

# [Assess the view that chamberlain’s](https://assignbuster.com/assess-the-view-that-chamberlains/)

During the 1930’s it was becoming increasing clear that Germany was rearming for a war and that Britain should do the same. Germany showed no international negotiations ability by breaking the Locarno and Versailles treaty with the remilitarises of the Rhineland and the invasion of Austria-Hungary.

Appeasement was a policy of agreeing to reasonable requests made by Germany, were these requests reasonable or was Britain simply giving in to by time for their own rearmament? The policy of appeasement started as early as 1919, it was a recognition that the Treaty of Versailles was to harsh on Germany and that it should be revised to solve Germany’s genuine grievances. It was not fair that Germany wasn’t allowed an army of more than 100, 000 men when the rest of Europe was building up their armies. Furthermore it’s understandable that Germany would want their troops in ‘ their own backyard’ (Rhineland) to act as a buffer from France which was the same reason the French wanted the area de-militarised. Furthermore there was a growing attitude that Germany wasn’t responsible for the war guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles which was what the whole treaty was based on.

This was the general feeling in Britain around the early 1920’s with top politicians gaining support for these views. The policy of appeasement was used to amend these grievances shown with the active appeasement by Britain with the creation of the Dawes Plan which was a success by stabilising the inflation rate and reducing high unemployment. However when the depression of the wall street crash happened in 1929, Britain looked to another American banker Young who suggested that Germany pay only 1/4 of the total reparations amount and on a sliding scale until 1988, however by 1931 it was decided to suspend reparations payments and that time only an 1/8 of the total amount was paid. So chamberlain’s policy of appeasement can be argued that it was done to amend genuine German grievances. Another possible reason for the policy of appeasement was that British public opinion was mostly against a new world war.

This was mainly because of the lasting impression of the devastation of the ‘ The Great War’ which ironically needed to be re-named. In 1928 all men and women in Britain over 21 had the right to vote this meant that for a political party to stay or gain power they would need to be acting in the public interest. Evidence to suggest that public opinion was against the war was the 1933 Oxford Union which was comprised of ‘ the sons of the elites’ who voted that they would not fight for king and country again! In addition there was a peace ballot in 1939 with thousands of people involved who voted for pro-League of Nations and deep resentment for war; however it must be noted that the voters were invited not compelled. Chamberlain visited Hitler three times to prevent war and was supported by the public with 40, 000 thank you letters and gifts. Furthermore most of the newspapers supported him; Britain was scared of war because of the new danger of air power allowing “ the bomber to always get through”. So this is again a possible reason for adopting the policy of appeasement in order to gain public support.

Yet another possible reason for the policy of appeasement is the ‘ Evils of War’. Chamberlain was a pacifist so obviously keen to avoid war but moreover 750, 000 British troops died in The First World War with 250, 000 empire deaths with thousands more casualties dieing later from their war wounds. War also brought about the collapse of developed countries including Britain, Germany, France, Poland, and Austria – Hungary, it caused Britain the title of the world’s greatest power by devastating our economy and allowed Communism to prevail in Russia. There is also an element of public opinion in this reason because the average family that had seen its father either killed or survived The First World War now saw his children reach the age of conscription into the army if a new war occurred.

Overall there war such ‘ evils of war’ that everything should be done to avoid war and Chamberlain believed this to be by a policy of appeasement. However it can be argued that this policy actually caused the war because Britain failed to stand up to Hitler and refuse his requests. Finally it can be argued Chamberlain’s main aim in following a policy of appeasement in 1937-38 was to buy enough time to enable Britain to rearm. In 1938 Britain simply wasn’t militarily ready to fight a war because we were still coming out of a depression and didn’t have the finance for rearmament. We only fully came out of the depression when major rearmament occurred because it created jobs to reduce unemployment.

A major argument for appeasement to buy Britain time was developing our radar technology which was still in its pioneering stage in 1938 but a year later when we declared war covered the whole south coast and around London. This was a major asset to the defence of Britain and key to the defeat of Germany! In conclusion, I would disagree with the view that Chamberlain’s main aim in following a policy of appeasement in 1937-38 was to buy enough time to enable Britain to rearm. Mostly because I don’t think appeasement was mainly introduced to buy Britain time to rearm, this was one of the reasons but not the most important. I think that the policy was adopted because of different reasons including the evils of war, public opinion against the war, genuine Germany grievances.

Chamberlain publicly admitted he would use all of his power to avoid war, furthermore he was a pacifist this is another key reason for appeasement. I think the fundamental reason for appeasement was the vast majority of people in Britain strongly were against the outbreak of war; because of the evils of war and with former soldiers would now see their children conscripted into the army for a conflict happening hundreds of miles away!