

Was appeasement a mistake?

In the box below there are a number of arguments. Some prove that appeasement WAS a mistake and some suggest that appeasement WASN'T a mistake.

Create a table with two headings - 'A mistake' and 'Not a mistake'.
Think carefully - and write each argument in the correct column.

Germany deserved a fair deal
Germany treated too harshly at Versailles, so were only being given their rightful land.

It encouraged Hitler
Giving into Hitler only made him feel he could do what he wanted - without fear of being stopped.

Germany was growing stronger
Allowed Germany to grow stronger meant it would be far more difficult to defeat.

Britain needed time
By giving Hitler what he wanted, Britain had more time to build up her armed forces.

The British people had to want war
In 1938, public opinion was against war - so the policy of appeasement was sensible.

Munich Agreement was a disaster
Churchill said Czechoslovakia was sacrificed for nothing - Hitler had fooled everyone.

Fear of another war
People wanted to avoid another terrible war and did everything possible.

Fear of Communism
It was felt better to support a strong leader of Germany rather than risk Communist takeover.

Appeasement scared the USSR
When Britain and France did not stand up to Hitler, the USSR became worried about German power - and began thinking about deals with Hitler.

Hitler was determined to conquer Eastern Europe
Hitler had made his plans clear - the policy of appeasement was clearly doomed from the start - Hitler just lied.

Using your completed table, answer the questions on the other side of this worksheet. MAKE SURE YOU FULLY EXPLAIN EACH ANSWER!

Was appeasement a mistake?

Find these answers in your table!

1. Why might it be said that Germany deserved a fair deal?
2. Why was giving extra land to Germany dangerous?
3. Appeasement meant Britain and France gave Hitler what he wanted - why was this a bad idea?
4. What did the policy of appeasement give Britain a chance to do?
5. Is there any evidence to suggest appeasement was a popular idea in 1938?
6. What did people want to avoid another war?
7. Appeasement meant a strong German leader was supported - how did this benefit Britain and France?
8. With the policy of appeasement, the USSR became worried - what was the result of this?
9. Why should the politicians of 1938 have realised Hitler would not keep to his promises at the Munich Conference?

Extension 1

Imagine you are Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. You have just returned from the Munich Conference and are very pleased with the deal you have made. However, Churchill is strongly criticising you:

Write a speech to defend your policy of appeasement.
(Use your table and answers to help you.)

Extension 2

Now change sides. Imagine you are Winston Churchill - number one critic of Neville Chamberlain. Having heard the speech defending appeasement:

Write a speech to attack and rubbish the policy of appeasement.

Extension 3

Having looked at both sides, write a paragraph explaining your opinion of appeasement.

- Was it a policy which made sense in 1938 or
- Was it a terrible and predictable mistake?