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Reasons for failure of the League of Nations

1.1

Structure of the League

from the beginning the League had problems:

1. Not meet often enough
2. Too long to make decisions
3. getting everyone to agree was difficult

Fairness

Many of the decisions made by the League were seen by many countries as not being fair

1.2

Lack of an army

Sanctions were meant to be followed by military action if they did not work. Lack of its own army and the reluctance of other countries (Britain & France) to send their own soldiers, meant the League lacked any real muscle.

1.3

“ The real death of the League was 1935. One day it was a powerful body imposing sanctions, the next day it was an empty sham Hitler was watching.

JAJ Taylor, Historian

1.4

Self interest

The powerful countries like Britain & France often thought about themselves & their interests, rather than the 'world interest'.

Examples:

Manchuria - Britain did not want to anger Japan, as it had interests in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Abyssinia - Britain & France wanted to be friends with Italy & not have Italy be friends with Hitler. They had their own ideas (Hoare-Laval Plan) rather than use the League

1.5

Membership & Sanctions

Many powerful countries were not members of the League inc. USA, Germany & Russia. These omissions undermined the League.

Other countries left at various times:
Germany 1933, Japan 1933 & Italy 1937

USA & other non members could trade when the League imposed sanctions on a country
e.g. Italy traded with the USA
Sanctions were never very effective

1.6

“ The League failed because they could not match their words with actions

Jack Straw, British Foreign Secretary 2002

1a

Rank the reasons for the failure of the League of Nations

	Reason for failure	Explanation
1		EXAMPLES:
2		EXAMPLES:
3		EXAMPLES:
4		EXAMPLES: