

Name: _____

Results:

Did England gain time to catch up?

Time is relative. Its passage no doubt did allow the British to bolster their defenses. But it simultaneously allowed Hitler to increase his offensive capability too...It is also true that the Germans became convinced that time would be against them if they delayed war much after 1939. But, in balance, time was more on the German's side than on the Britain's in the year after September 1938. The German army grew significantly more than the British or French armies combined between 1938 and 1939.

Hitler gained immediately from Munich. With Czechoslovakia emasculated, Germany's eastern frontier was significantly less venerable. In occupying the Sudetenland, the Germans acquired at a stroke 1.5 million rifles, 750 aircraft, 600 tanks, and 2,000 field guns, all of which were to prove useful in they years to come. Indeed, more than one in ten of the tanks used by the Germans in their western offensive of 1940 were Czech-built...

To put it another way: it would prove much harder to fight Germany in 1939 than it would have proved to fight Germany in 1938. In fact German officers who saw the extent of Czech preparations on the frontier following the Munich deal were greatly relieved that they did not have to fight their way into the Czech state.
- Ferguson

Respond to this historian's analysis. What does he conclude and does it make sense?

What was the German military's analysis of the situation prior to Munich?

German generals did more than tell Hitler of their opposition; several senior officers were involved in plots to overthrow the German government. One group sent an emissary to London at the peak of the Sudetenland crisis to urge the British Government to take a hard-line stand; they promised to overthrow the Nazis if Hitler ordered an invasion.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, a group of senior generals—including Army Chief of Staff Beck—organized a plan to send a German Army division to Berlin to attack the S.S. (*Schutzstaffel*, or Nazi paramilitaries) and arrest Hitler if he issued the order to invade Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁹ Even senior generals who refused to participate in the plots did not report the mutinous activities to Hitler: for example, Beck urged General Brauchitsch, the commander in chief of the army, to join the plot; he declined but never betrayed the plotters to Hitler.¹⁵⁰ Beck eventually resigned in protest over German plans to invade Czechoslovakia and was replaced by General Halder, but Halder opposed the invasion too, and he also participated in plots to overthrow Hitler.¹⁵¹ Throughout the Sudetenland crisis, many senior leaders of the German military not only opposed an invasion of Czechoslovakia, they did so with enough vehemence to risk their lives by plotting against the regime.



General Beck told his subordinates that they had to act stating "Now at stake are final decisions regarding the fate of the nation. History will burden those leaders with blood-guilt if they do not act according to their professional and statesmanly principles and knowledge. Their soldierly loyalty must end at the boundary where their knowledge, conscience, and sense of responsibility forbid the execution of an order. If they all act together, then it will be impossible to carry out military action. They will thereby save the Fatherland from the worst, from total ruin. If a soldier in a position of highest authority in such times see his duties and tasks only within the limits of his military responsibilities, without consciousness of his higher responsibility to the whole people, then he shows a lack of greatness, a lack of comprehension of responsibility. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary actions. -General Beck

Respond to this quote:

In addition to the problems with Germany's own army and the sizeable British and French army, the Czech army was fairly formidable. According to a British Military attaché, The Czech General Staff undoubtedly has a capacity for organization, and I do not expect any serious hitch in the process of rapid mobilization. For an army which is not absolutely of the front rank the equipment, especially as regards arms, is surprisingly good. The country has the advantage of possessing an arms industry which can vie with any other in the world My personal opinion is that the morale of the Czech army and nation is high. To sum it up, there are no shortcomings in the Czech army."

Chamberlain called the crisis "a quarrel in a faraway country, between people of whom we know nothing." *Why, in the end do you think the British and French gave Germany the Sudetenland?*

What logic did they have in giving the land other than avoiding war?