

Worksheet S6.3.1

The main protagonists of the Second World War and the strategic position of Malta.

A: THIS BEAUTIFUL LAND – IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA *(written by Frank Tabone)*

Over the centuries everything that happened in both Western and Eastern Europe also affected our country. This was due to the geographical position of Malta – which is exactly in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Second World War (1939-1945) did not exclude Malta. Due to its strategic location, Malta found itself in the middle of a conflict between Allies (the British and French) and Axis (Germany and Italy). The Maltese struggled greatly and had to make many sacrifices to not surrender. This is a story of suffering and disheartenment; our ancestors had to make daily sacrifices whilst under a rain of destructive bombs.

B: MILL-ISTORJA – META S-SEMA DDALLAM *(historical drama – first part)*

A group of five children went on tour around the city of Rome together with their grandfather Mario. When they were in Piazza Venezia, Grandpa Mario told them the link between this square and Malta.



*Piazza Venezia
in Rome*

Klara: This Square is so big!

Roderick: And it has a lot of traffic! And noise!

Grandpa: Due to a reason! Here we are at the heart of the city. This is Piazza Venezia and throughout history, this was of great importance.

Francesca: Really grandpa? And why is this?

Grandpa: Of course! And how! Look here ...

Caroline: Grandpa, what is that palace, it is so big and beautiful! I have never seen one like it before! Who lives there?

Grandpa: That is related to Malta.

The children: To Malta!!!

Grandpa: Indeed. Do you want to know why?

The children: Yes, grandpa, tell us why.

Klara: It looks very interesting!

Grandpa: Children, that palace is really important. An Italian leader who was greatly loved by the Italians used to live in it.

Roderick: What was his name, grandpa?

Grandpa: His name was Benito Mussolini. He built buildings and made many new works in Italy and he was also immensely loved here in Rome because he had built many new houses for the poor people.

Francesca: Apparently, he had a heart of gold, right?

Grandpa: To a certain degree yes. However, not totally!

Charlene: And why, grandpa?

Grandpa: Take a look at the middle door. A huge door through which he entered every day. On top of the door there is another door leading to a balcony. From this room Benito used to lead and control all of Italy. He commanded everything himself. He liked to go out in that balcony and talk to the whole Italian population that would be in this very Square we are in. There would not even be place for a single needle! The people used to listen very carefully and did whatever he told them to do!

Caroline: And I wonder, how does Malta enter into the story?

Grandpa: Children, exactly on 10th June 1940, Benito Mussolini came out on that balcony and delivered a horrible message, a message of war. He said that Italy from that day onwards would join the war to help Hitler's Germany.

Klara: That is scary! Who knows how afraid the people were!

Grandpa: Exactly. However it happened that Malta, during that time, was under the British. The British together with the French and later even the Americans, were against the uncontrolled egoism of Hitler and Mussolini who wanted the lands of others. Hence, for Mussolini and Italy, Malta was a great enemy due to the British.

Roderick: So grandpa, then the Italians came to attack Malta?



Grandpa: Indeed they came son! I remember very well, as if it was yesterday! It was the morning of 11th June 1940 when the Italians, with a large number of warplanes, started their rain of bombs on Malta!

Read ... Think ... Discuss ...and write.

1. In which city where the children and Grandpa Mario?

2. In which year did Italy join the Second World War?

3. Which were the countries that were allies of Malta?

4. Which were the countries that were enemies of Malta?

5. On which date did the first attacks on Malta occur? And by who?