaty a dictated peace, because they had not been allowed to negotiate its terms. The Weimar Republic — Germany's new democratic government — carried the blame for signing it. Politicians who promised to tear the treaty up gained a ready audience.

The Russian Revolution. In 1917, war and hardship brought down the Russian monarchy: Tsar Nicholas II gave up his throne in March, and in November the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, seized power. Russia left the war in March 1918. The revolution created the world's first communist state, and across Europe in the early 1920s many feared that communist revolutions would spread. That fear mattered for the causes of the next war: right-wing movements, including the Nazis, won support by promising to crush communism at home and presenting themselves as the defenders of social order.

The Great Depression. In October 1929, share prices on the New York stock exchange collapsed, and the crash spread into a world-wide economic disaster. Banks failed, trade fell, and jobs vanished. In Germany, which depended on American loans, the blow was crushing: unemployment reached about 6 million by early 1933, roughly one worker in three. Desperate voters turned to the parties that promised the most. The Nazi Party's share of the vote in Reichstag elections rose from 2.6% in 1928 to 18.3% in 1930 and 37.3% in July 1932, making it the largest party in the German parliament.

The rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party. Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on **30 January 1933**, appointed by the aged President Hindenburg, who believed Hitler could be controlled. Within weeks, a fire destroyed the Reichstag building (27 February 1933), which the government blamed on the communists, and the **Enabling Act** of 23 March 1933 gave Hitler's government the power to make laws without the parliament. Germany's democracy ended by law. The new regime began secretly — then openly — rearming, breaking the military limits of Versailles.

The League of Nations. In 1920 the victors founded the League of Nations to settle future disputes by discussion, not war. Its weaknesses were built in from the start, and the figure below lists them. In the 1930s the League was tested twice — in Manchuria and in Abyssinia — and failed both times. Those failures belong to the road to war in part 7.

The League of Nations: weaknesses built in

Founded in 1920 to settle disputes by discussion, not war.

Weakness	Why it mattered
No armed forces of its own	It could only ask members to act; no member had to.
Decisions needed agreement	Every member present had to agree, so one objection could block action.
The United States never joined	The world's richest new power stayed out, and the League lost weight at the start.
Key members absent or leaving	Germany joined only in 1926 and left in 1933; Japan left in 1933; Italy left in 1937; the USSR joined in 1934.
Economic penalties were easy to avoid	Countries kept selling goods outside the penalty list - oil to Italy in 1935, for example.

Tested twice in the 1930s - Manchuria in 1931 and Abyssinia in 1935 - the League failed both times.

Aggressors learned that the League would not fight.

A table of the League of Nations’ structural weaknesses: it had no armed forces of its own, its decisions needed the agreement of every member present, the United States never joined, Germany joined only in 1926 and left in 1933, and sanctions were easy to avoid. Each row explains how the weakness made the League unable to stop aggression.

Task C (scaffolded). For each of the four bridge supports — Versailles, the Russian Revolution, the Great Depression, the rise of the Nazis — write one sentence beginning “This helped cause World War II because ...”. Use one fact from this section in each sentence.

7. The road to war: aggression and its answers, 1931–1941

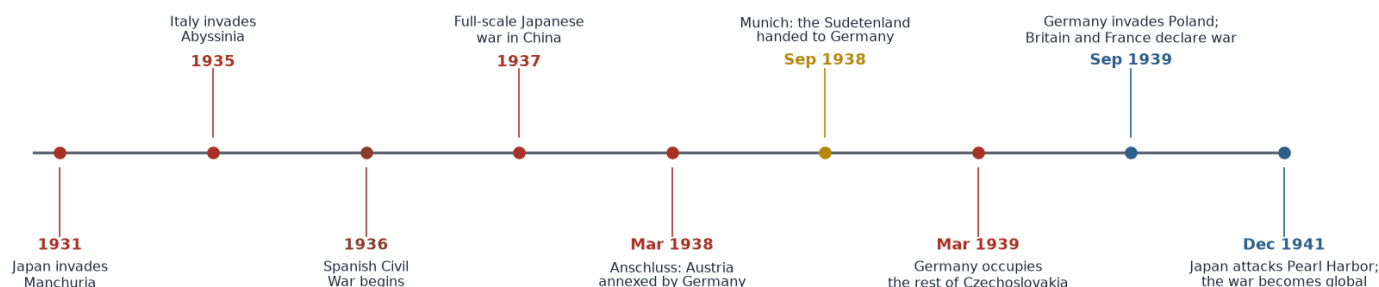
While Germany rearmed, three regimes emerged that were ready to use force to expand. Italy had been ruled since 1922 by Benito Mussolini and his **fascist** movement. Hitler’s Germany was the second. In Japan, military leaders gained control of policy and pushed for an empire in Asia. Before going further, fascism needs a definition, because it is a contested term.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *fascist* but does not define it. This section therefore treats fascism as: one-party rule by a dictator, built on extreme nationalism, that crushes opposition, glorifies the nation’s military power, and rejects democracy and communism. The Italian regime under Mussolini and the Nazi regime in Germany both fit this description, although they differed in important ways, and historians disagree about exactly where the boundary of the term lies. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

The 1930s then became a test: how would the democracies answer each act of aggression? The timeline below shows the tests, in order.

The road to war: acts of aggression and their answers

1931-1941. Each test showed how far an aggressor could go.



The League failed to answer Manchuria and Abyssinia; Britain and France stood aside over Spain; at Munich they gave in. World War II began in Europe on 3 September 1939. The attack on Pearl Harbor made it a world war in the full sense.

A timeline of the road to World War II from 1931 to 1941: the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, full-scale Japanese war in China from 1937, the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the Munich Agreement and annexation of the Sudetenland in September 1938, the German occupation of Prague in March 1939, the invasion of Poland and the declarations of war in September 1939, and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Manchuria, 1931. On 18 September 1931, an explosion damaged a Japanese-owned railway in Manchuria, in north-east China. Japan's army blamed Chinese forces and used the event as an excuse to invade and occupy the whole region, setting up a puppet state in 1932. China appealed to the League of Nations. The League's inquiry — the Lytton Report of 1932 — judged Japan in the wrong, and Japan simply left the League in 1933. The lesson aggressors took: the League would not fight.

Abyssinia, 1935. Italy had already fought Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1895–1896 and lost; Mussolini wanted revenge and an empire. In October 1935 Italy invaded. The League imposed economic penalties but did not ban oil sales, and Britain and France secretly tried to give Mussolini parts of Abyssinia to end the crisis — a deal that collapsed in shame when it leaked. By May 1936 Italy had conquered the country. In June 1936, Abyssinia's Emperor Haile Selassie addressed the League in Geneva and warned that if one small nation could be attacked without consequence, every small nation was in danger (League of Nations records, Geneva). The League had failed a second test.

The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939. In July 1936, army officers led by General Francisco Franco rebelled against Spain's elected government. Hitler and Mussolini sent troops and planes to help Franco; the Soviet Union sent aid to the government side; Britain and France stood aside. The war killed hundreds of thousands of people, and in April 1937 German planes bombed the Basque town of Guernica, killing many civilians — an early sign of what air power could do to towns. Franco won in April 1939. The war tested weapons and showed, again, that the democracies would not act.

China, 1937. On 7 July 1937, a clash between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge, near Beijing, became a full-scale Japanese invasion of China. By the end of 1937 Japan had taken Beijing, Shanghai and the capital Nanjing. The war in Asia had begun — two years before the war in Europe.

Austria and the Sudetenland, 1938. In March 1938 German troops entered Austria, and Hitler annexed it — the **Anschluss** — a union that Versailles had forbidden. Then Hitler demanded the **Sudetenland**, the German-speaking border regions of Czechoslovakia. On **29–30 September 1938**, at Munich, the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Italy agreed to hand the Sudetenland to Germany — without Czechoslovakia at the table. The policy behind the agreement is called **appeasement**, and part 8 examines it closely. Czechoslovakia lost its border defences overnight.

The final steps, 1939. In March 1939 Germany occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia — proof that Hitler wanted more than German-speaking lands. In August 1939, to everyone’s surprise, Nazi Germany and the communist Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact, agreeing not to fight each other and secretly dividing up eastern Europe between them. On **1 September 1939** Germany invaded Poland. On **3 September 1939** Britain and France declared war on Germany: World War II had begun in Europe. As in 1914, Australia was at war as part of the British Empire — the reasons Australians fought, and Prime Minister Menzies’s announcement of the war, are studied in Section 3B.

Pearl Harbor, 1941. On **7 December 1941** (Hawaiian time), Japanese aircraft attacked the United States Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States entered the war the next day, and Germany declared war on the United States days later. The conflict became truly global — and the war in the Pacific and Asia, which came so close to Australia, is studied in Section 3E.

8. Worked inquiry 2 — appeasement: peace for our time?

A contested term, defined before use.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *appeasement* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: the policy of the late 1930s, associated above all with the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, of giving in to some of Hitler’s demands — most famously at Munich in September 1938 — in order to avoid another war. Critics use the word to mean weakness; defenders argue it was the least bad choice available at the time. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

Read the source below — a **primary source**, recorded and reported at the time — then read the reply made by Winston Churchill.

Neville Chamberlain, 30 September 1938

Statement outside 10 Downing Street, on returning from the Munich conference; recorded at the time

*"My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there
has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour.
I believe it is peace for our time."*

The reply recorded by Winston Churchill

Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 1948

*"You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose
dishonour, and you will have war."*

Six months after Munich, German troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia (March 1939).

A framed reproduction of Neville Chamberlain's statement outside 10 Downing Street on 30 September 1938: "My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time." Below it, the reply recorded by Winston Churchill in The Gathering Storm (1948): "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour, and you will have war."

Question 1 — What does it say? Chamberlain claimed he had brought back "peace with honour". Why "the second time"? *Modelled answer:* he was comparing himself to a British prime minister of the 1870s who had claimed the same achievement after an earlier European crisis. Chamberlain was placing himself in a line of peacemakers.

Question 2 — What does it reveal? The statement was made to a crowd outside the Prime Minister's home, after days of fear that a war would start over Czechoslovakia. What does the tone tell you about the mood of the British public in September 1938? *Modelled answer:* it suggests relief — people wanted to believe the crisis was over and that another war like 1914–1918 had been avoided.

Question 3 — What are its limits? What could Chamberlain not know when he spoke? *Modelled answer:* he could not know that Hitler would break the agreement within six months, taking the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; the statement shows hope, not foresight.

The debate, steelmanned. To steelman an argument is to state it as strongly as its best supporter would — the opposite of attacking a weak version of it. Was appeasement a failure of courage, or the best choice Britain had in 1938? Historians still argue, and the strongest case on each side is this:

Was appeasement a failure, or the best choice in 1938?

Each position at its strongest, before you judge (define your terms first).

THE STRONGEST CASE FOR THE POLICY	THE STRONGEST CASE AGAINST IT
Britain was not ready for war in 1938. Its new fighter planes were only entering service, and its chiefs of staff warned against fighting yet. The public, remembering 1914-1918, would not support a war over a far-away country they knew little about; the dominions, including Australia, were not ready either. Versailles had left real grievances: German speakers lived outside Germany's new borders, and some of Hitler's early demands touched them.	Every concession led to a bigger demand: after the Rhineland came Austria, after Austria the Sudetenland, after Munich the rest of Czechoslovakia. At Munich, Britain and France handed over a friendly country's border defences, its arms and its industry - and Czechoslovakia was not even at the table. Stalin lost trust in the western democracies and signed his pact with Hitler in August 1939.
Munich bought time: in 1938-1939 Britain built up the fighter defences that won the air war in 1940. War came in 1939 against a Germany stronger by a year of arms and conquest - worse terms than 1938 would have offered.	

At the end of the exercise here rewards the quality of your reasoning and evidence, not the conclusion you reach. Each side answers the other: the time Britain bought was real, and so was the strength Germany gained.

Two columns steelmanning the appeasement debate. For the policy: Britain was not ready for war in 1938 and needed time to rearm; the public and the dominions would not support a war over a far-away country; the Treaty of Versailles had left real grievances; Munich bought the year in which Britain's fighter defences were built. Against the policy: each concession led to a bigger demand; Czechoslovakia's defences and allies were handed over; Stalin lost trust in the democracies and made his pact with Hitler; war came in 1939 on worse terms than 1938 would have offered.

Notice that each side answers the other: the time bought in 1938-1939 is real, but so is the strength Germany gained by taking Czechoslovakia's arms and industry. When you evaluate appeasement, weigh both — and define your terms first, exactly as the box above does.

A model paragraph. When you evaluate a cause of the war, build your paragraph in four moves: **claim, evidence, explanation, significance**. The figure below shows a worked paragraph on appeasement, colour-coded by move.

CLAIM

A model paragraph: evaluating a cause

The failure of appeasement was a significant cause of World War II, because it taught Hitler that the democracies would not fight.

Four moves - claim, evidence, explanation, significance.

EVIDENCE

At Munich in September 1938, Britain and France handed the Sudetenland to Germany. In March 1939, Germany occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia, breaking the agreement.

EXPLANATION

Each concession showed Hitler that a threat gained more than negotiation did. Having taken Czechoslovakia's arms and industry, Germany was stronger when the war finally came, while Britain and France lost an ally and its defences.

SIGNIFICANCE

As a result, the war of September 1939 began against a stronger Germany than the war of 1938 would have faced. Appeasement did not cause the war alone - the aims of the Nazi regime did that - but it made the war harder to win once it came.

Notice: the evidence is dated, the explanation connects evidence to claim, and the significance states an effect rather than restating the claim. The last sentence also sets a limit on the argument - a strong habit.

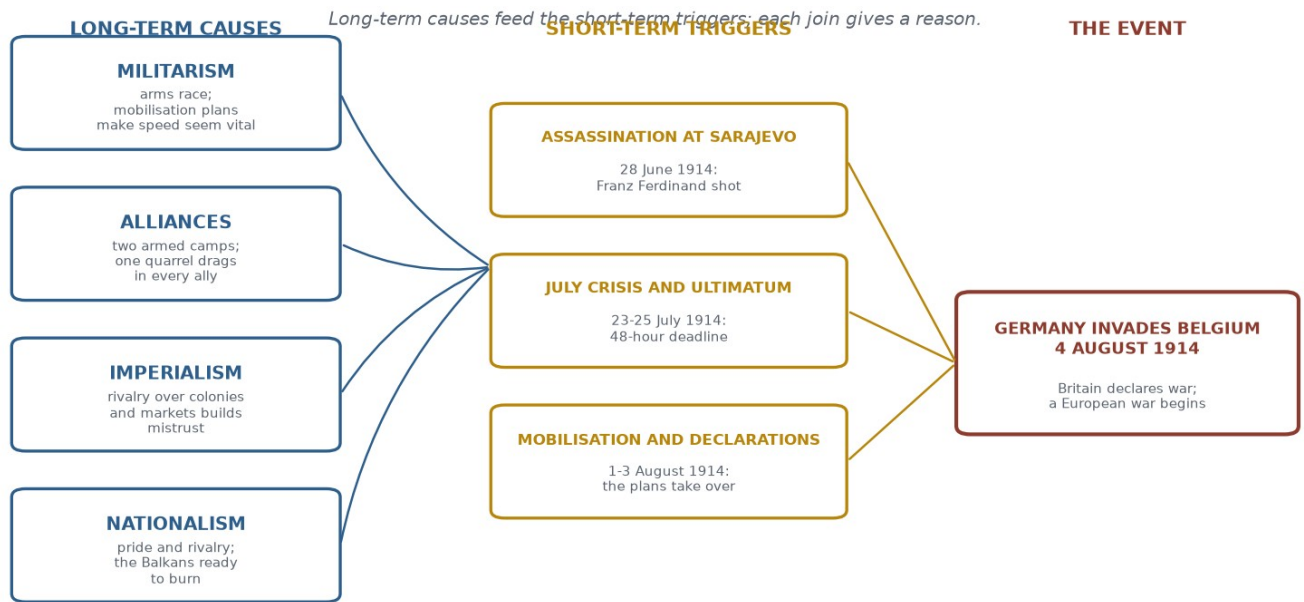
A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating the failure of appeasement as a cause of World War II, labelled by move: claim, evidence, explanation and significance. The claim states that appeasement was a significant cause; the evidence cites the Munich Agreement of September 1938 and the occupation of Prague in March 1939; the explanation shows how concession fed demand; the significance states that war came in 1939 against a stronger Germany.

Read the paragraph once for sense, then once more move by move. Notice that the evidence is dated, the explanation does the work of connecting evidence to claim, and the significance states an effect rather than repeating the claim.

9. Bringing it together: concept maps of both wars

A **concept map** sorts causes by type and joins them to the event. The two maps below show the arguments of this section at a glance.

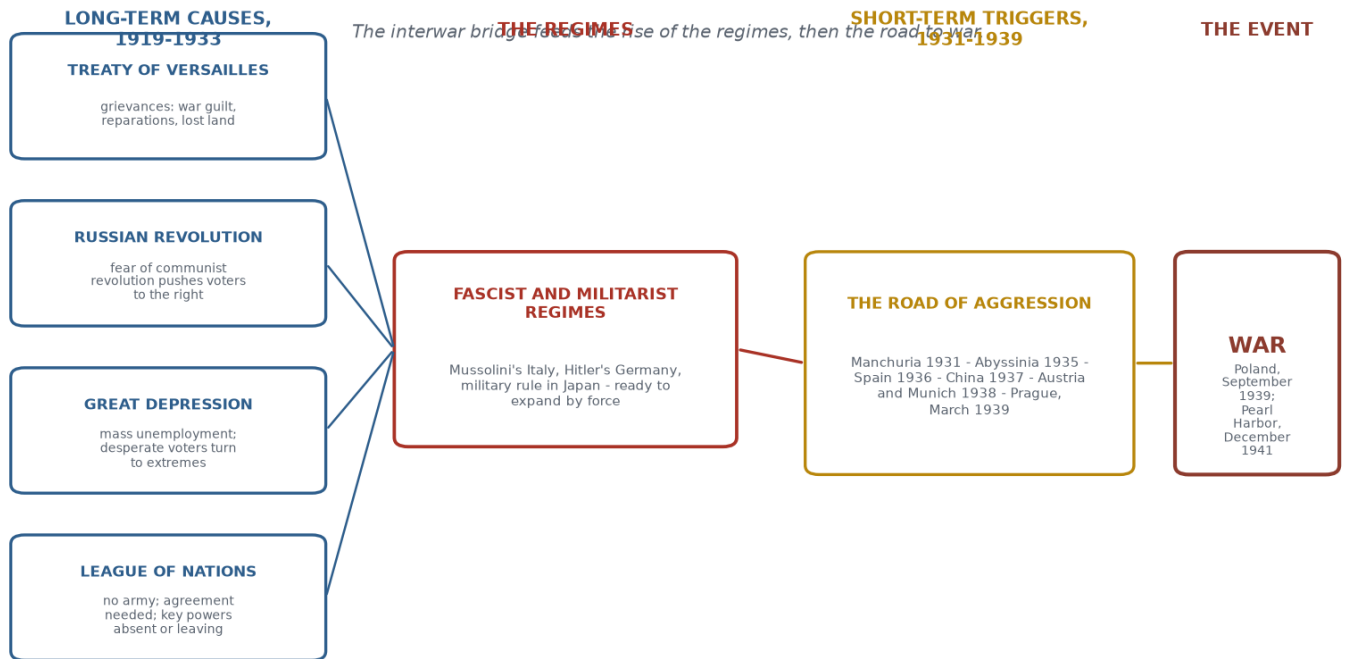
Concept map: what caused World War I



Read left to right: decades of militarism, alliances, imperialism and nationalism made the crisis of July 1914 possible;
the triggers of those six weeks turned it into a general war.

A concept map of what caused World War I. Long-term forces — militarism, alliances, imperialism and nationalism — feed into the short-term triggers of 1914: the assassination at Sarajevo, the July Crisis, the ultimatum and the mobilisation plans, ending with the invasion of Belgium and the declarations of war in August 1914.

Concept map: what caused World War II



The Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939 belongs on the trigger side too: it left Germany free to invade Poland without fighting the Soviet Union as well - one more reason the war came when it did.

A concept map of what caused World War II. Long-term forces between the wars — the Russian Revolution and fear of communist revolution, the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Depression, and the League of Nations' weaknesses — feed into the rise of militarist and fascist regimes, then into the short-term triggers: the Munich Agreement, the annexation of Austria, the occupation of Prague, the pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, and the invasion of Poland, ending with the declarations of war of September 1939 and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Task D (scaffolded). Copy the World War II map into your book from memory. Then add one cause of your own that this section has not drawn, and join it to the event it helped bring about. Be ready to defend your choice with evidence.

10. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

- Sort the causes.** For each of these, write L (long-term cause) or T (short-term trigger): militarism · the alliance system · the assassination of Franz Ferdinand · the July Crisis · imperialism · the invasion of Belgium · nationalism · the mobilisation plans.
- Complete the alliances.** Copy the alliance map in part 2. From memory, write the date beside each agreement: Dual Alliance, Triple Alliance, Franco-Russian Alliance, Entente Cordiale, Anglo-Russian Convention. Check against the section and correct your errors.
- Bridge supports.** Copy the bridge diagram in part 6. Under each of the four supports, write one fact from the section that proves it was a cause of World War II.
- Order the aggression.** Using the road-to-war timeline, number these events 1–8: Anschluss, invasion of Poland, invasion of Manchuria, Munich Agreement, invasion of Abyssinia, attack on Pearl Harbor, outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, occupation of Prague. Then write the year of each.
- Versailles grievances.** Copy the Versailles table in part 6. Choose the two terms you think created the deepest German grievance and write one sentence explaining why for each.

6. **Read the steelman.** From the appeasement steelman in part 8, write down the single strongest point on each side in your own words, then state which point you find more convincing and why.

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. Explain how the alliance system turned the assassination of Franz Ferdinand into a general European war. Name at least four countries and their alliance ties in your answer.
 8. Evaluate the significance of the Treaty of Versailles as a cause of World War II. Use the four moves from part 8: claim, evidence, explanation, significance.
 9. “Appeasement was the least bad choice available in 1938.” Define appeasement, then argue for or against this statement using at least three dated facts from this section. You may reach either conclusion; your reasoning and evidence carry the marks.
 10. Compare the causes of the two wars: name one long-term cause of World War I and one long-term cause of World War II, and explain one way they are similar and one way they differ.
-

11. Source-based inquiry

Read this primary source, then answer the questions below it.

Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, on the evening of 3 August 1914, the day Britain declared war on Germany. Speaking to a friend as the lamps were being lit in London, Grey said that “the lamps are going out all over Europe” and that “we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime”.

(Recorded in Sir Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1892–1916, 1925.)

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions this source could help you answer.
2. **Infer:** what did Grey believe the next few years would be like for Europe? Give one phrase from the source as your evidence.
3. **Context:** why might a British Foreign Secretary have felt this way on that exact evening? Use parts 3 and 6 to help you.
4. **Perspective:** Grey wrote these words down in his memoirs, published in 1925, eleven years after the event. Does that make the source more useful for studying 1914, or for studying how people remembered 1914 afterwards? Explain your answer.
5. **Evaluate:** is this source more useful for studying the *causes* of the war, or the *mood* with which it began? Explain, referring to what the source does and does not tell us.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- **Long-term causes (part 2, .E02):** student can name and define all four forces — militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism — and give a dated example for each (Navy Laws 1898/1900; *Dreadnought* February 1906; the alliance dates 1879–1907; the Moroccan crises 1905/1911; the Bosnian annexation 1908; Alsace-Lorraine since 1871; the Balkan Wars 1912–1913). Italy’s 1914 neutrality and 1915 switch, and the Ottoman Empire’s entry in November 1914, are noted where relevant.
- **Short-term triggers (parts 3–4, .E02):** correct order is assassination (28 June 1914) → ultimatum (23 July) → Serbian reply (25 July) → Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia (28 July) → mobilisations → German declarations of war on Russia (1 August) and France (3 August) → invasion of Belgium (4 August) → Britain declares war (4 August). The ultimatum inquiry shows the three moves: what it says, what it reveals, what it leaves out.
- **Responsibility debate (part 5):** students distinguish fact from interpretation; Fischer (1961/1967) and Clark (2012) are attributed correctly; answers are marked on reasoning and evidence, not on conclusion reached (CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 5).

- **Interwar bridge (part 6, .E03 and .E05):** student can state the Versailles terms (Article 231; reparations set at 132 billion gold marks in 1921; army limited to 100,000; demilitarised Rhineland; territorial losses; Anschluss forbidden) and their impact on Germany; can place the Russian Revolution (1917), the Great Depression (from October 1929) and the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party (Chancellor 30 January 1933; Enabling Act 23 March 1933) in order; and can evaluate each as a cause of World War II rather than merely describe it. League weaknesses (no armed forces; unanimity; the United States absent; Germany 1926–33) are stated accurately.
- **Road to war (part 7, .E04):** correct order and dates: Manchuria (from 18 September 1931), Abyssinia (October 1935), Spanish Civil War (July 1936 – April 1939), China (from July 1937), Anschluss (March 1938), Munich and the Sudetenland (September 1938), Prague (March 1939), Poland (1 September 1939) and the declarations of war (3 September 1939), Pearl Harbor (7 December 1941). The Italo-Abyssinian Wars include the 1895–1896 war as background. The contested-term definition of fascism is understood as a definition, not a debate prompt about the present.
- **Appeasement (part 8, .E05):** students define appeasement before evaluating it; the steelman shows both sides at their strongest (time to rearm versus strength handed to Germany); the model paragraph shows all four moves. Australia’s entry to each war as a dominion is noted; enlistment motives and Menzies’s speech stay in Section 3B.
- **Concept maps (part 9, .E01):** maps distinguish long-term causes from short-term triggers and join causes to the event with reasons, not just arrows.
- **Source inquiry (part 11):** questions are genuinely historical; the inference quotes the source; the context answer places the remark on 3 August 1914; the perspective answer handles the 1914/1925 gap (event versus memory); the evaluation distinguishes causes from mood.

Cross-links to skills sections: the inquiry question “Why did World War I begin?” and its reshaping (7A), sequencing the two chronologies (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), the WWI responsibility and appeasement debates (7F), cause time-spans and causal webs (8B), significance criteria applied to Versailles and appeasement (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D). **Forward within the chapter:** the reasons Australians fought (3B), the places they fought (3C), the turning points including Pearl Harbor and the Pacific war (3E).

Why Australians went to war, 1914–1945

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K14 (cited by code). Elaborations taught (cited by code): .E01, .E02, .E03, .E05, .E06. Elaboration .E04 is excluded from teaching under §2A of this book’s content decisions; the id is retained here as a linkage key only.

Two “whys” in one question. Ask *why did Australians fight in the world wars?* and you are really asking two different questions. The first is about governments: **why was Australia in these wars at all?** The short answer for both wars is Australia’s place in the British Empire — but the way leaders announced that place, and how sure they sounded, changed between 1914 and 1939. The second question is about individuals: **why did men choose to enlist?** Nobody was forced to serve overseas in World War I; the army was built entirely from volunteers, and in World War II the overseas force was volunteer too. So the reasons of real people — pay, duty, adventure, pressure — are historical evidence, not background noise. This section answers both “whys”, and its last task is the curriculum’s .E06 job: comparing the two wars.

Six words do heavy lifting in this section, so here they are up front. The **AIF** (Australian Imperial Force) was the volunteer army Australia raised for overseas service in World War I; a second AIF was raised in 1939. A **dominion** was a self-governing territory of the British Empire, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa: in 1914 a dominion controlled its own domestic affairs but not its own foreign policy, so when Britain went to war, Australia was at war too. **Propaganda** is organised persuasion run by a government or group — in this section, mostly recruiting posters, pamphlets and leaflets. A **primary source** is a record made at the time by a person inside the events; its **provenance** — who made it, where, and when — is part of the evidence. An **inference** is a sensible conclusion you draw from what a source says plus what you already know.

One more habit, because Australians genuinely disagreed about these wars. Most Australians in 1914 supported the war, and both of the country’s rival political leaders raced to promise support for Britain. But a real minority said no, and their case was not a silly one. In this section you will meet that case stated fairly — the *steelman* version of the other side — and in task 8 you will write it yourself.

Part 1 — Attitudes towards war: Australia in 1900

You cannot understand the rush to enlist in August 1914 unless you first see how Australians thought about war in the years before it. Figure 1 sets out the four attitudes held by many Australians in the early 1900s, and the strongest dissenting view beside them.

Attitudes towards war in 1900s Australia

Four views held by many Australians in the early 1900s - and one serious dissent.

WAR AS NOBLE AND HEROIC

War was seen as a test of courage and duty. Britain's cause in 1914 was presented as defending small nations: Germany invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914. The Boer War (1899-1902), in which over 16,000 Australians served, gave families a recent war to be proud of.

WAR AS AN ADVENTURE

Boys' papers and Empire adventure stories sold war as travel and glory. Enlisting meant free uniforms, food and a voyage across the world. John Simpson Kirkpatrick, stuck in Australia as a merchant seaman, enlisted in August 1914 partly hoping for a passage to England.

LOYALTY TO BRITAIN

Most Australians were British-born or of British descent and called Britain the 'Mother Country'. Empire Day was celebrated in schools from 1905. In August 1914 both of Australia's rival political leaders raced to promise support (Figure 2).

A NEW NATION TO PROVE

Australia had only federated in 1901. Many believed the new nation had to prove its manhood, and war was the test. From 1 January 1911 boys aged about 12 to 18 were already in compulsory cadet training for home defence - a generation raised to see service as normal.

STEELMAN - THE DISSENTING VIEW

Not every Australian agreed. The strongest case against the war came from parts of the labour movement: this was an imperial quarrel between governments, and working men would pay for it in blood while owning none of its prizes. That view was a minority in August 1914 - most public voices and both major parties supported the war - but it was real, and it grew as the casualty lists grew (see Q8).

Diagram of four attitude cards from 1900s Australia — war as noble and heroic, war as adventure, loyalty to Britain, and a new nation to prove itself — with a steelman strip giving the strongest dissenting view

Figure 1. Attitudes towards war in 1900s Australia: four widely held views, and the serious dissent beside them.

The four views had real foundations. The **noble-and-heroic** view had a recent war to point to: the **Boer War** of 1899–1902, in which over 16,000 Australians served and more than 600 died, and which families remembered with pride. The **adventure** view was sold every week by boys' papers and Empire adventure stories. **Loyalty to Britain** needed no selling at all: most Australians were British-born or of British descent, called Britain the "Mother Country", and had celebrated Empire Day in schools since 1905. And the **new-nation** view had Federation behind it — Australia had only become one nation in 1901, and many believed a nation proved itself in war. The state had been preparing boys for exactly this: from 1 January 1911, following a 1910 report by the British general Lord Kitchener, military cadet training was compulsory for boys aged about 12 to 18 for home defence. A generation was already being raised to see service as normal.

Steelman — the dissenting view. Not every Australian agreed, and the strongest case against the war came from parts of the labour movement: this was an imperial quarrel between governments, and working men would pay for it in blood while owning none of its prizes. That view was a minority in August 1914 — most public voices and both major parties supported the war — but it was real, and it grew as the casualty lists grew (you will write it up fairly in Q8).

Part 2 — Leaders at the outbreak: the promises of August 1914

Figure 2 lays out the days in which Australia entered each war. Read the top strip first: five events, one week, August 1914.

How Australia entered each war

AUGUST 1914 - WORLD WAR I



SEPTEMBER 1939 - WORLD WAR II



Notice the pattern: in both wars Australia entered because Britain was at war. As a dominion of the British Empire, Australia had no separate declaration to make. A dominion is a self-governing territory of the Empire, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. In December 1941 Japan entered the war, and from then on the war also reached Australia's own region - Singapore, Darwin and New Guinea (Section 3C).

Two timeline strips showing how Australia entered each world war: five events in August 1914 and three in September 1939, with a note that in both wars Australia entered because Britain was at war

Figure 2. How Australia entered each war. In both cases the trigger was Britain's declaration — as a dominion, Australia had no separate declaration to make.

On 31 July 1914, at a public meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall, **Andrew Fisher** — at that moment the leader of the opposition — pledged that Australia would stand by Britain “**to the last man and the last shilling**”. Three days later, at Horsham in Victoria, Prime Minister **Joseph Cook** said the same thing in different words: “If the old country is at war, so are we.” On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany, after Germany invaded Belgium; Australia, as part of the Empire, was automatically at war too. The new government offered an expeditionary force of 20,000 men “to any destination” the same day, and on 5 August the Governor-General formally proclaimed the state of war. (The curriculum's elaboration .E02 calls this “prime minister Andrew Fisher's pledge” because Fisher led Australia as prime minister from September 1914 through most of the war; on the day of the pledge he was still in opposition. Notice what that adds to the story: the pledge was so popular that the government and the opposition competed to make it.)

Worked inquiry 1 — reading Fisher's pledge. Watch how one reported sentence carries the government's whole response. Figure 3 annotates the pledge the way you will annotate sources in task 6.

Worked inquiry 1 - reading Fisher's pledge

A promise made five days before the war began.

THE SOURCE

"... Australia would stand by Britain to the last man and the last shilling."

Andrew Fisher, leader of the opposition (he became prime minister in September 1914), speaking at a public meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall, 31 July 1914. Reported in the next day's newspapers, for example *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 August 1914; the exact wording varies a little between papers.

1. 'The last man'

A promise of people: every soldier needed. In fact over 416,000 men enlisted before the war ended (Figure 6).

2. 'The last shilling'

A promise of money: a shilling is a British coin, and war costs pay, ships, food and equipment. Australia had been federated for only 13 years.

3. Said BEFORE the war

The pledge was made on 31 July; Britain declared war on 4 August. This was a promise in advance - loyalty stated before any fighting started.

4. Both sides agreed

Fisher was in opposition; prime minister Joseph Cook said the same thing three days later (Figure 2). Party politics stopped at the water's edge.

WHAT THE PLEDGE TELLS US

One sentence carries the whole of E02: the Australian government's first response to the outbreak of war was an unqualified promise of support for Britain, in men and in money, made publicly and matched by both rival leaders. The question it opens - why was loyalty to Britain so strong that no leader even paused? - is the question of Section Part 1 (Figure 1). The question it closes is whether the promise could be kept; the casualty lists of Section 3C show the cost.

Annotated source card of Andrew Fisher's 31 July 1914 pledge to stand by Britain to the last man and the last shilling, with four analysis notes and a takeaway panel

Figure 3. Worked inquiry 1 — Fisher's pledge, annotated. Four things to notice: it promised people, it promised money, it was made before the war began, and both rival leaders made it.

The pledge is a **primary source**: reported speech from a public meeting on 31 July 1914, printed in the next day's newspapers (for example *The Argus* of Melbourne, 1 August 1914). Its provenance matters: the exact wording varies a little between papers, which is why historians quote it as reported speech rather than as a single fixed text. The inference Figure 3 asks you to draw is about timing — a promise of loyalty made in advance, before any fighting, tells you how strong loyalty to Britain was in 1914.

Part 3 — Why men enlisted: the volunteer army, 1914–1918

Governments decide whether a country fights; individuals decide whether *they* fight. By the end of World War I, **416,809 Australian men had enlisted** in the AIF, from a population of under 5 million. Every one of them volunteered — and to understand why, the best evidence is the propaganda aimed at them and the conditions they lived in.

Worked inquiry 2 — reading a recruiting poster. From 1915, recruiting was run as an organised campaign by the Australian Parliamentary Recruiting Committee: posters on walls, leaflets handed out, rallies with speeches and bands. Figure 4 redraws the appeals of the real posters so we can take them apart line by line. (The redraw is an **original composite** made for this book — the appeals are the documented ones from real c.1915 posters, held at the Australian War Memorial and state libraries; the words are this book's own.)

Worked inquiry 2 - reading a recruiting poster

A redrawn composite: the appeals are real, the words below are this book's own.

AUSTRALIA'S CALL

ENLIST NOW

Your mates have already gone.

WILL YOU ANSWER THE CALL?

Pay: five shillings a day.
Uniform, food and travel found.
One shilling a day kept for you
until the war ends.

Duty to King, Empire and mates.

Apply at the nearest recruiting office.

AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY RECRUITING COMMITTEE
(as named on the real posters, c. 1915)

DIRECT ADDRESS - 'YOU'
The reader is singled out. Real posters pointed straight at the man reading them.

PEER PRESSURE - 'your mates'
Men enlisted in groups; towns raised their own battalions. Nobody wanted to be the one who stayed.

PAY - five shillings a day
Steady money, and more than many casual farm and bush jobs paid. One shilling a day was held back until the end of service - six shillings in all.

DUTY - King and Empire
Loyalty to Britain (Figure 1) made 'King and Empire' a reason that needed no explaining in 1914.

OFFICIAL VOICE - the office
The poster speaks as the state itself: a committee set up by the parliaments in 1915 to run recruiting.

Originals of this kind of poster are held at the Australian War Memorial and state libraries; this redraw is an original composite for this book.

Original composite recruiting poster drawn for this book, with five labelled appeals: direct address, peer pressure, pay, duty to King and Empire, and the official voice of the recruiting committee

Figure 4. Worked inquiry 2 — a recruiting poster taken apart. Five appeals: “you”, “your mates”, five shillings a day, King and Empire, and the state itself.

The five reason-groups behind the poster’s appeals are the five named in the curriculum’s .E03, and Figure 5 collects them with their evidence.

Why men enlisted in the AIF, 1914-1918

Five reasons, named in the curriculum, with the evidence that shows them.

1. PAY AND STEADY WORK

A private earned five shillings a day, with one more shilling a day kept safe until the end of service - six in all. Bush and farm work was often casual and paid less. For men out of work or on the land, the AIF was the most regular wage going.

2. ADVENTURE AND TRAVEL

The war promised a free voyage and a look at the world. John Simpson Kirkpatrick, a merchant seaman stuck in Australia, enlisted in August 1914; his AWM biography says he hoped the army would give him a passage to England.

3. DUTY FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Loyalty to the 'Mother Country' (Figure 1) was a reason, not a background: recruiters sold enlistment as standing by Britain, and Fisher's pledge of July 1914 set the tone from the top.

4. PROPAGANDA - POSTERS, PAMPHLETS, LEAFLETS

From 1915 the state parliamentary recruiting committees ran organised campaigns: posters on every wall, leaflets handed out, rallies with speeches and bands. Propaganda is organised persuasion by a government or group.

5. PEER AND COMMUNITY PRESSURE

Friends enlisted together and local towns raised their own units, so staying home meant staying behind alone. Recruiting rallies, and the questions of neighbours, pushed men who were unsure.

Most men who enlisted named more than one reason; these groups overlap in real lives (see Q4 and Q7).

Five cards summarising the reasons Australian men enlisted in the AIF: pay and steady work, adventure and travel, duty for the British Empire, propaganda posters and leaflets, and peer and community pressure

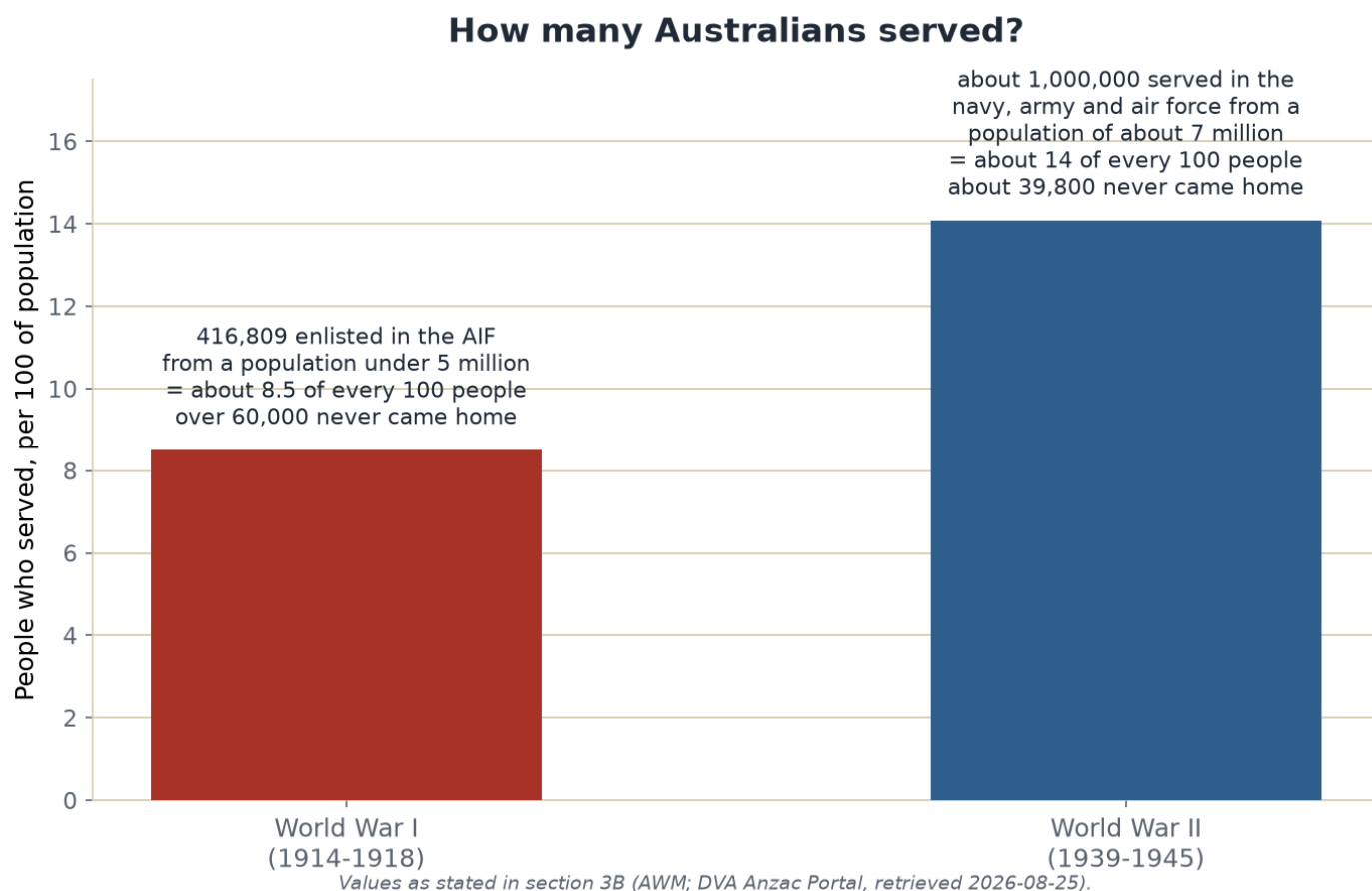
Figure 5. The five reason-groups of .E03, each with its evidence. Most real men named more than one.

Two of the five deserve a closer look. **Pay:** an AIF private — an ordinary soldier — earned five shillings a day, with one more shilling a day held back safely until the end of service, six in all. Bush and farm work was often casual and paid less, so for men out of work or scraping a living on the land, the AIF was the most regular wage going.

Adventure: the war promised a free voyage and a look at the world, and some men said so. John Simpson Kirkpatrick — later famous as Simpson and his donkey at Gallipoli — was a merchant seaman stuck in Australia when the war began; he enlisted in August 1914, and his Australian War Memorial biography says he hoped the army would give him a passage to England.

A limit on loyalty: the conscription referendums. As the war dragged on and casualties rose, volunteers fell short of what the generals wanted. The answer some leaders pushed was **conscription** — forcing men to serve by law. Because Australia's constitution gave voters the final say on changing the rules, the question went to a **referendum** — a national vote — twice: on 28 October 1916 and 20 December 1917. Both times Australians voted no. So the AIF remained an all-volunteer force for overseas service right through the war (Australia's part-time citizen soldiers, the militia, stayed limited to home defence). Read that result as a perspective: Australians supported the war, and hundreds of thousands volunteered — but twice they refused to *force* any man to fight overseas.

Figure 6 shows the scale of the answer the volunteers gave — and, beside it, the scale of the second war.



Bar chart comparing the share of Australians who served in each world war: about 8.5 of every 100 in World War I and about 14 of every 100 in World War II, with raw totals and death tolls labelled

Figure 6. How many Australians served, set against the population of each time. Source line at the end of the section.

Part 4 — 1939: “Australia is also at war”

Twenty-one years later, the pattern of 1914 repeated itself — with one change in the sound of it. On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland; Britain, which had promised to defend Poland, declared war on Germany on 3 September. That evening, Prime Minister **Robert Menzies** went on the radio and told the country what the dominion position now meant.

“Fellow Australians. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.”

— Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939. The sound recording is held by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; the transcript is held by the National Archives of Australia.

This is a **primary source**, and its provenance carries a historical fact all by itself: in 1939 families heard their prime minister’s own voice in their own living rooms, because radio had arrived. In 1914 the news came by newspaper and proclamation; in 1939 it came through the air. Figure 7 puts the ORIGIN question frame to the broadcast and pulls one word out for attention: *melancholy* means sad and heavy-hearted. Menzies chose a sad word, not a proud one — in 1939 nobody in government pretended this war would be the adventure that 1914 had seemed to many. The casualty lists of 1914–1918 were still within living memory.

Source inquiry - a nation hears the news

Prime Minister Robert Menzies on the radio, the evening of 3 September 1939.

THE SOURCE

"Fellow Australians. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war."

Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939. The sound recording is held by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; the transcript is held by the National Archives of Australia.

PUT THE ORIGIN QUESTIONS TO IT

WHO

Who is speaking - and what gives him the right to speak for Australia?

HOW

Radio: in 1939 families gathered around one set to hear the prime minister's own voice. Why does the medium matter?

WHEN & WHERE

What had happened in the days before 3 September 1939? (See Figure 2.)

PURPOSE

Menzies is not asking for anything yet. What is this broadcast for - and for whom?

INFERENCE

What do the words 'also at war' tell us about how Australia entered this war?

One word to watch: 'melancholy' here means sad and heavy-hearted. Menzies chooses it instead of a proud or excited word - in 1939, nobody in government pretended this war would be the adventure that 1914 had seemed to many (Figure 1).

Source card of Robert Menzies' 3 September 1939 radio broadcast announcing that Australia is also at war, with five question cards — who, how, when and where, purpose, inference — and a gloss of the word melancholy

Figure 7. Source inquiry — the questions to ask of the Menzies broadcast (and of any source in this section).

The reasons Australia entered World War II (.E05) are therefore the 1914 reasons *minus the adventure*: loyalty to Britain, the dominion position, and the leaders' immediate promise of support — plus, from December 1941, when Japan entered the war and the fighting reached Singapore, Darwin and New Guinea, a reason that was new in its urgency: the defence of Australia itself (Section 3C).

Part 5 — Two wars compared: what stayed the same, what changed

.E06 asks you to compare and contrast the reasons Australia entered each war. Comparison needs a frame, so Figure 8 puts the two wars side by side, question by question, and then states the pattern in one line: **continuity** — what stayed the same across the 21 years — and **change** — what did not.

The two world wars compared

Different wars, one pattern - and two big differences.

THE QUESTION	WORLD WAR I (1914)	WORLD WAR II (1939)
Why was Britain at war?	Germany invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914; the alliance system turned a Balkan crisis into a world war (3A).	Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939; Britain had promised to defend Poland (3A).
How did Australia enter?	Automatically: as a dominion of the British Empire, Australia was at war when Britain was. There was no separate declaration.	The same legal position in 1939 - Menzies announced it. Australia adopted the Statute of Westminster in 1942, becoming fully independent of Britain's parliament.
What did leaders say?	Fisher: 'to the last man and the last shilling' (31 July 1914). Cook: 'If the old country is at war, so are we' (3 August 1914).	Menzies: 'Australia is also at war' (3 September 1939) - a 'melancholy duty', not an adventure.
Who served?	Volunteers only, in the AIF, for overseas service. Voters rejected conscription for overseas service twice, in 1916 and 1917.	Volunteers for overseas (the second AIF), plus militia called up for home defence under the National Security Act 1939.
How big?	416,809 enlisted from under 5 million people; over 60,000 died.	About 1,000,000 served from about 7 million people; about 39,800 died.
Where was the war?	Far away: Gallipoli, the Western Front, the Middle East - more than 14,000 km from home (3C).	Far away at first - then, from December 1941, close: Singapore, Darwin bombed, New Guinea (3C).

WHAT STAYED THE SAME: in both wars Australia entered at Britain's side, leaders promised full support at once, and men enlisted from the same mix of duty, pay, adventure and pressure (Figure 5). WHAT CHANGED: by 1939 the memory of 1914-1918 had ended the adventure, and by 1942 the war itself was reaching Australia - defence of home joined loyalty to Britain as a reason to fight.

Comparison table of the reasons Australia entered each world war, in six rows: why Britain was at war, how Australia entered, what leaders said, who served, how big the effort was, and where the war was; with a summary of what stayed the same and what changed

Figure 8. The two wars compared. Same entry, same pledge-style loyalty, same mix of enlistment reasons — but a different sound in 1939, and a different war from December 1941.

What stayed the same: in both wars Australia entered at Britain's side the moment Britain declared war, because it was a dominion; in both wars leaders promised full support at once (Fisher and Cook in 1914, Menzies in 1939); and in both wars men enlisted from the same mix of duty, pay, adventure and pressure. **What changed:** by 1939 the memory of 1914–1918 had ended the adventure — listen to “melancholy” — and by 1942 the war itself was reaching Australia, so defence of home joined loyalty to Britain as a reason to fight. And one more change for the record: Australia adopted the **Statute of Westminster** in 1942, becoming fully independent of Britain's parliament — legally, the dominion era the wars had been fought inside was ending as the second war ran.

Figure 9 puts the comparison into a finished paragraph, annotated so you can see how each sentence earns its place.

Model paragraph - why did Australians fight?

One possible answer to the section question, with its moves labelled. Steal the moves, not the words.

Australians fought in both world wars first of all because Australia entered each war at Britain's side.

In 1914, as a dominion of the British Empire, Australia was at war the moment Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August, and both rival leaders had already promised support: Andrew Fisher 'to the last man and the last shilling' on 31 July, and Joseph Cook, 'If the old country is at war, so are we', on 3 August.

Individual men then chose to enlist for pay and steady work, for adventure, out of duty to the Empire, and under the pressure of posters, rallies and mates - 416,809 in all.

In 1939 the pattern repeated itself: Robert Menzies announced on 3 September that 'Australia is also at war'.

Yet the second war was not the first one again. Menzies spoke of 'melancholy' duty, not glory, because the casualty lists of 1914-1918 were still within living memory; and from December 1941, when Japan entered the war, Australians were also fighting to keep the war away from Australia itself.

Loyalty to Britain opened both wars, but by 1942 defence of home had become a reason of its own.

CLAIM

DATED EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 2

COMPARISON

DIFFERENCE

JUDGEMENT

WHY THIS PARAGRAPH WORKS

It answers the question in its first sentence. Every claim after that is carried by a dated fact from this section (the pledges, the declaration, the enlistment total, the broadcast). It does what E06 asks - compares the two wars - by naming one pattern that repeated and two things that changed. And it ends with a judgement of its own, instead of trailing off. Your tasks 7 and 10 ask for the same shape with your own choice of evidence.

Annotated model paragraph answering why Australians fought in the world wars, with its moves labelled: claim, dated evidence, comparison, difference, judgement

Figure 9. A model answer to the section question. Steal its moves, not its words — tasks 7 and 10 ask for the same shape with your own evidence.

Practice — scaffolded

1. Match the attitudes. Copy the table and complete it using Figure 1 and Part 1. One row is done for you.

Attitude	One piece of evidence from this section
War as noble and heroic	The Boer War (1899–1902): over 16,000 Australians served
War as an adventure	
Loyalty to Britain	
A new nation to prove itself	

2. Order the outbreak. Using Figure 2: (a) put these five events of August 1914 in order: Britain declares war on Germany; the Governor-General proclaims the state of war; Fisher’s pledge; the offer of 20,000 men; Cook’s statement. (b) Which one word in Menzies’ 1939 sentence — “Australia is *also* at war” — shows that Australia entered the second war the same way it entered the first?

3. Reasons and evidence. Copy the table and complete it using Figure 5. One row is done for you.

Reason group (. E03)	Evidence from this section
Pay and steady work	Five shillings a day, plus one held back until the end of service

Adventure and travel

Duty for the British Empire

Propaganda: posters, pamphlets, leaflets

Peer and community pressure

4. Read the poster. From Figure 4: (a) which appeal is aimed at a man through his friends? (b) quote the two lines of the poster that make the money argument. (c) who ran the real recruiting campaigns these posters came from, from what year, and why does that official voice matter?

5. Read the chart. From Figure 6: (a) about how many of every 100 Australians served in each war? (b) True or false, and fix the false ones: (i) more Australians served in total in World War II than in World War I. (ii) World War I drew a bigger share of the population than World War II. (iii) More than 60,000 Australians died in World War I.

6. Origin questions for the Menzies broadcast. Using only the provenance line under the quote and Figure 7, answer three ORIGIN questions: Who is speaking, and what gives him the right to speak for Australia? How did Australians hear it, and why does that medium matter? What had happened in the days before the broadcast?

Practice — unscaffolded

7. Why did they volunteer? In one paragraph (4–6 sentences), explain why men enlisted in the AIF in World War I. Use at least **two** reason-groups from Figure 5, at least two dated facts from this section, and the paragraph shape in Figure 9 (claim, dated evidence, judgement).

8. The steelman task. Write the strongest case *against* Australia's entry into World War I as an Australian dissenter in 1914 would have made it (Part 1 and Figure 1 give you the view). Then write two more sentences beginning "A supporter of the war would answer ..." and answer that case fairly. You are marked on how fairly the other side is stated, not on which side you hold.

9. Silences and checks. (a) Name one thing the Menzies broadcast does **not** tell us about Australia's reasons for fighting in World War II. (b) Name one other kind of source — a diary, a recruiting poster, a parliamentary debate, a photograph — that could check or challenge what Menzies said, and say what it would add.

10. The .E06 comparison. In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), compare and contrast the reasons Australia entered each of the two world wars. You must name one pattern that repeated itself and one thing that changed, and carry each with a dated fact from this section. Figure 9 is the model; Figure 8 is the evidence bank.

Answers

1. War as an adventure — boys' papers and Empire adventure stories; or Simpson Kirkpatrick enlisting in August 1914 partly hoping for a passage to England. Loyalty to Britain — most Australians were British-born or of British descent; Empire Day in schools from 1905. A new nation to prove itself — Federation only in 1901; compulsory cadet training from 1 January 1911.

2. (a) Fisher's pledge (31 July) → Cook's statement (3 August) → Britain declares war (4 August) → offer of 20,000 men (4 August) → the Governor-General's proclamation (5 August). (b) "Also": Australia is at war because Britain is — the dominion position, same as 1914.

3. Adventure and travel — the free voyage and a look at the world; Simpson's hoped-for passage to England. Duty for the British Empire — loyalty to the "Mother Country"; Fisher's pledge setting the tone from the top. Propaganda — the Australian Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's campaigns from 1915: posters, leaflets, rallies. Peer and community pressure — friends enlisted together and towns raised their own units, so staying home meant staying behind alone.

4. (a) The peer-pressure appeal: "Your mates have already gone. Will you answer the call?" (b) "Pay: five shillings a day." and "One shilling a day kept for you until the war ends." (c) The Australian Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, from 1915 — a committee set up by the parliaments, so the poster speaks as the state itself, which made refusing feel like refusing the country, not just a poster.

5. (a) World War I about 8.5 of every 100; World War II about 14 of every 100. (b) (i) True — about 1,000,000 against 416,809. (ii) False — World War II drew the bigger share (14 per 100 against 8.5 per 100). (iii) True — over 60,000.

6. Who: Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia — the head of government, speaking officially for the country. How: by radio, with families gathered around one set — in 1939 the prime minister's own voice reached every home, which was new (in 1914 the news came by newspaper and proclamation). When and where: the evening of 3 September 1939, two days after Germany invaded Poland on 1 September and the same day Britain declared war.

7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: at least two reason-groups with dated facts, and the Figure 9 shape (7); the dissenting case stated at full strength and answered fairly, not knocked down (8); a silence genuinely absent from the broadcast, and a check-source that would add something new (9); one repeated pattern and one change, each carried by a dated fact (10).

Model response (for task 10)

Australians fought in both world wars first of all because Australia entered each war at Britain's side. In 1914, as a dominion of the British Empire, Australia was at war the moment Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August, and both rival leaders had already promised support: Andrew Fisher "to the last man and the last shilling" on 31 July, and Joseph Cook, "If the old country is at war, so are we", on 3 August. Individual men then chose to enlist for pay and steady work, for adventure, out of duty to the Empire, and under the pressure of posters, rallies and mates — 416,809 in all, every one a volunteer. In 1939 the pattern repeated itself: Robert Menzies announced on 3 September that "Australia is also at war". Yet the second war was not the first one again. Menzies spoke of a "melancholy" duty, not glory, because the casualty lists of 1914–1918 were still within living memory; and from December 1941, when Japan entered the war, Australians were also fighting to keep the war away from Australia itself. Loyalty to Britain opened both wars, but by 1942 defence of home had become a reason of its own.

Looking back. You can now give both answers to the section question: why Australia was in the wars at all (the dominion position, stated in 1914 by Fisher and Cook and in 1939 by Menzies), and why individual men served (the five reason-groups of Figure 5). The comparison you built in Part 5 — same entry, same loyalty, a changed mood and a war that came closer — is the framework the rest of the chapter keeps using: *where* Australians fought is Section 3C, what fighting was like is Section 3D, and what the wars changed at home, including the conscription debates' afterlife, is Section 3G.

Sources for this section (all figures in this section are original, generated for this book by the scripts in `src/`; the poster redraw in Figure 4 is an original composite, labelled as such).

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 9 and 10: VC2HH10K14 with elaborations .E01–.E06 (VCAA export, 29 July 2026).
- Australian War Memorial, website encyclopaedia entries (awm.gov.au): AIF enlistment total of 416,809; more than 60,000 Australian deaths in World War I; the private's rate of pay; the 1916 and 1917 conscription referendums; and the biography of John Simpson Kirkpatrick — retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs, Anzac Portal (anzac.gov.au): Australians serving in World War II (about 1,000,000) and deaths (about 39,800); population figures for both wars; the Boer War service total (over 16,000 Australians) — retrieved 2026-08-25.
- *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 August 1914, via Trove, National Library of Australia: the newspaper report of Andrew Fisher's pledge at the Adelaide Town Hall, 31 July 1914 — retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Robert Menzies, radio broadcast to the nation, 3 September 1939: sound recording held by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; transcript held by the National Archives of Australia — retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Australian Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, recruiting posters, c. 1915: originals held at the Australian War Memorial and state libraries; the appeals in Figure 4 are drawn from these, and the redrawn poster is this book's own composite.

Gallipoli to Kokoda: where Australians fought

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K15 (cited by code). Elaborations drawn on (cited by code): .E01, .E02.

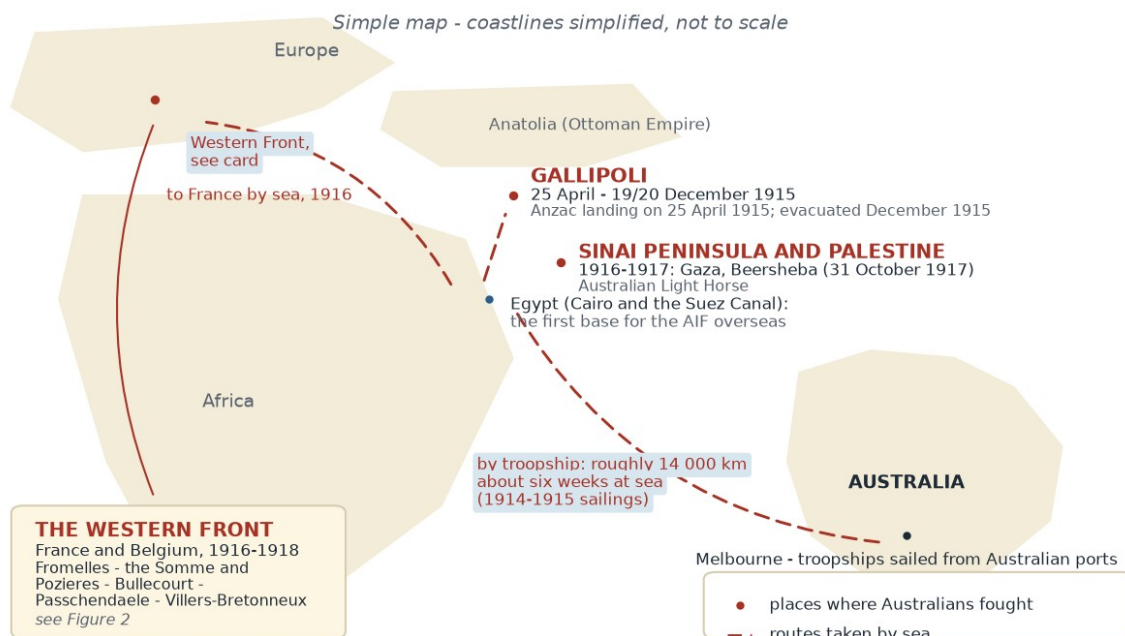
The word we keep testing: significant. This section is about *significant* places, so we need to say what the word means here before we use it. In this section, a place is **significant** if the fighting there *mattered* — and we test “mattered” on the two scales the curriculum names: **Scale 1, Australia’s war effort**, and **Scale 2, the war as a world conflict**. Figure 7 gives this section’s working questions for those two scales. The formal criteria for historical significance — importance, profundity (depth of effect), quantity (how many people), durability (how long the effects last) and relevance — are taught in Section 8C; here we borrow two of its habits early: answer on *both* scales, and back every claim with a dated fact.

One more habit, because historians genuinely disagree about these places. Many Australians would call the Kokoda Track the most significant place of World War II *for Australia*, because the fighting happened so close to home and is remembered so strongly today. Other historians point out that the fall of Singapore shaped the war more widely: it took about 15 000 Australians prisoner, ended British control of the region, and pushed Australia toward the United States. Both views are serious views. In this section you will meet both, and you will be marked on *how* you argue, not on which side you pick.

Part 1 — World War I: three theatres far from home

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, Australia raised a volunteer army for service overseas, the **AIF** (Australian Imperial Force). (Why so many men volunteered is a story in its own right — Section 3B.) The AIF could not fight in 1914 the way it hoped; the first troops trained in Egypt, near the Suez Canal, a lifeline of the British Empire. A **theatre** of war is a broad region where fighting happens; a **campaign** is the series of battles fought in one theatre for one purpose. Figure 1 shows the three theatres where Australians fought in World War I.

Three theatres of World War I: where Australians fought, 1915-1918



AIF = Australian Imperial Force, the volunteer army raised for service overseas.

Simple map of the World War I theatres where Australians fought: the Western Front in France and Belgium, Gallipoli, and the Sinai Peninsula and Palestine, with the sea routes from Australia via Egypt

Figure 1. The three World War I theatres where Australians fought.

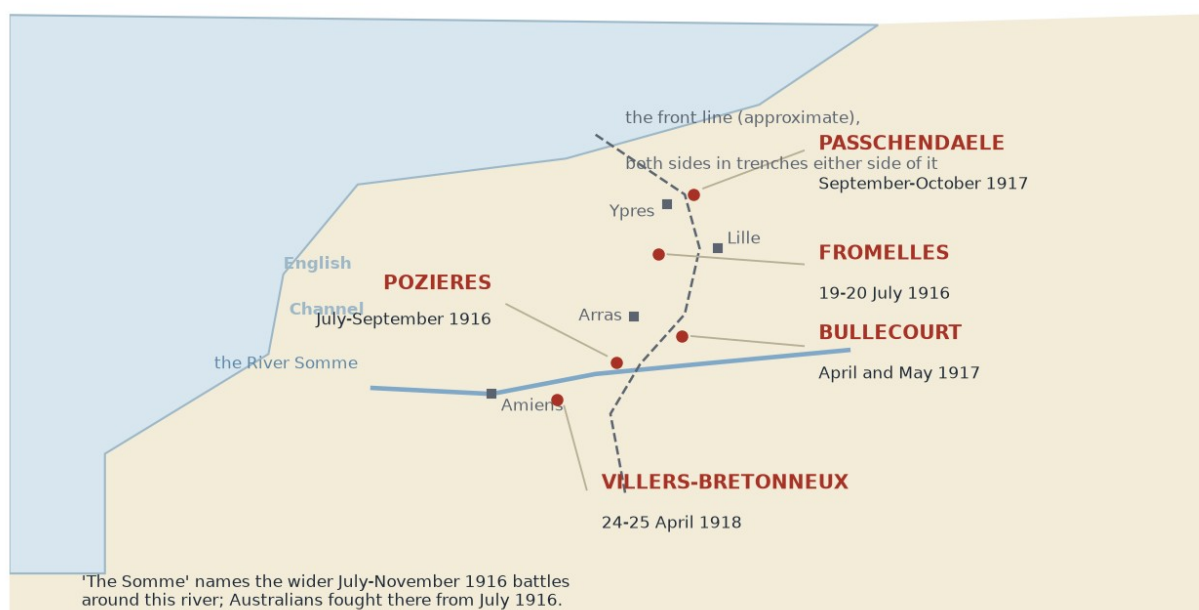
Gallipoli (25 April – 19/20 December 1915). The Anzac landing on 25 April 1915 put Australian and New Zealand troops on a steep peninsula in the Ottoman Empire, facing trenches they could not push through. After eight months of deadlock the Allies **evacuated** — pulled out — secretly in December 1915. Gallipoli was a defeat, but it is the place that made “Anzac” a national word (how that happened belongs to Sections 3E and 4D).

The Sinai Peninsula and Palestine (1916–1917). When the Ottoman army pushed toward the Suez Canal, Australians helped stop it in the desert. The **Australian Light Horse** — mounted troops who usually fought without their horses in this theatre — took part in the attacks on Gaza and in the charge at **Beersheba** on 31 October 1917, which broke the Ottoman line in the south of Palestine.

The Western Front (1916–1918). From 1916 the main Australian effort moved to France and Belgium, the **front** — the long line of **trenches** — deep ditches dug as defence — where the German army faced the British, French and Belgian armies (and their allies, including the AIF). Figure 2 shows the five places named in the curriculum that sit on this one small stretch of front.

The Western Front, 1916-1918: where Australians fought in France and Belgium

Simple map - coastlines simplified, positions approximate



Five places from VC2HH10K15.E01; the Somme battle zone is the river area marked above.

Simple map of the Western Front showing Fromelles, the Somme and Pozieres, Bullecourt, Passchendaele and Villers-Bretonneux with dates

Figure 2. The Western Front places of VC2HH10K15.E01, on one small stretch of France and Belgium.

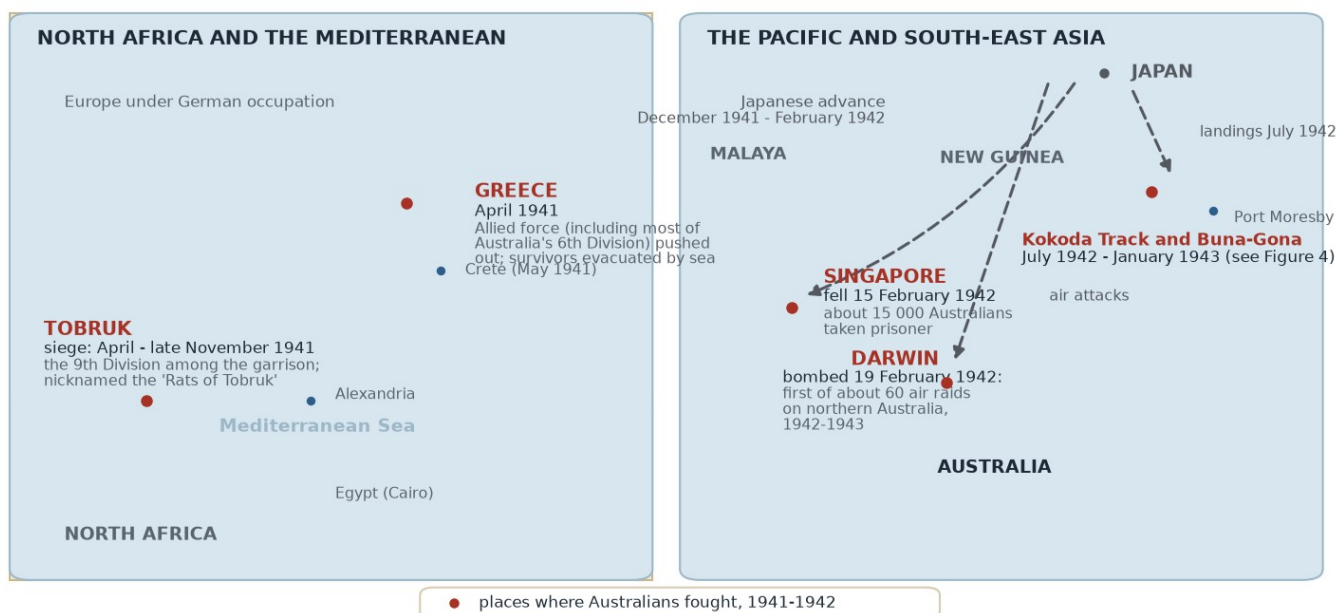
At **Fromelles** (19–20 July 1916), in the AIF’s first big battle in France, Australians suffered 5,533 **casualties** — killed, wounded, missing or taken prisoner — in about 24 hours. On **the Somme**, at **Pozières** (July–September 1916), the AIF took part in the great push of 1916 at a cost of about 23,000 casualties. At **Bullecourt** (April and May 1917) about 10,000 more were lost, and at **Passchendaele** (September–October 1917), in the mud of Flanders, about 12,000. Finally, at **Villers-Bretonneux** (24–25 April 1918), Australian troops helped retake the town from a German attack — exactly three years after the Gallipoli landing. (The figures in this paragraph come from the Australian War Memorial’s website entries for each battle; the source line is at the end of the section.)

Part 2 — World War II: the war reaches Australia’s region

Twenty-one years after the first Anzac Day dawn, Australians were again at war, and this time the fighting came far closer to home. Figure 3 shows the World War II places of this section in two theatres.

World War II, 1941-1942: places where Australians fought

Simple theatre maps - coastlines simplified, not to scale



Simple map of World War II places where Australians fought: Greece and Crete, Tobruk in North Africa, Malaya and Singapore, Darwin, and New Guinea

Figure 3. World War II places where Australians fought, 1941–1942.

Greece and Crete (April–May 1941). When Germany invaded Greece, an Allied force that included most of Australia's 6th Division fought a losing retreat and was evacuated by sea; many who escaped landed on Crete, where German parachute troops forced a second evacuation in May 1941.

Tobruk (siege: April – late November 1941). In North Africa, the port of Tobruk in Libya was cut off and **besieged** — surrounded and attacked — by German and Italian forces. Its **garrison** — the troops holding a defended place — included Australia's 9th Division, which held the port for about eight months. German propaganda broadcasts called the defenders “rats” for living underground; the Australians took the name as a badge of pride: the **Rats of Tobruk**.

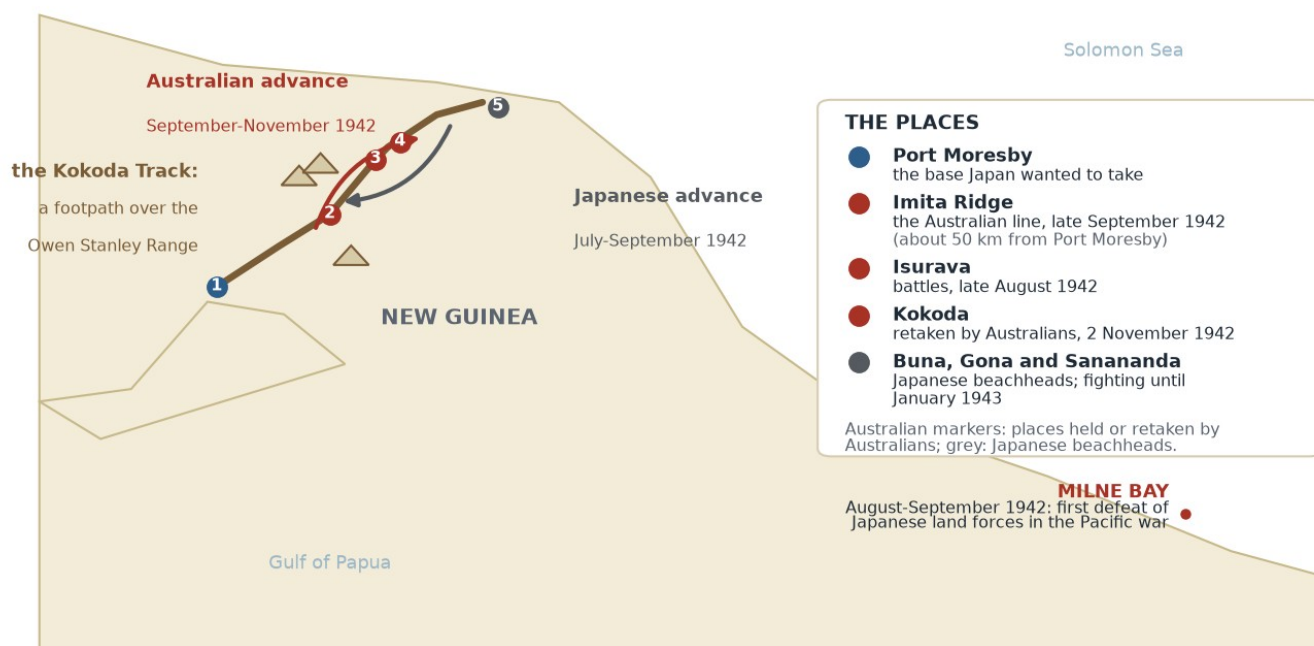
Malaya and Singapore (December 1941 – 15 February 1942). Japan entered the war in December 1941 and advanced down the Malay Peninsula. On 15 February 1942 the British fortress island of Singapore surrendered; about 15,000 Australians were taken **prisoner of war** — captured and held by the enemy. It remains the largest surrender of Australian forces in history.

Darwin (19 February 1942). Four days later, Japanese aircraft bombed Darwin, the first of about 60 air raids on northern Australia in 1942–1943. For the first time, war reached Australian soil. (Life in Australia under these attacks is Section 3G.)

New Guinea (July 1942 – January 1943). Japanese troops landed at Buna and Gona and pushed overland toward Port Moresby along the **Kokoda Track**, a footpath over the Owen Stanley Range (Figure 4). Australian militia — part-time citizen soldiers — and AIF battalions — units of about a thousand men — delayed them at places like Isurava, held their last line at Imita Ridge, retook Kokoda on 2 November 1942, and fought on at the Japanese **beachheads** — the defended landing places on the coast — until January 1943. At Milne Bay (August–September 1942) Australian forces handed Japanese land troops their first defeat of the Pacific war.

The Kokoda Track campaign, July–November 1942

Simple map - coastlines simplified, not to scale



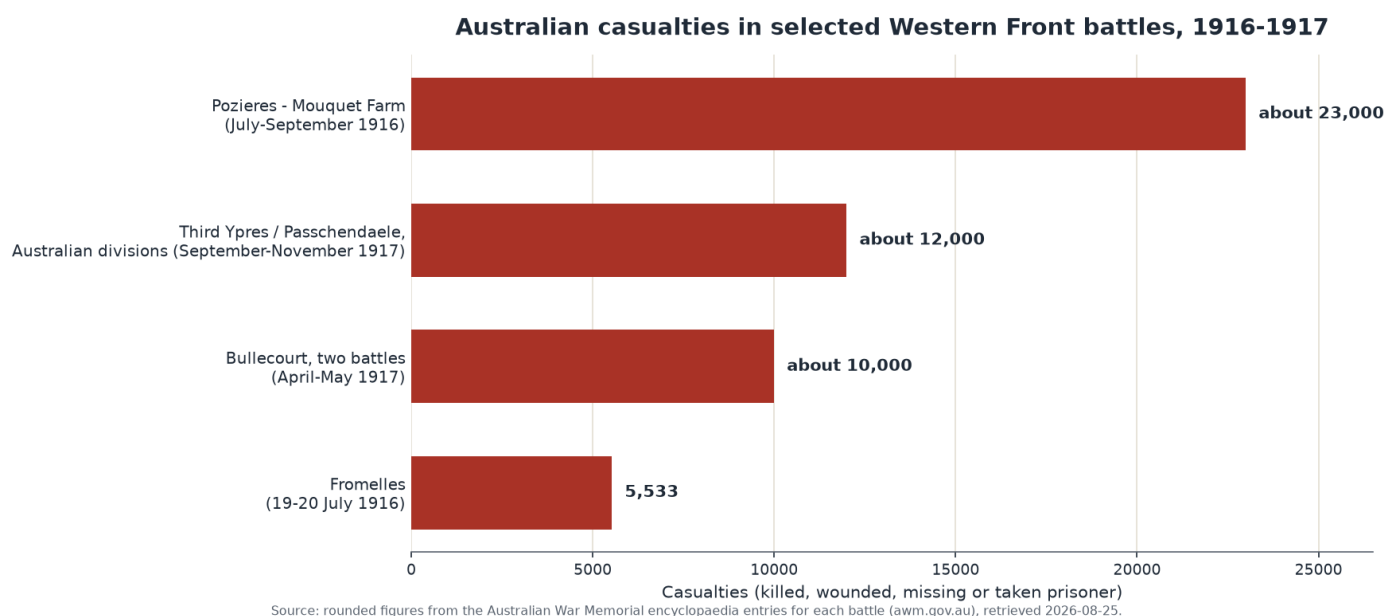
Japanese troops landed near Buna and Gona in July 1942 and advanced overland toward Port Moresby; the Australians pushed them back.

Simple map of the Kokoda Track over the Owen Stanley Range, with numbered places from Port Moresby to Buna and Gona

Figure 4. The Kokoda Track campaign, July–November 1942, with the Buna–Gona beachheads.

Part 3 — Was this place significant? Working with the evidence

Knowing *where* Australians fought is the first half of this section. The second half is the .E02 task: evaluating how significant each place was, on both scales. Start with the human cost of four Western Front battles, from the Australian War Memorial’s website entries (Figure 5).



Bar chart of Australian casualties in four Western Front battles: Fromelles 5,533; Bullecourt about 10,000; Passchendaele about 12,000; Pozieres about 23,000

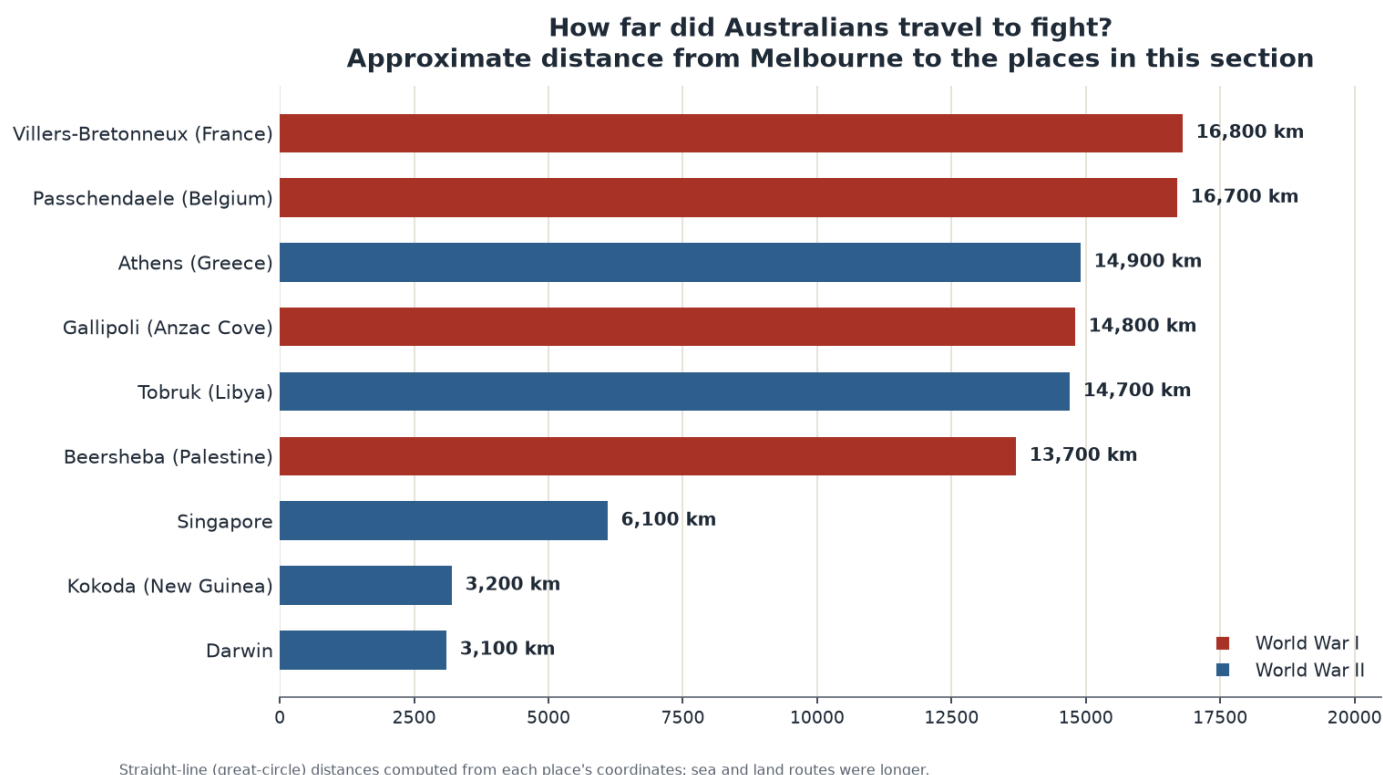
Figure 5. Australian casualties in selected Western Front battles, 1916–1917.

Worked inquiry 1 — Pozières on both scales. Watch how dated facts do the arguing. *Scale 1 (Australia’s war effort)*: in six weeks at Pozières the AIF lost about 23,000 men killed, wounded or missing — more than in any other six weeks of the war — which shook public confidence at home and made Pozières a name every Australian knew. *Scale 2 (the war as a world conflict)*: Pozières was one part of the Somme offensive of 1916, the battle that wore down the German army on the Western Front; holding it mattered to a campaign involving British, French and German millions, not only to Australia. The official Australian war historian, C.E.W. Bean, later wrote that Pozières was

“more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth.”

— C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume III (1948). Notice what Bean’s sentence does: it is not just feeling. It makes a *quantity* claim (dense sacrifice) and a *durability* claim (a place to be remembered), which are exactly the kinds of claims the working questions in Figure 7 ask you to test.

Now the second scale of distance. Figure 6 shows how far each place in this section sits from Melbourne, measured in a straight line.



Bar chart of the approximate distance from Melbourne to nine places where Australians fought, from Darwin at about 3,100 km to Villers-Bretonneux at about 16,800 km

Figure 6. How far did Australians travel to fight? Straight-line distances from Melbourne; real sea and land routes were longer.

The spread is the point. In World War I Australians fought about 14,000–17,000 km from home, on other peoples’ fronts, in a war that was global because so many empires and nations were pulled into it. In World War II the distances shrink — Singapore about 6,100 km, Kokoda about 3,200 km, Darwin about 3,100 km — and Scale 2 changes shape: the war became a global conflict *that reached Australia itself*. Distance is evidence, not decoration: it supports claims on both scales.

The working questions. Figure 7 is this section’s version of the significance test. Section 8C will later teach the formal criteria; these questions put them to work now.

Was this place significant? The working questions of this section

Section 8C teaches the formal criteria for historical significance; here is this section's working set.

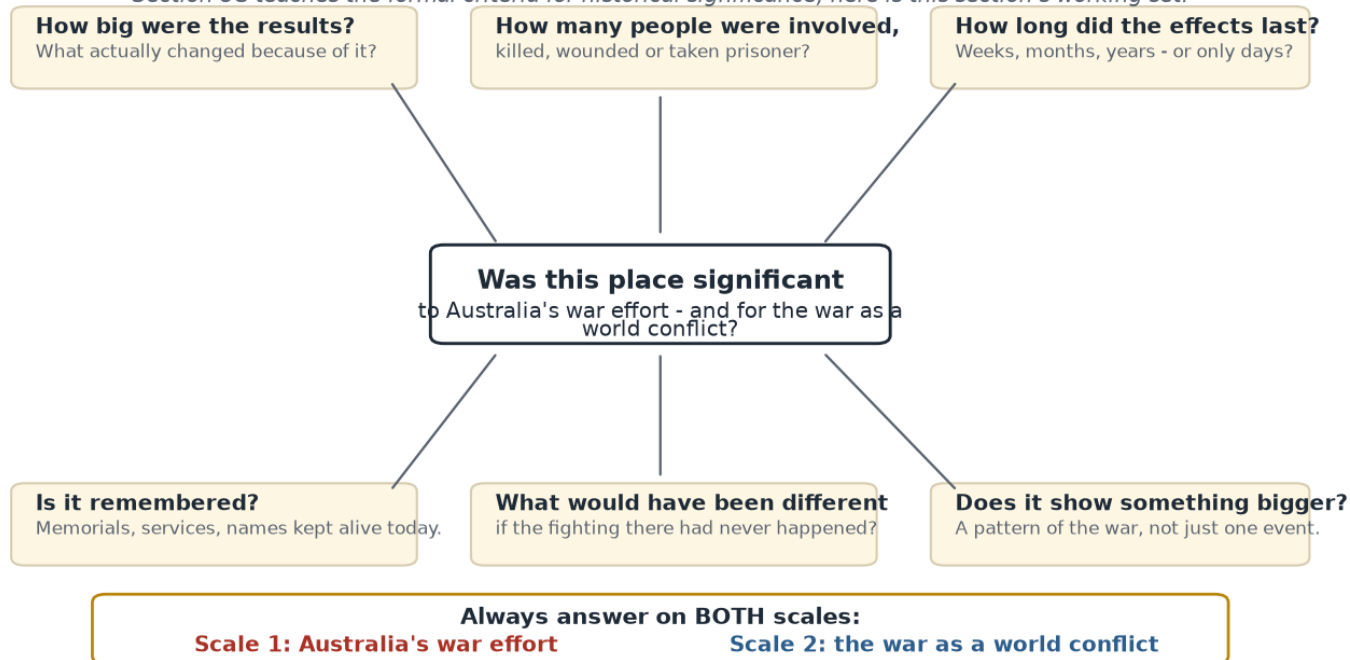


Diagram of the six working questions used to judge whether a place was significant, with the two scales: Australia's war effort, and the war as a world conflict

Figure 7. The working questions of this section, and the two scales every answer must use.

Worked inquiry 2 — Tobruk on both scales. Apply the questions to Tobruk and an evaluation builds itself: *How long did the effects last?* About eight months of siege in 1941. *How many people were involved?* A whole division (the 9th) plus the garrison's British and Polish troops, against German and Italian armies. *What would have been different?* If Tobruk had fallen early, the Axis advance would have reached Egypt and the Suez Canal months sooner. *Is it remembered?* "Rats of Tobruk" became one of the war's proudest Australian names. Figure 8 shows those moves as a finished model paragraph, annotated so you can see how each sentence earns its place.

Model text: evaluating the significance of Tobruk

Original model written for this section. Notes show how the answer is built.

Model answer

Tobruk was significant to Australia's war effort because
the 9th Division and other troops held the port through a
siege of about eight months in 1941. The defence mattered
at home: it showed Australians could stand against the
best German forces, and the nickname 'Rats of Tobruk' -
taken from enemy broadcasts - became a badge of pride.

Tobruk was also significant to the war as a world conflict.
The garrison tied down German and Italian forces that
could otherwise have been used against the Allied advance
across North Africa. Holding the port denied the enemy a
harbour close to the front and kept an Allied base inside
enemy-held territory.

Move 1 - claim, Scale 1
'Significant to Australia's war effort because...' names the scale, then gives the who (9th Division), the what (held the port) and the how long (about eight months).
A claim without evidence is an opinion, not an evaluation.

Move 2 - claim, Scale 2
'Also significant to the war as a world conflict' - a second scale, with its own evidence: forces tied down, a harbour denied, a base kept inside enemy-held territory.
Two scales = the full E02 task.

Move 3 - explain why it matters
'The defence mattered because...' significance is the effect a place had, not just the fact of fighting.

Annotated model paragraph evaluating the significance of Tobruk on both scales

Figure 8. A model evaluation of Tobruk. Steal its moves, not its facts — your tasks below use other places.

And hold the *steelman* — the strongest version of the other side's view, stated fairly, as modelled in the introduction — in your head while you work: the strongest case *against* calling any single place “the most significant” is that significance depends on the scale you weigh. Kokoda scores highest on Scale 1 for many Australians (the war at the doorstep, the memory kept alive); Singapore scores highest on Scale 2 (one event that changed alliances, prisoners' fates and the map of the war in Asia). A good evaluation says where its place sits on *both* scales, and meets the other scale's best argument instead of ignoring it.

Source inquiry — a prime minister changes the subject, 27 December 1941

Places are not only fought over; they change how a nation sees the world. Three weeks after Japan invaded Malaya, and seven weeks before Singapore fell, Prime Minister **John Curtin** published an article in the Melbourne newspaper the *Herald*. Read the two sentences that made it famous.

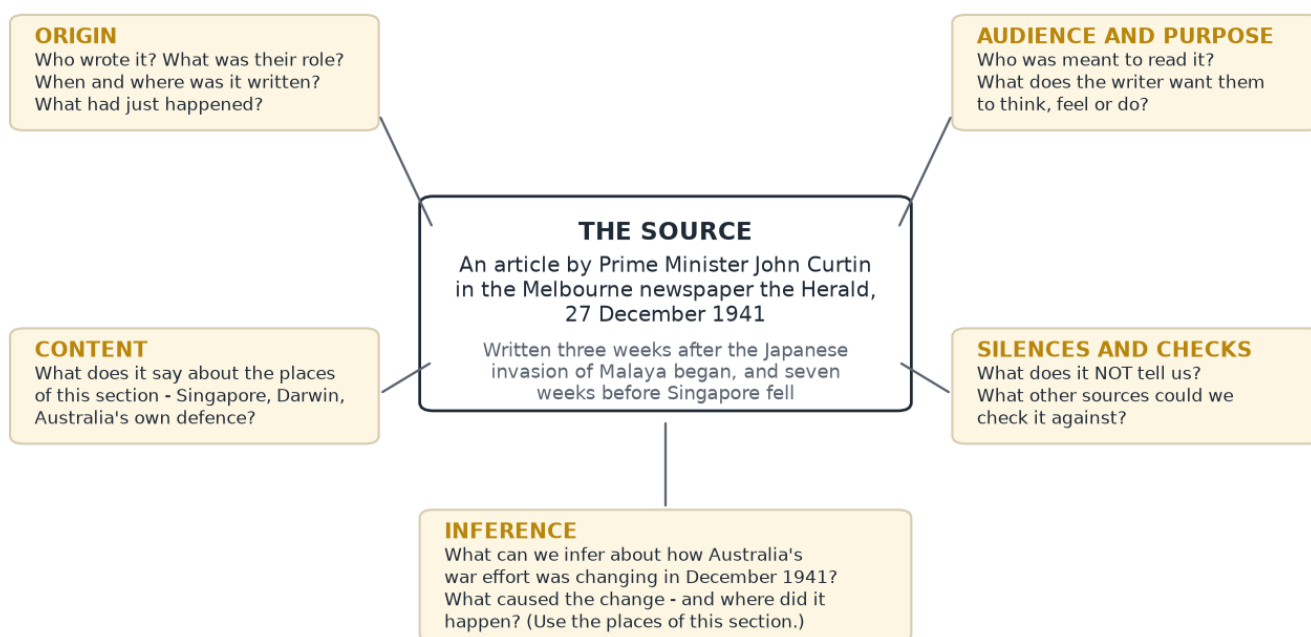
“Without any inhibitions of any kind, I would like to make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.”

— John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, “The Task Ahead”, *Herald* (Melbourne), 27 December 1941.

This is a **primary source**: a record made at the time by a person inside the events. The **provenance** line under the quote — who wrote it, where, and when — is part of the source, and Figure 9's ORIGIN questions start from it. An **inference** is a sensible conclusion you draw from what the source says plus what you already know. Figure 9 gives you the full set of questions to put to the source — the same frame Sections 7C and 7D teach in depth.

Reading a wartime source: the questions to ask

Use this frame on the Curtin source (and on any source about the places in this section).



The skills in this frame are taught in depth in Sections 7C (analysing sources) and 7D (evaluating sources).

Question frame for reading a wartime source: origin, audience and purpose, content, silences and checks, and inference, applied to John Curtin's 1941 article

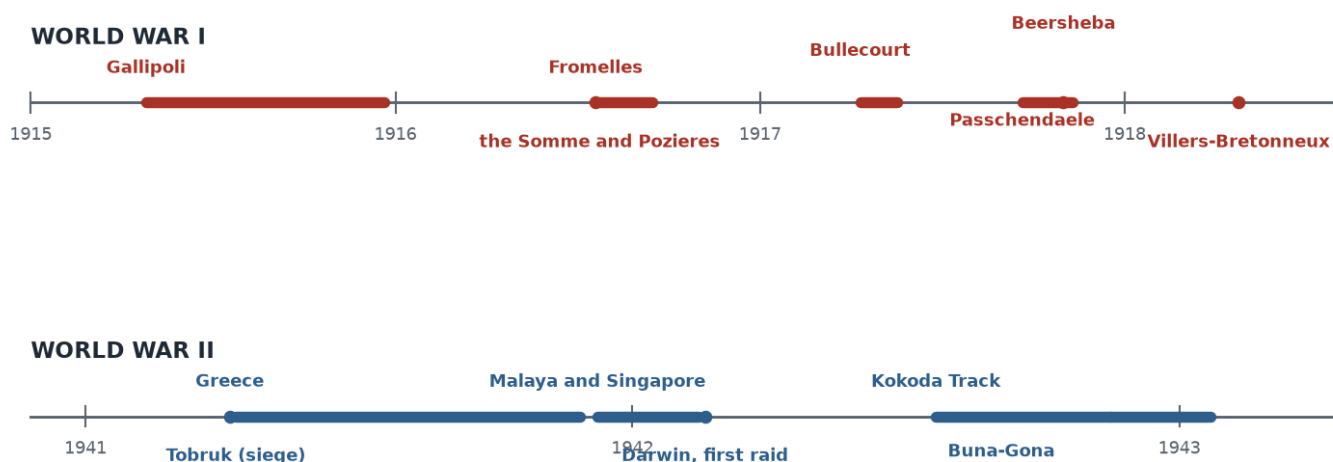
Figure 9. The questions to ask of the Curtin source (and of any source about the places in this section).

The places in time

Before the tasks, put the places in order. Sequencing is a skill taught in Section 7B; Figure 10 does it here for every place in this section, so your answers below can be checked against it.

The places of this section in time

Bars mark campaigns; dots mark single events.



Dates in this section: Gallipoli landing 25 April 1915 - Fromelles 19-20 July 1916 - Beersheba 31 October 1917 - Villers-Bretonneux 24-25 April 1918 - Darwin 19 February 1942 - Singapore fell 15 February 1942.

Two timelines placing the places of this section in order for each war

Figure 10. The places of this section in time. Bars mark campaigns; dots mark single events.

Practice — scaffolded

1. Place the places. Copy the table and complete it using Figures 1–4. One row is done for you.

Place	War	One dated fact from this section
Gallipoli	World War I	Anzac landing, 25 April 1915
Fromelles		
Beersheba		
Tobruk		
Singapore		
Kokoda		

2. Put five events in order. Using Figure 10, order these from earliest to latest: the fall of Singapore; the Gallipoli landing; the first air raid on Darwin; the battle of Beersheba; the battle of Fromelles. Which two are only four days apart?

3. Use the distance chart. From Figure 6: (a) which place is closest to Melbourne, and which is furthest? (b) Finish this sentence with one historical claim, not a repeat of the numbers: “The difference in distances between the World War I places and the World War II places shows that ...”

4. Read the casualty chart. From Figure 5: (a) which battle cost the AIF the most casualties? (b) True or false, and fix the false ones: (i) Fromelles lasted about six weeks. (ii) Bullecourt cost more Australian casualties than Passchendaele. (iii) The four battles together cost roughly 50,000 Australian casualties.

5. Two questions for Gallipoli. Answer two of the working questions from Figure 7 about Gallipoli — “Is it remembered?” and “How many people were involved?” — using these starters: *On the first question, the evidence is ...* and *On the second question, the evidence is ...* (For the numbers, anzac.gov.au and the AWM put the total landed at Gallipoli across the campaign at well over 400,000 Allied and Ottoman soldiers; use “hundreds of thousands on both sides” unless your teacher gives you a figure.)

6. Origin questions for the Curtin source. Using only the provenance line under the quote (“John Curtin, Prime Minister ... *Herald* (Melbourne), 27 December 1941”) and Figure 9, answer the three ORIGIN questions: Who wrote it, and what was their role? When and where was it written? What had just happened?

Practice — unscaffolded

7. Evaluate a desert battle. Choose **Beersheba** or **Gaza**. In one paragraph (4–6 sentences), evaluate its significance on **both** scales, using at least two of the working questions and at least two dated facts from this section.

8. The steelman task. Choose **Kokoda** or **Singapore**. Write one paragraph evaluating your place on both scales. Then write two more sentences beginning “However, a historian who chose the other place would argue ...” and answer that argument fairly. (Figure 8 shows the standard of evidence; the introduction shows the two sides.)

9. Silences and checks. (a) Name one thing the Curtin source does **not** tell us about the places in this section. (b) Name one other source — a kind of source, such as a diary, a military report, a photograph — that could check or challenge Curtin’s claim, and say what it would add.

10. Is it remembered? Choose one place from Figure 10. Explain how it is remembered today (a memorial, a service, a street name, a day in the calendar — one concrete example is enough), and give one reason why remembering it matters to Australians. If you get stuck, Villers-Bretonneux and Kokoda both have well-known memorials to look up.

Answers

1. Fromelles — World War I — 19–20 July 1916, the AIF's first big battle in France. Beersheba — World War I — Light Horse charge, 31 October 1917. Tobruk — World War II — siege held about eight months, April–late November 1941. Singapore — World War II — fell 15 February 1942, about 15,000 Australians taken prisoner. Kokoda — World War II — retaken by Australians 2 November 1942.
2. Gallipoli landing (25 April 1915) → Fromelles (19–20 July 1916) → Beersheba (31 October 1917) → fall of Singapore (15 February 1942) → first Darwin raid (19 February 1942). The fall of Singapore and the first Darwin raid are four days apart.
3. (a) Closest: Darwin, about 3,100 km; furthest: Villers-Bretonneux, about 16,800 km. (b) Any claim that uses the spread as evidence — for example: "... the war Australians fought in 1914–1918 was a European and Middle Eastern war they had to travel halfway across the world to join, while by 1942 the war had moved into Australia's own region."
4. (a) Pozières (about 23,000). (b) (i) False — Fromelles lasted about 24 hours (19–20 July 1916). (ii) False — Passchendaele (about 12,000) cost more than Bullecourt (about 10,000). (iii) True — $5,533 + \text{about } 10,000 + \text{about } 12,000 + \text{about } 23,000$ is roughly 50,000.
5. Models: *On the first question, the evidence is* that Gallipoli is remembered every 25 April at Anzac Day services across Australia — more strongly, arguably, than any other place in this section. *On the second question, the evidence is* that hundreds of thousands of soldiers on both sides were involved across the eight-month campaign, which is quantity on a scale that matters to Scale 2.
6. Who: John Curtin, the Prime Minister of Australia — a person inside the events, with the highest authority to speak for the country. When and where: in the Melbourne *Herald*, 27 December 1941 — a newspaper article for the Australian public. What had just happened: Japan had invaded Malaya three weeks earlier and entered the war; the Pacific war had begun; Singapore was under threat (it fell seven weeks later).
- 7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: a dated fact for each scale you claim; both scales addressed (7, 8); the other side's best argument met fairly (8); a silence that is really absent from the source, and a check-source that would add something new (9); one concrete example of remembering plus one reason it matters (10).

Model response (for task 8)

Kokoda was significant to Australia's war effort because the fighting on the Track stopped the Japanese overland push toward Port Moresby, the base the AIF defended at Imita Ridge until the Japanese were pushed back in November 1942. The quantity was small beside the Western Front — a few thousand men at a time on each side — but the result was big: Port Moresby never fell. Kokoda was also significant to the war as a world conflict, because it was part of the first months in which Japan's advance was checked on land, alongside Milne Bay, where Japanese land forces met their first defeat of the Pacific war. However, a historian who chose Singapore would argue that one fall in February 1942 did more to shape the war: it handed Japan the region's great British base, put about 15,000 Australians into captivity, and turned Australia toward the United States. That argument is strong on Scale 2 — which is why this answer has said where Kokoda's own strength lies: on Scale 1, and in memory.

Looking back. You can now place the significant places of both wars — Gallipoli, the Sinai and Palestine, and the Western Front in World War I; Greece and Crete, Tobruk, Malaya and Singapore, Darwin, and New Guinea in World War II — on a map and on a timeline, and evaluate any of them on the two scales the curriculum names: Australia's war effort, and the war as a world conflict. The places themselves keep working in later sections: what fighting there was *like* is Section 3D, which battles turned the wars is 3E, what the wars changed at home is 3G, and the formal criteria for the significance judgments you practised here are Section 8C.

Sources for this section (all figures and maps in this section are original, drawn for this book; coastlines are simplified and positions approximate).

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 9 and 10: VC2HH10K15 with elaborations .E01–.E02 (VCAA export, 29 July 2026).

- Australian War Memorial, website encyclopaedia entries (awm.gov.au) for Gallipoli, Fromelles, Pozières, Bullecourt, Passchendaele, Villers-Bretonneux, Beersheba, Tobruk, Singapore, the Kokoda Track and the bombing of Darwin — casualty figures, dates and the “first defeat” claim at Milne Bay; retrieved 2026-08-25.
- C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume III (1948), for the Pozières line quoted above.
- John Curtin, “The Task Ahead”, *Herald* (Melbourne), 27 December 1941; the article is held in the National Archives of Australia’s digitised collection; retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Distances in Figure 6 are computed in this book’s figure scripts from each place’s map coordinates (great-circle distance from Melbourne), rounded to the nearest 100 km.

Those who served overseas: experiences and perspectives

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 — History, Levels 9 and 10 band. Content description VC2HH10K16 (cited by code). Elaborations taught (cited by code): .E01, .E03, .E04, .E05, .E06.

Elaboration .E02 is excluded from teaching under §2A of this book's content decisions; the id is retained here as a linkage key only.

What was it like, and what did it feel like? Those are the two questions of this section. *Experience* is what happened to people — the trench routine of 1916, the siege of Tobruk, the jungle of the Kokoda Track, the prison camps of 1942–1945. *Perspective* is what those people made of it — written down at the time in **diaries, letters and newspapers**, and read back by historians now. The people in this section were **deployed** — sent to serve far from home, whether to fight (most of them) or, like the nurses, to care for the wounded. Four terms carry the section. A **combat** experience is the experience of fighting or facing the enemy. A **primary source** is a record made at the time by a person inside the events (its **provenance** — who made it, where and when — is part of the evidence, as in Section 3B). A **prisoner of war (POW)** is a captured member of the armed forces, whom a 1929 treaty, the **Geneva Convention**, was meant to protect. And a word about comparing: we compare captivities and combats here to *explain* differences, never to rank suffering.

Part 1 — World War I: two ways of fighting

The same war could be two different wars. Figure 1 sets the two Australian experiences of World War I that the curriculum names — the infantry of the Western Front, and mounted Light Horsemen in Sinai and Palestine — side by side.

World War I: two very different ways of fighting

VC2HH10K16.E01 asks us to compare combat experiences. Both cards are the same war - but not the same war.

Infantry on the Western Front, 1916-1918	Light Horse in Sinai and Palestine, 1916-1917
<i>France and Belgium - the trench line</i> The daily round Stand to at dawn and dusk: every man awake, watching the enemy line. Night: wiring parties out into no man's land. The ground itself In Flanders the water table sits about a metre below the surface - trenches flooded fast; some lines were built up above ground, not dug down. The danger No man's land: about 90-275 metres wide, open to fire from both sides. Massed attacks into that fire cost dearly. The cost, dated Fromelles, July 1916: 5,533 Australian casualties in about 24 hours. Pozieres, 1916: about 23,000 casualties in six weeks. "Pozieres is one vast Australian cemetery." - C.E.W. Bean, Australia's official war correspondent, on the 1916 battlefield	<i>The desert war against the Ottoman Empire</i> How they fought Mounted troops who usually fought on foot: in each section of four men, one stayed behind holding the horses of the other three. The desert problem Long rides, harsh heat, little water. In this theatre, a well was a prize of war. The charge at Beersheba, 31 October 1917 The 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments (4th Light Horse Brigade) charged the town at dusk and took it - and its wells. 1,947 prisoners were captured. The cost, dated The battle cost 171 dead - a small number by Western Front standards. The success opened the way to Jerusalem. Ion Idriess, 5th Light Horse Regiment, kept a diary (1915-1918) published as <i>The Desert Column</i> (1932) - "entirely from the private soldier's point of view".

Facts: Australian War Memorial battle entries (via Section 3C); Wikipedia - Battle of Beersheba (1917), Australian Light Horse, *The Desert Column*, Trench warfare (all retrieved 2026-08-25).

Two cards comparing World War I combat: infantry on the Western Front with stand-to, flooded Flanders trenches, no man's land and the costs of Fromelles and Pozieres, beside the Light Horse in Sinai and Palestine with the charge at Beersheba on 31 October 1917

Figure 1. World War I: two very different ways of fighting. Both cards are the same war — but not the same war.

On the Western Front the ground set the rules: in Flanders the water table sits about a metre below the surface, so trenches flooded fast and men lived in mud, standing to at dawn and dusk and going out at night on wiring parties.

Attacks went across **no man's land** — the open ground between the lines, about 90–275 metres wide — into fire from both sides, and the bills came in fast: Fromelles in July 1916 cost 5,533 Australian casualties in about 24 hours, and Pozieres in the same summer about 23,000 in six weeks. In the desert it was a different war: the Light Horse were mounted troops who usually fought on foot, one man in four holding the horses of the other three; their problem was heat, distance and water, and their prize at the charge on Beersheba on 31 October 1917 — taken by the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments at dusk — was the town and its wells. Beersheba cost 171 dead and opened the way to Jerusalem: a hard day, but a small number by Western Front standards.

Both cards carry a source, because .E04 starts here. The Pozieres line — “Pozieres is one vast Australian cemetery” — is from **C.E.W. Bean**, Australia's official war correspondent, who kept an almost-daily diary through the war. The desert card carries **Ion Idriess** of the 5th Light Horse Regiment, whose diary (1915–1918) was published in 1932 as *The Desert Column*, “entirely from the private soldier's point of view”. Diaries, letters and newspapers are the window this section keeps using.

Part 2 — World War II: three army experiences

Twenty years on, Australian soldiers fought in the Greek campaigns, in North Africa and in the Pacific theatres — the three the curriculum names. Figure 2 gives one dated experience of each.

World War II: three army experiences, 1941-1942

Retreat, siege, and jungle - the curriculum names Greece, North Africa and the Pacific as theatres (.E01).

Greece and Crete <i>April - May 1941</i> A fighting retreat after Germany invaded Greece; evacuation by sea. The 6th Australian Division: 320 killed, 2,030 captured in Greece. On Crete, about 3,000 Australians could not be evacuated and were taken prisoner - including the whole 2/7th Battalion. For thousands of men, this campaign ended not in death but in capture.	Tobruk, North Africa <i>siege: 10 April - 27 November 1941</i> 231 days cut off and besieged; the 9th Division held the port (the “Rats of Tobruk”, Section 3C). Constant shelling and bombing; supplies came in by sea - about 34,500 tonnes over the siege. Australian cost: 3,009 casualties - 832 killed, 941 captured. Most Australians were withdrawn August - October 1941; the 2/13th Battalion stayed to the end.	New Guinea - the Kokoda Track <i>21 July - 16 November 1942</i> Dense jungle, heat, heavy rain; supplies dropped by air - half, sometimes 90 per cent, was lost. Fights at Isurava (26-31 August), Imita Ridge, Olivi-Gorari. 625 killed; 1,055 wounded - and more than 4,000 fell sick: malaria, dengue fever, scrub typhus, tropical ulcers, dysentery. Disease was a third enemy on the Track.
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Facts: Wikipedia - Military history of Australia during World War II, Siege of Tobruk, Kokoda Track campaign (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Three cards of World War II army experience: Greece and Crete in April-May 1941 as a fighting retreat ending in capture; Tobruk in North Africa, besieged 231 days; and the Kokoda Track in New Guinea, where disease was a third enemy

Figure 2. Retreat, siege and jungle. Three campaigns, three different kinds of danger — and in Greece and Crete, an experience this section returns to: capture.

Read the date lines first, because the kind of danger changes with the campaign. In Greece (April–May 1941) the 6th Division fought a retreat and left by sea where it could: 320 killed and 2,030 captured in Greece, then about 3,000 more captured on Crete when the ships could not come — for thousands of men the campaign ended not in death but in capture. At Tobruk the 9th Division sat still and held on: 231 days besieged, under constant shelling and bombing, supplied by sea (the “Rats of Tobruk” of Section 3C). On the Kokoda Track the fighting moved on foot through jungle, and the numbers tell you what the real enemy often was: 625 killed and 1,055 wounded — and more than 4,000 sick, with malaria, dengue fever, scrub typhus, tropical ulcers and dysentery. Disease was a third enemy on the Track.

Part 3 — The war at sea and in the air

.E01 also names naval personnel and the aircrew who served in World War II. Figure 3 gives two sea stories and two air stories, each with a date and a cost.

The war at sea and in the air

Naval personnel and the aircrew who served in World War II (VC2HH10K16.E01). Four dated case studies.

At sea: HMAS Sydney (II)

19 November 1941: a battle with the German raider *Kormoran*, off Camarvon, Western Australia.
Sydney was lost with all hands - 645 men; there were no survivors.
318 of the *Kormoran*'s 399 crew lived.
The loss stands for 35 per cent of the Australian navy's wartime casualties.
The wrecks were not found until 17 March 2008.

At sea: HMAS Armidale - Teddy Sheean

1 December 1942: thirteen Japanese aircraft attack; two torpedoes and a bomb hit the ship.
100 of the 149 aboard were killed.
Ordinary Seaman Edward "Teddy" Sheean, 18, wounded twice, stayed at the aft gun, shot down one bomber and covered his shipmates as they left the ship.
He received the Victoria Cross for Australia in 2020 - 78 years on.

In the air: Bomber Command

About 13,000 Australian airmen served in Britain's Bomber Command over Europe.
3,486 were killed - almost one in five of all Australia's deaths in combat in the war - and hundreds more were taken prisoner.
Night after night in heavy bombers was the routine; loss rates made each tour a roll of the dice.

In the air: No. 460 Squadron RAAF

Formed 15 November 1941; flew Lancaster bombers from bases in England.
6,262 operational flights; 188 aircraft lost.
1,018 aircrew killed - 589 of them Australian - the most of any Australian squadron.
24,856 tonnes of bombs dropped - the most of any Bomber Command squadron.

Facts: Wikipedia - HMAS Sydney (D48), Teddy Sheean, Military history of Australia during World War II, No. 460 Squadron RAAF (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Four cards of the naval and air war: HMAS Sydney (II) lost with all 645 hands on 19 November 1941; Teddy Sheean at the gun of HMAS Armidale on 1 December 1942; Bomber Command's 3,486 Australian aircrew killed; and No. 460 Squadron RAAF's 1,018 dead

Figure 3. The war at sea and in the air. A sailor's war could end in one evening; an airman's war was a long run of short odds.

Two of the four deserve a line each. The loss of **HMAS Sydney (II)** on 19 November 1941 — all 645 hands, no survivors, in a battle with the German raider *Kormoran* off Western Australia — is still Australia's worst single naval loss, and the wrecks were not found until 2008. And Ordinary Seaman **Edward "Teddy" Sheean**, 18, twice wounded, stayed at his gun while HMAS *Armidale* sank on 1 December 1942, shooting down one attacking bomber and covering his shipmates; his Victoria Cross for Australia was announced in 2020, 78 years later. In the air, about 13,000 Australians flew with Bomber Command over Europe and 3,486 were killed — almost one in five of all Australia's deaths in combat — and **No. 460 Squadron RAAF** lost more aircrew (1,018) than any Australian squadron.

Worked inquiry 1 — writing the comparison. .E01 asks you to compare and contrast, and comparison has a shape. Figure 4 takes the two worlds of this section so far — the Western Front of 1916 and New Guinea of 1942 — and writes the comparison out as a model paragraph, with every move labelled.

Worked inquiry 1: writing the comparison

An annotated model paragraph - the Western Front, 1916, and New Guinea, 1942 (.E01).

POINT - name both cases and your basis of comparison

Combat experience in the two world wars differed in the most basic way: what did most of the killing.

EVIDENCE - case 1, dated and sourced

On the Western Front in 1916, shells and machine guns did the work. At Fromelles in July 1916, Australian forces suffered 5,533 casualties in about 24 hours, and at Pozieres about 23,000 in six weeks.

EVIDENCE - case 2, dated and sourced

On the Kokoda Track in New Guinea in 1942, disease struck down more men than bullets: 625 were killed in battle, while more than 4,000 fell sick - malaria, dengue fever, scrub typhus, dysentery.

EXPLANATION - what the difference meant day to day

In France, men waited in flooded trenches under shellfire; in New Guinea, they marched jungle tracks, hungry, with air-dropped supplies lost half at a time. The danger was constant in both - its shape was not.

LINK - answer the question

Both demanded endurance; but the enemy that wore men down in 1916 was fire, and in 1942 it was the jungle itself.

Why this works as a comparison

1. It names both cases, and one basis of comparison (what did most of the killing) - not just a list of each.
2. Every fact carries a place and a date, and comes from a source named in this section.
3. It explains the difference (waiting under shells vs marching with disease) instead of only stating it.
4. It links back to the question in the last line.

Figures used here appear in Figures 1 and 2 of this section, with sources.

Annotated model paragraph comparing the Western Front in 1916 with New Guinea in 1942, with the moves labelled point, evidence, evidence, explanation and link, and a checklist of what makes a comparison work

Figure 4. Worked inquiry 1 — a comparison, taken apart. Steal the moves, not the words: task 7 asks for the same shape with your own evidence.

Notice the basis of comparison — *what did most of the killing?* — chosen before any facts were quoted. A comparison without a basis is two lists standing next to each other.

Part 4 — Women deployed overseas: the nurses

The curriculum's .E03 adds the women: about 2,861 Australian nurses served overseas in World War I and about 3,500 in World War II. Figure 5 compares the two wars' nursing, and the bottom strip says what stayed the same.

Australian nurses deployed overseas, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945

VC2HH10K16.E03 - comparing the experiences of women deployed overseas, using historical sources.

World War I - the AANS

Australian Army Nursing Service, formed 1902
2,861 Australian women served overseas
with the AIF - all of them nurses.

Where they served: Belgium, Egypt,
England, France, Greece, India.
No. 3 Australian General Hospital sat
on Lemnos island from 1915, near
Gallipoli; its principal matron was
Grace Margaret Wilson.

No ranks at first; officer-equivalent
status came in early 1916.

21 nurses died in war service.
Decorations for bravery under fire
included rescues from a burning
building (July 1917) and calm in an
air raid (Pearl Corkhill, Military Medal).

World War II - the AANS again

About 3,500 nurses, of about 36,000 women who enlisted
Nurses served close to the fighting,
including the Middle East, Greece,
Singapore and New Guinea.

When Singapore fell in February 1942,
65 nurses escaped on the ship *Vyner
Brooke*; two were killed in a bombing.
On Bangka Island, 21 nurses were
shot at Radji Beach on 16 February
1942. Vivian Bullwinkel alone survived.

Off Queensland on 14 May 1943 the
hospital ship *Centaur* was torpedoed;
11 of the 12 nurses aboard died.
Captured nurses spent three and a
half years in prison camps.

What stayed the same across both wars

Trained military nurses served in hospitals near the front line, and moved as the front moved.
They came under shellfire, bombing and - in World War II - massacre and capture.
They were recognised for bravery, and some died on service.
Their diaries, letters and hospital records are the sources historians use (.E03).

Facts: Wikipedia - Australian Army Nursing Service, Grace Margaret Wilson, Bangka Island massacre, AHS Centaur, Vivian Bullwinkel (retrieved 2026-08-25).

Two cards comparing Australian nurses in the two world wars: World War I service from Lemnos to the Western Front with 21 dead, and World War II service from Singapore and Bangka to the sinking of the Centaur, with a strip of what stayed the same

Figure 5. The nurses' two wars. The work stayed the same; the danger changed shape — and in World War II it included massacre, capture and a torpedoed hospital ship.

In World War I the great risks were shells, disease and — from 1917 — air raids: Sister Pearl Corkhill won the Military Medal for her calm in an air raid, and four nurses (Dorothy Cawood, Clare Deacon, Mary Jane Derrer and Alice Ross-King) were honoured for pulling patients from a burning building on 22 July 1917. In World War II the danger moved closer. When Singapore fell in February 1942 the ship *Vyner Brooke* carried 65 nurses out; bombed, wrecked, and landed on Bangka Island, 21 of them were shot at Radji Beach on 16 February 1942, and **Vivian Bullwinkel** alone survived. Off Queensland on 14 May 1943 the hospital ship *Centaur* was torpedoed and 11 of the 12 nurses aboard died; Sister Ellen Savage, the only nursing survivor, won the George Medal.

Worked inquiry 2 — two nurses, two wars. Perspective is the point of .E03, so Figure 6 sets two real nurses side by side — one from each war — and ends each card with the question a historian would ask next.

Worked inquiry 2: two nurses, two wars - perspectives from sources

VC2HH10K16.E03 - comparing how Australian women deployed overseas experienced the war, using historical sources.

Sister Grace Margaret Wilson

1879-1957 - World War I

Who she was

Principal matron of No. 3 Australian General Hospital, 1915-1919 - first on Lemnos island, then at Abbeville in France.

What the sources show

Hospital records, letters and reports show a matron organising wards on a wind-blown island close to Gallipoli, then running a hospital under fire on the Western Front.

Recognition and after

CBE, Royal Red Cross, Florence Nightingale Medal. In September 1940, aged 61, she joined the Second AIF.

Her perspective: a career nurse who saw nursing as skilled military work - and did it twice, across two wars and 25 years.

Ask: whose view of the war do hospital records record, and whose do they miss?

Sister Vivian Bullwinkel

1915-2000 - World War II

Who she was

A nurse with the 2/13th Australian General Hospital, serving in Malaya and Singapore.

What happened

When Singapore fell she left by ship; on 16 February 1942 at Radji Beach, Bangka Island, 21 nurses were shot. Wounded, she pretended to be dead and was the only nurse to survive. She hid 12 days with a wounded British soldier, Cecil George Kingsley, before capture; he died soon after. She then spent three and a half years as a prisoner.

What the sources show

In 1946 she gave evidence about the massacre to the Tokyo war crimes trial.

Her perspective: witness and survivor, who carried the story into a court of law, then back into nursing for the rest of her life.

Ask: how does giving evidence in 1946 change what a survivor's story is for?

Two source cards: Grace Margaret Wilson, principal matron of No. 3 Australian General Hospital in World War I, and Vivian Bullwinkel, the sole nursing survivor of the Radji Beach massacre, who gave evidence at the Tokyo war crimes trial in 1946

Figure 6. Worked inquiry 2 — two nurses, two wars. Wilson's perspective is the career matron's; Bullwinkel's is the witness's.

Grace Margaret Wilson ran No. 3 Australian General Hospital from Lemnos in 1915 to France in 1918, earned the CBE, the Royal Red Cross and the Florence Nightingale Medal — and in September 1940, aged 61, joined the Second AIF and did it again. Her perspective is the professional's: nursing as skilled military work. **Vivian Bullwinkel's** is different in kind: she carried what she had seen into the Tokyo war crimes trial in 1946, and then back into nursing for the rest of her life. One perspective runs a hospital; the other gives evidence. Both are primary-source material — hospital records and letters in Wilson's case, testimony and later interviews in Bullwinkel's.

Part 5 — Perspectives from the sources: Bean on the last day

.E04 is practised here on one of the most powerful diary entries in Australian history. On 11 November 1918 — Armistice Day, the last day of the war — C.E.W. Bean walked the old Fromelles battlefield of July 1916 and wrote in his diary:

“...we found the old no man's land simply full of our dead ...”

— C.E.W. Bean, diary entry, 11 November 1918. The Australian War Memorial holds 286 of Bean's diaries and notebooks.

Source inquiry: a diary entry from the last day of the war

VC2HH10K16.E04 - perspectives from diaries, letters and newspapers.

The source

"...we found the old no man's land
simply full of our dead ..."

- C.E.W. Bean, diary entry, 11 November
1918, visiting the Fromelles battlefield
(site of the July 1916 battle)

Who was Bean?

C.E.W. Bean was Australia's official war
correspondent in World War I. He kept an
almost-daily diary all through the war.

How much survives?

The Australian War Memorial holds 286 of
his diaries and notebooks.

Why this entry matters

Written on Armistice Day - the day the
fighting stopped - it looks back at a
battlefield two years old. The dead it
describes were the men of July 1916.

Five questions historians ask of it

ORIGIN

Who wrote it, when, where, and in what role?

AUDIENCE

Who was it written for? (A diary: for himself.)

CONTENT

What does it plainly say? What words carry feeling?

SILENCES

Whose view is missing? (German dead; families at home.)

INFERENCE

What does it let us infer about how Bean wanted
Australians to remember the war?

Remember the rule for all sources in this
course: a source is evidence for what it shows,
and evidence for what it hides. Say both.
*One source, one moment, one point of view - never
"the whole story".*

Source card of C.E.W. Bean's diary entry of 11 November 1918 beside the five question frame — origin, audience, content, silences, inference — that historians ask of a source

Figure 7. Source inquiry — Bean's diary entry, and the five questions to ask of it (and of any source in this section).

The entry's power sits in its date: written on the day the fighting stopped, about men who died in 1916, still lying where they fell. The five questions in Figure 7 pull out why it is good evidence — and what it cannot do. A private diary was written for himself, so it is close to what Bean actually felt; but it is still one man's eyes on one day, silent about the German dead and about the families at home. **One source, one moment, one point of view — never the whole story.**

Part 6 — Prisoners of war: two captivities

More than a third of the Australians captured in World War II never came home. .E05 asks you to compare how German and Japanese captors treated Australian POWs; Figure 8 sets the two captivities side by side, and Figure 9 turns the heart of the difference into a chart.

Two captivities: German/Italian control and Japanese control

VC2HH10K16.E05 - comparing the experiences of prisoners of war. We compare to explain, not to rank suffering.

Under German and Italian control

Mainly prisoners of the 1941 campaigns

The law

The 1929 Geneva Convention set rules for prisoners. Germany ratified it - made it binding law for itself.

Who was held

About 142,319-169,000 British and Commonwealth POWs, among them Australians captured in Greece, Crete and North Africa.

Labour

Work generally followed the Convention's rules; officers were not forced to work.

Death rate

About 3.5 per cent of British and Commonwealth prisoners died.

Under Japanese control

Mainly prisoners from early 1942

The law

Japan signed the Convention but never ratified it; treatment of prisoners did not follow it.

Who was held

21,467 Australians were taken by Japan - most at Singapore (14,972). About 14,000 survived the war.

Labour

Forced labour, including the Thai-Burma Railway: 13,004 Australians worked on it; 2,802 died.

Death rate

About 36 per cent of Australian prisoners died - more than ten times the German-control rate.

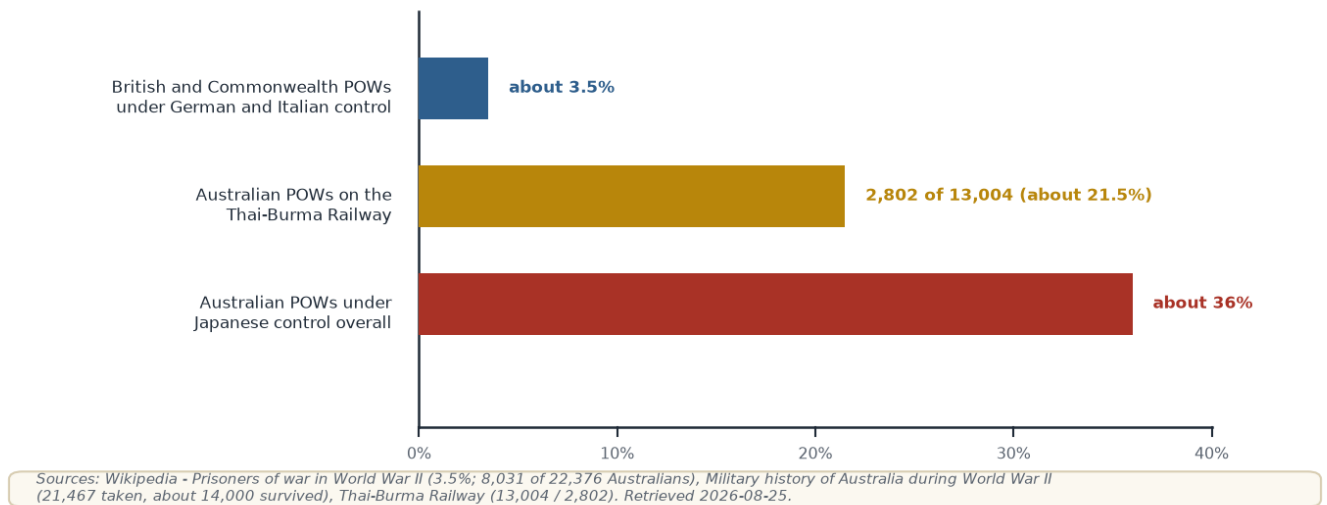
Both captivities were hard. The difference historians explain is why the death rates were so far apart - law, food, medicine and labour.

Two-column comparison of Australian POW experiences under German and Italian control and under Japanese control, across the law, who was held, labour and death rate

Figure 8. Two captivities. The 1929 Geneva Convention set rules for prisoners; Germany made it binding law on itself, Japan signed but never did — and the difference shows in every row.

Death rates in captivity

VC2HH10K16.E05. Each bar is the share of prisoners who died - a rate, not a ranking of suffering.



Bar chart of death rates in captivity: about 3.5 per cent of British and Commonwealth POWs under German and Italian control, about 21.5 per cent of Australians on the Thai-Burma Railway, and about 36 per cent of Australians under Japanese control overall

Figure 9. Death rates in captivity — a rate, not a ranking of suffering.

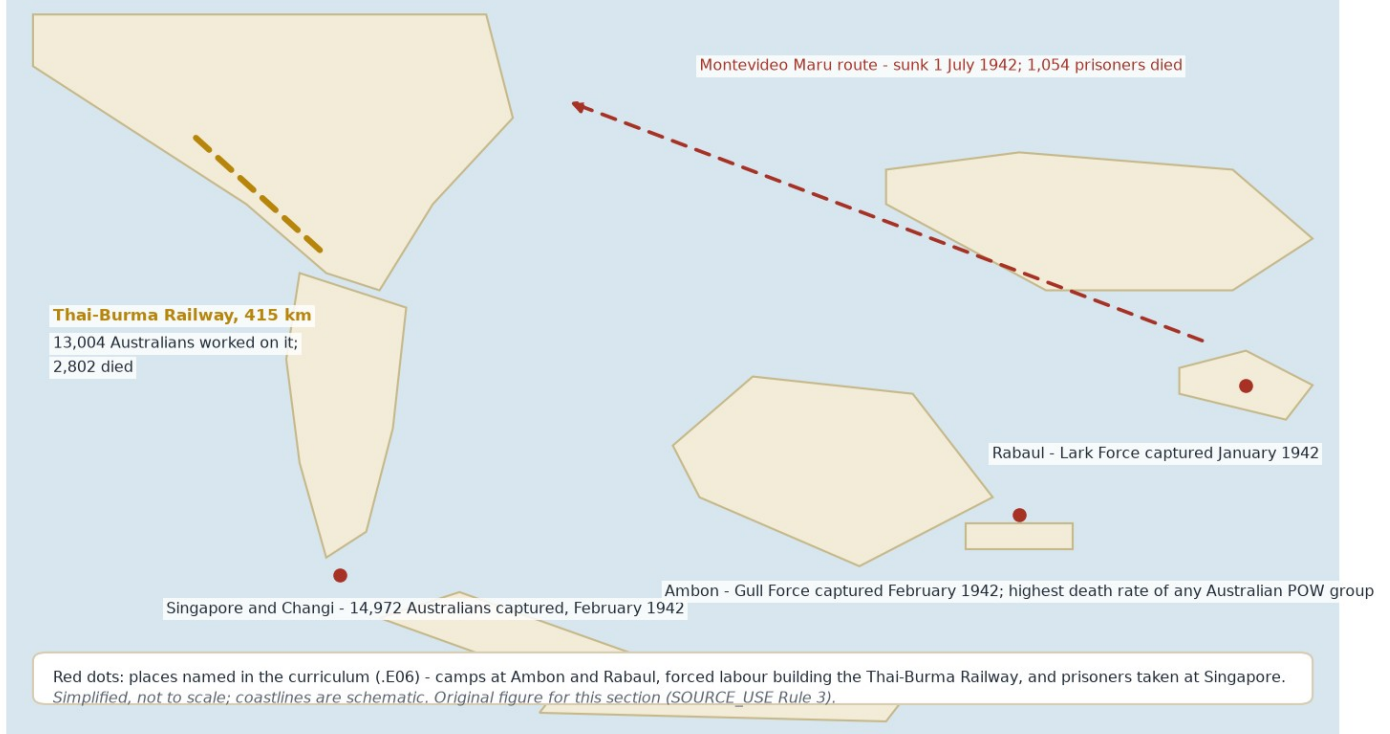
The numbers need one careful sentence. Under German and Italian control about 3.5 per cent of British and Commonwealth prisoners died; under Japanese control about 36 per cent of Australians died — of the 21,467 Australians taken by Japan, only about 14,000 survived. Historians explain the gap with the rows of Figure 8: law (Germany worked inside the Convention; Japan had signed it but never made it binding law on itself), food and medicine, and labour — including **forced labour** building the Thai-Burma Railway. The comparison explains *why*; it does not say one captivity was “worse” to live through day by day. Hardship does not come in rankings, and the men of Tobruk’s fall or of Greece did not feel 3.5 per cent of anything.

Part 7 — The camps the curriculum names

.E06 names four groups: prisoners in camps at **Ambon** and **Rabaul**, prisoners who did **forced labour** building the **Thai-Burma Railway**, and **army nurses captured in Singapore**. Figure 10 puts them on a map; the nurses’ story is already told in Part 4, so this part walks the other three.

Where Australians were held prisoner - the Pacific and South-East Asia

VC2HH10K16.E05/E06. Simplified map, NOT to scale - drawn for this section, from no published map.



Simplified map, not to scale, of South-East Asia and the Pacific marking Singapore and Changi, Ambon, Rabaul and the Thai-Burma Railway, with the route of the Montevideo Maru sunk on 1 July 1942

Figure 10. Where Australians were held. Simplified and not to scale — an original map drawn for this section.

Ambon. Gull Force — the 2/21st Battalion and support troops, about 1,100 men — was attacked on the night of 30–31 January 1942 and surrendered on 3 February. About 309 of its men were killed or murdered, most in executions at Laha airfield in February 1942, and the battalion lost 661 dead by the war's end — the highest death rate of any Australian prisoner group. **Rabaul.** Lark Force, taken in January 1942, was split: officers eventually went to Japan, and more than a thousand other ranks went aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, sunk by an American submarine on 1 July 1942 with 1,054 prisoners dead — none of the prisoners aboard survived. It remains Australia's worst maritime disaster.

Forced labour building the Thai-Burma Railway

VC2HH10K16.E06. Left: the railway by the numbers. Right: one man who answered it.

The railway by the numbers

What

A 415-kilometre railway line built between Thailand and Burma.

When

Built 16 September 1942 - 17 October 1943; opened 25 October 1943.

Allied POWs

61,811 worked on the line; 12,621 died.

Australians

13,004 worked; 2,802 died - more than one in five.

Asian labourers

At least 250,000 were forced to work; more than 90,000 died.

Conditions: starvation rations, tropical disease, long hours, beatings. Men worked with hand tools in jungle heat and rain.

The dead were prisoners of war whose treatment broke the rules of the Convention.

Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop

1907-1993 - army surgeon

Captured at Bandung, Java, in March 1942.

In January 1943 he led the first group of Australian POW labourers sent to the railway.

In the camps and jungle hospitals he organised care, kept records, argued for his men, and restored morale when it was nearly gone.

Honoured after the war: OBE, CMG, knight, Companion of the Order of Australia; Australian of the Year 1976. Statues stand in Melbourne's Domain Parklands and at the Australian War Memorial.

"...a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering."

- the writer Donald Stuart, a fellow prisoner, on Dunlop, quoted in The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop

Fact panel of the Thai-Burma Railway — 415 kilometres built September 1942 to October 1943, 61,811 Allied POWs of whom 12,621 died, 13,004 Australians of whom 2,802 died, at least 250,000 forced Asian labourers of whom more than 90,000 died — beside a card on the surgeon Weary Dunlop

Figure 11. The Thai-Burma Railway by the numbers, and one man who answered it.

The railway (Figure 11) is the forced-labour case of .E06: 415 kilometres built between 16 September 1942 and 17 October 1943 by 61,811 Allied prisoners — 13,004 of them Australian, 2,802 dying — and at least 250,000 Asian labourers forced to work beside them, of whom more than 90,000 died. And if Part 4 ended with a nurse's perspective, the railway's most remembered one is a doctor's: **Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop**, surgeon, captured at Bandung in March 1942, who led the first Australian prison labour group onto the railway in January 1943 and answered it with organisation, care and stubborn morale — "a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering", in the words of a fellow prisoner, the writer Donald Stuart. Dunlop's war diaries, published after the war, are among the key primary sources for the railway experience.

Practice — scaffolded

- 1. Read Figure 1.** (a) Name two parts of the daily trench routine on the Western Front that a Light Horseman in the desert never did. (b) Which regiment charged at Beersheba on 31 October 1917, and what did taking the town win? (c) Whose words are the quote on the Western Front card, and what does the word "cemetery" tell you about Pozieres?
- 2. Order the campaigns.** Using Figure 2: (a) put in date order — the Kokoda Track campaign; the Greek campaign; the siege of Tobruk. (b) In which of the three did more Australians fall sick than were killed or wounded? (c) Which campaign ended, for thousands, in capture rather than death or evacuation?
- 3. Sea and air.** From Figure 3: (a) sort the four case studies into sea and air. (b) True or false, and fix the false ones: (i) HMAS *Sydney* lost men but most survived. (ii) Teddy Sheean was 18 when he died. (iii) No. 460 Squadron lost more aircrew than any Australian squadron. (c) Which case study shows the war reaching Australian waters?
- 4. The moves of a comparison.** Copy the table and complete it from Figure 4. One row is done for you.

Move	Its job in one line
POINT	Names both cases and the basis of comparison
EVIDENCE (case 1)	
EVIDENCE (case 2)	
EXPLANATION	
LINK	

5. The nurses' two wars. From Figure 5: (a) one way the danger to nurses *changed* between the wars; (b) one way their work *stayed the same*; (c) name two kinds of source historians use for nurses' experiences.

6. Read the map. Copy the table and complete it using Figure 10. One row is done for you.

Place	What happened there
Singapore and Changi	14,972 Australians captured, February 1942
Ambon	
Rabaul	
Thai-Burma Railway	

Practice — unscaffolded

7. The .E01 comparison. In one paragraph (5–7 sentences), compare and contrast one World War I combat experience with one World War II combat experience from this section. Use the shape of Figure 4 (point, dated evidence for each case, explanation, link), carry at least two dated facts per case, and name your basis of comparison in the first sentence.

8. The .E04 source frame. Apply the five questions of Figure 7 — ORIGIN, AUDIENCE, CONTENT, SILENCES, INFERENCE — to Bean's diary entry of 11 November 1918. Write five to six sentences. For SILENCES, name something the entry genuinely does not tell us; for INFERENCE, say what the entry lets you conclude about how Bean wanted Australians to remember the war.

9. A nurse's perspective. Choose Grace Wilson or Vivian Bullwinkel (Figure 6). In one paragraph, explain her perspective on the war using at least three dated facts from this section, and end with one sentence naming something the sources about her cannot tell us.

10. The .E05 explanation. Using Figures 8 and 9, explain in one paragraph (5–7 sentences) why the death rates of Australian POWs were so far apart under German and Japanese control. Carry at least two dated figures, use at least two of the rows of Figure 8 (law, who was held, labour, death rate), and finish with one sentence on why comparing captivities is explaining, not ranking suffering.

Answers

1. (a) Stand-to at dawn and dusk, and night wiring parties out into no man's land (the flooded-trench mud too). (b) The 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments; the town and its wells — water was the desert's prize — and the way to Jerusalem. (c) C.E.W. Bean's; "cemetery" says the field was still covered with Australian dead — the cost of 1916, two years on.

2. (a) Greece (April–May 1941) → Tobruk (siege 10 April–27 November 1941) → Kokoda (21 July–16 November 1942). (b) Kokoda: 625 killed, 1,055 wounded, more than 4,000 sick. (c) Greece and Crete: 2,030 captured in Greece and about 3,000 on Crete.

3. (a) Sea: *Sydney*, *Armidale*/Sheean. Air: Bomber Command, No. 460 Squadron. (b) (i) False — *Sydney* was lost with all 645 hands, no survivors. (ii) True. (iii) True — 1,018 aircrew killed, 589 of them Australian. (c) HMAS *Sydney* (II): the battle was fought off Carnarvon, Western Australia — the war at Australia's coast.

4. EVIDENCE (case 1): dated, sourced facts for the Western Front (Fromelles, Pozieres). EVIDENCE (case 2): the same for New Guinea (625 killed, 4,000+ sick). EXPLANATION: what the difference meant day to day — waiting under shells vs marching with disease. LINK: answers the question in one closing line.

5. (a) Changed: World War II brought massacre (Radji Beach), capture (three and a half years for Bullwinkel) and a torpedoed hospital ship (*Centaur*). (b) Same: trained military nurses serving in hospitals near the front, recognised for bravery, some dying on service. (c) Diaries, letters and hospital records (testimony and interviews too).

6. Ambon — Gull Force captured February 1942; the highest death rate of any Australian prisoner group, with about 309 killed or murdered at Laha. Rabaul — Lark Force captured January 1942; many of its men lost when the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk on 1 July 1942. Thai-Burma Railway — 13,004 Australians used as forced labour on it; 2,802 died.

7–10. There is no single right answer; the checklist is: a named basis of comparison and the Figure 4 shape, with two dated facts per case (7); all five questions answered, a genuine silence and a reasoned inference (8); three dated facts, one perspective, and an honest silence (9); two figures, two rows of Figure 8, and a closing sentence that explains rather than ranks (10).

Model response (for task 10)

Australian prisoners died at very different rates under German and Japanese control, and the difference is explained by law, labour and care, not by luck. Under German and Italian control, where Germany had made the 1929 Geneva Convention binding law on itself, about 3.5 per cent of British and Commonwealth prisoners died; under Japanese control, where Japan had signed the Convention but never made it binding law, about 36 per cent of Australians died — of the 21,467 taken by Japan, only about 14,000 survived. Labour is the clearest row of the comparison: in Europe work mostly followed the Convention's rules, while in the Pacific prisoners were used as forced labour, and on the Thai-Burma Railway alone 2,802 of 13,004 Australians died building 415 kilometres of line between September 1942 and October 1943. Food and medicine moved with the same gap: Convention rations and Red Cross parcels in one captivity, starvation rations and tropical disease in the other. The comparison explains why the rates were far apart; it does not rank suffering — a prisoner's hard day was hard in either camp.

Looking back. You can now answer both section questions: what service overseas was like (the experiences — trench, desert, siege, jungle, ship, bomber, hospital ward, prison camp) and what those who served made of it (the perspectives — Bean's diary, Idriess's diary, the nurses' records and testimony, Dunlop's war diaries). The section also hands the rest of the book its evidence: *where* these experiences happened is Section 3C, *why* men and women put themselves in the way of them is Section 3B, how the weapons and targets of war changed — making 1942's dangers different in kind from 1916's — is Section 3F, which battles counted as turning points is Section 3E, and what the waiting and the letters did to families at home is Section 3G.

Sources for this section (all figures in this section are original, generated for this book by the scripts in `src/`; the map in Figure 10 is a simplified original, not to scale).

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 9 and 10: VC2HH10K16 with elaborations .E01–.E06 (VCAA export, 29 July 2026).
- Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org), retrieved 2026-08-25: *Trench warfare* (water table, stand-to, no man’s land 90–275 m); *Battle of Beersheba (1917)* (4th and 12th Regiments, 1,947 prisoners, 171 dead); *Ion Idriess* and *The Desert Column* (diary 1915–1918, published 1932, “private soldier’s point of view”); *Military history of Australia during World War II* (Greece 320 killed/2,030 captured; Crete about 3,000 captured; Tobruk 3,009 casualties; Kokoda 625 killed/1,055 wounded/4,000+ sick; 21,467 taken by Japan, about 14,000 survived; Bomber Command 3,486 killed; totals 27,073 killed, 23,477 wounded); *Siege of Tobruk* (231 days, 34,500 tonnes by sea, 2/13th Battalion); *Kokoda Track campaign*; *HMAS Sydney (D48)* (645 lost, 19 November 1941, wrecks found 17 March 2008); *Teddy Sheean* (1 December 1942, VC for Australia 2020); *No. 460 Squadron RAAF* (1,018 dead, 24,856 tonnes); *Australian Army Nursing Service* (2,861 in WWI, 21 dead; about 3,500 in WWII); *Grace Margaret Wilson*; *Vivian Bullwinkel*; *Bangka Island massacre* (Vyner Brooke, 16 February 1942, 21 nurses); *AHS Centaur* (14 May 1943, 268 dead, Ellen Savage, George Medal); *C.E.W. Bean* (diaries; 286 diaries and notebooks held at the Australian War Memorial); *Prisoners of war in World War II* (Geneva Convention 1929 — signed by Germany, signed but not ratified by Japan; 3.5% death rate under Germany; 8,031 of 22,376 Australians under Japan); *Thai-Burma Railway* (415 km, dates, 61,811 POWs/12,621 dead, 13,004 Australians/2,802 dead, 250,000+ Asian labourers/90,000+ dead); *Weary Dunlop* (Bandung, January 1943, Stuart’s “lighthouse” words); *Montevideo Maru* (1 July 1942, 1,054 prisoners dead); *Battle of Ambon / Gull Force* figures (about 309 at Laha, 661 battalion dead).
- Australian War Memorial (awm.gov.au): Fromelles 5,533 casualties and Pozieres about 23,000 (via Section 3C’s battle entries); Bean’s “vast Australian cemetery” line — retrieved 2026-08-25.

Key events and turning points, 1914–1945

A war contains thousands of events, but only some of them change what happens next. This section gives you a method for judging **which events mattered, to whom, and for how long**. You will weigh one World War I campaign for Australia and then for the world as a whole, explain why certain events turned the war in Europe, rank the key events of the Asia-Pacific war, and look closely at Kokoda and the Anzac legend.

Content description VC2HH10K17 is the spine of this section. The elaboration codes E01-E04 are shown where they link. Section 3C studies the campaigns themselves; this section asks why they mattered.

Theory

1. What does it mean to say an event is “significant”?

Definition - significance. An event is **significant** if it mattered: to many people, with deep effects, and for a long time. In Section 8C you met five criteria, which this section borrows: **how many** people were affected (quantity), **how deep** the change in their lives was (profundity), **how long** the effects lasted (durability), **how important** it was at the time, and **how relevant** it still is now. An event that scores well on several criteria is more significant than one that scores well on only one.

Two cautions before you use the criteria:

- **Significance is always significance to someone.** The same event can rank differently for Australia, for Britain, for the United States, or for the war as a whole. A strong answer **states its frame** (to whom, and from which point of view) before it ranks anything.
- **Significance is not the same as body count.** A battle can be small and still matter greatly, because of what it led to or what it came to mean.

Definition - turning point. A **turning point** is an event after which a war runs in a different direction. To test one, compare the war BEFORE and AFTER the event: which way was it heading, and what changed? Historians debate which events truly turned a war, so a turning-point claim must be argued with evidence, not simply asserted.

Definition - perspective. A **perspective** is a point of view shaped by who someone is and where they stand. In 1915, Australians, Britons and Ottomans did not experience the same war, and they do not remember it the same way today.

Figure 1 turns the five criteria into five questions you can ask of any event.

Judging significance: five questions historians ask

Applied here to Gallipoli (1915-1916). Section 8C explores the criteria in full.

Criterion	The question	Gallipoli - for example
How many?	How many people were affected?	About 50 000 Australians served there; more than 130 000 died on both sides (estimates).
How deep?	How deep was the change in people's lives?	8 709 Australian deaths left lasting grief for families and communities across the country.
How long?	How long did the effects last?	More than a century on, Australia still remembers Gallipoli every Anzac Day (25 April).
How important	How much did it matter to people at the time?	The defeat ended the campaign, and the landing became a story Australians told about themselves while the war was still being fought.
How relevant	How much does it help us understand the present?	Gallipoli still shapes how many Australians think about service, sacrifice and national identity.

Different historians can reach different judgments. The task is not to guess a 'right' answer but to justify the judgment with criteria and evidence.

A table of the five significance questions - how many people were affected, how deep the change went, how long the effects lasted, how important the event was at the time, and how relevant it is now - each with a Gallipoli example

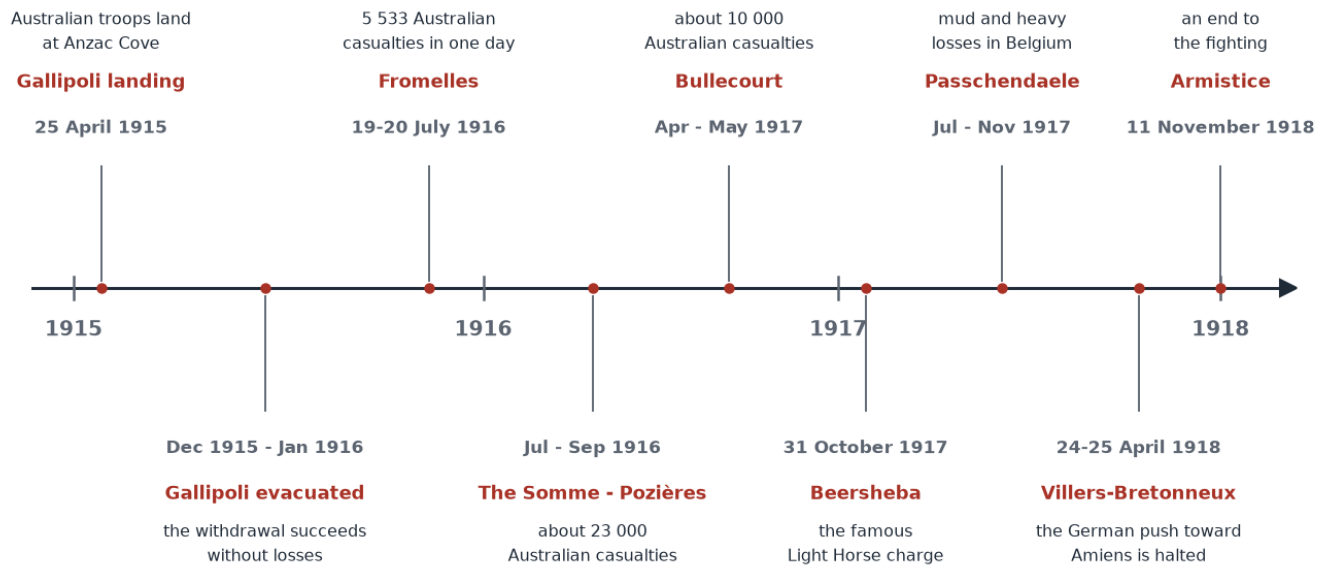
2. World War I: choosing one campaign (E01)

Words you need. In World War I the **Allies** (mainly Britain, France and Russia, later joined by the United States, and including dominions of the British Empire such as Australia and New Zealand) fought the **Central Powers** (mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire). **Casualties** means killed, wounded or taken prisoner. An **armistice** is an agreement to stop fighting.

Elaboration E01 asks you to evaluate how significant **one** major battle or campaign of World War I was to Australia - Gallipoli, Beersheba, the Somme, Fromelles, Pozières, Bullecourt, Passchendaele or Villers-Bretonneux - and then to look at the same event from the perspective of the wider war. Figure 2 places those campaigns in order.

World War I: key campaigns involving Australians, 1915-1918

Spacing is simplified - this is an order of events, not to scale. Section 3C studies these places.



Casualties = killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Figures are rounded; see the Sources list.

This timeline asks WHEN and WHAT. The harder question - WHY these events mattered - is the work of Section 3E.

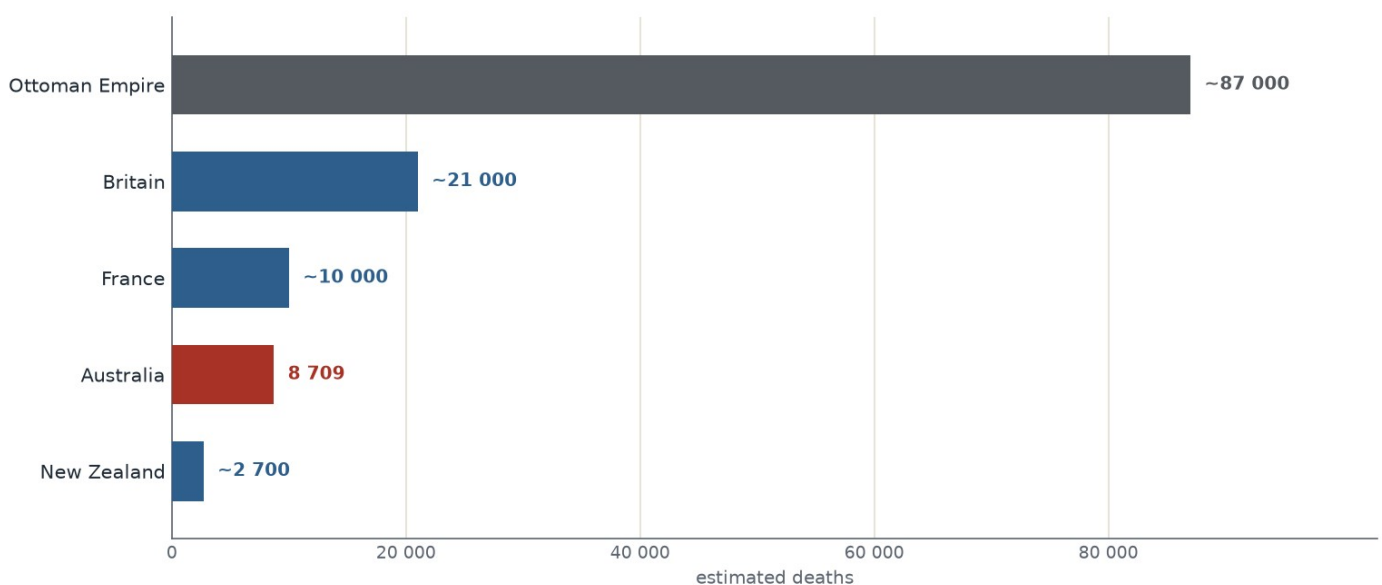
A timeline of World War I campaigns involving Australians from 1915 to 1918: the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915, the evacuation of December 1915 to January 1916, Fromelles, the Somme at Pozières, Bullecourt, Beersheba, Passchendaele, Villers-Bretonneux, and the armistice of 11 November 1918

Two facts from Figure 2 are worth holding on to. Fromelles (19-20 July 1916) cost 5 533 Australian casualties in a single day - the worst day in Australian military history - yet most Australians could not tell you when it happened. Gallipoli, which cost less in one day, is remembered every year. **Memory and significance are not the same thing**, and part of E01 is noticing the difference.

Figure 3 shows the human cost of Gallipoli for each army that fought there.

Estimated deaths at Gallipoli, 1915-1916

Figures are estimates and totals vary between sources. Australia's figure (8 709) is the accepted count.



'~' marks an estimate. Total allied dead are often given as about 44 000; Ottoman losses are estimates

that range up to about 87 000. Sources: Australian War Memorial; see the section's Sources list (retrieved 25 August 2026).

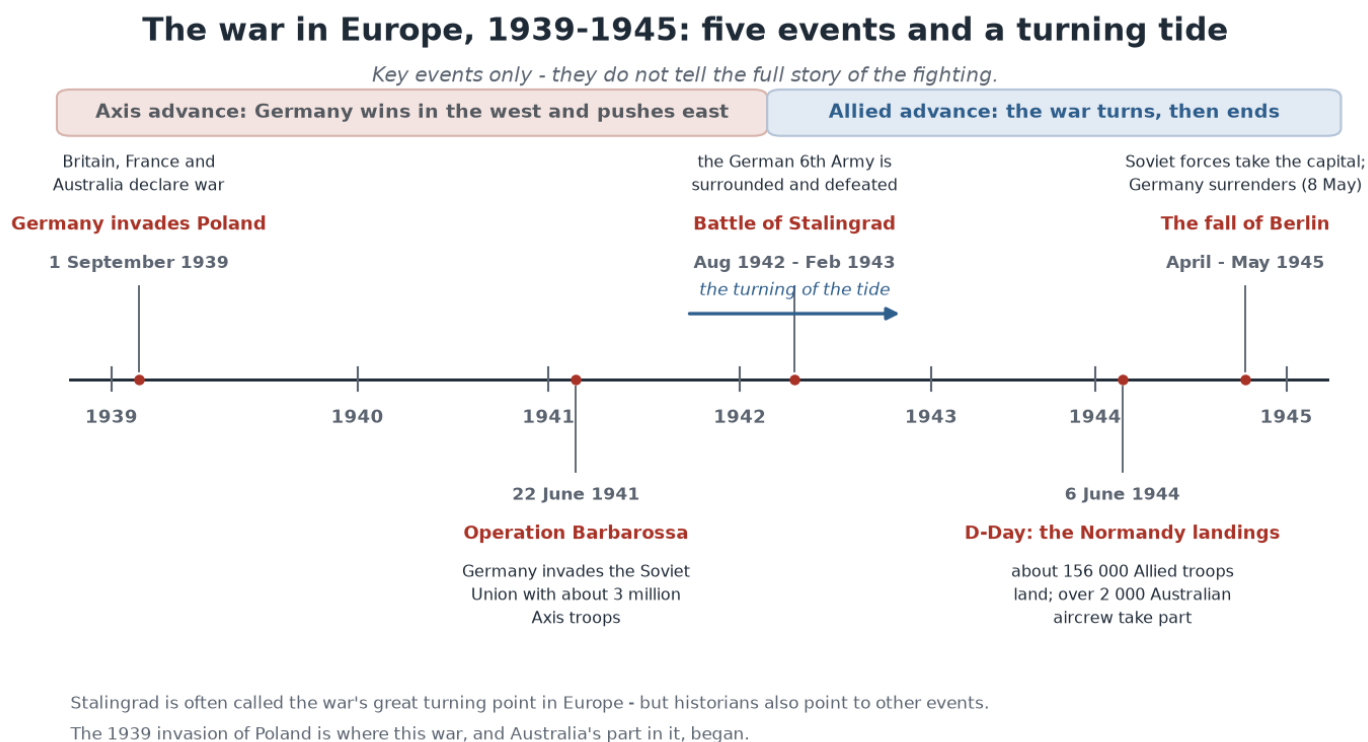
A horizontal bar chart of estimated deaths at Gallipoli, 1915-1916: New Zealand about 2 700, Australia 8 709, France about 10 000, Britain about 21 000, and the Ottoman Empire about 87 000

The 8 709 Australian dead at Gallipoli is the accepted count; the other figures are estimates, and totals vary between sources. For a small nation of under five million people, a loss of that size reached into almost every town and street. How the campaign came to be remembered - and how far wartime images can be trusted - is studied in Sections 3D and 7C.

3. Europe, 1939-1945: five events and a turned war (E02)

Words you need. In World War II the **Allies** (chiefly Britain, the Soviet Union and, from December 1941, the United States, again with dominions such as Australia) fought the **Axis** (chiefly Germany, Italy and Japan). A **prisoner of war (POW)** is a captured soldier held by the enemy.

Elaboration E02 asks you to explain why particular European events of 1939–1945 are significant. Figure 4 tracks five of them.



A timeline of the war in Europe with five events: Germany invades Poland on 1 September 1939, Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941, the Battle of Stalingrad from August 1942 to February 1943, the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944, and the fall of Berlin in April-May 1945, with the tide turning after Stalingrad

Read the five events as one argument:

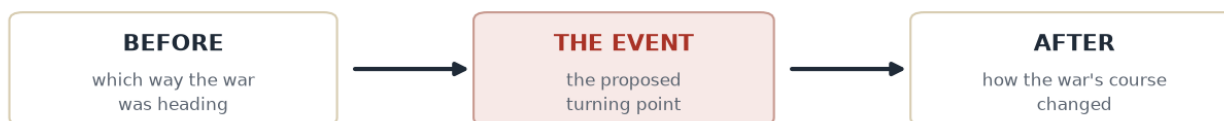
- **Poland, 1 September 1939** - the event that began the war. Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later, and Australia followed. Its significance is in its *starting power*: everything in this section grows from it.
- **Operation Barbarossa, 22 June 1941** - Germany invaded the Soviet Union with about 3 million Axis troops, opening the largest front of the war. From this point the war became truly a world war.
- **Stalingrad, August 1942 - February 1943** - the German 6th Army was surrounded and forced to surrender. From early 1943 the German forces in the east were pushed back, all the way to Berlin.
- **D-Day, 6 June 1944** - about 156 000 Allied troops landed in Normandy, opening a second major front against Germany in the west. Over 2 000 Australian aircrew took part, mostly in the air forces of the British Empire.
- **The fall of Berlin, April-May 1945** - Soviet forces took the capital; Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945. The war in Europe was over.

Now apply the turning-point test to Stalingrad, using Figure 6.

What makes an event a turning point?

Historians debate which events truly turned a war - the claim must be supported with evidence.

A turning point is an event after which a war runs a different course. To test one, compare the direction of the war BEFORE and AFTER the event, and show what changed.



Example 1 - Stalingrad (August 1942 - February 1943)

BEFORE: German forces had advanced deep into the Soviet Union, taking city after city.

EVENT: At Stalingrad, the German 6th Army was surrounded and forced to surrender.

AFTER: From early 1943 the German forces in the east were pushed back, all the way to Berlin.

Verdict: most historians accept Stalingrad as the great turning point of the war in Europe.

Example 2 - the Battle of Midway (4-7 June 1942)

BEFORE: Japan had swept across South-East Asia and the Pacific in six months.

EVENT: The US Navy sank four Japanese aircraft carriers at Midway.

AFTER: Japan lost the ships and trained aircrew needed to keep expanding; the US went onto the attack.

Verdict: many historians call Midway the turning point of the Pacific war - Kokoda and Guadalcanal also have claims, which is why the debate continues.

A definition model of a turning point - compare the direction of the war BEFORE and AFTER the event - worked twice: for Stalingrad in Europe and for the Battle of Midway in the Pacific

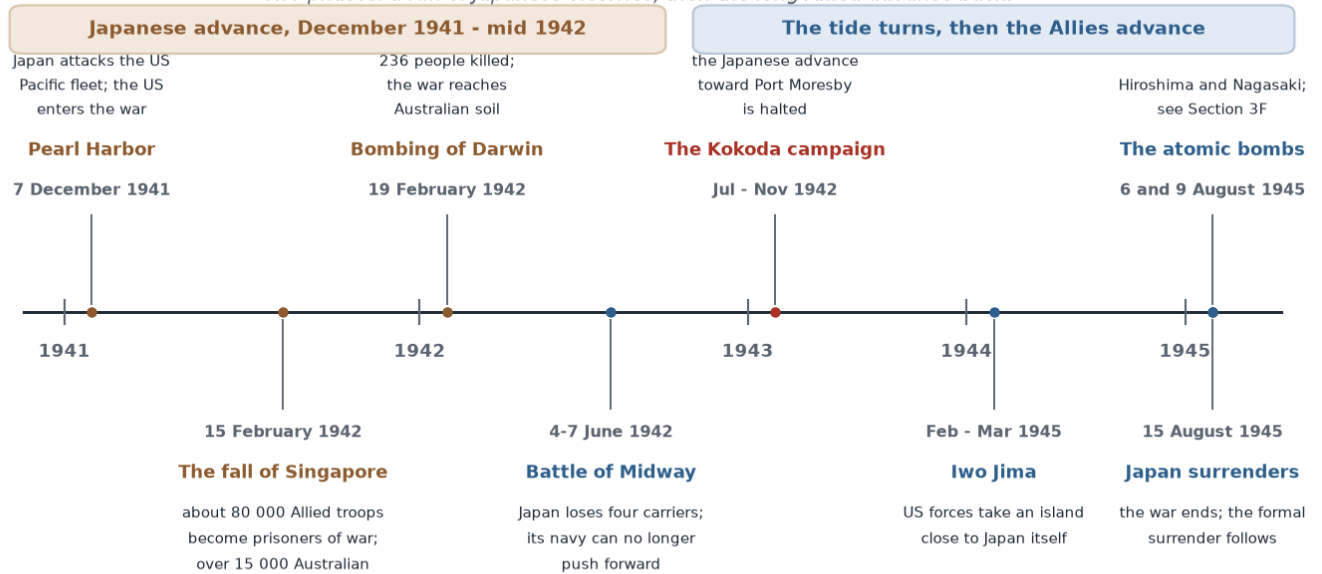
Before Stalingrad, German forces had advanced deep into the Soviet Union, taking city after city. After it, they retreated on every front in the east until the war reached Berlin itself. The direction of travel reversed: by the test above, Stalingrad earns its title as the great turning point of the war in Europe. Notice, though, that Figure 6 also shows the test producing a *debate* for the Pacific - which is exactly how historians use it.

4. The Asia-Pacific, 1941-1945: ranking what mattered (E03)

Elaboration E03 asks you to **rank** the significance of key events of the Asia-Pacific war from 1941 to 1945 - from Pearl Harbor and the fall of Singapore, through the bombing of Darwin, Kokoda and Midway, to Iwo Jima and the atomic bombings of Japan. (The atomic bombs are listed here only as one of the war's final events; their story is studied in Section 3F. The raids on Darwin and life in the town at this time also appear in Section 3G.) Figure 5 gives the timeline.

The war in the Asia-Pacific, 1941-1945

Two phases: a run of Japanese victories, then the long Allied advance back.



The atomic bombs are listed here as one of the war's final events; their story is studied in Section 3F.

Prisoner of war (POW) = a captured soldier held by the enemy.

A timeline of the war in the Asia-Pacific in two phases: Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942, the Battle of Midway on 4-7 June 1942, the Kokoda campaign from July to November 1942, Iwo Jima in February-March 1945, the atomic bombs on 6 and 9 August 1945, and Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945

Ranking is where the first caution from Part 1 does its work. Figure 7 shows the same six events argued both ways for one question: which mattered more to Australia, the fall of Singapore or the Kokoda campaign? Both columns use real evidence. The criteria - and the frame - decide.

A contestable judgment: which mattered more to Australia?

The same question, argued both ways. Both sides use real evidence - the criteria decide.

'The fall of Singapore mattered more'

More Australians were affected.

Over 15 000 Australians became prisoners of war; about 625 died on the Kokoda Track.

It changed Australia's alliances.

After Singapore, Australia turned to the United States for defence - a change that lasted decades.

It broke a trusted assumption.

Britain's 'great fortress' fell in ten weeks, showing it could not protect the region.

It changed the war's reach.

Singapore's fall put Japanese forces within striking distance of Australia itself.

'Kokoda mattered more'

It stopped an advance on home.

The Japanese push toward Port Moresby was halted; from Port Moresby, aircraft could reach northern Australia.

It was fought on Australian soil.

Papua was administered by Australia. Soldiers fought to defend Australian territory, not a faraway empire.

It gave Australia a story of its own.

The citizen soldiers of the Track became a national story of ordinary people doing hard things.

Its memory lasted.

Kokoda reinforced the Anzac legend and is still remembered every year.

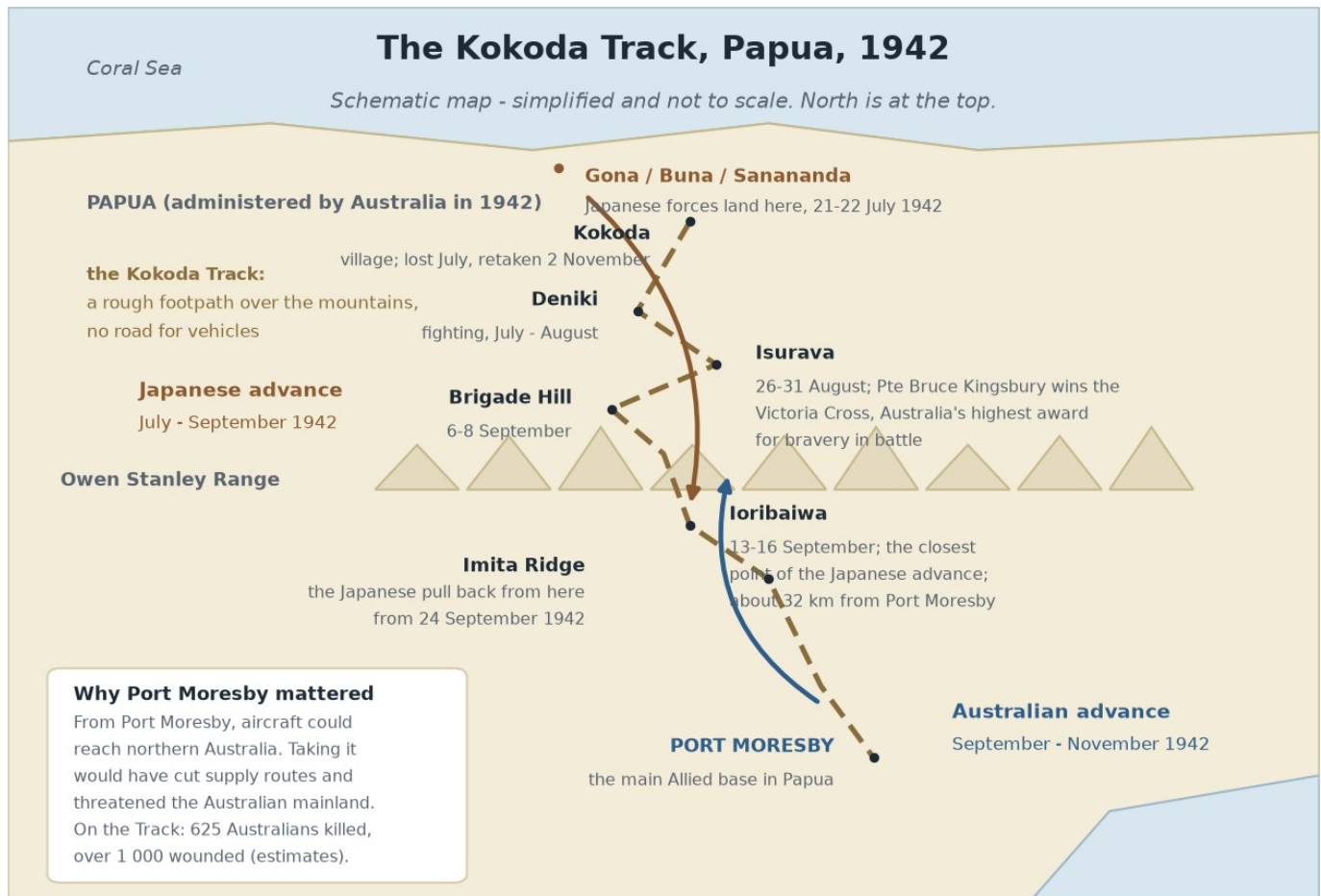
Neither answer is simply 'right'. A strong answer names its criteria (how many? how deep? how long?), uses the evidence, and admits what the other side could say back.

Two panels arguing the same question both ways: four reasons the fall of Singapore mattered more to Australia, and four reasons the Kokoda campaign mattered more, with a closing note that a strong answer names its criteria, uses the evidence, and admits what the other side could say back

5. Kokoda and the Anzac legend (E04)

Words you need. In 1942, Papua was a **territory** administered by Australia - land under Australian rule. The **militia** were citizen soldiers, part-time troops called up for home defence, as distinct from the volunteer **Second AIF** who could be sent to fight overseas. The **Victoria Cross (VC)** is Australia's highest award for bravery in battle.

Elaboration E04 asks you to investigate the significance of Kokoda as the battle that stopped the Japanese advance towards Port Moresby, and to explain why the battle fed the **Anzac legend**. Figure 8 maps the campaign.



A schematic map of the Kokoda Track in Papua, 1942, from the Japanese landings at Gona, Buna and Sanananda over the Owen Stanley Range via Kokoda, Deniki, Isurava, Brigade Hill and Ioribaiwa to Imita Ridge and Port Moresby, with the Japanese advance of July to September and the Australian advance of September to November

The outline of the campaign: Japanese forces landed at Gona and Buna on 21-22 July 1942 and pushed south along the Track. Australian militia and AIF units fought delaying actions at Deniki, Isurava and Brigade Hill - at Isurava, Private Bruce Kingsbury won the Victoria Cross, the first awarded to a member of the militia. By 13-16 September the Japanese reached Ioribaiwa, about 32 km from Port Moresby, the closest they would come. From 24 September they pulled back, and Australian forces followed until the beachheads fell in November. On the Track, 625 Australians were killed and over 1 000 wounded (estimates).

Why does this matter? On the military criterion, Kokoda halted the overland advance on Port Moresby - the base from which aircraft could reach northern Australia. On the memory criterion, Kokoda became a second founding story for the Anzac legend: citizen soldiers, mostly militia at first, holding a "battle for Australia" against an advancing enemy. Wartime film made that link explicit. Damien Parer's newsreel *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942) - a **newsreel** being a short news film shown in cinemas - presented the men on the Track as "just ordinary Australians" and tied their struggle directly back to Anzac, 1915.

Contested term - the Anzac legend. The **Anzac legend** is the story Australians tell about their soldiers: ordinary people showing courage, mateship and endurance under fire. It grew out of Gallipoli, was built up by the official historian C. E. W. Bean in his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* (1921-1942), and was carried into the Second World War by films like Parer's. The legend is **contested** (people of good faith disagree about it). Supporters argue it gives Australia a shared story of what ordinary people can do together. Critics - for example the historian Ken Inglis in *Sacred Places* (1998), and Alan Seymour's play *The One Day of the Year* (1960), in which a family argues over Anzac Day - ask whether the legend simplifies war, hides its costs, and leaves some Australians out. Both sides care a great deal about how Australia remembers; they disagree about what the legend does. Holding both views in mind is what good history looks like.

One more caution, specific to Kokoda. The historian Peter Stanley argues in *Invading Australia* (2008) that Japan never made a plan to invade Australia, so the “battle that saved Australia” reading is a memory claim rather than a fact about Japanese plans in 1942. Set against that, Australians at the time - including the Prime Minister, John Curtin - genuinely feared invasion after Singapore fell, and fear is also historical evidence. Neither side of this pair cancels the other out: **what a campaign did and what it came to mean are two real kinds of significance.**

Worked examples

Worked inquiry 1 - Gallipoli, twice: Australia’s story and the war’s story (E01)

The question. Evaluate the significance to Australia of the Gallipoli campaign (1915-16). Then evaluate its significance for the wider war.

Source A - Estimated deaths at Gallipoli, 1915-1916 (Figure 3 above): Australia 8 709 (accepted count); New Zealand about 2 700; Britain about 21 000; France about 10 000; Ottoman Empire about 87 000. Australian War Memorial, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Source B - Of the roughly 50 000 Australians who served in the campaign, most were volunteers who had left a country of under five million people only months earlier. The landing on 25 April 1915 was the first major battle fought by the Australian Imperial Force.

Working	Comment
Frame 1: to Australia. Count the people affected.	8 709 dead and many more wounded, from a small nation: the “how many” and “how deep” criteria both score highly.
Ask how deep the change went at home.	Almost every town and street lost someone; grief and pride arrived together, and the story of Anzac began on 25 April 1915.
Ask how long the effects lasted.	Anzac Day has been observed every year since 1916; the campaign still shapes how Australians talk about themselves. The “how long” and “how relevant now” criteria score highly.
Verdict for Frame 1.	For Australia, Gallipoli is highly significant - less for its military result than for its cost and its place in memory.
Frame 2: to the war as a whole. Ask what the campaign was meant to do.	The plan was to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war and open a sea route to Russia. It failed on both counts, and the Ottoman Empire stayed in the war until late 1918.
Compare with the main fronts.	The decisive fighting of 1915-18 happened on the Western Front and, later, in the east. Gallipoli was a side campaign that tied down some troops but changed no large outcome.
Frame 3: another perspective. Ask what it meant to the Ottomans.	For the Ottoman defenders it was a successful defence of their homeland, later remembered as a founding moment on the road to modern Turkey. Significance again depends on where you stand.
Final verdict.	The same campaign is a founding national story for Australia, a costly failure for the Allies as a whole, and a founding victory for Turkey. That spread of answers is not a contradiction - it is what significance means.

Worked inquiry 2 - Ranking the Asia-Pacific war for Australia (E03, E04)

The question. Rank the significance of six Asia-Pacific events **for Australia**, and show your working.

Source - The event list and dates in Figure 5 above (Asia-Pacific timeline). Figures for Singapore and Kokoda: Australian War Memorial, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Working	Comment
State the frame first.	“Significance to Australia” - not to the war as a whole. The frame decides the order.
1. Fall of Singapore (15 February 1942).	Over 15 000 of the about 80 000 Allied troops who became prisoners of war were Australian; trust in Britain’s protection broke, and Australia began turning to the United States - a change that lasted decades. Scores well on every criterion.
2. Kokoda campaign (July-November 1942).	Halted the overland advance on Port Moresby; 625 Australians killed; and the campaign grew into a national story that reinforced the Anzac legend. High on depth, memory and relevance.
3. Bombing of Darwin (19 February 1942).	236 people killed; the war had reached Australian soil. High on “how important at the time” for the people of the north.
4. Atomic bombs and Japan’s surrender (August 1945).	Ended the war for every Australian serviceman, prisoner of war and worker at home - but the bombs themselves are Section 3F’s territory, so this row borrows significance rather than owning it.
5. Pearl Harbor (7 December 1941).	Few Australians were affected directly, but it brought the United States into the war - which mattered greatly to Australia within weeks.
6. Battle of Midway (4-7 June 1942).	Turned the Pacific war, but far from Australia; its significance for Australia is mostly indirect.
Now change the frame and re-rank.	For the war as a whole , Midway and Pearl Harbor climb toward the top and Darwin falls away. Neither ranking is wrong; they answer different questions. State your frame before you rank.

A worked model of this ranking, with the criteria as columns, is shown in Figure 9.

Worked model: ranking Asia-Pacific events by significance to Australia

One defensible order. A different order can also be right if it uses criteria and evidence.

Rank	Event	Who was affected, and how many?	How deep was the change?	How long did the effects last?
1	Fall of Singapore (February 1942)	Over 15 000 Australians became prisoners of war	Trust in Britain's protection broke; Australia turned to the US	Decades: alliances and defence policy changed
2	Kokoda campaign (July - November 1942)	The soldiers on the Track; the people of Papua; the home front	Halted the advance on Port Moresby; grew into a national story	Long: still remembered as a 'battle for Australia'
3	Bombing of Darwin (February 1942)	236 people killed; the town and harbour hit	Showed the war could reach Australian soil	Long: the day the war came home
4	Atomic bombs and Japan's surrender (August 1945)	Ended the war for every Australian serviceman, POW and worker	The war ended; see Section 3F for the bombs themselves	Very long: shaped the post-war world
5	Pearl Harbor (December 1941)	Few Australians directly; the US Pacific fleet	Brought the US into the war - a powerful ally for Australia	Long: changed the balance of the whole war
6	Battle of Midway (June 1942)	Mostly the naval forces of Japan and the US	Turned the Pacific war, but far from Australia	Long for the war's outcome

Notice how the ranking depends on the question: this order ranks significance TO AUSTRALIA. Rank the same events for the war as a whole and Midway or Pearl Harbor may climb higher. State your frame before you rank.

A worked model table ranking six Asia-Pacific events by significance to Australia - fall of Singapore first, then Kokoda, Darwin, the atomic bombs and Japan's surrender, Pearl Harbor, and Midway - with columns for who was affected, how deep the change went, and how long the effects lasted, and a closing note that a different frame gives a different order

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Question 1 (uses Figure 1). Match each of the five criteria to the question it answers, then give one example of your own (not from this section) for any two of them.

a quantity b profundity c durability d importance at the time e relevance now

i "How deep was the change in people's lives?" ii "How many people were affected?" iii "How long did the effects last?" iv "How important was the event at the time?" v "How much does it still matter to us?"

Question 2 (uses Figures 2 and 3). Fromelles cost 5 533 Australian casualties in one day - more than any other single day in Australian military history - yet Gallipoli, not Fromelles, is remembered every year.

a Give one reason from Figure 3 why Gallipoli's cost was significant to Australia even before memory is considered. b Give two reasons why Gallipoli came to be remembered more strongly than Fromelles. c Which caution from Part 1 of the Theory does this pair of facts demonstrate? Name it in one sentence.

Question 3 (uses Figures 4 and 6). a Place the five European events of Figure 4 in order, with dates. b Complete a before/event/after table for Stalingrad, in your own words. c Using the same test, give one reason why D-Day also has a claim to be a turning point, and one reason why a historian might still prefer Stalingrad.

Question 4 (uses Figure 5, the Asia-Pacific timeline). a Which event in the timeline best marks the boundary between the two phases - the run of Japanese victories and the Allied advance back? Defend your choice in two or three sentences. b A classmate says the boundary should be drawn at Kokoda instead. Steelman their view: give the best two reasons for it, even if you disagree.

Question 5 (uses Figures 7 and 8). Work with the frame “significance to Australia”. a Using the table in Figure 7, decide which of the fall of Singapore or the Kokoda campaign you would rank higher. State your choice and the two criteria that did the most work in your decision. b Write one fair sentence admitting the strongest point on the other side.

Question 6 (uses the Kokoda map, Figure 8). a Name the place on the Track closest to Port Moresby, and the distance given. b In one or two sentences, explain why Port Moresby mattered to both sides. c Where on the map did the Japanese advance stop turning south? What happened from 24 September 1942?

Un scaffolded

Question 7. “The fall of Singapore was the most significant event of the war for Australia.” Write a paragraph of 6-8 sentences agreeing or disagreeing. Use at least three of the five criteria, at least two pieces of dated evidence, and one sentence that fairly states what the other side would say.

Question 8. Two historians argue: “Barbarossa was the real turning point of the war in Europe - Stalingrad only finished what Barbarossa started.” “No: Barbarossa made the war bigger, but Stalingrad turned it.” Choose one claim and argue for it in a paragraph, using the before/event/after test. You must concede, in one sentence, the strongest point of the other claim.

Question 9. Rank these four events for their significance **to Australia**: the Battle of Midway, the bombing of Darwin, the Kokoda campaign, and the atomic bombings of Japan. State your frame in one sentence, justify your order with the criteria, and then name which event would climb highest if the frame were “the war as a whole”.

Question 10. “An event is only as significant as the person judging it.” Discuss this claim using Gallipoli as your evidence. Refer to at least two different perspectives (for example Australian, British, Ottoman/Turkish) and reach a stated position of your own.

Source-based inquiry

Read the source below, then answer the questions that follow. A worked model of this exact method is shown in Figure 10.

Source 1 - Narration from *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942), a wartime newsreel filmed by the Australian cameraman Damien Parer and shown in cinemas at home during the war. In 1943 it became one of the first Australian films to win an Academy Award. The narration describes the men on the Track as “just ordinary Australians”, and says that what they are doing “will make Australia a nation”.

a **Origin.** When and by whom was this source made, and for whom? b **Purpose.** What was it made to do? Name both purposes. c **Content.** What two claims does the quoted narration make about the soldiers? d **Perspective.** Whose point of view does the source carry? Whose points of view are missing from it? e **Usefulness.** Give two ways a historian today could still use this source as evidence, even knowing what it was made for. f **Limits.** Give two things this source cannot tell a historian about the Kokoda campaign. g In one or two sentences: why is a source made to persuade still a source?

Worked source analysis (model text)

How to question a source: origin, purpose, content, perspective, usefulness, limits.

SOURCE: Narration from the newsreel *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942), filmed by Australian cameraman Damien Parer and shown in cinemas during the war. In 1943 it became one of the first Australian films to win an Academy Award.

ORIGIN

Made in 1942, during the war, by an Australian film unit for cinema audiences back home.

PURPOSE

To tell Australians about the fighting on the Track - and to build support for the war effort. Wartime newsreels were made to inform, but also to persuade.

CONTENT

It presents the soldiers as 'just ordinary Australians' and says they 'will make Australia a nation'. It shows tired men climbing the Track and wounded men being carried down.

PERSPECTIVE

An Australian, wartime point of view. It links the men of Kokoda to the Anzac story of 1915 and to nation-building.

USEFULNESS

Useful evidence of how Australians were encouraged to understand Kokoda in 1942, and of the conditions on the Track. It is also evidence of the Anzac legend at work.

LIMITS

Made to persuade, not to criticise. It does not show the Japanese side, the people of Papua, or any Australian doubts about the war.

Key idea: even a source made to persuade is still evidence - of what its makers wanted people to believe, and of how the war was presented at home.

*A worked model of source analysis applied to the narration of *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942), with rows for origin, purpose, content, perspective, usefulness and limits, and the key idea that even a source made to persuade is still evidence*

Answers

Q1. a-ii, b-i, c-iii, d-iv, e-v. Examples will vary; they must name a real event and answer the right question (for example, for durability: “the alliance changes after 1942 lasted for decades”).

Q2. a Any of: 8 709 Australian dead from a nation of under five million; grief reached nearly every community. b Any two of: it was the first major battle of the AIF; it produced the Anzac story and Anzac Day; it was told and retold in books, films and ceremonies (see Sections 3D and 7C for the image-making). c “Significance is not the same as body count” / memory and significance are not the same thing.

Q3. a Poland 1 September 1939; Barbarossa 22 June 1941; Stalingrad August 1942-February 1943; D-Day 6 June 1944; Berlin April-May 1945 (German surrender 8 May 1945). b Before: German forces advancing deep into the Soviet Union. Event: the German 6th Army surrounded and forced to surrender. After: German forces pushed back in the east, all the way to Berlin. c D-Day opened the second major front in the west, so from June 1944 Germany was losing ground in two directions at once; a historian might still prefer Stalingrad because the reversal in the east began earlier and cost the German army far more.

Q4. a Midway (4-7 June 1942) is the usual choice: Japan lost four carriers and the trained aircrew to keep expanding, and the phase bands in Figure 5 turn here. Kokoda or Guadalcanal are defensible with reasons. b Steelman for Kokoda: it halted the overland advance on Port Moresby, the base from which aircraft could reach northern Australia; and it was fought on Australian-administered territory, so for Australia the war’s direction changed there.

Q5. Answers will vary. A good answer names its choice, names two criteria that did the work (for example “how many” and “how long” for Singapore; depth and memory for Kokoda), and concedes one fair point to the other side.

Q6. a Ioribaiwa, about 32 km from Port Moresby. b From Port Moresby, aircraft could reach northern Australia; taking it would have cut supply routes and threatened the mainland - so both sides fought for the Track that led to it. c The advance reached Ioribaiwa in mid-September and then stopped; from 24 September 1942 the Japanese pulled back and the Australians advanced behind them.

Q7. Should include: a stated position; three criteria used by name or by question; two dated pieces of evidence (for example 15 February 1942, over 15 000 Australian POWs, about 80 000 in total; or Curtin’s turn toward the United States, signalled in late December 1941); and one fair sentence for the other side (for example, that Kokoda’s depth and memory give it the stronger claim).

Q8. Either claim is arguable. The test must be applied: before/event/after. Barbarossa claim: it opened the eastern front where the war’s biggest battles were then fought, so the war’s centre of gravity moved east from June 1941. Stalingrad claim: before it Germany advanced, after it Germany retreated - the direction reversed. The conceded sentence is required on either side.

Q9. Any order is acceptable if the frame is stated and the criteria do the work. Expected moves: for Australia, Kokoda and Darwin usually outrank Midway; if the frame changes to “the war as a whole”, Midway climbs highest of the four (Pearl Harbor is not in this list; the atomic bombs end the war in either frame, but their own story belongs to Section 3F).

Q10. Must use at least two perspectives and reach a stated position. The strongest answers notice that the claim is half right: significance is always significance *to* someone (Frame 3 of Worked inquiry 1), but the events still did real things - people died, fronts opened, wars ended - so the judgment is not arbitrary. Criteria and evidence keep it honest.

Source inquiry. a Made in 1942, during the war, by an Australian film unit (cameraman Damien Parer), for cinema audiences at home. b To inform Australians about the fighting on the Track, and to build support for the war effort. c That the soldiers are “just ordinary Australians”, and that their struggle “will make Australia a nation” - ordinariness and nation-building. d An Australian, wartime point of view, linking Kokoda to Anzac 1915; missing are the Japanese side, the people of Papua, and any Australian doubts about the war. e Any two of: evidence of how Australians were encouraged to understand the war in 1942; evidence of the conditions on the Track (tired men, wounded carried down); evidence of the Anzac legend at work. f Any two of: the Japanese side of the fighting; the experience of Papuans; the military reasons behind decisions; Australian doubts or war-weariness. g A persuasive source is still evidence - of what its makers wanted people to believe, and of how the war was presented at home.

Fully-worked solutions

Question 7 - model paragraph (disagreeing, for demonstration). The fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 was enormously significant for Australia, but “most significant” is a claim I do not accept. On *how many* and *how deep*, Singapore scores highest of any event of the war: over 15 000 Australians became prisoners of war among about 80 000 Allied troops, and the loss of the “great fortress” in ten weeks broke the assumption that Britain could protect the region. On *how long*, its effects ran for decades: Australia turned to the United States for defence, a change signalled by John Curtin even before the fall and hardened after it. Yet the Kokoda campaign scores higher on the memory criterion - it reinforced the Anzac legend and is still observed - and on depth for the people of the north, the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 brought the war to Australian soil, killing 236 people. I therefore rank Singapore first for alliances and numbers, but not first for every criterion; a fair case for Kokoda stands beside mine.

Question 8 - model paragraph (arguing for Stalingrad). Before Stalingrad, the direction of the war in Europe ran Germany’s way: after Barbarossa’s June 1941 invasion, German forces advanced deep into the Soviet Union, taking city after city. The event itself reversed nothing on paper - it was a siege, August 1942 to February 1943 - but its result did: the German 6th Army was surrounded and forced to surrender, the first great German army lost in the war. After it, German forces in the east were pushed back until the war reached Berlin in 1945. The before/after test is satisfied: the arrow of the war changed direction at Stalingrad. I concede the Barbarossa claim one true point: without Barbarossa there is no eastern front at all, and the eastern front is where the war’s greatest battles were fought. But making a front bigger is not turning the war; Stalingrad turned it.

Question 9 - model ranking (frame: significance to Australia). Frame: significance to Australia, 1942-45 and after. 1. Kokoda - halted the overland advance on Port Moresby (625 Australians killed, over 1 000 wounded), fought on Australian-administered territory, and it grew into a national story that still carries the Anzac legend: high on depth, importance at the time, and relevance now. 2. Darwin - 236 killed on 19 February 1942; the war reached Australian soil; high on importance at the time and on depth for the north. 3. Atomic bombs - ended the war for every Australian serviceman and POW, which is very high on how many, but the bombs’ own significance is Section 3F’s question, so here they borrow weight. 4. Midway - turned the Pacific war, but far from Australia; for this frame its weight is indirect. Changing the frame to “the war as a whole”, Midway climbs to number 1 of the four: it cost Japan the four carriers and the trained aircrew it needed to keep expanding.

Question 10 - model discussion (summary). The claim is half right, and the half that is right matters. Gallipoli shows that significance is always significance to someone: for Australia, a founding national story built on 8 709 dead; for Britain, one costly failure in a world war whose centre lay on the Western Front; for the Ottoman defenders and for later Turkey, a successful defence of home and a founding memory of the new nation. Three rankings, one campaign - so yes, the person judging decides the frame. But the claim goes too far when it makes significance only personal: the campaign did real things that no judge can vote away. It cost over 130 000 lives across the armies (estimates), it kept the Ottoman Empire in the war, and it began a story that still shapes Australia. Perspectives choose the frame; criteria and evidence keep the judgment honest. That is the difference between “it depends” and good history.

Source inquiry - model answers (compressed). See the Answers section for the marking points; the method is modelled in Figure 10. The single idea worth keeping: a newsreel made to persuade is not useless to a historian - it is *exactly* the evidence a historian needs for questions like “what were Australians told about the war?”, “how was Kokoda linked to Anzac?”, and “what did the government want people to feel in 1942?”. Its limits (no Japanese side, no Papuan voices, no doubts shown) tell the historian what to go and find in other sources.

Sources

All web sources retrieved 25 August 2026.

1. Australian War Memorial, *awm.gov.au* - Gallipoli and Kokoda campaign pages and casualty/death figures (Figures 2, 3 and 8; Worked inquiries 1 and 2).
2. National Film and Sound Archive, *nfsa.gov.au* - *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942), dir. Damien Parer: production details, narration quotations, and the 1943 Academy Award (Source 1; Figure 10).
3. C. E. W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, 6 vols (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1921-1942) - the building of the Anzac legend.

4. Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998) - the legend in Australian public life.
5. Alan Seymour, *The One Day of the Year* (Sydney, 1960) - dramatised criticism of Anzac commemoration.
6. Peter Stanley, *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942* (Melbourne: Viking, 2008) - the argument that Japan did not plan to invade Australia.
7. John Curtin, statement published in the *Melbourne Herald*, 27 December 1941 - Australia “looks to America”.
8. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 4 (London: Cassell, 1950) - the fall of Singapore as “the worst disaster” in British military history.

The nature of warfare: change and continuity

Between 1914 and 1945 the way wars were fought changed more than in any other thirty years in history. In 1914, horses still pulled guns and most soldiers died within sight of another army. By 1945, one aircraft could destroy one city. This section traces that change through five developments: the targeting of civilians, trench warfare and new technology, Blitzkrieg and air power, the mobilising of whole societies, and the atomic bomb - the race to build it, the argument over why it was used, and its short- and long-term consequences. It also asks what did **not** change, because a change is only visible against a background of continuity.

Content description VC2HH10K18 is the spine of this section. The elaboration codes E01-E05 are shown where they link. This section sits inside the investigation “Australians at war (1914-1945)”. Section 3C studies the campaigns of the two wars and Section 3E asks which events mattered most; this section asks how the war itself changed as it was fought.

Theory

1. What is “the nature of warfare”, and what do continuity and change mean?

Definition - nature of warfare. The **nature of warfare** is how a war is actually fought: the weapons used, the tactics (methods of fighting), who fights, who is targeted, and how far whole societies are drawn into the fighting. A change in any of these is a change in the nature of warfare.

Definition - continuity and change. A **change** is a way in which things became different across a period. A **continuity** is a way in which things stayed the same. Between 1914 and 1945, weapons changed completely - but the aim of war (to break the enemy’s will to fight) and its cost in human grief continued. Good history holds both at once.

Words you need. A **civilian** is anyone not a member of the armed forces. **Casualties** means killed, wounded or taken prisoner. A **blockade** is the cutting off of a country’s supplies by sea. In World War I the **Allies** (mainly Britain, France and Russia, later the United States, with dominions such as Australia) fought the **Central Powers** (mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire); in World War II the Allies (chiefly Britain, the Soviet Union and, from December 1941, the United States) fought the **Axis** (chiefly Germany, Italy and Japan).

2. Civilians in the firing line (E01)

Elaboration E01 asks you to compare the targeting of civilian populations across the two world wars and explain the **significance** of the differences. Figure 1 sets out the comparison.

Targeting of civilians: World War I compared with World War II

What changed between 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 — and what the differences meant

	World War I (1914-1918)	World War II (1939-1945)
Main dangers to civilians	Naval blockades cut off food and fuel; submarines sank merchant and passenger ships; airships and early aeroplanes made small raids on towns.	Deliberate bombing of whole cities; sieges and occupation; firestorms; single atomic bombs destroying entire cities.
Deadliest single attacks on civilians	The liner <i>Lusitania</i> was torpedoed on 7 May 1915; 1,198 civilians died, including 128 Americans.	The firebombing of Tokyo (9-10 March 1945) killed an estimated 100,000 civilians; each atomic bomb killed tens of thousands in a single day.
Civilians killed in Britain by bombing	1,414 people were killed by airship and aeroplane raids over the whole war.	More than 40,000 civilians were killed by German bombing, most of them in the Blitz of 1940-1941.
Was targeting civilians deliberate?	Raids on towns were new and limited by technology; most killing still happened between armies, especially on the Western Front.	Bombing civilian cities became a planned strategy used by all sides; civilian deaths grew to outnumber military deaths.
Rules of war after the war	The 1925 Geneva Protocol banned the use of poison gas and germ weapons in war between states.	In 1945 no rule stopped atomic attack; after the war the new United Nations began work on controlling such weapons (see Section 1C).

Figures are estimates from the sources listed at the end of this section. 'All sides' here means the main wartime governments that ran bombing campaigns.

A comparison table of the targeting of civilians across the two world wars, with rows for the main dangers to civilians, the deadliest single attacks, civilians killed in Britain by bombing (1 414 against more than 40 000), whether the targeting was deliberate, and the rules made after each war

In World War I, civilians suffered mainly from blockades that cut off food and fuel, and from submarine attacks on ships. The torpedoing of the passenger liner **Lusitania** on 7 May 1915 killed 1 198 civilians, including 128 Americans, and moved American opinion toward the war. Raids on towns by airships and early aeroplanes were new and frightening, but small: 1 414 people in Britain were killed by air raid over the whole war. Most killing still happened between armies.

In World War II, bombing whole cities became a planned strategy on all sides. The **Blitz** (7 September 1940 to 16 May 1941) killed tens of thousands in Britain; the firebombing of **Tokyo** on 9-10 March 1945 killed an estimated 100 000 people in one night; and each atomic bomb destroyed a city in seconds. For the first time in a modern war, civilian deaths grew to outnumber military deaths.

Significance. The significance of the difference is this: by 1945, being a civilian no longer kept you out of the firing line. That change forced the world, after 1945, to write new rules for the protection of civilians - part of the work of the new United Nations (see Section 1C).

Rules were not new, though. Figure 2 shows two primary sources - documents made at the time - that tried to limit one horrible weapon: poison gas.

Rules about poison-gas weapons: two primary sources

Written before 1914, and after it — what they banned, and what they could not stop

Think about: these rules existed before 1915 — yet gas was used at Ypres that year. What does that suggest about the limits of written rules in wartime?

Hague Declaration (IV, 2) concerning Asphyxiating Gases

The Hague, 29 July 1899 — signed by the major powers, including Germany and Britain

"The Contracting Powers agree to abstain from the use of projectiles the sole object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or harmful gases."

In plain words: the great powers promised not to fire shells built only to spread choking or harmful gases. 'Asphyxiating' means suffocating. (Modern wording - the 1899 legal text pairs it with a formal word meaning harmful.)

Source: Hague Declaration (IV, 2), 29 July 1899, in The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Geneva Protocol on gas and germ weapons

Geneva, 17 June 1925 — drawn up after gas weapons were used in World War I

"the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices"

This protocol extended the ban to chemical and germ (bacteriological) weapons in war between states. It did not ban making or storing them, and it did not cover civil wars.

Source: Geneva Protocol, 17 June 1925; scope summarised in 'Chemical weapons in World War I', Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.

Primary source = a document or object made at the time being studied.

Two primary-source cards: the 1899 Hague Declaration, in which the contracting powers agree to abstain from projectiles whose sole object is the diffusion of asphyxiating or harmful gases (modern wording), and the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which banned the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and germ methods, with a think-about prompt about the limits of written rules in wartime

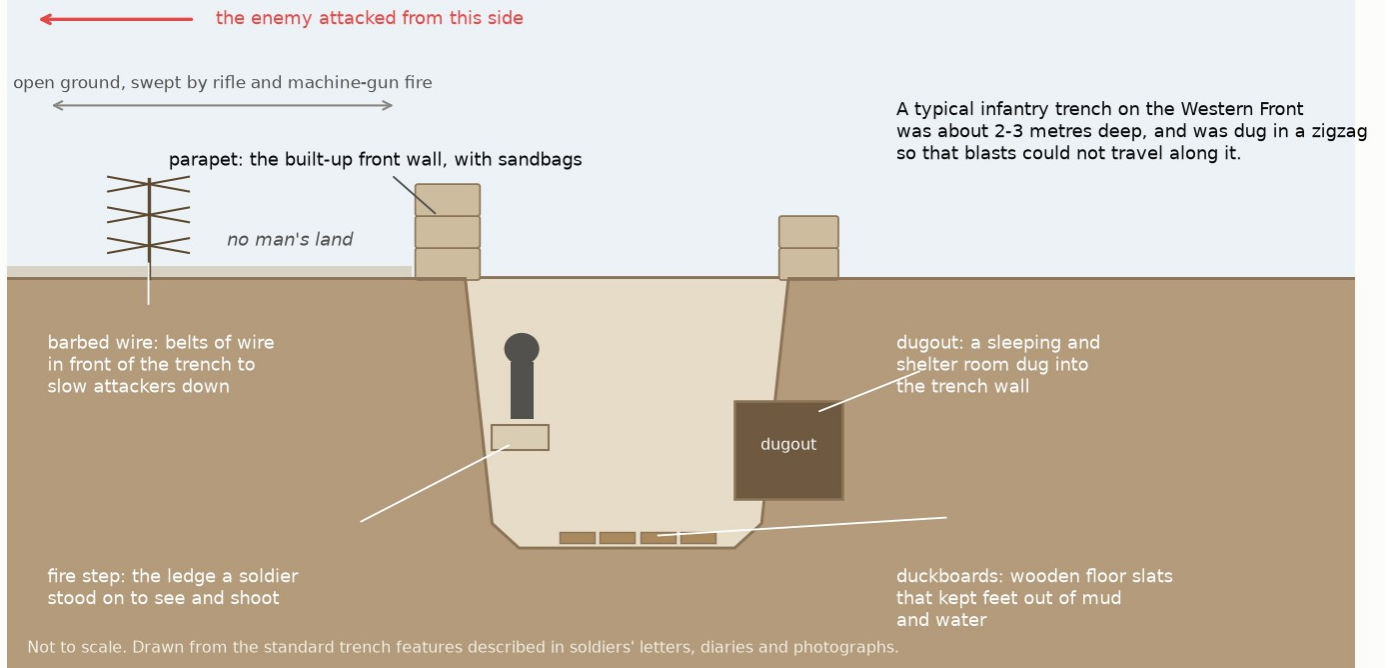
The 1899 Hague Declaration promised not to use shells built only to spread choking gases - yet in 1915 gas was used on a large scale anyway. The 1925 Geneva Protocol then banned the **use** of gas and germ weapons in war between states, but not the making or storing of them. A rule on paper is a change in law; whether people obey it is a different question. This pair of sources is also a warning about reading sources: what a document **promises** is not the same as what happened.

3. Trench warfare and new technology, 1914-1918 (E02)

By late 1914 the Western Front in France and Belgium had become two long lines of trenches facing each other across **no man's land** - the empty ground between the armies. When defence (machine guns, artillery, barbed wire) was stronger than attack, the result was **stalemate**: neither side could break through, and battles became long slogs of artillery and loss. Figure 3 shows the trench system that stalemate produced.

Inside a Western Front trench (cross-section)

Australian infantry joined the Western Front in March 1916 and lived in trenches like this one



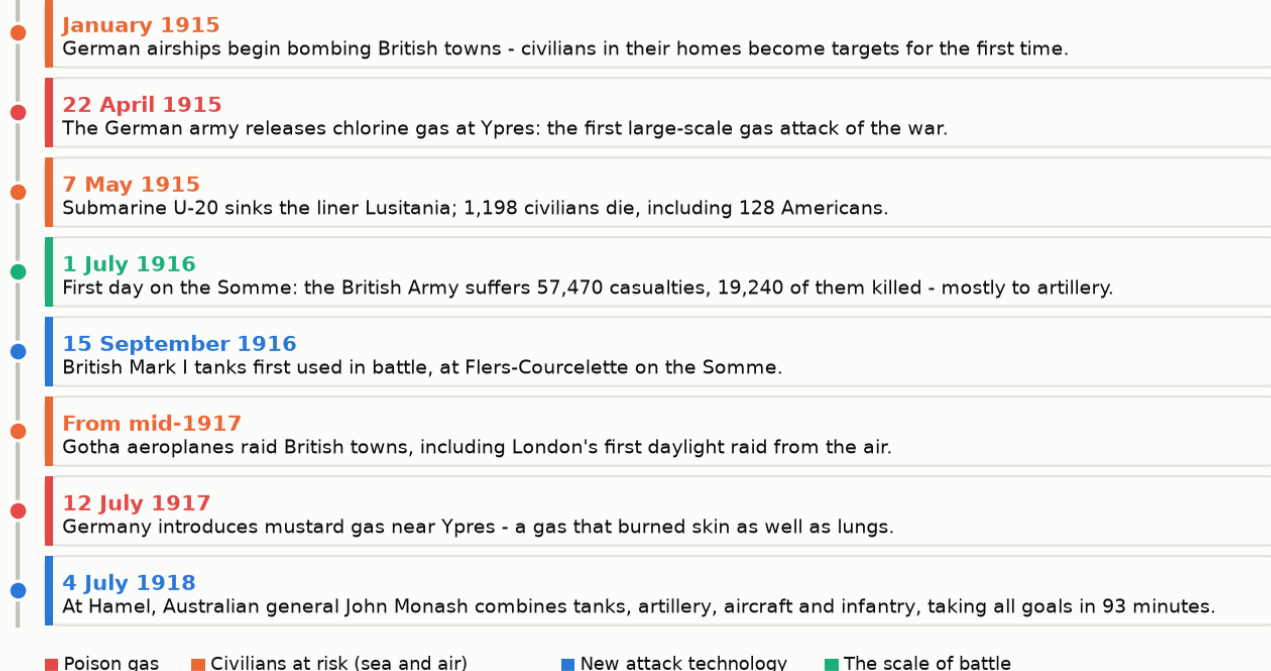
A labelled cross-section of a Western Front trench, showing the parapet of sandbags on the enemy-facing side, belts of barbed wire in no man's land, the fire step a soldier stood on to shoot, duckboards on the trench floor, and a dugout sleeping room, with a note that a typical trench was about 2-3 metres deep and dug in a zigzag

Australian infantry joined the Western Front in March 1916. At **Fromelles** on 19-20 July 1916, over 5 500 Australians became casualties in twenty-four hours - the worst loss by a single Australian division in the war (see Section 3E). In all, more than 60 000 Australians died in World War I.

Stalemate drove both sides to invent their way out of it. Figure 4 places eight real, dated developments in order.

New weapons and methods, 1914-1918

Eight real, dated developments show how the nature of war changed during World War I itself



Casualties include killed, wounded and missing. Dates and figures as listed in the sources at the end of this section.

A vertical timeline of eight dated developments in World War I: German airship raids on British towns from January 1915; the first large-scale gas attack at Ypres on 22 April 1915; the sinking of the Lusitania on 7 May 1915 with 1 198 dead; the first day of the Somme on 1 July 1916 with 57 470 British casualties; the first use of tanks at Flers-Courcelette on 15 September 1916; Gotha aeroplane raids from mid-1917; the first use of mustard gas on 12 July 1917; and Monash's combined-arms battle at Hamel on 4 July 1918

Read the timeline as an argument about change:

- **Poison gas** (chlorine at Ypres in April 1915, then gases deadlier still, and from July 1917 mustard gas that burned the skin as well as the lungs) made the air itself a weapon. About 1.3 million people became gas casualties in the war, and about 90 000 died.
- **Tanks** (the British Mark I, first used on 15 September 1916) were slow - about 6 km/h - and unreliable: of 49 tanks sent forward at Flers-Courcelette, only nine reached the German lines. But they pointed at the future: a machine that could cross no man's land under fire.
- **Aeroplanes and airships** took war into the sky and brought civilians into it (Part 2 above).
- **Artillery** caused most casualties of the war; the first day of the Somme (57 470 British casualties, 19 240 of them killed) was above all an artillery story.

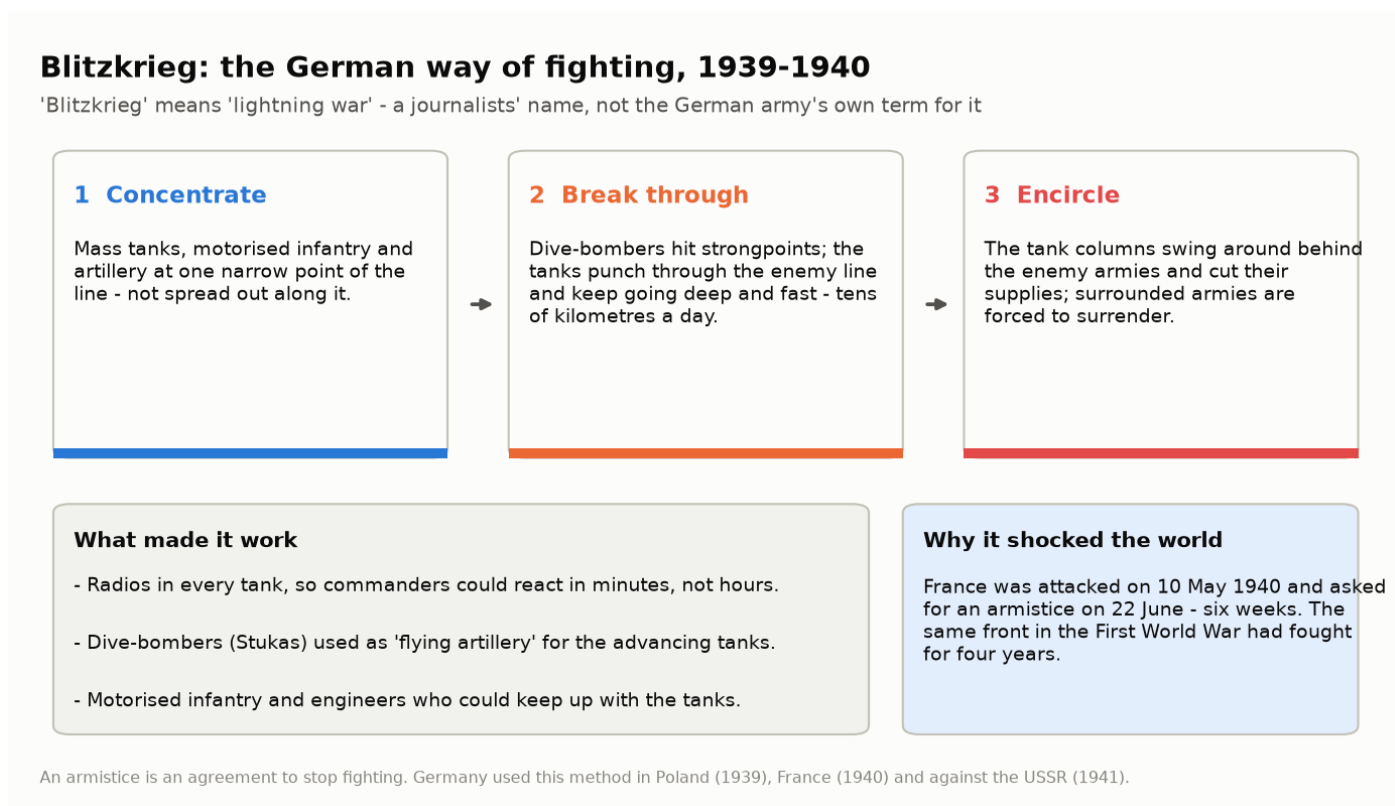
And at the other end of the war, on 4 July 1918, Australian general **John Monash** combined tanks, artillery, aircraft and infantry at **Hamel**, taking every objective in 93 minutes. Hamel showed what the new technology could do when it was used together - a taste of the warfare of 1940.

Continuity and change, 1914-1918. Within one war, the nature of warfare changed: gas, tanks and aircraft appeared, and civilians came under attack from sea and air. What continued was the stalemate of the Western Front, and the enormous cost of artillery war: most of the dead were still soldiers, killed in battles between armies.

4. The Second World War: Blitzkrieg, air power and whole societies at war (E03)

Elaboration E03 asks you to evaluate the changing aspects of warfare in World War II: Blitzkrieg, air power, bombing campaigns, the mass mobilisation of society, the targeting of civilians, and atomic weapons.

Twenty-two years after the Western Front locked into trenches, Germany broke the stalemate with a new method. Figure 5 shows it in three stages.



A three-stage concept diagram of Blitzkrieg: concentrate tanks, motorised infantry and artillery at one narrow point; break through with dive-bombers and keep going deep and fast; encircle the enemy armies and cut their supplies, with a list of what made it work (radios in every tank, dive-bombers as flying artillery, motorised infantry) and the fact that France, attacked on 10 May 1940, asked for an armistice on 22 June

Blitzkrieg ("lightning war" - a journalists' name, not the German army's own term) used radios, tanks and aircraft together to move faster than the enemy could react. France, attacked on 10 May 1940, asked for an armistice on 22 June - six weeks, on the same ground where 1914-1918 had fought for four years. The stalemate of the First World War had become the rush of the second.

Air power then carried the war to the cities, as Part 2 showed. Figure 6 compares five bombing campaigns, 1940-1945.

Air power and the cities: five bombing campaigns, 1940-1945

Each campaign pushed the targeting of civilians further than the one before

Campaign and dates	Who carried it out	Estimated civilians killed	What it showed about the new warfare
The Blitz (7 Sep 1940 - 16 May 1941)	The German Luftwaffe bombed London and other British cities, mostly by night.	c. 40,000 in Britain	Whole cities became a battlefield: shelters, radar, night fighters and the evacuation of children.
Hamburg, Operation Gomorrah (from 24 Jul 1943)	RAF Bomber Command (with Australian aircrew) and the US Eighth Air Force.	c. 37,000 (34,000-40,000)	A firestorm: joined fires made their own weather and burned a city in days.
Tokyo, Operation Meetinghouse (9-10 Mar 1945)	334 US B-29 bombers dropped firebombs on a city of wooden homes.	c. 100,000 in one night	The deadliest single air raid of the war - more than any one raid in Europe.
Hiroshima (6 Aug 1945)	One US B-29, the Enola Gay, dropped one atomic bomb, Little Boy.	90,000-140,000 by end of 1945	One aircraft now did the work of a whole raid; one city was destroyed at once.
Nagasaki (9 Aug 1945)	One US B-29, Bockscar, dropped one atomic bomb, Fat Man.	60,000-80,000	A second city, three days later; Japan announced surrender on 15 August.

Death tolls are historians' estimates; sources are listed at the end of this section. Australian aircrew flew in RAF Bomber Command.

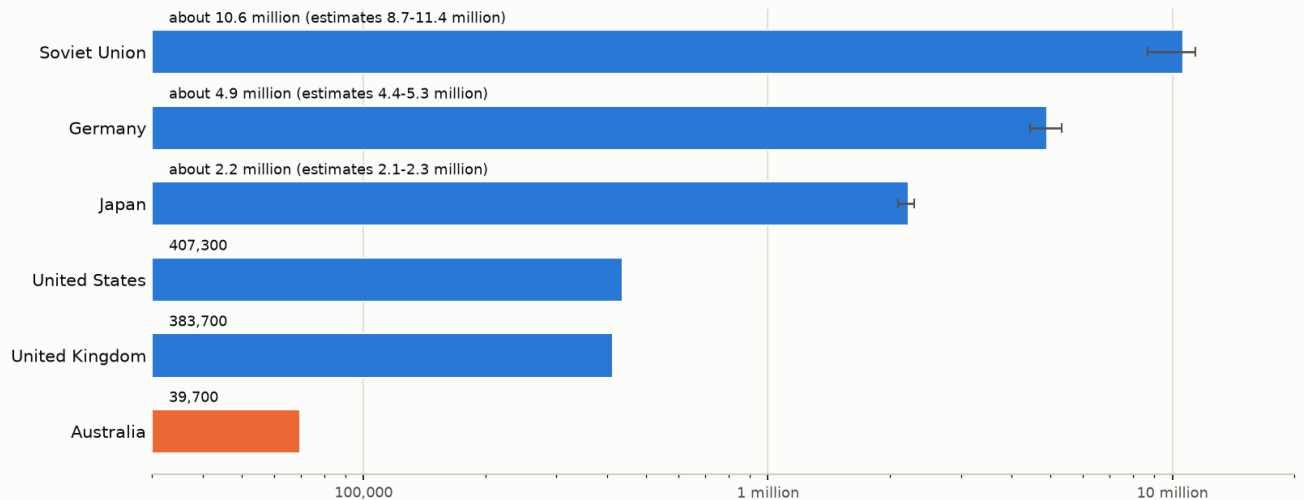
A comparison table of five bombing campaigns: the Blitz on Britain from 7 September 1940 to 16 May 1941; Hamburg (Operation Gomorrah) from 24 July 1943 with about 37 000 dead; Tokyo (Operation Meetinghouse) on 9-10 March 1945 with about 100 000 dead in one night; Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 with 90 000-140 000 dead by the end of 1945; and Nagasaki on 9 August 1945 with 60 000-80 000 dead

Notice the direction of travel: each campaign killed more civilians, faster, than the one before. At Hamburg in July-August 1943 the joined fires created a **firestorm** - a fire so large it makes its own weather and wind. At Tokyo in March 1945, 334 B-29 bombers burned about 100 000 people in one night. Then one aircraft did the work of a whole raid. Australian aircrew flew in RAF Bomber Command throughout: about 13 000 Australians served in it, and 3 486 were killed - close to 20 per cent of all Australian combat deaths in the war.

The scale of the whole war dwarfs the First World War. Figure 7 shows military deaths for six countries - and the footnote makes the bigger point: worldwide, **50-55 million civilians** died, more than half of all deaths in the war. In 1914-1918 most of the dead had been soldiers; in 1939-1945 most were civilians. That single fact is the clearest measure of how the nature of warfare had changed.

Military dead in the Second World War: six countries

Estimates, on a log scale so that small and large losses can share one chart



Worldwide, 50-55 million civilians also died - more than half of all deaths in the war; in the First World War most of the dead had been soldiers. Australia (orange): 39,700 dead, of almost one million who served.

A horizontal bar chart on a log scale of military dead in the Second World War for six countries: Soviet Union about 10.6 million, Germany about 4.9 million, Japan about 2.2 million, United States 407 300, United Kingdom 383 700, and Australia 39 700 shown in orange, with a note that worldwide 50-55 million civilians also died

Finally, **mass mobilisation**: World War II was fought by whole societies, not just armies. Almost one million Australians served in uniform; at home, factories turned to war production, goods were rationed, and women entered war work in numbers never seen before. The same was true, on a far larger scale, in every major fighting country. When a whole society makes the war effort, the old line between “fighters” and “civilians” blurs - which is one reason civilians came to be targeted (Part 2).

Continuity and change, 1939-1945. What changed: speed (Blitzkrieg), air power over cities, and the drawing in of whole societies. What continued: the same aim - to break the enemy’s will - and the old truth that ordinary people carry the cost.

5. The atomic bomb: the race, and the decision (E04)

Elaboration E04 asks you to examine the atomic-bomb race and analyse why the bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Figure 8 follows the race from a laboratory discovery to two destroyed cities.

The atomic-bomb race, 1938-1945

From a laboratory discovery in Berlin to two cities destroyed in Japan

- **December 1938**
In Berlin, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann split the uranium atom; Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch explain the physics - fission releases huge energy.
- **August 1939**
Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard warn the United States that Germany may be trying to build such a bomb.
- **June 1942**
President Roosevelt approves a crash program; General Leslie Groves is put in charge. It becomes the Manhattan Project.
- **1942-1946**
The Manhattan Project employs about 130,000 people at its peak and costs about US\$2 billion; J. Robert Oppenheimer runs the design lab at Los Alamos.
- **16 July 1945**
The Trinity test in New Mexico: the world's first atomic explosion.
- **July 1945**
A Target Committee shortlists five Japanese cities, including Kyoto; Kyoto is removed and Nagasaki is added to the list.
- **6 and 9 August 1945**
B-29s drop Little Boy (uranium) on Hiroshima and Fat Man (plutonium) on Nagasaki.

Some of its own scientists objected

In June 1945, a committee of the bomb's own scientists, chaired by James Franck and largely written by Eugene Rabinowitch, urged that the bomb be demonstrated on a barren island before representatives of the United Nations - not used on a city. The government's Interim Committee answered that it could see 'no alternative to the use of the bomb'.

The two bombs

Little Boy: a 'gun-type' design that fired one piece of uranium into another, with the power of about 20 000 tonnes of ordinary high explosive. Fat Man: a plutonium bomb set off by crushing its core with explosives.

Fission = splitting a heavy atom, which releases energy. The United Nations was founded in 1945 (see Section 1C).

A vertical flow of the atomic-bomb race: nuclear fission discovered in Berlin in December 1938 by Hahn and Strassmann and explained by Meitner and Frisch; the Einstein-Szilard letter of August 1939; Roosevelt approving a crash program in June 1942 under General Groves; the Manhattan Project of 1942-1946 employing about 130 000 people at a cost of about US\$2 billion with Oppenheimer running Los Alamos; the Trinity test of 16 July 1945; the Target Committee's list of five cities with Kyoto removed and Nagasaki added; and the bombings of 6 and 9 August 1945, with a side card on the Franck Report of June 1945, in which some of the bomb's own scientists urged a demonstration rather than use on a city

The science began in Germany in December 1938, when Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann split the uranium atom (**fission** - splitting a heavy atom, which releases enormous energy), explained by Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch. Fearing a German bomb, Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard warned the United States in August 1939. The American answer became the **Manhattan Project**: about 130 000 people at its peak, about US\$2 billion, secret cities, and a design laboratory at Los Alamos run by J. Robert Oppenheimer. The **Trinity** test in New Mexico on 16 July 1945 was the world's first atomic explosion. Germany had surrendered in May; Japan had not.

Why, then, were the bombs used? Figure 9 gives you two primary sources to start from.

Two sources on the decision to drop the bomb

What the Allies promised, and how President Truman announced the bomb

Think about: Truman calls Hiroshima 'an important Japanese Army base'. The Potsdam Declaration promises Japan will not be 'destroyed as a nation'. How does each source choose its words - and why?

The Potsdam Declaration

26 July 1945 - issued by the United States, Britain and China

"We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals. ... The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction."

An ultimatum calling on Japan to surrender unconditionally. Japan's leaders rejected it. The dots mark out a sentence that listed how Japan's armed forces would be treated.

Source: Potsdam Declaration, 26 July 1945, Wikisource, retrieved 25 August 2026.

President Harry Truman's statement

Washington, 6 August 1945 - as the Enola Gay was flying home

"Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. ... It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum."

Truman's first sentence describes Hiroshima as an army base, and he added that the one bomb equalled 20 000 tons of ordinary high explosive. The city was also home to hundreds of thousands of civilians. How a source describes things is part of what we analyse.

Source: Harry S. Truman, statement of 6 August 1945, Harry S. Truman Library, retrieved 25 August 2026.

An ultimatum is a final set of terms, with a stated consequence if it is refused.

Two primary-source cards: the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945, which promises that Japan will not be destroyed as a nation but that the alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction, and President Truman's statement of 6 August 1945 calling Hiroshima an important Japanese Army base and saying the one bomb had more power than 20 000 tons of ordinary high explosive, with a think-about prompt about word choice

The Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945 called on Japan to surrender unconditionally; Japan's leaders rejected it. Truman's statement of 6 August then announced the bomb. Historians have debated the decision ever since. Figure 10 states the two main views at their strongest.

Why were the atomic bombs dropped? Two views historians argue

Each view is stated at its strongest - a fair debate needs both sides

View 1: the bombs ended the war sooner and saved lives

1. An invasion of Japan (Operation Downfall) was planned for 1 November 1945; US estimates of the casualties ran from 220,000 to several million.
2. Japan had rejected the Potsdam ultimatum and showed no sign of surrendering unconditionally.
3. The war was killing thousands of people every week; ending it sooner saved lives on every side, including Japan's.
4. A demonstration blast might not have convinced the hardliners in Tokyo, and only two bombs existed in August 1945.

View 2: there were alternatives to bombing cities

1. The Franck Report of June 1945, from the bomb's own scientists, urged a demonstration before the bomb was used on a city.
2. Japan was already blockaded and bombed; some historians argue it was close to surrender, especially after the Soviet Union declared war on 8 August.
3. The bomb could have been demonstrated, or used on a military target with warning given to civilians.
4. Some historians see other motives at work: revenge for Pearl Harbor, and a wish to warn the Soviet Union before the post-war settlement.

Many historians now stress the 'twin shocks' - the two bombs and the Soviet declaration of war of 8 August 1945 - as the reasons Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945.

A two-column diagram of the historians' debate: four reasons for the view that the bombs ended the war sooner and saved lives (an invasion of Japan was planned with US casualty estimates from 220 000 to several million; Japan had rejected the Potsdam ultimatum; the war was killing thousands every week; a demonstration might not have convinced hardliners) and four reasons for the view that there were alternatives (the Franck Report urged a demonstration; Japan was already blockaded and close to surrender, especially after the Soviet declaration of war; the bomb could have been demonstrated or used on a military target; some historians see revenge and a wish to warn the Soviet Union), with a footnote on the twin shocks

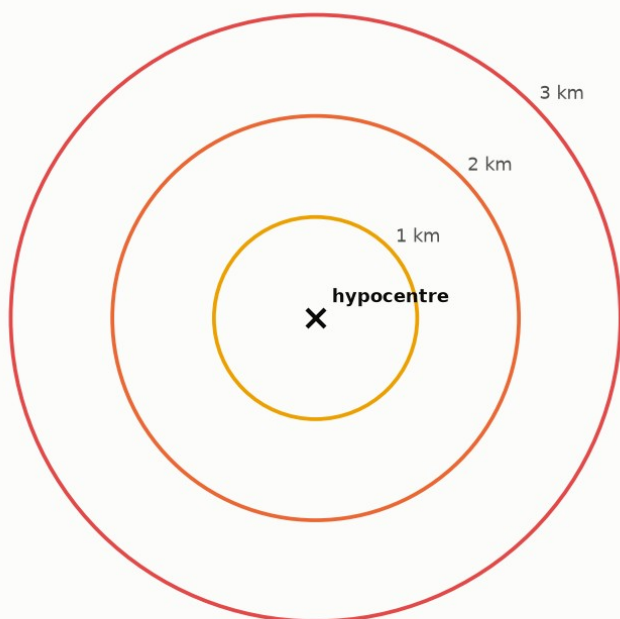
Two facts complicate either simple story. First, an invasion of Japan - Operation Downfall - was planned for 1 November 1945, and American estimates of the casualties ran from 220 000 to several million; the bombs made that invasion unnecessary. Second, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945, between the two bombs. Many historians now stress the **"twin shocks"** - the bombs and the Soviet entry - as the reasons Japan announced surrender on 15 August 1945, and they still debate the bombs' exact part. A fair analysis holds both views in mind, uses the evidence, and says which it finds stronger and why.

6. Consequences: health, environment, memory (E05)

Elaboration E05 asks you to investigate what followed the atomic bombings, including short- and long-term effects on human health, and on the two cities and the areas around them. Figure 11 shows what one bomb did at ground level.

What one atomic bomb did to a city

Ranges are drawn from the hypocentre - the point in the air directly above the explosion



Blast

A shock wave flattened most buildings within about 2 km; roughly 70% of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed.

Heat

A flash of heat caused burns and blindness kilometres away, and set clothing, wood and paper alight in seconds.

Fires

Joined fires made a firestorm; rescue parties could not reach the centre of the city until the next day.

Radiation

People caught in the open took a dose of radiation; many developed radiation sickness in the following weeks.

Black rain

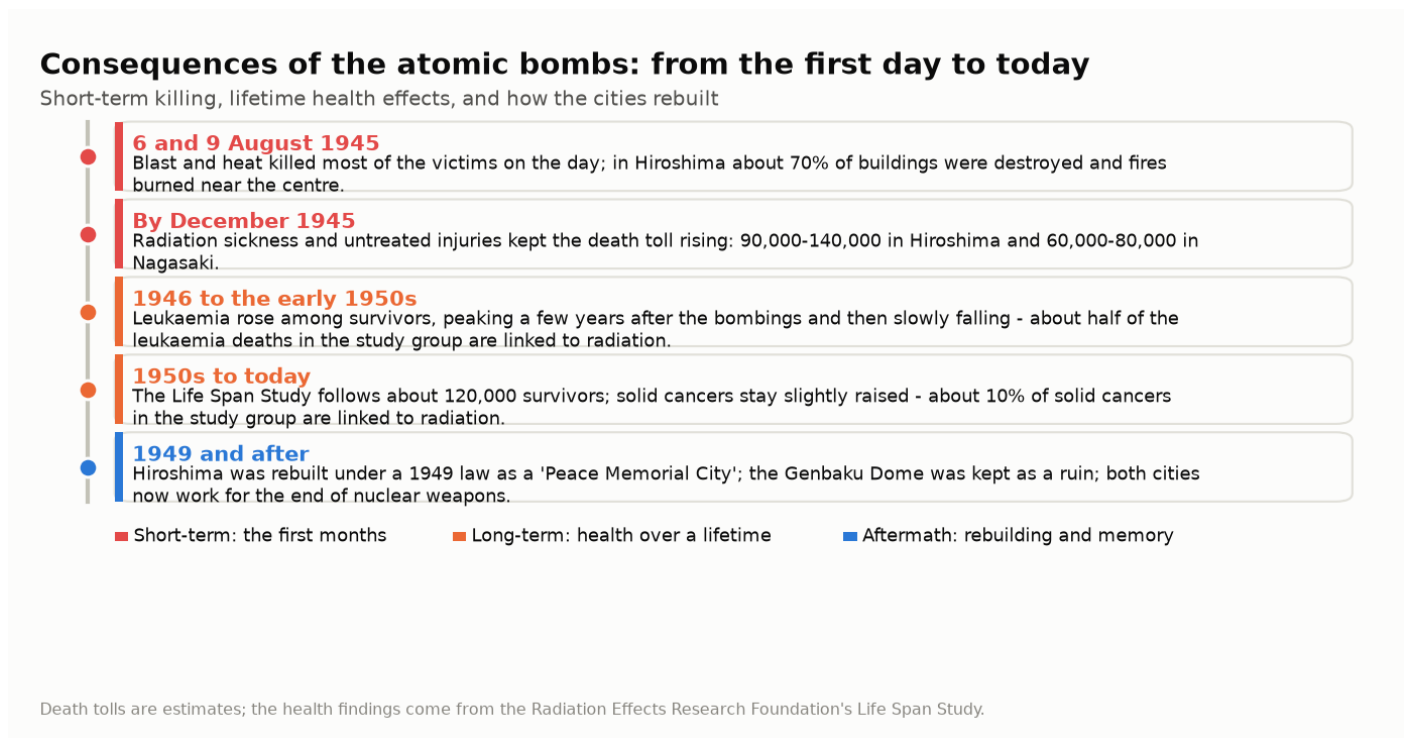
Rain black with soot and fallout fell on survivors and carried contamination beyond the ruined area.

Effects are drawn from the Radiation Effects Research Foundation's studies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fallout = radioactive dust carried by the wind.

A concentric-range diagram of what one atomic bomb did to a city, with rings at 1, 2 and 3 kilometres from the hypocentre and cards for blast (most buildings flattened within about 2 km, roughly 70 per cent of Hiroshima's buildings destroyed), heat (burns and blindness kilometres away), fires (a firestorm the rescue parties could not reach until the next day), radiation (radiation sickness in the following weeks) and black rain (rain black with soot and fallout carrying contamination beyond the ruined area)

The **hypocentre** is the point in the air directly above the explosion. From it, blast flattened about 70 per cent of Hiroshima's buildings within about 2 km; heat caused burns kilometres away; fires joined into firestorms; and radiation and **black rain** (rain black with soot and **fallout** - radioactive dust) carried harm beyond the ruined area.

The consequences ran for decades. Figure 12 places them in order.



A vertical timeline of consequences: blast and heat killing most victims on 6 and 9 August 1945; radiation sickness and injuries raising the death toll to 90 000-140 000 in Hiroshima and 60 000-80 000 in Nagasaki by December 1945; leukaemia rising among survivors from 1946 to the early 1950s; the Life Span Study of about 120 000 survivors from the 1950s to today showing slightly raised solid-cancer rates; and the rebuilding of Hiroshima under a 1949 law as a Peace Memorial City with the Genbaku Dome kept as a ruin

The short-term cost: by the end of 1945, an estimated 90 000-140 000 people had died in Hiroshima and 60 000-80 000 in Nagasaki - most of them civilians. The long-term cost: survivors (called **hibakusha** in Japan) showed raised rates of leukaemia within a few years, and slightly raised rates of solid cancers across their lifetimes; the Radiation Effects Research Foundation's Life Span Study still follows about 120 000 of them today, and it is the world's main source of knowledge about radiation and health. The environmental cost ran from the burnt, flattened cities and contaminated soil to the slow work of rebuilding.

And the memory: Hiroshima was rebuilt under a 1949 law as a "Peace Memorial City", and the ruined shell of an exhibition building - the **Genbaku Dome** - was kept standing on purpose, as a warning. Both cities now campaign for the end of nuclear weapons. The bomb that ended one war began a new fear: that the next war between great powers could end cities everywhere. That fear shaped the Cold War and the United Nations' work on controlling such weapons (see Section 1C).

7. The balance sheet: what changed, and what did not

What changed, 1914-1945: - the weapons: from rifle, artillery and the first gas and tanks to firestorms and atomic bombs; - the speed: from four years of stalemate to six-week campaigns; - the target: from armies in the field to whole cities, until civilians became most of the dead; - the fighters: from professional armies and volunteers to whole societies mobilised.

What did not change: - the aim: to break the enemy's will to fight; - the cost: ordinary people - soldiers and civilians - carried the loss in both wars; - the pattern: each new weapon produced fear, then rules, then arguments about whether the rules would hold (gas in 1915, the bomb after 1945).

That balance sheet **is** the answer to VC2HH10K18: the nature of warfare changed utterly in its means, and continued in its ends and its human cost.

Worked examples

Worked inquiry 1 - Comparing civilian targeting, and explaining why the difference matters (E01)

The question. Compare the targeting of civilian populations across the two world wars, and explain the significance of these differences.

Source - Figure 1 above (comparison table). Figures for the Lusitania and for Britain's air-raid dead are from the sources listed at the end of this section.

Working	Comment
Step 1: describe World War I.	Civilians suffered mainly from blockades and submarine war (Lusitania, 7 May 1915, 1 198 dead), plus small airship and aeroplane raids (1 414 killed in Britain over the whole war). Most killing happened between armies.
Step 2: describe World War II.	Deliberate bombing of cities became strategy on all sides: the Blitz, Hamburg (about 37 000), Tokyo (about 100 000 in one night), then one atomic bomb per city. Civilian deaths grew to outnumber military deaths.
Step 3: find the differences.	Scale (thousands to tens of thousands per attack); intent (raids were a sideshow in WWI, a planned strategy in WWII); technology (airships to B-29s to atomic bombs).
Step 4: check the continuities.	In both wars civilians also suffered from hunger and blockade; in both, ordinary people carried the cost.
Step 5: explain the significance.	The difference meant that by 1945 civilian status no longer kept people out the firing line; that forced new rules for protecting civilians after the war (United Nations, 1945), and it made the atomic bomb look like a next step rather than a new kind of crime to some wartime planners - which is exactly why the difference matters.

Worked inquiry 2 - Why were the atomic bombs dropped? Weighing two views (E04)

The question. Analyse why the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Use the sources and reach a stated position.

Sources - Figures 9 and 10 above (Potsdam Declaration; Truman's statement; the two views), and the Franck Report card in Figure 8.

Working	Comment
Step 1: state the view that the bombs ended the war sooner.	Japan rejected the Potsdam ultimatum; an invasion (Operation Downfall) was planned for 1 November 1945 with US casualty estimates from 220 000 to several million; ending the war sooner saved lives on every side. Truman's statement of 6 August speaks in exactly this way.
Step 2: state the view that there were alternatives.	The Franck Report (June 1945) urged a demonstration first; Japan was blockaded and, some historians argue, close to surrender - especially after the Soviet Union declared war on 8 August; a demonstration or a warned military target were options.
Step 3: weigh them.	View 1 explains the decision as it was made in 1945, with the evidence leaders actually had. View 2 explains the doubts of some of the bomb's own scientists, and gains strength from the Soviet entry on 8 August. Each

Working	Comment
Step 4: use the “twin shocks”.	view struggles with the other’s best fact. The bombs and the Soviet declaration of war landed within three days of each other; Japan announced surrender on 15 August. Many historians now treat the pair together rather than crediting one cause alone.
Step 5: reach a stated position.	Example position: the bombs were used chiefly to end the war before an invasion - View 1 - but the speed of surrender after 8 August shows the Soviet shock mattered too, so View 2 fairly limits how much one cause can claim. State your own position in the same way: view, evidence, concession.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Question 1 (uses Figure 3). a Name the feature a soldier stood on to see and shoot, and the feature that kept his feet out of the mud. b Explain in one sentence each how the parapet and the dugout answered two different dangers. c Why was a trench dug in a zigzag?

Question 2 (uses Figure 4). a Place these four developments in order with dates: first use of tanks; first large-scale gas attack; sinking of the Lusitania; Monash’s battle of Hamel. b Which two developments in Figure 4 put **civilians** at risk rather than soldiers? Name them. c Which development in Figure 4 points most clearly toward the warfare of 1940? Give one reason.

Question 3 (uses Figure 1). a Choose two rows of the table and state, in your own words, what changed between the wars. b Which row shows a **continuity** as well as a change? Explain in one sentence. c Explain the significance of ONE difference you named in part a. Use the word “significance” and give a reason, not just a restatement.

Question 4 (uses Figures 5 and 6). a Name the three stages of Blitzkrieg in order. b The Western Front of 1914-1918 was a stalemate. Which stage of Blitzkrieg most directly broke that old problem, and why? c The Tokyo row of Figure 6 says 334 B-29s killed about 100 000 people in one night. The Hiroshima row says one aircraft destroyed a city. In one sentence: what had air power become by August 1945?

Question 5 (uses Figure 7). a Read the chart: give the Australian figure and the Soviet figure. b The chart uses a log scale. In one sentence, say why a log scale is needed here. c The footnote says 50-55 million civilians died in World War II, more than half of all deaths, while in World War I most of the dead were soldiers. Which change in the nature of warfare does this measure?

Question 6 (uses Figures 11 and 12). a Name four of the five immediate effects shown in Figure 11. b Give one short-term health effect and one long-term health effect from Figure 12. c Give one environmental impact of the bombs, and one way the cities turned their destruction into memory.

Unscaffolded

Question 7. “The targeting of civilians was the biggest change in the nature of warfare between the two world wars.” Write a paragraph of 6-8 sentences agreeing or disagreeing. Use at least two dated pieces of evidence from this section, name one change that you think was bigger (or say why none was), and include one fair sentence for the other side.

Question 8. Two students argue. “New technology changed warfare more between 1914 and 1945 than anything else.” “No - what changed most was who war targeted: technology only served that change.” Choose one claim and argue for it in a paragraph, using at least three developments from Figures 4, 5 and 6. Concede, in one sentence, the strongest point of the other claim.

Question 9. A historian writes: “The atomic bomb was not a new kind of war. It was the bombing of cities made instant - the last step on the road that ran from the Blitz to Tokyo, not a break with it.” Evaluate this claim in a

paragraph. Use Figure 6 and Figures 11-12, and refer to at least one way the bomb was continuous with earlier bombing and at least one way it was a break.

Question 10. Choose TWO developments from this section (for example: poison gas, tanks, air power, the atomic bomb). For each, trace what changed and what stayed the same between 1914 and 1945, and end with one sentence stating the single most important continuity across the whole period.

Source-based inquiry

Read the two sources below, then answer the questions that follow.

Source 1 - Hague Declaration (IV, 2), signed at The Hague on 29 July 1899 by the major powers, including Germany and Britain, in modern wording: “The Contracting Powers agree to abstain from the use of projectiles the sole object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or harmful gases.” (“Asphyxiating” means suffocating; the 1899 legal text pairs it with a second formal word meaning harmful, put in modern wording here. The exact original is in the Avalon Project, source 1 below.)

Source 2 - Statement by President Harry Truman of the United States, 6 August 1945, announced as the Enola Gay flew home from Hiroshima: “Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. ... It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum.” (Between the dots, Truman said the one bomb had more power than 20 000 tons of the ordinary high explosive used in shells - in modern wording, the work of a whole raid in one weapon.)

a **Origin.** When was each source made, and by whom? b **Purpose.** What was each source made to do? (A promise and an announcement are both doing work.) c **Content.** Source 1 promises to abstain from one thing. State, in your own words, exactly what. Source 2 gives two reasons for using the bomb. State them in your own words. d **Perspective.** Source 2 describes Hiroshima as “an important Japanese Army base”. What does that choice of words hide? Whose point of view does the source carry? e **Usefulness.** Give two ways a historian today could use these sources as evidence, even though one is a promise and the other is an announcement made to persuade. f **Limits.** Give one thing these two sources cannot tell a historian about the nature of warfare, 1899-1945. g In one or two sentences: Source 1 was made in 1899, and gas was used on a large scale from 1915. What does that pair of facts show about the limits of written rules in wartime?

Answers

Q1. a The fire step; the duckboards. b The parapet (built-up front wall with sandbags) shielded heads from rifle fire and shell splinters; the dugout gave shelter from shelling and a place to sleep. c A zigzag stopped blasts and bullets travelling along the trench if a shell fell in or the enemy got in.

Q2. a First large-scale gas attack, 22 April 1915; Lusitania sunk, 7 May 1915; first use of tanks, 15 September 1916; Hamel, 4 July 1918. b The airship raids (from January 1915) and the sinking of the Lusitania (a passenger ship); the Gotha raids also qualify. c Hamel: it combined tanks, artillery, aircraft and infantry into one fast plan - the combined-arms method of 1940 - taking all objectives in 93 minutes.

Q3. a Answers will vary; for example: civilians killed in Britain by bombing rose from 1 414 in the whole of WWI to more than 40 000 in WWII; and targeting changed from limited raids to a planned strategy of city bombing. b “Main dangers to civilians”: blockade hunger continued in both wars (continuity) while the means of attack changed (change). c Significance must be a consequence, e.g.: because civilians became deliberate targets, the world after 1945 had to write new rules protecting civilians - the difference changed what states agreed war may do.

Q4. a Concentrate; break through; encircle. b Break through (with concentrate behind it): tanks and dive-bombers punching through and keeping moving restored movement to a war that trenches had frozen - France fell in six weeks where 1914-18 took four years. c Air power had become capable of destroying a whole city in one raid - and then, with the atomic bomb, in one aircraft’s single run.

Q5. a Australia 39 700; Soviet Union about 10.6 million (estimates 8.7-11.4 million). b The values range from tens of thousands to over ten million, so on a normal scale Australia’s bar would be invisible; a log scale lets small and large losses share one chart. c The change from a war in which most of the dead were soldiers to one in which most of the dead were civilians - the targeting of civilians (Part 2).

Q6. a Any four of: blast, heat, fires, radiation, black rain. b Short-term: radiation sickness and injuries raising the death toll to 90 000-140 000 (Hiroshima) and 60 000-80 000 (Nagasaki) by December 1945. Long-term: raised leukaemia rates from 1946, then slightly raised solid-cancer rates across lifetimes. c Environmental: fires and black rain contaminated soil and surrounding areas (or: the cities were flattened and burnt). Memory: Hiroshima rebuilt as a “Peace Memorial City” under a 1949 law; the Genbaku Dome kept as a ruin.

Q7. Should include: a stated position; two dated pieces of evidence (for example, 1 414 vs more than 40 000 killed in Britain; Tokyo 9-10 March 1945 about 100 000; Hiroshima 6 August 1945); a named rival change if disagreeing (for example mass mobilisation, or speed/Blitzkrieg); and one fair sentence to the other side.

Q8. Either claim is arguable. The paragraph must use three developments (for example gas at Ypres 22 April 1915, tanks 15 September 1916, Blitzkrieg May-June 1940, Tokyo March 1945) and concede one sentence. Technology claim: each new means (gas, tank, aircraft, bomb) opened a new kind of attack. Targeting claim: the same machines could have fought armies; it was the choice to aim at cities that made civilians most of the dead.

Q9. A good answer finds both halves. Continuity: the bomb continued the logic of city bombing (Blitz to Hamburg to Tokyo) - aiming at civilian will, with ever bigger single raids. Break: one aircraft, one weapon, tens of thousands dead in a day, plus radiation effects that ran for decades (leukaemia, cancers, black rain) - a difference in kind as well as scale. The position must be stated and the evidence used.

Q10. Answers will vary. Each development needs one change and one continuity (for example gas: changed by making air a weapon, continued in that it still needed armies to hold ground - and was then banned in use but kept in store). The closing continuity should be of the section's kind: the aim (breaking the enemy's will) or the cost (ordinary people carry it).

Source inquiry. a Source 1: 1899, the major powers at The Hague, including Germany and Britain. Source 2: 6 August 1945, President Truman of the United States. b Source 1: to bind the signers not to use gas projectiles - a rule. Source 2: to announce the bomb and justify it to the world and to the American public. c Source 1: not to fire shells whose only purpose is spreading choking or harmful gases. Source 2: the bomb ended the war and spared destruction; and Japan's leaders had rejected the Potsdam ultimatum. d It hides the hundreds of thousands of civilians who lived there; the source carries the American wartime government's point of view. e Any two of: evidence of what rules states promised before 1914; evidence of how the bomb was presented and justified in 1945; evidence of the gap between promise and practice (gas after 1899). f They cannot show what the bombs did on the ground in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or what ordinary people on either side experienced - other sources are needed. g Rules on paper do not, by themselves, stop weapons in war; the 1899 promise and the gas of 1915 show that a rule needs power and will behind it to hold.

Fully-worked solutions

Question 7 - model paragraph (agreeing, for demonstration). The targeting of civilians was the biggest change in the nature of warfare between the two world wars, and the figures make the case. In World War I, 1 414 people were killed in Britain by air raid over the whole war, and most of the dead everywhere were soldiers. By World War II that order had reversed: the Blitz killed tens of thousands in Britain; one night's firebombing of Tokyo on 9-10 March 1945 killed about 100 000 civilians; and more than 40 000 civilians were killed by German bombing in Britain alone. Worldwide, 50-55 million civilians died - more than half of all deaths - so the war's centre of gravity had moved from the battlefield to the city. A fair case for another "biggest change" exists: mass mobilisation drew whole societies into war and is a strong rival, and one could argue it caused the targeting rather than just accompanying it. But mobilisation changed who fought; targeting changed who died. I therefore hold the targeting of civilians as the greater change, because it removed the oldest protection in war - not being a soldier.

Question 9 - model paragraph (evaluating the claim). The claim is half right, and the half that is right matters. On the continuity side, the atomic bomb ran on the same road as the earlier bombing of cities: the Blitz made cities a battlefield, Hamburg's firestorm of July-August 1943 made fire itself a weapon, and Tokyo on 9-10 March 1945 killed about 100 000 people with 334 aircraft - so when one B-29 destroyed Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, the idea of destroying a city to break a nation's will was not new. In that sense the bomb was "the last step". But the claim understates the break. One aircraft now did the work of a whole raid; and the bomb added effects no firebomb had - blast that flattened about 70 per cent of a city's buildings in seconds, radiation sickness in the following weeks, leukaemia and cancers across survivors' lifetimes, and black rain that carried contamination beyond the city. The road was the same; the vehicle was different in kind. I therefore evaluate the claim as partly true: it is right about the aim (civilian will) and wrong about the means (a new kind of destruction), and a full account needs both halves.

Source inquiry - model answers (compressed). See the Answers section for the marking points. The single idea worth keeping: a promise (1899) and an announcement (1945) are not records of what happened - they are records of what states wanted to be true, and said so. A historian uses them for exactly that: what rules were promised, how new weapons were justified, and where the gap between promise and practice lay. Their limits (no ground truth from Hiroshima, no Japanese voices, no civilians in Truman's "Army base") tell the historian which other sources to go and find.

Sources

All web sources retrieved 25 August 2026.

1. The Avalon Project, Yale Law School - Hague Declaration (IV, 2) concerning Asphyxiating Gases, 29 July 1899 (Figure 2; Source 1).

2. Geneva Protocol, 17 June 1925; scope (use banned, stockpiles not; war between states only) summarised in Wikipedia, “Chemical weapons in World War I” (Figure 2).
3. Wikipedia, “Chemical weapons in World War I” - chlorine at Second Ypres 22 April 1915, the later and deadlier gases, mustard gas from 12 July 1917, about 1.3 million gas casualties and about 90 000 deaths (Figure 4; Part 3).
4. Wikipedia, “Lusitania” - sinking by U-20 on 7 May 1915, 1 198 dead including 128 Americans (Figures 1 and 4; Part 2).
5. Wikipedia, “Strategic bombing during World War I” - airship raids from January 1915, Gotha raids from 1917, 1 414 killed in Britain (Figures 1 and 4).
6. Wikipedia, “First day on the Somme” - 57 470 British casualties, 19 240 killed, 1 July 1916 (Figure 4).
7. Wikipedia, “Mark I tank” and “Battle of Flers-Courcelette” - first use of tanks 15 September 1916; of 49 tanks, 32 began and 9 reached the German lines; about 6 km/h (Figure 4).
8. Wikipedia, “Battle of Hamel” - Monash’s combined-arms battle, 4 July 1918, objectives taken in 93 minutes (Figure 4; Part 3).
9. Australian War Memorial, *awm.gov.au* - Fromelles casualties (over 5 500 in 24 hours); AIF on the Western Front from March 1916; over 60 000 Australian dead in World War I (Part 3).
10. Wikipedia, “The Blitz” - 7 September 1940 to 16 May 1941; over 40 000 UK civilians killed by German bombing across the war (Figures 1 and 6).
11. Wikipedia, “Operation Gomorrah” - Hamburg from 24 July 1943; 37 000 dead (34 000-40 000); firestorm of 27-28 July (Figure 6).
12. Wikipedia, “Bombing of Tokyo (10 March 1945)” - 334 B-29s; about 100 000 dead; about 15.8 square miles burned (Figure 6).
13. Wikipedia, “World War II casualties” - military dead ranges for the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan, United States and United Kingdom; 50-55 million civilian deaths worldwide (Figure 7).
14. Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Anzac Portal, and Australian War Memorial - almost one million Australians served in World War II; about 13 000 Australians in RAF Bomber Command, 3 486 killed (Part 4).
15. Wikipedia, “Manhattan Project” - Roosevelt’s crash program approved 17 June 1942; Groves in charge; about 130 000 people at peak; about US\$2 billion; Oppenheimer and Los Alamos (Figure 8).
16. Wikipedia, “Trinity (nuclear test)” - first atomic explosion, 16 July 1945, New Mexico (Figure 8).
17. Wikipedia, “Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” - Target Committee list of five cities; Kyoto removed, Nagasaki substituted; Little Boy uranium gun-type, Fat Man plutonium (Figures 8 and 9).
18. Wikisource - Potsdam Declaration, 26 July 1945 (Figure 9; Source 2 area).
19. Harry S. Truman Library - Truman statement of 6 August 1945 (Figure 9; Source 2).
20. Wikipedia, “Franck Report” - committee chaired by James Franck, largely written by Eugene Rabinowitch; demonstration proposal; Interim Committee’s “no alternative to the use of the bomb” (Figures 8 and 10).
21. Wikipedia, “Operation Downfall” - Olympic planned for 1 November 1945, Coronet for about 1 March 1946; US casualty estimates 220 000 to several million (Figure 10).
22. Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF), *rerf.or.jp* - same-day deaths from blast and heat; black rain; Life Span Study cohort of about 120 000; about half of leukaemia deaths and about 10 per cent of solid cancers attributable to radiation; acute death ranges 90 000-166 000 (Hiroshima) and 60 000-80 000 (Nagasaki) (Figures 11 and 12).
23. Wikipedia, “Hiroshima” and “Nagasaki” - about 70 per cent of Hiroshima’s buildings destroyed; deaths by end of 1945 (90 000-140 000 Hiroshima; 60 000-80 000 Nagasaki); Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law 1949; Genbaku Dome (Figures 11 and 12).

The home front: how the wars changed Australian society

Australia sent its armies overseas in both world wars - but the wars also reached home. In World War I, the home front was split by the question of forcing men to serve overseas: the nation voted on it twice, and voted no twice. In World War II, the war itself arrived: enemy bombs fell on Darwin and other northern towns, midget submarines slipped into Sydney Harbour, and ships were sunk off the coast. At the same time, the war changed who did what work - more than 54 000 women served in uniform, and thousands more worked the land and filled wartime jobs - and it changed what the government could do to its own people, through the National Security Act 1939. This section stays at home and asks: what did the wars do to Australian society, what changed, and what stayed the same?

Content description VC2HH10K19 is the spine of this section. The elaboration codes E01-E03 are shown where they link. Elaborations .E04-.E06 - covering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences on the home front - are excluded from teaching under §2A of this book's content decisions; their ids are retained as linkage keys only. This section sits inside the investigation "Australians at war (1914-1945)". Section 3B asks why Australians fought and Section 3D follows those who served overseas; this section asks what the wars did to the society that sent them.

Theory

1. What is the "home front"?

Definition - home front. The **home front** is the civilian side of a war: the people who did not serve in uniform, and their work, laws, fears and daily life while the war went on. A "consequence on the home front" is a change - or a stubborn sameness - in how that civilian life ran.

Words you need. A **civilian** is anyone not a member of the armed forces. **Censorship** is official control over what newspapers, radio, film and letters are allowed to say. **Internment** is locking people up without a court trial, usually because of who they are (for example, citizens of an enemy country) rather than something a court found they did. **Conscription** is forcing people by law to serve in the armed forces. A **plebiscite** is a public vote on a big question that is not a change to the Constitution - the votes of 1916 and 1917 were plebiscites: they asked the nation's opinion, and they were not binding on parliament. **Rights and freedoms** here means the ordinary protections of Australian life - free speech, a court trial before punishment, freedom of association - that the law normally respects.

The home front was never one single experience. A factory worker in Melbourne, a refugee locked up in a camp in rural New South Wales, and a prime minister writing newspaper articles in Canberra all lived the same war differently. So this section keeps asking two questions: **what happened?** and **from whose point of view?** - because consequences look different from different angles, and a good answer says whose angle it is using.

2. The Australian home front at a glance, 1939-1945

When Britain went to war on 3 September 1939, Australia was at war too (Section 3B explains why). The government moved fast: on 9 September 1939, parliament passed the **National Security Act 1939**, giving it sweeping powers for the war ahead. Figure 1 sets out the home-front story in one timeline: the laws that limited freedoms, the women's services that formed, and the months in 1941-1943 when the war reached Australian soil and waters.

The Australian home front at a glance, 1939-1945

Key dates from Section 3G - rights and freedoms, women's roles, and the war reaching Australian soil

Sep 1939

Australia at war from 3 September; National Security Act assented 9 September

Jul 1940

Censorship rules: newspapers, radio and film placed under the Director-General of Information

Mar 1941

WAAAF formed (March) - the first women's service

Nov 1941

HMAS Sydney lost with all 645 crew (19 November)

Feb 1942

Darwin bombed (19 February); northern Australia bombed about 100 times, 1942-43

May 1942

Midget submarines attack Sydney Harbour (31 May - 1 June)

Nov 1942

'Battle of Brisbane' between Allied troops (26-27 November)

Aug 1944

Cowra breakout: Japanese prisoners escape (5 August)

Jun 1940

Ten communist and fascist organisations banned (15 June)

Sep 1940

HMT Dunera arrives Sydney (6 September): 2 542 internees, most of them Jewish refugees

Aug 1941

AWAS formed (13 August)

Dec 1941

Japan enters the war; Curtin writes 'Australia looks to America' (27 December)

Mar 1942

Broome attacked by Japanese fighters (3 March)

Jul 1942

Australian Women's Land Army formed (27 July)

May 1943

Hospital ship Centaur sunk off Queensland (14 May)

Aug 1945

War ends

Dates and details: see the source lines in Section 3G; accessed 25 August 2026.

A vertical timeline of sixteen dated events on the Australian home front from September 1939 to August 1945, including the National Security Act (9 September 1939), the banning of ten communist and fascist organisations (15 June 1940), censorship rules over newspapers, radio and film (July 1940), the arrival of the HMT Dunera with 2 542 internees (6 September 1940), the forming of the WAAAF (March 1941), AWAS (13 August 1941) and the Australian Women's Land Army (27 July 1942), the loss of HMAS Sydney with all 645 crew (19 November 1941), Japan's entry into the war and John Curtin's 'Australia looks to America' statement (December 1941), the bombing of Darwin (19 February 1942), the attack on Broome (3 March 1942), the midget-submarine attack on Sydney Harbour (31 May - 1 June 1942), the 'Battle of Brisbane' (26-27 November 1942), the sinking of the hospital ship Centaur (14 May 1943), the Cowra breakout (5 August 1944) and the end of the war

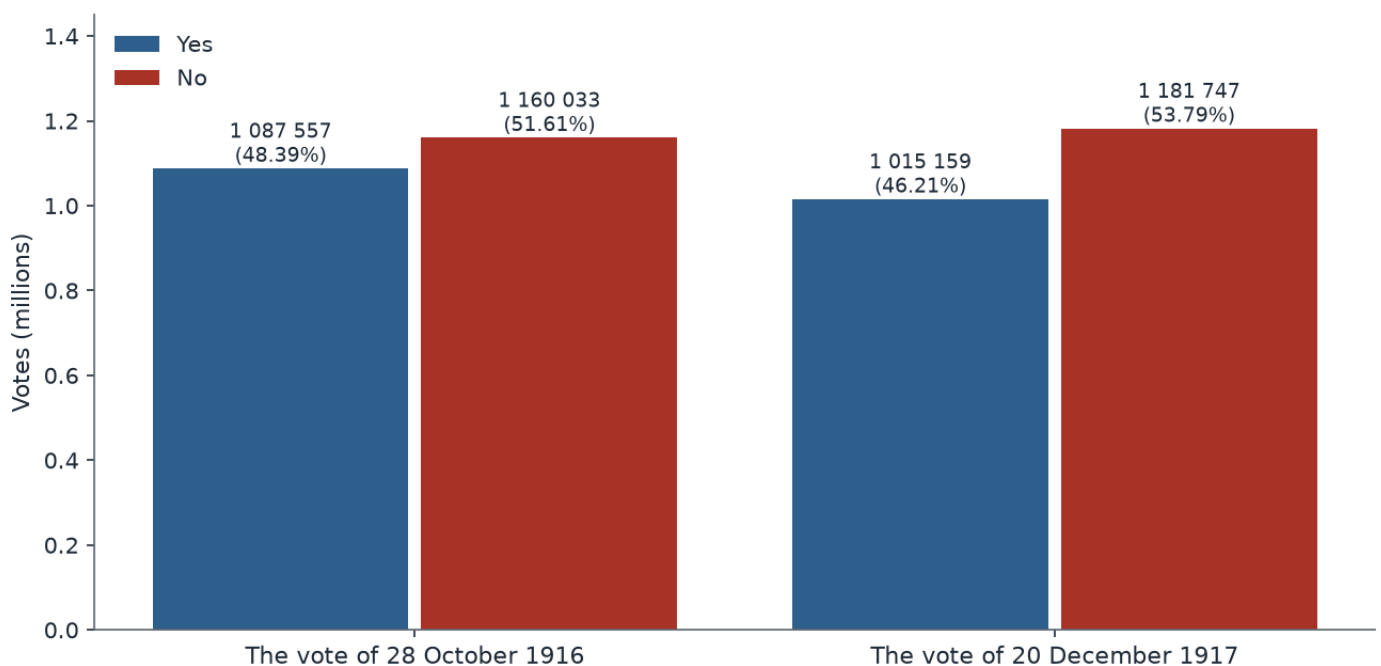
Two things to notice as you read the timeline. First, the home front was **regulated** before it was attacked: the censorship rules, the banned organisations and the first internees all came in 1940, more than a year before any bomb fell on Australian soil. Second, 1942 is the hinge year. Between December 1941 and the middle of 1942, Japan entered the war, Singapore fell (Section 3E), Darwin was bombed, and Sydney Harbour was attacked - and in those same months Australians feared, for the first time, that the war could become an invasion.

3. World War I's home-front legacy: the conscription split (Figure 2)

The content description speaks of "the world wars", so start with the first one. World War I's deepest consequence for Australian society was not a bomb or a law but a division. By 1916 the volunteer army was not replacing its losses, and Prime Minister **Billy Hughes** - a Labor prime minister - asked voters to agree to forcing men to serve overseas. He put the question to the nation twice, in 1916 and 1917. Figure 2 shows the results.

World War I: Australia's two conscription votes

Should men be forced to serve overseas? Both votes said no - and the 'no' majority grew



Source: results quoted in Section 3G (the 1916 and 1917 conscription plebiscites); accessed 25 August 2026

A grouped bar chart of Australia's two World War I conscription votes: on 28 October 1916, 1 087 557 votes (48.39 per cent) for compulsion against 1 160 033 (51.61 per cent) against; on 20 December 1917, 1 015 159 (46.21 per cent) for against 1 181 747 (53.79 per cent) against - both votes rejected, and the 'no' majority grew

Both votes said **no** - and the second vote said no more strongly than the first. The quarrel split communities and families, and it split the government itself: Hughes and his supporters were expelled from the Labor Party, formed their own party, and Hughes stayed prime minister only by joining with his old opponents (he won the 1917 election with their support). That is what the word **consequence** can mean: a vote that changed nothing in law still changed who governed the country.

The split left a long shadow over World War II. Because of it, no Australian government dared introduce conscription for overseas service in the second war. Conscripted militia soldiers (the part-time Citizen Military Forces) could be required to serve only in Australia and its territories under the Defence Act; the overseas force was built from volunteers, as in 1914-1918. Not until January 1943 did parliament change the law to let militia units serve in part of the South West Pacific - and even then, the change stopped well short of the kind of compulsion Hughes had asked for. The memory of 1916-1917 shaped what Australia did - and refused to do - twenty-five years later.

4. Women's changing roles in World War II (E01)

Elaboration E01 asks you to investigate how World War II changed the roles of women in Australia - women who served in the military, in the Women's Land Army, and in factory work - and to contrast the war years with what came before and after.

Why women were needed. Almost one million Australians served in the armed forces during the war, and every man who enlisted left a job behind. The services themselves wanted women: forming a women's branch released trained men in Australia for service overseas, and women had been lobbying to serve. Figure 3 sets out the three women's services and the civilian Land Army.

Women's services and the Land Army, 1941-1945

Who they were, when they formed, and the work women did

WAAAF Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force - Approved 4 February 1941; formed March 1941 - the first women's service - About 27 000 enlisted between March 1941 and August 1945 - Roles: signals and aircraft maintenance, radar operator, telegraphist, driver - Director: Clare Stevenson (from June 1941); disbanded December 1947	AWAS Australian Women's Army Service - Formed 13 August 1941 - Total enlistments: 24 026; peak strength 20 051 (January 1944) - Roles: drivers, cooks, typists, signallers, cipher clerks, canteen workers, military police - The largest of the three services
WRANS Women's Royal Australian Naval Service - Approved 24 July 1942; over 3 000 served - Roles: telegraphists, clerks, drivers, stewards, cooks, Sick Berth Attendants - Also intelligence and cryptanalysis work (code-breaking) - The last of the three services to be formed	AWLA Australian Women's Land Army (civilian, not military) - Formed 27 July 1942, overseen by Lieutenant General Carl Jess - Peak, December 1943: 2 382 permanent members and 1 039 auxiliary members - Work: growing vegetables and fruit, pigs and poultry, sheep and wool - An average 48-hour week; minimum wage 30 shillings a week; disbanded 31 December 1945

Figures and dates as stated in Section 3G; source lines given there; accessed 25 August 2026.

Four information cards for the women's wartime services: the WAAAF (Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, approved 4 February 1941 and formed in March 1941 as the first women's service, about 27 000 enlisted, roles in signals and aircraft maintenance, radar and driving, director Clare Stevenson from June 1941, disbanded December 1947); the AWAS (Australian Women's Army Service, formed 13 August 1941, 24 026 enlistments with a peak strength of 20 051 in January 1944, the largest service, roles from drivers and cooks to signallers and cipher clerks); the WRANS (Women's Royal Australian Naval Service, approved 24 July 1942, over 3 000 served, roles including telegraphists and Sick Berth Attendants plus intelligence and code-breaking); and the AWLA (Australian Women's Land Army, civilian not military, formed 27 July 1942 under Lieutenant General Carl Jess, peak in December 1943 of 2 382 permanent and 1 039 auxiliary members, farm work, an average 48-hour week and a minimum wage of 30 shillings a week, disbanded 31 December 1945)

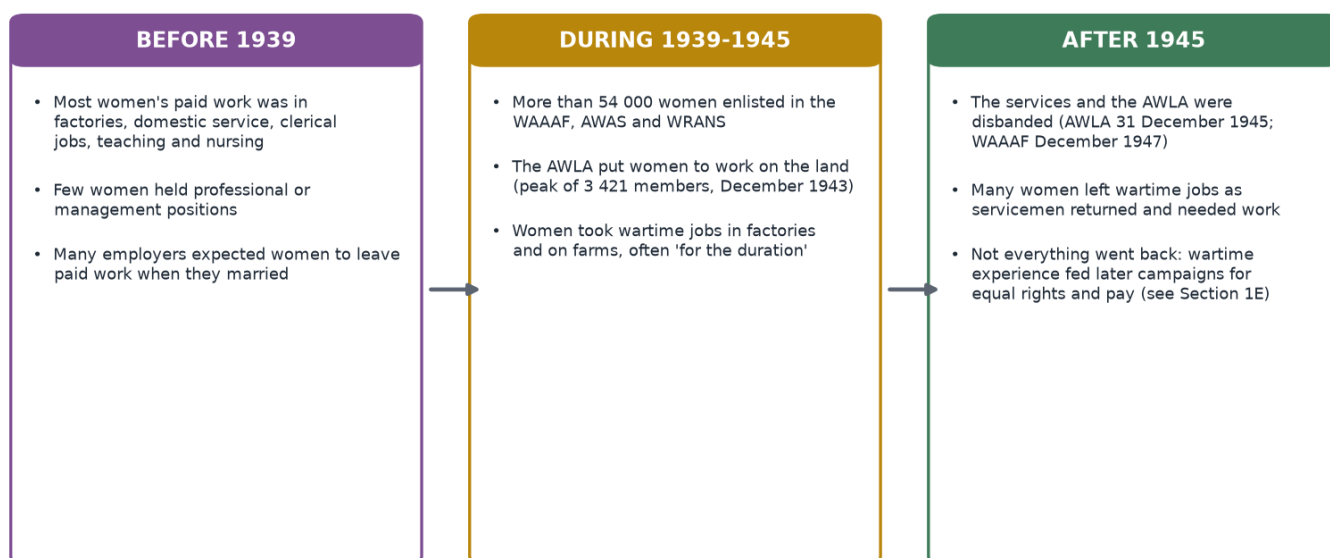
Three things about these services matter for the historian. First, they were **skilled** roles - radar operator, cipher clerk, telegraphist, driver - not only cleaning and cooking. Second, they were large: more than 54 000 women enlisted across the three services. Third, they were framed as wartime measures: women were recruited “for the duration”, and when the war ended the services were disbanded (the AWLA on 31 December 1945; the others by 1947).

On the land, the **Australian Women’s Land Army (AWLA)** put women into farm work to ease rural labour shortages: vegetables, fruit, pigs, poultry, sheep and wool, for an average 48-hour week at a minimum wage of 30 shillings. In towns and cities, women took paid industrial and clerical work to keep the war economy running - a war that, as historians of the period note, speeded up Australia’s industrial growth.

Before, during, after - change against continuity. E01 asks you to contrast the war years with what came before and after. Figure 4 does exactly that.

Women's work: before, during and after the war

Continuity and change - what changed, and what stayed the same



Change: new roles in uniform, on the land and in industry

Continuity: after 1945 many women were expected to return to pre-war roles - but expectations had shifted

Framework from elaboration E01 (VC2HH10K19); details and source lines in Section 3G.

A three-column comparison of women’s work before 1939, during 1939-1945 and after 1945: before, most women’s paid work was in factories, domestic service, clerical jobs, teaching and nursing, with few professional or management positions and an expectation that women leave paid work on marriage; during, more than 54 000 women enlisted in the services, the AWLA worked the land with a peak of 3 421 members, and women took wartime jobs ‘for the duration’; after, the services and AWLA were disbanded, many women left wartime jobs as servicemen returned, but wartime experience fed later campaigns for equal rights and pay

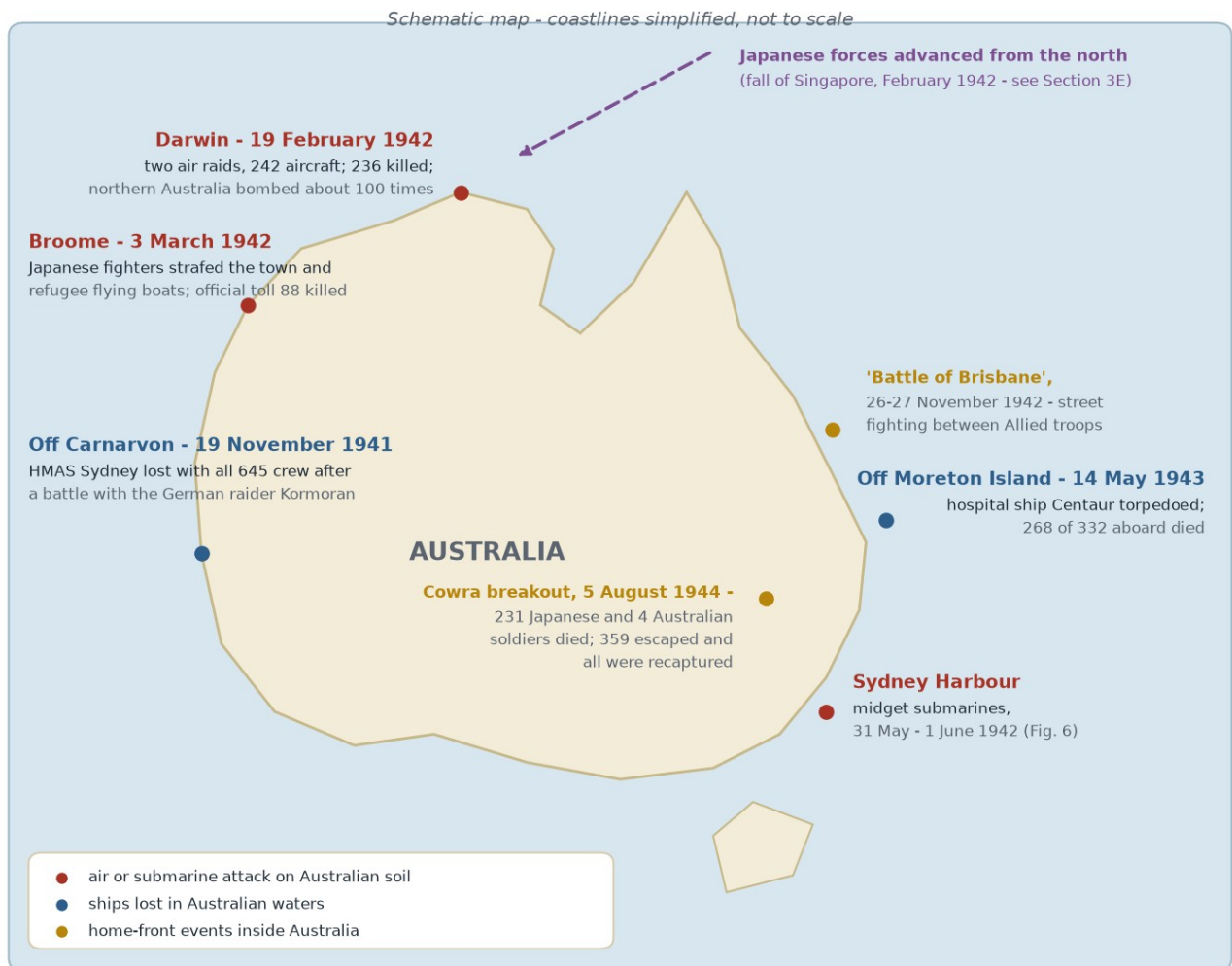
Read the three columns as an argument about **continuity and change**. The change is obvious: roles that had been closed to most women in 1938 were open to them by 1943, in uniform, on the land and in industry. The continuity is subtler but just as real: after 1945 most of the structure went back. The services were disbanded, returning servicemen needed the jobs, and the old expectation - that a woman’s paid work ended at marriage - took years to unwind. What did **not** go back was the experience itself: women had been trained, paid and trusted with skilled work on a national scale, and that experience fed the later campaigns for equal pay and equal rights (Section 1E follows that story after 1945).

5. The war reaches Australian soil (E02)

Elaboration E02 asks you to investigate how World War II reached Australia at local and national level - the bombing of Darwin, the submarine attack on Sydney Harbour, ships sunk off the coast, and home-front events inside the country such as the “Battle of Brisbane” and the Cowra breakout.

Why 1942 felt different. Japan entered the war in December 1941. In February 1942 Singapore, Britain's great naval base to Australia's north, fell (Section 3E), and days later Darwin was bombed. Figure 5 maps where the war reached Australia.

The wars reach Australian soil and waters, 1941-1943



Original schematic map prepared for this section; dates and figures as stated in the text.

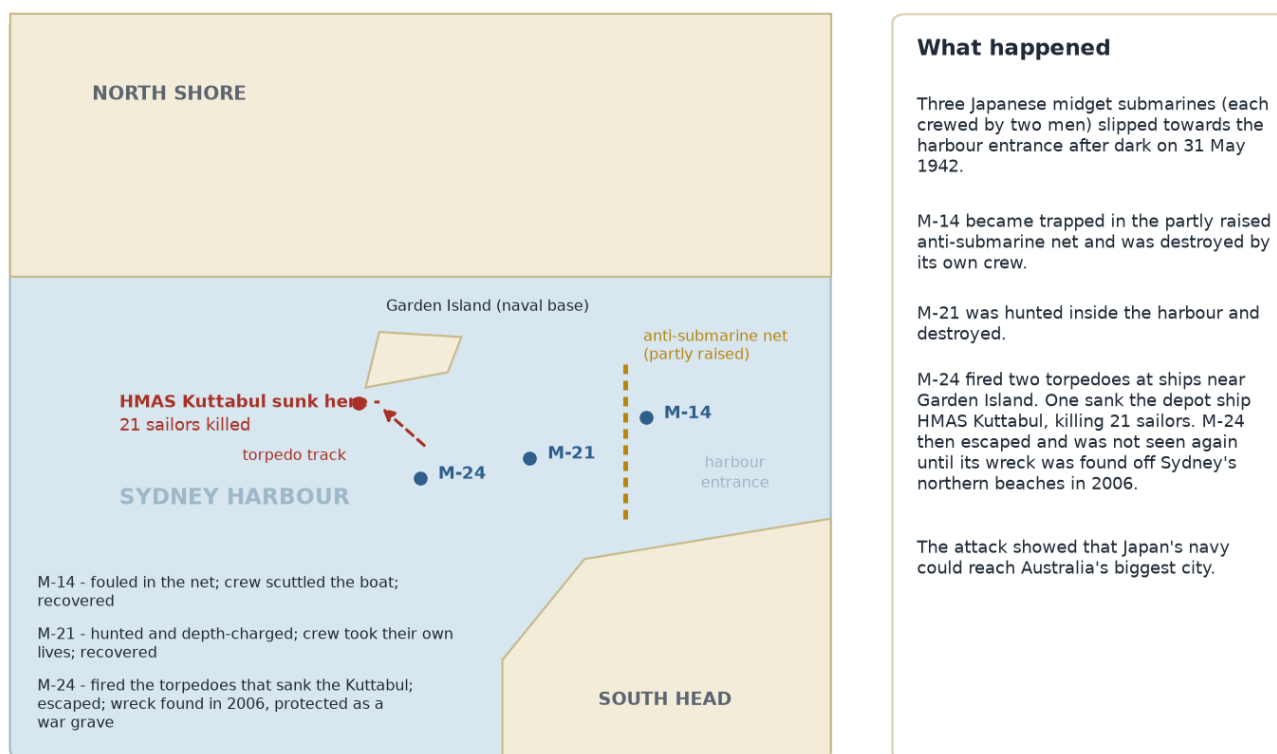
A schematic map of Australia and its waters marking eleven events of 1941-1944: the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 (two air raids, 242 aircraft, 236 killed, with northern Australia bombed about 100 times in 1942-43); the attack on Broome on 3 March 1942 (official toll 88 killed, including refugees on flying boats); the loss of HMAS Sydney off Carnarvon on 19 November 1941 (all 645 crew); the torpedoing of the hospital ship Centaur off Moreton Island on 14 May 1943 (268 of 332 aboard died); the midget-submarine attack on Sydney Harbour (31 May - 1 June 1942); and, inside the country, the 'Battle of Brisbane' (26-27 November 1942) and the Cowra breakout (5 August 1944), with a legend and a note that the coastline is simplified and not to scale

- **Darwin, 19 February 1942.** Two air raids, 242 Japanese aircraft (188 carrier-based in the first raid, 54 land-based in the second), 236 people killed - most of them military - and 11 vessels sunk in the harbour. It was the largest single attack ever mounted by a foreign power on Australia. It was not the last: northern Australia was bombed about 100 times in 1942-1943. The Darwin area alone was hit 64 times; Broome and Exmouth Gulf four times; Townsville and Millingimbi three times.
- **Broome, 3 March 1942.** Japanese fighters strafed this Western Australian town, which was a refuelling point crowded with refugee aircraft fleeing the Japanese advance through the Netherlands East Indies. The official toll was 88 killed, including many refugees aboard the flying boats; at least 22 Allied aircraft were destroyed, 15 of them flying boats at anchor.

- **HMAS Sydney, 19 November 1941.** The cruiser was lost off Carnarvon after a battle with the German raider *Kormoran*, with all 645 of her crew - no Australian survivors (318 of *Kormoran*'s 399 crew survived). It remains Australia's worst naval loss of life. The wrecks were found in 2008.
- **AHS Centaur, 14 May 1943.** The clearly marked hospital ship was torpedoed off Moreton Island, Queensland - probably by the Japanese submarine *I-177* - and 268 of the 332 people aboard died. The sinking of a hospital ship caused public outrage across Australia.
- **Sydney Harbour, 31 May - 1 June 1942.** Three Japanese midget submarines, each with a crew of two, were released by larger "mother" submarines off the coast and slipped towards the harbour entrance. Figure 6 shows what happened next.

The midget-submarine attack on Sydney Harbour

Night of 31 May - 1 June 1942 - schematic diagram, not to scale



Original diagram prepared for this section; details as stated in the text.

A labelled schematic diagram of Sydney Harbour on the night of 31 May - 1 June 1942: the partly raised anti-submarine net, Garden Island naval base, and the three Japanese midget submarines M-14 (fouled in the net and scuttled by her crew), M-21 (hunted and destroyed, her crew taking their own lives) and M-24 (which fired the torpedoes that sank the depot ship HMAS Kuttabul, killing 21 sailors, and escaped; her wreck was found off Sydney's northern beaches in 2006 and protected as a war grave), with a side panel explaining the attack and its meaning

M-24's two torpedoes were aimed at the warships near Garden Island, including the American heavy cruiser *Chicago*. One sank the depot ship **HMAS Kuttabul**, killing 21 sailors. Militarily the attack "ended in failure on both sides": no major Allied warship was destroyed. Psychologically it succeeded: the war had now reached Australia's biggest city, and in June 1942 the mother submarines also shelled Sydney's eastern suburbs and Newcastle.

The war inside the country. Not every consequence of the war arrived from outside. In the "**Battle of Brisbane**" on 26-27 November 1942, tensions between Australian and American troops - over pay, supplies and the behaviour of armed American military police - exploded into two nights of street fighting; one Australian soldier was killed and hundreds of Australians and Americans were hurt. At **Cowra** on 5 August 1944, more than 1 100 Japanese prisoners of war staged a breakout: machine-gun fire killed 231 prisoners and 4 Australian soldiers, and 359 escaped before all were recaptured within ten days. And in politics, the "**Brisbane Line**" affair showed how fear works on evidence. In October 1942 the minister Eddie Ward claimed the previous government had planned to give up northern Australia in

an invasion and defend only a line around Brisbane. The claim grew out of a February 1942 memo by Lieutenant-General Iven Mackay urging that scarce forces be concentrated around the Brisbane-Melbourne industrial area - a memo Curtin's cabinet rejected. A royal commission in July 1943 found no evidence that any such official plan existed. The affair is a warning for historians: a claim can shape public fear even when the evidence for it fails.

Consequence, local and national. Locally, the attacks killed civilians and servicemen, destroyed ships and aircraft, and emptied towns like Darwin. Nationally, they ended the comfortable distance between Australia and the war, fed a real fear of invasion in 1942, and pushed the government to shift its defence plans and its alliances (Part 7).

6. The National Security Act 1939: powers and their price (E03)

Elaboration E03 asks you to describe how the National Security Act 1939 changed individual rights and freedoms - media censorship, the detention of residents of enemy origin, the banning of groups opposed to the war, and controls over the workforce ("manpower controls").

The Act itself. Figure 9 is a source card for the Act: study it before reading on.

SOURCE CARD - PRIMARY SOURCE (LEGISLATION)

National Security Act 1939 (No. 15 of 1939)
Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
[Assented to 9 September 1939]
Status today: repealed - no longer in force
(Federal Register of Legislation)

What the Act allowed (verified)
The Act allowed the Governor-General to make regulations, in the words quoted by Justice Williams in the High Court case *Australian Communist Party v The Commonwealth* (1951):
'for securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth and the Territories of the Commonwealth'

What the regulations did - in modern wording (details in Part 6)

- Censorship: newspapers, radio and film placed under the Director-General of Information (July 1940); 'speaking disloyalty' banned, even in private (January 1941)
- Detention without trial of residents of enemy origin and others; more than 12 000 people held at the 1942 peak
- Banning of organisations: ten communist and fascist groups banned (15 June 1940)
- Controls over businesses and the workforce ('manpower controls')

Reading check: which two consequences limited what people could say?
Which consequence let the government lock people up without a court trial?

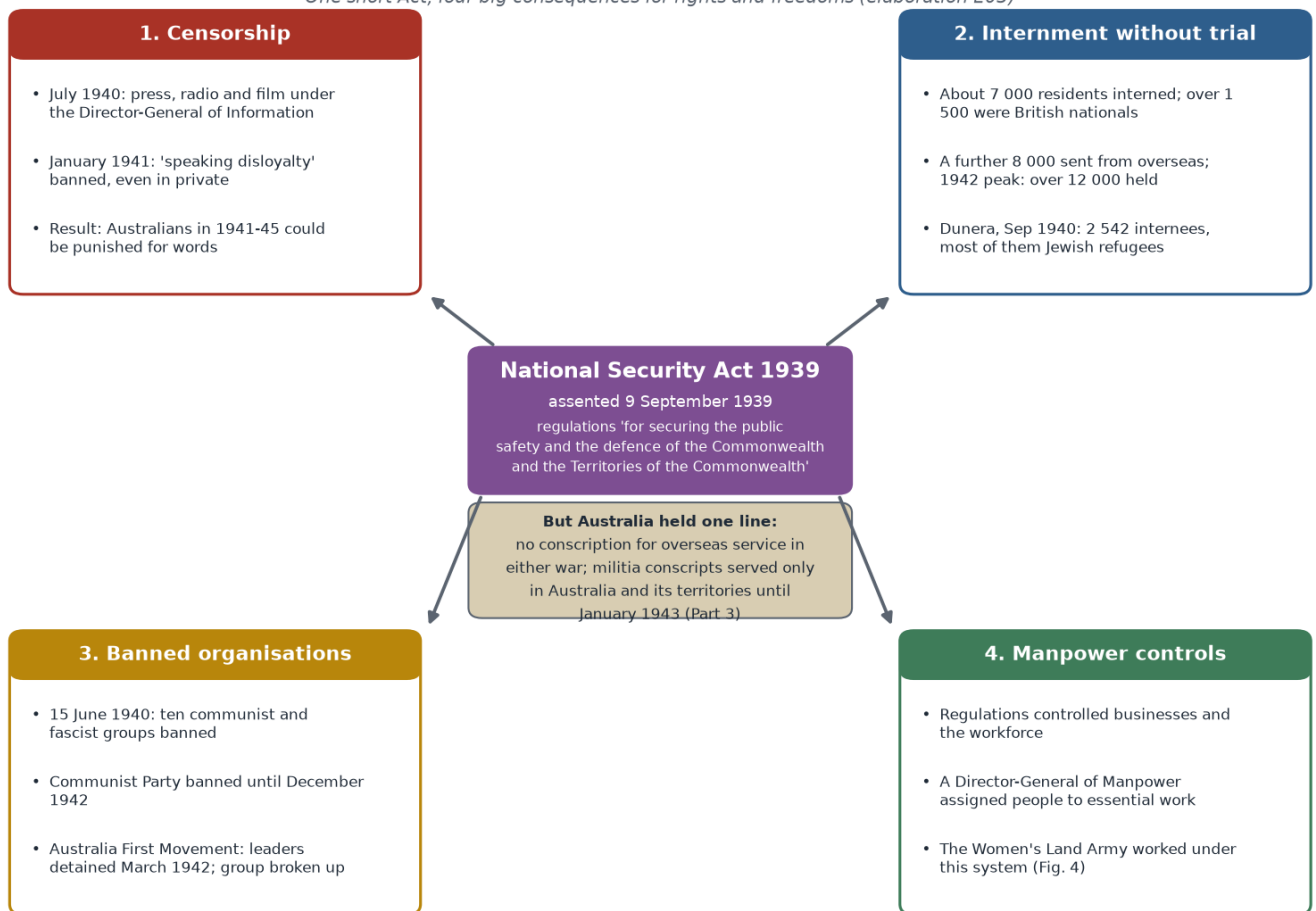
Card prepared for this section from the verified register details and the 1951 High Court judgment; full source lines in Section 3G; accessed 25 August 2026.

*A source card for the National Security Act 1939 (No. 15 of 1939), a primary-source legislation item: assented to on 9 September 1939 and now repealed and no longer in force; the Act allowed the Governor-General to make regulations for 'securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth and the Territories of the Commonwealth', words quoted by Justice Williams in the High Court case *Australian Communist Party v The Commonwealth* (1951); and a summary, in modern wording, of what the regulations did - censorship of newspapers, radio and film; detention without trial of residents of enemy origin and others; banning of organisations; and controls over businesses and the workforce - with a reading-check prompt*

One short Act, four big consequences. Figure 7 maps them as branches from the Act.

The National Security Act 1939: what it allowed

One short Act, four big consequences for rights and freedoms (elaboration E03)



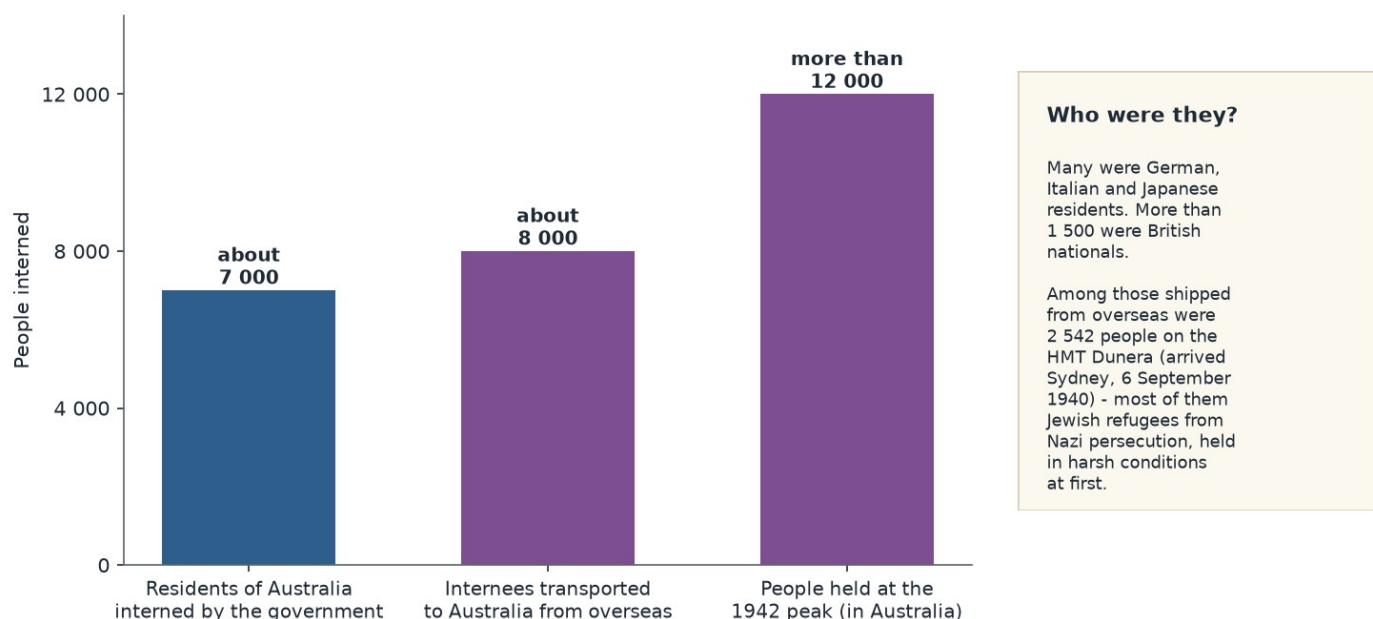
Dates and wording as stated in Section 3G; source lines given there; accessed 25 August 2026.

A concept web with the National Security Act 1939 at its centre and four consequence branches: censorship (from July 1940 the press, radio and film under the Director-General of Information; from January 1941 'speaking disloyalty' banned even in private); internment without trial (about 7 000 residents interned, over 1 500 of them British nationals; a further 8 000 sent from overseas; 1942 peak over 12 000 held; the Dunera's 2 542 internees); banned organisations (15 June 1940, ten communist and fascist groups banned under the National Security (Subversive Associations) Regulations 1940; the Communist Party legalised again 18 December 1942; Australia First Movement leaders detained in March 1942); and manpower controls (laws directing businesses and the workforce under a Director-General of Manpower; the Women's Land Army under his oversight) - with a strip noting the limit Australia held: no conscription for overseas service

1. **Censorship of the media.** From July 1940, newspapers, radio stations and the film industry came under the Director-General of Information. From January 1941, the rules went further: "speaking disloyalty" became an offence, even in private conversation. Australians in 1941-1945 could be punished for words.

2. **Internment without trial.** Figure 8 shows the scale.

Internment without trial in Australia, World War II



Source: figures quoted in Section 3G; accessed 25 August 2026

A bar chart of internment without trial in Australia in World War II: about 7 000 residents of Australia interned by the government; about 8 000 internees transported to Australia from overseas; and more than 12 000 people held at the 1942 peak - with a side box explaining who they were (many German, Italian and Japanese residents; more than 1 500 British nationals; and among those shipped from overseas, the 2 542 people on the HMT Dunera, most of them Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution, held at first in harsh conditions)

About 7 000 residents of Australia were interned - more than 1 500 of them British nationals - and a further 8 000 people were brought to Australia after being detained overseas. At the peak in 1942, more than 12 000 people were held. The strangest and saddest cargo was the **HMT Dunera**, which arrived in Sydney on 6 September 1940 with 2 542 internees: about 2 000 of them were German and Italian civilians opposed to Nazism, most of them Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution - locked up alongside prisoners of war and some Nazi sympathisers. Conditions aboard were harsh and the guards violent; an army doctor's report led to courts-martial in 1941. In time many of the refugee internees were reclassified as "friendly aliens", released, and some even volunteered for the Australian forces. The Dunera story shows why "security" decisions deserve scrutiny: the people harmed were not always the people feared.

3. **Banned organisations.** On 15 June 1940, under the National Security (Subversive Associations) Regulations 1940, the Menzies government banned ten communist and fascist organisations. The Communist Party stayed banned until the Curtin government legalised it again on 18 December 1942, when the Soviet Union was Australia's ally against Germany. The fascist Australia First Movement, formed in Sydney in October 1941 and led by Percy Stephensen and Adela Pankhurst Walsh, had its leaders detained in March 1942 and was broken up. The power was not unlimited: a High Court judge later recorded that some of these regulations had been struck down in court as going beyond the Act's power - one of Australia's courts drew a line even in wartime.
4. **Manpower controls.** The war economy needed directing. Regulations controlled businesses and the labour force, and a Director-General of Manpower assigned people to essential work - the Australian Women's Land Army itself was overseen within this system (Part 4). Compulsion at work was real; but compulsion to fight overseas was not (below).

The limit Australia held. In both wars, Australia refused full conscription for overseas service (Part 3). Militia conscripts could serve only in Australia and its territories until January 1943, when the law was changed to allow

service in part of the South West Pacific - still far short of the 1916 proposal. It is a fair question whether a democracy at war must limit its own powers this way; Worked inquiry 2 below asks you to argue both sides.

Two positions, argued at their strongest. For any claim about the Act, first state the **strongest** version of both sides, then decide. *For the powers:* Australia faced a real invasion scare in 1942; wars are fought by whole societies, and governments must control information, labour and security risks; the powers were temporary, and the courts struck down what went too far. *Against the powers:* people were locked up without trial, including refugees fleeing the very regime Australia was fighting; private speech was policed; political parties were banned. Notice the test: would you accept the same powers in peacetime? If not, the question is not whether the powers were useful but whether they were necessary, proportional, and given back. Section 7D's skills (value and limits of sources) and Section 8B (consequences) give you the tools to weigh this properly.

7. Looking to America - and the balance sheet (Figures 10 and 11)

The attacks of 1942 did more than frighten people: they changed how Australia saw its own safety. Britain - the great power Australia had always relied on - was fighting for survival in Europe, and its forces could not protect the Pacific. Figure 10 gives you the most famous words of that change.

SOURCE EXTRACT - PRIMARY SOURCE (NEWSPAPER ARTICLE)

“

Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

- Prime Minister John Curtin, article published in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 28 December 1941

Context

Curtin wrote this on 27 December 1941, weeks after Japan entered the war (8 December 1941, Australian time).

Britain - Australia's traditional protector - was fighting for its own survival in Europe. Within months, the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin showed how far the war had come.

Quotation typeset for this section from the published article; source line in Section 3G; accessed 25 August 2026.

A primary-source card reproducing Prime Minister John Curtin's December 1941 statement - 'I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom' - published in the Sydney Daily Telegraph on 28 December 1941, with a context panel: written on 27 December 1941, weeks after Japan entered the war; Britain fighting for its own survival; and within months, the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin showing how far the war had come

“Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.”

- Prime Minister **John Curtin**, article published in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 28 December 1941 (written 27 December 1941)

Read the source as its own kind of document: this is a prime minister **persuading** - telling Australians that the old reliance on Britain had to end. It was also a signal to Washington. Historians describe the change as a fundamental shift in Australian foreign policy: the alliance with the United States that shaped Australia's defence after 1945 (Section 4D follows the legacies, and Section 1C the post-1945 world) began here, in the darkest months of 1942.

Figure 11 gathers the whole section into one study grid - use it to plan answers.

Consequences of the world wars: a study grid

Short-term (1939-1945) and long-term (after 1945) - use it to plan answers

Area of Australian society	Short-term (during the wars, 1939-1945)	Long-term (after 1945)
Women's work and roles	More than 54 000 women enlisted; the AWLA worked the land; women took factory, driving and signals jobs 'for the duration'	Services and the AWLA disbanded (1945-47); many women returned to pre-war jobs - but wartime experience fed later campaigns for equal rights and pay (see Section 1E)
Rights and freedoms	Censorship; internment without trial (peak over 12 000 in 1942); organisations banned; manpower controls over the workforce	The wartime laws were repealed ('no longer in force'); the debate over security versus rights stayed part of Australian public life
Security and national outlook	War on Australian soil for the first time: Darwin, Broome, Sydney Harbour, ship losses; invasion fears of 1942	Defence planning and alliances turned towards the United States (see Section 4D); the attacks stayed in national memory

Planning aid built from the content of Section 3G; see also Sections 3E, 4D and 1E for the linked topics.

A three-by-two study grid of the consequences of the world wars for Australian society: women's work and roles (short-term: more than 54 000 women enlisted and women took wartime jobs 'for the duration'; long-term: the services disbanded, many women returned to pre-war jobs, but wartime experience fed later campaigns for equal rights and pay); rights and freedoms (short-term: censorship, internment without trial peaking over 12 000 in 1942, banned organisations and manpower controls; long-term: the wartime laws were repealed and are no longer in force, but the debate over security versus rights stayed part of public life); and security and national outlook (short-term: war on Australian soil and waters - Darwin, Broome, Sydney Harbour, ship losses - and invasion fears of 1942; long-term: defence planning and alliances turned towards the United States, and the attacks stayed in national memory)

What changed, 1914-1945: - who worked: women entered the services, the land and industry in numbers and roles never seen before (Part 4); - where the war was: in 1942-1943 enemy attacks reached the mainland, the harbour and coastal waters for the first time (Part 5); - what the state could do: censorship, internment, banned organisations and manpower controls rewrote the boundary between government and citizen (Part 6); - who Australia relied on: the shift from Britain toward the United States (Figure 10).

What did not change: - overseas military service stayed voluntary through most of both wars - the 1916-1917 votes still held their grip on policy; - ordinary people carried the cost of war, as civilians and as families, in both conflicts; - and after each war the law stepped back: the wartime powers were repealed, and are "no longer in force" today.

That balance sheet **is** the answer to VC2HH10K19: the world wars changed Australian society in its work, its laws and its alliances - and the choices of 1916-1917 limited what the second war was allowed to change.

Worked examples

Worked inquiry 1 - How did World War II change women's work in Australia - and what did not change? (E01)

The question. Investigate how World War II changed the roles of women in Australia, and contrast the war years with the continuities before and after the war.

Sources - Figures 3 and 4 above, plus Part 4.

Working	Comment
Step 1: describe the position before 1939.	Most women's paid work was in factories, domestic service, clerical jobs, teaching and nursing; few held professional or management positions; many employers expected women to leave paid work when they married.
Step 2: describe the change during the war.	More than 54 000 women enlisted in the WAAAF (formed March 1941, about 27 000 enlisted), the AWAS (formed 13 August 1941, 24 026 enlisted) and the WRANS (approved 24 July 1942, over 3 000 served), in skilled roles - radar operator, cipher clerk, driver; the AWLA put women on the land (peak 3 421, December 1943) for a 48-hour week at 30 shillings; women also took industrial and clerical work "for the duration".
Step 3: describe what happened after 1945.	The services and the AWLA were disbanded (AWLA 31 December 1945; the others by 1947); many women left wartime jobs as servicemen returned needing work.
Step 4: separate change from continuity.	Change: roles closed in 1938 were open by 1943, in uniform and skilled trades. Continuity: the structure of expectation - women's work ending at marriage - survived 1945; the change was framed as temporary ("for the duration") from the start.
Step 5: state a conclusion with evidence.	Example conclusion: the war changed women's roles in scale and kind - skilled, uniformed, national - but the change was meant to be temporary, so its deepest consequence was not the jobs themselves but the experience and expectations that fed the later campaigns for equal rights and pay (Section 1E).

Worked inquiry 2 - Were the limits on rights and freedoms under the National Security Act justified in wartime? (E03)

The question. Evaluate the claim: "The limits on individual rights and freedoms under the National Security Act 1939 were justified by the dangers of World War II." Use the sources, argue both sides at their strongest, and reach a stated position.

Sources - Figures 7, 8 and 9, and Part 6.

Working	Comment
Step 1: state the strongest case FOR.	Japan entered the war in December 1941; Singapore fell, Darwin was bombed (19 February 1942), Sydney Harbour attacked (31 May - 1 June 1942), and invasion fear was real. Wars are fought by whole societies, so governments need control of information and labour.

Working	Comment
Step 2: state the strongest case AGAINST.	The powers were temporary - the Act is now repealed - and Australian courts struck down regulations that went beyond the Act. Internment was without trial, and it held people who were no threat - the Dunera's 2 542 included about 2 000 refugees from Nazi persecution, some held in harsh conditions. Private speech was policed ("speaking disloyalty", January 1941). Political organisations were banned (15 June 1940), including a party later re-legalised for alliance reasons (18 December 1942) - which suggests politics, not only danger, drove some decisions.
Step 3: apply the test.	The substitution test: would these powers be acceptable in peacetime? If no, then the real question is necessity and proportion - did each power match a real danger, and was it given back? Internment of genuine security risks is one thing; locking up refugees is another.
Step 4: weigh the evidence.	The FOR case is strongest about censorship of military information and directing the workforce in 1942. The AGAINST case is strongest about internment of refugees and policing of private speech - where the "danger" was weakest and the harm clearest.
Step 5: reach a stated position.	Example position: the Act's powers were justified in part - information and labour controls in the face of a real invasion scare - but not in full, because internment without trial caught innocent refugees and speech controls went beyond what security needed; a democracy fighting for freedom must show its own limits, and Australia's courts partly enforced them. State your own position the same way: claim, evidence, concession.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Question 1 (uses Figure 1). a Name the Act passed within a week of Australia entering the war, and give its assent date. b Give one 1940 event from Figure 1 that shows the government limiting freedoms, and one 1942 event that shows the war reaching Australian soil. c Which two events on Figure 1 involve women's services forming? Give their dates.

Question 2 (uses Figure 2). a What question were voters answering in 1916 and 1917? b Give the no-vote totals and percentages for both years. c What happened to Prime Minister Billy Hughes's party over this issue, and what does that show about the vote's consequences?

Question 3 (uses Figure 3). a Name the three women's services in order of formation, with dates. b Which service had the most members, and what was its peak strength (with date)? c Give two skilled roles women held in these services.

Question 4 (uses Figure 4). a State one feature of women's paid work before 1939. b Give two pieces of evidence from the "during" column that women's roles changed. c The "after" column shows change and continuity together. Give one of each, in your own words.

Question 5 (uses Figures 5 and 6). a Give the date, the number of aircraft and the number killed in the bombing of Darwin. b Name three ships or vessels lost in Australian waters shown on Figure 5, and what happened to each. c Which midget submarine's torpedoes sank the Kuttabul, and what happened to that submarine afterwards?

Question 6 (uses Figures 7 and 8). a Name the four branches of consequences shown in Figure 7. b Using Figure 8, state how many residents of Australia were interned, and the total held at the 1942 peak. c Who were the 2 542 people aboard the Dunera, and why is their story a warning about internment?

Un scaffolded

Question 7. “World War II changed more for Australian women than for any other group on the home front.” Write a paragraph of 6-8 sentences agreeing or disagreeing. Use at least two dated pieces of evidence from this section, name one other group whose war you think changed as much or more (or say why none did), and include one fair sentence for the other side.

Question 8. Two students argue. “The attacks on Australia in 1942-43 mattered more for how Australians felt than for what actually happened to them.” “No - they had real, measurable effects, and the feelings followed from them.” Choose one claim and argue for it in a paragraph, using at least three events from Part 5. Concede, in one sentence, the strongest point of the other claim.

Question 9. A historian writes: “A democracy at war must always give up some of its freedoms - the only question is how much.” Evaluate this claim in a paragraph using the National Security Act’s four branches (Figure 7), referring to at least one power you judge justified and at least one you judge not justified, and one way Australia’s system limited the powers.

Question 10. Choose TWO rows of the study grid in Figure 11. For each, trace one short-term consequence and one long-term consequence, and say whether the long-term consequence was intended or unintended (Section 8B’s language). End with one sentence stating which long-term consequence you judge most significant for Australia today, and why.

Source-based inquiry

Read the two sources below, then answer the questions that follow.

Source 1 - Prime Minister John Curtin, statement written 27 December 1941 and published in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* on 28 December 1941: “Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.” (The statement was carried in other Australian newspapers too; Curtin was writing in the weeks after Japan entered the war and before the fall of Singapore.)

Source 2 - The National Security Act 1939 (No. 15 of 1939), assented to 9 September 1939, now repealed. The Act allowed the Governor-General to make regulations “for securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth and the Territories of the Commonwealth” (the quoted words appear in the High Court judgment *Australian Communist Party v The Commonwealth*, 1951). Under its regulations: newspapers, radio and film came under censorship from July 1940; residents of enemy origin - and others - could be detained without trial (more than 12 000 people were held at the 1942 peak); organisations could be banned (ten communist and fascist groups, 15 June 1940); and businesses and the workforce could be directed (“manpower controls”).

a **Origin.** When was each source made, by whom, and in what form (a speech-like newspaper article; a law)? b **Purpose.** What was each source made to do? (A prime minister persuading a nation; a parliament granting powers.) c **Content.** In your own words, state what Curtin was telling Australians, and name two powers the Act’s regulations created. d **Perspective.** Whose point of view does each source carry? Whose point of view is absent from both? e **Usefulness.** Give two ways a historian today could use these sources as evidence about the war’s consequences for Australian society. f **Limits.** Give one thing these two sources cannot tell a historian about the home front. g In one or two sentences: Source 1 says Australia “looks to America” in December 1941; Source 2 shows a government gathering great power over its own people. What do the two sources together suggest about how total war changed Australia’s outlook - outward and inward at once?

Answers

Q1. a The National Security Act 1939, assented 9 September 1939. b Any correct pairing, e.g. censorship rules over newspapers, radio and film (July 1940) or ten organisations banned (15 June 1940) for limiting freedoms; the bombing of Darwin (19 February 1942) or the Sydney Harbour attack (31 May - 1 June 1942) for the war reaching Australian soil. c The WAAAF (March 1941) and the AWAS (13 August 1941); the AWLA also qualifies as women's war work (27 July 1942).

Q2. a Whether men should be compelled (forced by law) to serve overseas in the war - in 1916 framed as giving the government the same compulsory powers overseas as it already had at home; in 1917 framed as reinforcing the AIF overseas. b 1916: 1 160 033 no votes (51.61 per cent); 1917: 1 181 747 no votes (53.79 per cent). c Hughes and his supporters were expelled from the Labor Party; he formed the National Labor Party, merged it into the Nationalist Party, and stayed prime minister with his old opponents' support, winning the 1917 election. This shows a vote can change politics and parties even when it changes no law.

Q3. a WAAAF (approved 4 February 1941, formed March 1941), AWAS (13 August 1941), WRANS (approved 24 July 1942). b The AWAS: 24 026 enlisted in total, peak strength 20 051 in January 1944. c Any two of: radar operator, telegraphist, cipher clerk, signaller, driver (also aircraft maintenance, military police).

Q4. a Any one of: most women's paid work was in factories, domestic service, clerical jobs, teaching and nursing; few held professional or management positions; women were expected to leave paid work on marriage. b Any two of: more than 54 000 women enlisted in the three services; the AWLA worked the land with a peak of 3 421 members (December 1943); women took wartime jobs in industry and on farms "for the duration". c Continuity: after the war many women left wartime jobs as servicemen returned, and the services were disbanded. Change: women had done skilled, uniformed work on a national scale, and the experience fed later campaigns for equal rights and pay.

Q5. a 19 February 1942; 242 aircraft across the two raids; 236 killed. b Any three of: HMAS Sydney - lost with all 645 crew after battle with the German raider Kormoran (19 November 1941); AHS Centaur - hospital ship torpedoed off Moreton Island, 268 of 332 died (14 May 1943); HMAS Kuttabul - sunk by a midget-submarine torpedo in Sydney Harbour, 21 sailors killed (31 May - 1 June 1942); the 11 vessels sunk in Darwin harbour on 19 February 1942 also qualify. c M-24; it escaped the harbour and was not seen again until its wreck was found off Sydney's northern beaches in November 2006, then protected as a war grave (gazetted 1 December 2006).

Q6. a Censorship; internment without trial; banned organisations; manpower controls. b About 7 000 residents interned; more than 12 000 held at the 1942 peak (including about 8 000 transported from overseas). c They were internees shipped from Britain - about 2 000 were German and Italian civilians opposed to Nazism, most of them Jewish refugees, held alongside prisoners of war and some Nazi sympathisers, at first in harsh conditions. It warns that "security" detention can punish the very people fleeing the enemy - refugees from Nazi persecution locked up by the side fighting Nazism.

Q7. Should include: a stated position; two dated pieces of evidence (for example, the WAAAF formed March 1941 and about 27 000 enlisted; the AWLA formed 27 July 1942 with a peak of 3 421 in December 1943; more than 54 000 women in uniform); a named rival group (for example, men in the services - almost one million served - or internees, whose loss of liberty was total); and one fair sentence to the other side.

Q8. Either claim is arguable. The paragraph must use three events (for example Darwin 19 February 1942, Sydney Harbour 31 May - 1 June 1942, Broome 3 March 1942, the Centaur 14 May 1943, the Battle of Brisbane 26-27 November 1942) and concede one sentence. Feelings claim: the Sydney Harbour attack failed militarily but changed fear and defences; the Brisbane Line affair ran on rumour and shaped politics though no official plan existed. Effects claim: 236 killed at Darwin, 88 at Broome, 268 on the Centaur, 645 on the Sydney - real losses that drove real changes (the shift toward the United States, stronger harbour defences).

Q9. A good answer picks one justified power (for example workforce direction during the 1942 invasion scare, or censorship of military information) and one not justified (for example internment of refugee internees on the Dunera without trial, or policing private speech from January 1941), and names a limit on the powers (the courts striking down regulations beyond the Act; no overseas conscription ever introduced; the Act repealed after the war). The position must be stated and the evidence used.

Q10. Answers will vary. Each chosen row needs one short-term and one long-term consequence from the grid and an intended/unintended label (for example, the disbanding of the women's services was intended; the later equal-pay campaigns were an unintended long-term consequence of wartime experience). The closing sentence must state one long-term consequence as most significant with a reason (the United States alliance is the strongest candidate, given its durability).

Source inquiry. a Source 1: written 27 December 1941 by Prime Minister John Curtin, published in the Sydney Daily Telegraph on 28 December 1941 - a newspaper article with the force of a statement. Source 2: a law of the Commonwealth parliament, assented 9 September 1939, now repealed. b Source 1: to persuade Australians to accept a new alliance direction and to signal it to the United States. Source 2: to give the government legal powers for the war's safety and defence. c Curtin: Australia would rely on the United States, without guilt over its British ties. Any two of: censorship of the media; detention without trial; banning organisations; manpower controls. d Source 1 carries a prime minister's (and government's) point of view; Source 2 carries the parliament's. Absent: ordinary Australians - women in the services, internees, censored journalists, and the people whose freedoms the Act restricted. e Any two of: evidence of how leaders explained the alliance shift (Source 1); evidence of exactly which freedoms the state limited and when (Source 2); the pair together shows a nation turning outward for protection while the state tightened inward control. f They cannot show what ordinary people experienced or thought - an internee's diary, a woman's letters, a censored newspaper would be needed. g Total war changed Australia's outlook in both directions at once: outward, a new reliance on America; inward, a government with powers over speech, liberty and work it had never held before - and the tension between those two directions is a lasting consequence of the war.

Fully-worked solutions

Question 7 - model paragraph (agreeing, for demonstration). World War II changed more for Australian women than for any other group on the home front, and the dated evidence supports the claim. Before the war, most women's paid work was limited to factories, domestic service, clerical jobs, teaching and nursing, and marriage usually ended it. By March 1941 the WAAAF had formed - the first women's service - and about 27 000 women enlisted in it; the AWAS followed on 13 August 1941 with 24 026 enlistments and a peak of 20 051 in January 1944, and the WRANS added over 3 000 more, in roles like radar operator and cipher clerk that had been closed to women entirely. On the land, the Australian Women's Land Army from 27 July 1942 put women into skilled farm work for a 48-hour week - 3 421 members at its peak in December 1943. A fair case can be made for other groups: the men who served - almost one million of them - had their lives transformed too, and internees lost freedoms women never lost. But most servicemen returned to a society that honoured their service, while women were told their work was "for the duration" and were pushed out of it after 1945. That contrast is exactly why the change was greater for women: they crossed a line no one had promised to let them cross.

Question 9 - model paragraph (evaluating the claim). The claim is partly right, and the part that is right matters less than the part that is wrong. A democracy at war does give up some freedoms by necessity: from July 1940 Australia placed newspapers, radio and film under the Director-General of Information, and directed businesses and the workforce through manpower controls, because the invasion scare of 1942 - Singapore fallen, Darwin bombed on 19 February, Sydney Harbour attacked on 31 May - 1 June - made control of information and labour a genuine defence need. Those powers I judge justified, because they matched a real danger and were given back: the Act is repealed and no longer in force. But “must always give up some freedoms” cannot justify every power the Act took. From January 1941 private speech could be punished as “speaking disloyalty”, and more than 12 000 people were interned without trial at the 1942 peak - among them about 2 000 refugees from Nazi persecution aboard the Dunera, the very people the war was fought against. Neither speech nor refugee detention matched a real danger, and both I judge not justified. Australia’s system also drew limits: no overseas conscription was ever introduced, and the courts struck down regulations that went beyond the Act. So the historian’s answer is not “how much must be given up” but “which powers matched which dangers, and who checked them” - and on that test, the National Security Act passes in part and fails in part.

Source inquiry - model answers (compressed). See the Answers section for the marking points. The single idea worth keeping: a persuasive statement (Source 1) and a law (Source 2) are both records of what the government chose - one in words, one in powers - and a historian reads them together to see total war working in two directions at once: the turn toward America, and the tightening of control at home. Their limits (no ordinary voices, no censored words, no internee experience) tell the historian exactly which other sources to go and find.

Sources

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3. Wikipedia, “Attack on Sydney Harbour” - 31 May - 8 June 1942; midget submarines M-14, M-21 and M-24 from mother submarines I-21, I-22, I-24, I-27 and I-29; HMAS Kuttubul sunk, 21 sailors killed; M-24’s wreck found in November 2006 near Bungan Head and gazetted as a protected site on 1 December 2006; the attack “ended in failure on both sides”; the shelling of Sydney’s suburbs and Newcastle in June 1942 (Figures 1, 5 and 6; Part 5).
4. Wikipedia, “Australian Women’s Land Army” - formed 27 July 1942 under Lieutenant General Carl Jess; peak enrolment December 1943 of 2 382 permanent and 1 039 auxiliary members; vegetable, fruit, pig, poultry, sheep and wool work; an average 48-hour week and a minimum wage of 30 shillings a week; disbanded 31 December 1945 (Figures 1, 3 and 4; Part 4).
5. Wikipedia, “Australian Women’s Army Service” - raised 13 August 1941; 24 026 enlisted with a peak strength of 20 051 in January 1944; Sybil Irving; roles in administration, driving, catering, signals and intelligence; the only non-medical women’s service to send personnel overseas; demobilised by 30 June 1947 (Figures 3 and 4; Part 4).
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11. Wikipedia, "Australian Army during World War II" - militia service restricted to Australia and its territories under the Defence Act 1903; the Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act 1943 allowing militia service in the South West Pacific Area from January 1943 (Parts 3 and 6).
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14. Wikipedia, "Attack on Broome" - 3 March 1942; Japanese fighter aircraft; 88 killed (official toll), including refugees aboard flying boats; at least 22 Allied aircraft destroyed, 15 of them flying boats at anchor; Broome as a refuelling point on the refugee flight routes (Figures 1 and 5; Part 5).
15. Wikipedia, "AHS Centaur" - torpedoed 14 May 1943 off Moreton Island, Queensland; 332 aboard, 268 dead; the probable attacker the Japanese submarine I-177; public outrage at the sinking (Figures 1 and 5; Part 5).
16. Wikipedia, "Cowra breakout" - 5 August 1944; 1 104 Japanese prisoners; 231 Japanese and 4 Australians killed; 359 escaped and all recaptured within ten days; Vickers and Lewis machine guns used by the guards (Figures 1 and 5; Part 5).
17. Wikipedia, "Battle of Brisbane" - 26-27 November 1942; fighting between American forces and Australian troops and residents; one Australian soldier killed and hundreds hurt; causes including better US supplies and pay and armed US military police; Brisbane hosting General MacArthur's headquarters (Figures 1 and 5; Part 5).
18. Wikipedia, "John Curtin" - the "Australia looks to America" statement published in the Sydney Daily Telegraph on 28 December 1941; Curtin prime minister from 7 October 1941 until his death on 5 July 1945 (Figure 10; Source 1).
19. Wikipedia, "Australia-United States relations", and Wikipedia, "History of Australia (1901-1945)" - the statement's wording ("I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom"), dated 27 December 1941, also carried in Melbourne's Herald; the war producing a fundamental shift in Australia's foreign policy (Figure 10; Part 7).
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