Causes of World War II in the Pacific and Europe Discussion Questions

IB History

**Instructions:** To review our understanding of the causes of World War II in both the Pacific and Europe, we are going to prepare and discuss the below questions in fishbowl discussions. The goal of the discussions is to review the events that led up to each of these conflicts beginning and reach some historical conclusions on why they occurred. You will each be expected to develop notes around the questions and be prepared to answer all questions in detail. On the day of the discussion, you will be assigned one question from each group you are responsible for, so you will need to be ready to ensure you have engaged all of the questions.

To prepare for our discussion we will review relevant secondary sources to gather facts and expert opinions to shape our views on each conflict and how we feel about it as a cross-regional war. You will be allowed to access your notes during the discussion and your performance will be evaluated using our Socratic discussion rubric for IB History.

World War II in the Pacific

1. How did domestic developments in Japan (political, economic, social) push the nation to have a more aggressive foreign policy in the 1930’s?
2. To what extent can the invasion of China in 1937 be blamed on the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1854? (Long term vs. Short Term Causes)
3. To what extent can we say that World War II in the Pacific was a battle of conflicting ideologies and their visions for the future of Asia?
4. To what extent should the United States be blamed for the Second Sino-Japanese War escalating to World War II in the Pacific?

 World War II in Europe

1. How did the domestic developments in the nations of Europe (political, economic, social) push Germany and Italy to pursue more aggressive foreign policies in the 1930’s
2. To what extent was World War II made inevitable after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919? (Long term vs. Short Term Causes)
3. To what extent can we blame Hitler’s ideology for the outbreak in World War II in Europe in 1939?
4. To what extent can we blame the outbreak of World War II in Europe on the failure of British and French policies?

Cross Regional/Problems of Historiography

1. When did the Second-Sino Japanese War become World War II in the Pacific?
2. To what extent can we say that World War II in Europe began because of the actions of individual statesman?
3. What are the similarities and differences in how these conflicts began? What historiographic difficulties are created by viewing them as one large conflict?
4. To what extent can should we see World War II (Europe and Pacific) as a consequence of the Great Depression?