The Liberation of Europe (1943–1945)

1 Read the text and answer the questions.

In the 1930s, Germany was under the control of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, and Italy was under the control of Mussolini and the Fascist Party. Hitler wanted to control all of Europe. In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, so Britain and France went to war with Germany. The year after, Germany invaded Holland, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Denmark and Norway. It took control of those countries.

World War II was fought between two groups of countries. On one side were the Axis Powers, including Germany, Italy and Japan. On the other side were the Allies, including Great Britain, France, the old British colonies (for example, Australia and Canada), the Soviet Union (a federation of states including Russia and Ukraine) and the United States of America.

Glossary
invaded  invade

1 Who was the leader of Germany during World War II?
2 Who was the leader of Italy at the start of World War II?
3 Which countries did Germany invade in 1940?
4 Complete the table. Write the important events from the text next to the dates.

**In 1943, the Allied leaders, including Roosevelt and Churchill, decided to invade Europe to try to end the war.** On 10th July 1943, Allied troops landed in Sicily. They wanted to open the way for an Allied invasion of Italy. The Allies were also planning a large, secret invasion of France, called ‘Operation Overlord’.

**The invasion of Sicily caused a crisis in the Italian government.** On 25th July, Mussolini was removed as leader and arrested. The new Italian government was friendly to the Allies, so the war in Italy became a series of fierce battles between the Allies and the Germans. About 300,000 soldiers were killed on each side during the invasion of Italy. The Allies entered Rome on 4th June 1944.

**Two days later, on 6th June, 150,000 Allied soldiers landed on the beaches in Normandy, in northern France.** This surprise attack was called ‘D-Day’. It was the start of Operation Overlord and the liberation of France. Two weeks later, there were more than half a million Allied soldiers in northern France.

**Glossary**

- **troops** | truppe
- **was removed** | fu destituito
- **fierce** | agguerrite, violente
The Soviet Union also attacked Germany from the East. In September 1944 the Allies entered Germany, and in April 1945 the Russians entered Berlin. Hitler committed suicide on 30th April, and on 7th May 1945 Germany surrendered to the Allies. It was the end of the War in Europe.

**Glossary**

committed suicide  
*si suicidò*

surrendered  
*si arrese*