



DRIVING QUESTION

In 1919 the world signed a peace. In 1939 it went back to war — same continent, many of the same nations, one of the same borders. Was the return to war built into the peace itself, or did twenty years of choices build it?

You have just spent six rounds making those choices yourself. Now do the history.

SECTION 1 – BUILD THE CHRONOLOGY

SEQUENCING

Ten events between 1919 and 1939, deliberately out of order and deliberately undated. Put them in sequence, and add the year where you can. Where you are unsure, reason it out from cause and effect — an event that is a response to another has to come after it.

- A** Japan invades Manchuria. The League of Nations investigates for a year, publishes a report — and does nothing.

C Fifteen nations sign a pact in Paris renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. Germany, Italy, and Japan are among them.

E Wall Street crashes. American credit to Europe stops.

G At Locarno, Germany guarantees its western borders with France and Belgium — and agrees only to arbitration in the east.

I The US Senate refuses to ratify the Treaty. America never joins the League of Nations.
- B** The Treaty of Versailles is signed in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles.

D Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany.

F German troops re-enter the demilitarized Rhineland. No one stops them.

H Germany invades Poland.

J Britain and France agree at Munich to hand the Sudetenland to Germany. Czechoslovakia is not invited to the meeting.

ORDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
LETTER										
YEAR										

Five of these years you played through in the simulation: 1919, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1933. Use them as anchors.

Which two events were hardest to separate in time, and what finally decided the order for you?

Find a pair where one event is clearly a *response* to another. Write both letters and name the relationship in one sentence.

"This is not Peace. It is an Armistice for twenty years."

Attributed to **Marshal Ferdinand Foch**, Supreme Allied Commander, on hearing that the Treaty of Versailles had been signed – 28 June 1919.

The arithmetic is famous because it is almost exact. The treaty was signed 28 June 1919. Germany invaded Poland 1 September 1939 — twenty years and sixty-five days later. The quotation appears in textbooks, documentaries, and on museum walls. Before you use it as evidence, look at where it comes from.

WHAT THE PAPER TRAIL ACTUALLY SHOWS

1. The earliest known printing is **Winston Churchill**, *The Gathering Storm* (1948), page 7 — twenty-nine years after Foch supposedly spoke, and three years after the war it appears to predict had ended. Churchill gives no source.
2. The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* traces it instead to **Paul Reynaud's Mémoires** (French 1960, English 1963) — later still.
3. Commandant Bugnet's *En écoutant le maréchal Foch* (1929), a book of Foch's recorded remarks, **does not contain it**.
4. No contemporaneous 1919 record of the sentence has been found.

The quotation may well be something Foch never said. Does that make it worthless to a historian? Explain what it is still *evidence of*, given who first wrote it down and when.

Churchill published this in 1948. Why might a writer in 1948 want a 1919 prophecy on the first pages of his history of the Second World War?

SECTION 3 – TWO PREDICTIONS THAT ARE DOCUMENTED

CLAIMS & EVIDENCE

These two are dated, published, and verifiable. Both were written in 1919. Both predict the return of war.

"You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth rate power; all the same in the end if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919 she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors."

David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister – *Some Considerations for the Peace Conference Before They Finally Draft Their Terms* (the "Fontainebleau Memorandum"), **25 March 1919**. Written to his fellow negotiators three months *before* the treaty was signed.

"If we aim deliberately at the impoverishment of Central Europe, vengeance, I dare predict, will not limp."

John Maynard Keynes, British Treasury delegate who resigned from the peace conference in protest – *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Chapter VII, published **December 1919**.

Compare these two sources to the Foch quotation as *evidence*. If you had to build an argument that the 1919 peace carried the next war inside it, which source would you lead with, and why? Name the specific feature of the source that makes it stronger — not just the fact that you agree with it.

SECTION 4 – SORT THE CAUSES

CAUSATION

Using the letters from Section 1, sort the events into long-term conditions and immediate triggers. At least one is genuinely arguable — that is the point. Be ready to defend a placement.

LONG-TERM / STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

Made war more likely over years. Created the situation.

Name the one event you would call **necessary** — remove it and you believe war in 1939 does not happen. Defend it.

IMMEDIATE / PRECIPITATING EVENTS

Moved the world from tension to war in months.

Now name an event that made war more likely but was **not sufficient** on its own. Explain the difference between the two.

SECTION 5 – THE BOOKENDS

CONTINUITY & CHANGE

The left column lists what the 1919 settlement promised or created. For each, find the event from Section 1 that undid it, write the letter, and say what was actually left of the promise.

WHAT 1919 ESTABLISHED	UNDONE BY	WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE PROMISE
A League of Nations, so that disputes between states would be settled without war.		
A demilitarized Rhineland — guaranteed a second time by Germany's own signature at Locarno in 1925.		
Czechoslovakia, created as a sovereign state out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.		
Poland, restored as an independent state after 123 years of partition — and war itself renounced by treaty in 1928.		

Historians separate **change** (things became different) from **continuity** (things stayed the same underneath). Pick one row and argue that what looks like dramatic change was really a continuity that had never been resolved.

At Locarno, Germany guaranteed its western border and refused to guarantee its eastern one. Poland's military attaché in Paris said Germany had been "officially asked to attack the east in return for peace in the west." Using your sequence, judge whether he was right.

Mark the single moment on your sequence at which you believe the return to war became *unavoidable*. Give the letter and the year, then defend it. A strong answer must also explain why the moment immediately before your mark was *still reversible*.

Some historians treat 1914–1945 as one long conflict interrupted by a truce. Others insist 1919–1939 was its own era, with real possibilities that were lost. Take a side and defend it with two events from your sequence.

One detail you may have missed: the Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28 June 1919 – five years to the day after the assassination in Sarajevo that began the First World War. The date was chosen deliberately. Whether that is a bookend or the start of a loop is exactly the question above.

RETURN TO THE DRIVING QUESTION

Was the return to war built into the peace of 1919, or did twenty years of choices build it?

Use at least one source from Section 2 or 3, and at least three events from your sequence.

LAST – YOU WERE THERE

You played a real nation for six rounds without knowing which one. Name one decision you made that matched what your nation actually did.

Now name a decision you made that your nation did *not* make. What would have had to be different — in 1919, or in your nation's resources — for your version to have been possible?
