By November 1918, the First World War had been going on for four years. The Allies (including Britain, France and the United States) were gradually winning, but Germany was not yet defeated. However, back at home, the German state was crumbling. Strikes and revolts had broken out across the country. Between November 1918 and July 1919, a series of events known as the German revolution took place. The Kaiser (the German emperor) stood down and a new German state – called the Weimar Republic – was formed.

However, the new Weimar Republic faced a difficult situation from the start. It had to deal with the damage caused by four years of war. Many people also disliked the new government.

**Learning outcomes**

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- the origins of the Weimar Republic, 1918–19
- the early political and economic challenges to the Republic, 1919–23
- the political and economic recovery of the Republic, 1919–23
- changes in German society, 1924–29.
The legacy of the First World War

During the First World War, Germany had faced the combined strength of the Allies, which included Britain, France, Russia, Italy and the USA. It had been a long and expensive war.

- Fighting had lasted four years, from 1914 to 1918.
- Eleven million Germans fought in the war. Almost two million German troops died.
- The cost of the war meant that the German government's debts increased from 50 billion marks to 150 billion marks.
- Over 750,000 Germans died because of food shortages.

As a result of this suffering, the German people began to rebel and turn against their government.

Kaiser* Wilhelm (the German emperor) and his government lost control of Germany. It was time for him to go.

**Source A**

From the papers of Jan Smuts, a South African politician who visited Germany in 1918.

... mother-land of our civilization [Germany] lies in ruins, exhausted by the most terrible struggle in history, with its peoples broke, starving, despairing, from sheer nervous exhaustion, mechanically struggling forward along the paths of anarchy [disorder with no strong authority] and war.

**Interpretation 1**


In the face of such pressure, existing order virtually collapsed. The rapid spread throughout Germany of workers’ and soldiers’ councils confirmed that people were attracted to the prospect of far-reaching political change.

**Key terms**

- Kaiser*
  The German emperor.
- Strike*
  When workers stop work in protest.
- Demonstrate*
  When people protest against something.
- Mutiny*
  When people in the military rebel.
The German revolution, 1918–19

By November 1918, the German revolution had already begun. Kaiser Wilhelm’s government had lost control of the country to strikers and rioters.

The abdication* of the Kaiser

On 9 November 1918, the Kaiser’s ministers told him that the only way to restore peace in Germany was for him to give up his position as emperor.

The Kaiser had no choice as he had lost the support of his ministers, the German army, and the German people. On 9 November, he abdicated and, in the early hours of 10 November, he ran away to Holland.

The declaration of a republic

On 9 November, the streets of Berlin were full of people. Some gathered peacefully outside the Reichstag*, while others collected guns and took over parts of the city.

The political party with the most members in the Reichstag was the Social Democratic Party* (SPD). The politicians of the SPD were scared that armed rioters were going to try to take control and set up a communist* government.

Source B

Scheidemann’s appeal from the balcony of the Reichstag on 9 November 1918. Scheidemann was a leading SPD politician.

The Hohenzollerns [the German royal family] have abdicated. Take care not to allow anything to mar this proud day. Long live the German Republic.

The Council of People’s Representatives

Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the SPD, became the first chancellor (like the British prime minister) of the new republic*. He had to work quickly to establish a government.

We will sign an armistice*, bringing an end to the war.

The Council of Representatives will lead the country until we have written a new constitution*.

Figure: Ebert’s immediate aims in 1918.

The armistice

On 11 November, Ebert’s representative signed the armistice. This was the formal agreement between Germany and the Allies to end the First World War.

Key terms

Abdication*
A leader, like a king, queen or emperor, gives up their position.

Reichstag*
The German parliament.

Social Democratic Party (SPD)*
A moderate party whose politicians were happy that the Kaiser was gone, but did not want the country to fall into chaos, or to communism.

Key terms

Communist*
An extreme form of government, in which representatives of the workers take over ownership of all land, property and resources in a country.

Republic*
A country without a king/queen or emperor/empress.

Armistice*
An agreement made to end a war.

Constitution*
The rules which set out how a country is run.
Setting up the Weimar Republic

The nine months from November 1918 to July 1919 were a tense time for the new republic whilst a new government was put in place. Ebert took several steps to increase people’s trust in the new Republic.

Civil servants* were promised that they would keep their jobs as long as they continued collecting taxes and running services (like schools).

Trade union* leaders were promised that the government would try to introduce an eight-hour working day.

Ebert reassured different groups of people

Business leaders were promised that the government would not take control of their industries or businesses.

Officers in the army were told that they would keep their positions.

Figure: How Ebert won the trust of different groups of people.

Despite Ebert’s efforts, some extreme political parties were still unhappy. Demonstrations, and even riots, were common in the major cities.

Still, Ebert had got control, which lasted long enough for a new constitution to be created.

Key terms

Civil servant*
Somebody who works for the government in some way.

Trade unions*
Groups of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of workers in various occupations.

Anarchy*
A country without a government; the word is often used to mean chaotic.

Activities

1 List as many points as you can that show that the First World War had weakened the German government (look back at page 9). Here are some clues to help you:
- In what ways had the war made it harder for the government to rule the country?
- What was happening in Germany that was difficult for the government to control?

2 The German revolution was a fairly peaceful change of power from the Kaiser to the new republic. Make a list of reasons why the change was fairly peaceful. Consider:
- why many Germans were glad to see the Kaiser gone
- why the armistice would have been popular
- what Ebert did to keep people happy.
# The origins of the Republic, 1918–19

## Key terms

**Moderate parties***
Groups of politicians who oppose extreme political ideas.

**Electorate***
People who are allowed to vote in an election.

**Democracy***
Where people have the right to vote for their leaders.

## The National Assembly

The Council of People’s Representatives, which took control of Germany in November 1918, was replaced in January 1919 by the National Assembly. In the elections, moderate parties* gained most of the seats: the SPD won 40%.

The National Assembly met in the town of Weimar as there was too much unrest in Berlin. Its job was to agree a new constitution. The new constitution was agreed on 31 July 1919, and the Weimar Republic was born.

## The Weimar Constitution

### The Parliament

- **Reichstag**: The more powerful of the two houses. Controlled taxation. Directly elected by the people at least once every four years.

### Head of State

- **President**: Head of the Weimar Republic. Elected by the people every seven years. Played no part in day-to-day politics. Had some important political powers. For example, the president chose the chancellor.

### The Government

- **Chancellor**: Head of government in the Weimar Republic. Chose all government ministers.

### Cabinet

The chief ministers who made many of the most important decisions.

### The electorate

All men and women of 21 years old or over.

**Figure 1.2** The constitution of the Weimar Republic.
The strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution

The strengths of the constitution

- Germans had the right to elect their leaders.
- The chancellor decided what laws should be passed, but laws still had to be agreed by the Reichstag.
- The president chose the chancellor and could shut down the Reichstag.
- The president did not make the laws; the Reichstag did.
- The president also had to be elected by the people.
- Checks and balances prevented any one person having too much power.
- Much more democratic than under the Kaiser.
- All Germans aged over 21 could vote.
- Women could vote for the first time in Germany.
- Germany became very democratic.

Figure: Strengths of the constitution.

Source D

A photograph, taken on 6 February 1919, showing the official opening of the National Assembly by Friedrich Ebert.
1.1 The origins of the Republic, 1918–19

The weaknesses of the constitution

- There were 29 parties in the Reichstag.
- It was rare for one party to get a majority to become the government, so coalitions were common.
- With so many parties in the coalition government, the politicians often disagreed.
- There was a lack of clear leadership and direction.
- The president had the power to pass laws without the Reichstag.
- The chancellor could ask the president to pass laws without approval from the Reichstag. This happened more and more as the Reichstag often disagreed.
- The moderate constitution meant people with more extreme political views were not happy.
- There were communists in the Reichstag who openly hated the new constitution.
- There were also nationalists in the Reichstag who opposed democracy.

Coalition* governments

Division within the Republic

Weaknesses of the constitution

Figure: Weaknesses of the constitution.

Activities

1. Draw a picture of weighing scales. On one side, write a heading ‘Strengths of the Weimar Republic’. On the other side, write a heading ‘Weaknesses of the Weimar Republic’. Add what you think are the three most important strengths and three most important weaknesses to the scale. Overall, do you think it was a good constitution?

2. Who do you think was pleased with the new constitution? Who was not?

Source E

A photograph taken at the end of 1918 in Berlin. The building behind the army shows damage caused by rioting.

Key terms

Coalition*
When a government is made up of different political parties.

Moderate*
Not extreme.

Nationalists*
People who strongly love their country.
1.1 The origins of the Republic, 1918–19

**THINKING HISTORICALLY Evidence (2b&c)**

**Different viewpoints**
Sometimes people living at the time of great events only know part of what is going on. Their knowledge of events is limited; they see only part of the picture.

This means that what people wrote at the time, and their accounts of the past, sometimes do not give an accurate view about the overall picture of what was happening.

Consider Sources F, G and Interpretation 2. What impression do they give you about how extreme the German revolution was?

Answer the following questions:

1. Sources F and G were produced by people living at the time of the German revolution. What impressions do they give you about how extreme the German revolution was? Do they suggest that there was a big change, or a small one?

2. Interpretation 2 was written by a modern historian. What impressions does it give you about how extreme the German revolution was?

3. Where did the authors of Sources F and G get their information from?

4. Where did the author of Interpretation 2 get their information from?

5. Does Interpretation 2 use information that the people in Sources F and G would not have known?

6. Why do you think that later interpretations sometimes reach different conclusions about events from sources from the time?

**Source F**

From a description by Rosa Levine-Meyer of events she saw in the streets of Munich in April 1919. Levine-Meyer was a communist leader who set up workers' councils in Munich in 1919 to replace the local government.

The streets were filled with workers, armed and unarmed, who marched by in detachment [groups]... Lorries loaded with armed workers raced through the town, often greeted with jubilant [happy] cheers. The bourgeoisie (the middle classes) had disappeared completely.

**Source G**

From a description of the German revolution by Anton Pannekoek, a Dutch communist who supported the workers’ uprisings in Germany at the end of the First World War, in May 1919.

The result of... the military defeat, was revolution... The masses have destroyed the machinery [old system] that crushed them... they have won political liberty... In Germany the workers have done the same as in Russia - formed Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. These councils... are the new instrument of power for the masses... against the organisation of the middle classes.

**Interpretation 2**

From The Coming of the Third Reich by Richard J. Evans, published in 2004.

Fear and hatred... gun battles, riots and civil unrest... ruled the day in Germany at the end of the First World War. Yet somebody had to take over the reins of power... Radical elements [extreme groups] looked to the workers' and soldiers' councils. [But] instead of revolution, Ebert wanted parliamentary democracy... [rule by an elected parliament – the Reichstag]... Many ordinary electors in Germany saw voting for the three moderate democratic parties as the best way to prevent the creation of a communist revolution. Not surprisingly, therefore, [in January 1919] the Social Democrats, the Democratic Party and the Centre Party gained an overall majority in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The constitution which it approved in July 1919 was just a modified version of the [old German constitution] established nearly half a century before.
1.1 The origins of the Republic, 1918–19

Exam-style question, Section A
Study Source A on page 9. Give two things you can infer from Source A about how well Germany was being governed in November 1918.

4 marks

Exam tip
A good answer will select details from the source, for example, ‘civilization lies in ruins’ or ‘its peoples broke, starving, despairing’. It will then explain what these details/quotes from the source suggest about how well Germany was being governed in November 1918. For example, for the quote ‘its peoples broke, starving, despairing’, you might write that ‘This suggests that Germany was being governed badly and that people were suffering due to all the economic problems after the First World War.’

Summary
- With the First World War coming to an end, the Kaiser abdicated on 9 November 1918. The war ended two days later.
- The consequences of the First World War meant that the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had to work quickly to establish control.
- Despite revolts and riots in the streets, Ebert and the SPD established a new government and a National Assembly.
- The National Assembly met in Weimar and created a constitution for the Weimar Republic.
- The constitution had strengths: it was democratic and was meant to stop an individual or party from holding all the power.
- But it also had its weaknesses. Being a coalition, it was weak in a crisis and there were many divisions. This later weakened the Weimar Republic.

Checkpoint
Strengthen
S1 List the ways in which the First World War weakened the German government.
S2 Explain how Ebert kept control of Germany from November 1918 to July 1919.
S3 Describe the key features of the Weimar Constitution.
S4 List the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution.

Challenge
C1 How did Germany manage to achieve a fairly peaceful change of power from the Kaiser’s leadership to the Weimar Republic?

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you are unsure, look again at pages 10–11 for C1. If you are still unsure about a question, discuss with others or with your teacher.
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

Learning outcomes
- Understand early challenges to the Weimar Republic, including the Treaty of Versailles, political challenges from the Left and Right, and the events of 1923.

Unpopularity of the Republic
The Weimar Republic did not officially start until July 1919, after the armistice and the Treaty of Versailles. However, the leading politicians of the Weimar Republic were the same people who surrendered and signed the unpopular peace treaty, and so they, and the Weimar Republic’s government, were blamed for it.

The armistice
On 11 November 1918, just two days after the Kaiser had abdicated, the armistice – an agreement to stop fighting – was signed.

In truth, there was little alternative. By November 1918, Germany was torn apart by unrest and its money and troops were running out (see page 9). But beginning the new republic with a surrender was not a strong start.

The Treaty of Versailles, 1919
Once the armistice was signed, the Allied leaders decided the terms of the peace. The peace treaty was eventually signed in a French palace at Versailles, near Paris, on 28 June 1919.

Peace was popular with the German people, as they had suffered during the war. Even so, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were very unpopular and this also made the Weimar Republic unpopular.

The diktat
Most Germans expected that Germany would be able to negotiate the terms of the peace treaty, but the Allies* refused to allow German representatives to join in the treaty discussions. The treaty was a ‘diktat’ – meaning the terms were forced upon Germany. The Germans were strongly against the treaty terms.

Source A
A German poster from 1931. It advertises a NSDAP rally and shows a German figure in handcuffs labelled ‘Versailles’.

Key term
Allies*
The main Allies were Britain, France and the USA (Russia had pulled out of the war in 1917).
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

The Treaty of Versailles, 1919

**War guilt**
Germany was blamed for causing the war. War guilt meant that Germany had to pay reparations* to the countries that won the war. Germany did not agree that it was to blame for causing the war, and Germans hated the war guilt clause*.

**Germany lost all its colonies**
German colonies* in Africa and Asia were given to the winning nations.

**Germany had to pay reparations**
The reparations were set at 136,000 million marks (£6.6 billion).

**Germany lost land**
- Some land in west Germany (including Alsace-Lorraine) was lost and given to France and Belgium.
- Some land in east Germany (including West Prussia) was lost and given to Poland.

- In some areas, people could vote on whether or not they wanted to remain a part of Germany.
- The German port of Danzig was made into an ‘international city’, not governed by Germany.
- These losses meant Germany lost 10% of its population, almost 50% of its iron resources and 15% of its coal.

**German military strength was cut**
- The German army was limited to 100,000 men.
- Germany was only allowed a small navy.
- No airforce was allowed.
- No German troops were allowed in the Rhineland (an area between France and Germany). It was demilitarised*.

**War guilt**
Germany was blamed for causing the war. War guilt meant that Germany had to pay reparations* to the countries that won the war. Germany did not agree that it was to blame for causing the war, and Germans hated the war guilt clause*.

**Clause**
A part of a treaty or agreement.

**Colonies***
Land ruled by another country as part of an empire.

**Demilitarised zone***
An area where soldiers and weapons are banned.

**Economy***
The wealth and resources of a country.

**Demilitarised***
An area where troops and military equipment are not allowed.

Figure: Terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

Figure 1.3 Germany and the Treaty of Versailles.
Dolchstoss – the stab in the back

Another reason the Treaty of Versailles was unpopular was because the German people didn’t believe their army had been defeated in the war. Although it was in retreat by November 1918, the German army was not defeated. Some people said the army was betrayed by politicians – that they were ‘stabbed in the back’ (Dolchstoss).

Source B

A poster from 1924 showing a German soldier being ‘stabbed in the back’.

Source C

From an article in Deutsche Zeitung, a German newspaper, 28 June 1919.

Vengeance [revenge], German nation! Today, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, a disgraceful treaty is being signed. Never forget it! On that spot... German honour is being dragged to its grave. There will be revenge for the shame of 1919.

The impact of the treaty on the Weimar Republic

The Treaty of Versailles aimed to damage Germany’s economy*, so that it could not start another world war. This made the Weimar Republic weak from the start.

It also made the Weimar Republic politically weak. The German people were angry with the leaders of the new republic who signed the treaty. They became known as the ‘November Criminals’ because they surrendered in November 1918.

Activities

1. Play ‘Versailles Volleyball’. Divide the class in half and take it in turns to ‘lob’ a German grievance (complaint) about the Treaty of Versailles ‘over the net’ to the other team until one side fails to give a different grievance – and loses the game. Jot down each grievance as you play.

2. Consider: the diktat, war guilt, reparations, loss of military strength, lost land, the ‘stab in the back’. Which was the biggest grievance? For each grievance, write one or two sentences describing what it was. Then write one or two further sentences explaining why it made people angry.

Interpretation 1

From The Coming of the Third Reich by Richard J. Evans, published in 2004.

No one was prepared for the peace terms... All of this was greeted with incredulous horror by the majority of Germans. The sense of outrage and disbelief... was almost universal*. Germany’s international strength and prestige had been on an upward course since unification* in 1871... now, suddenly, Germany had been brutally expelled from the ranks of the Great Powers and covered in what they considered to be undeserved shame. Versailles was condemned as a dictated* peace, unilaterally imposed* without the possibility of negotiation.

Key terms

Universal*
Shared or felt by everyone.

Unification*
Before 1871 Germany was a group of separate states. In 1871 these states joined together to form Germany.

Dictated*
To be told what to do.

Unilaterally imposed*
When something is forced on one side by the other side, rather than agreed together.
Challenges to the Weimar Republic from the Left and Right

In the National Assembly (see page 12), which created the constitution for the new republic, most politicians were moderates. However, there were extreme left-wing and right-wing parties which did not support the Weimar Republic.

Right wing and left wing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extreme left-wing groups</th>
<th>Moderate parties</th>
<th>Extreme right-wing groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wanted Germany to be controlled by the people.</td>
<td>• Supported the Weimar Constitution.</td>
<td>• Wanted Germany to be ruled by a strong leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wanted to end private ownership of property.</td>
<td>• Supported democracy, where people can vote.</td>
<td>• Supported private ownership of property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wanted all business profits to be shared by the workers.</td>
<td>• Were against extreme changes.</td>
<td>• Wanted strong law and order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wanted to co-operate with other countries.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wanted Germany to be powerful again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The challenge of the Left and Right in the Reichstag

The number of seats* that the moderate parties held in the Reichstag fell greatly between 1919 and 1920. The extremist politicians of the left and the right wings grew in power.

Interpretation 2

From Nazism and War by Richard Bessel, published in 2004. The Social Democratic politicians, into whose lap the German government fell in 1918, didn't have widespread support. Instead, they faced a bitter, suffering population, filled with unrealistic ideas about what peace could bring and divided about… the road ahead.

Activity

Study Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2, which both describe the political situation around 1920. What do they say that is similar, and what information is found in only one of the extracts?

Key term

Seats*

When used to talk about politics, the term ‘seats’ refers to seats in parliament (the Reichstag in this case). Each politician has one seat.

Figure: What the parties wanted.

The main parties of the Weimar Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremist</th>
<th>Moderate Parties</th>
<th>Extremist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPD</td>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>DNVP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td>Social Democrats</td>
<td>National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme left wing</td>
<td>Moderate left wing</td>
<td>Right wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed the Weimar Republic</td>
<td>Supported Weimar Republic</td>
<td>Unhappily accepted Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported by workers and some middle classes</td>
<td>Supported by workers and middle classes</td>
<td>Conservatives. Originally the party of the Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.4 The main parties of the Weimar Republic.
The challenge of the left and right outside the Reichstag

The Weimar Republic also faced challenges from left and right-wing groups outside of the Reichstag. There were violent uprisings* against the government.

The Spartacist Revolt – a left-wing uprising

- The German Communist Party was set up in December 1918.
- It soon had 33 daily newspapers and 400,000 members.
- The Communists were supported by the Spartacist League.
- The Spartacist League was another extreme left-wing group, based in Berlin.
- It was led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

On 4 January 1919, Ebert sacked the police chief in Berlin. He was popular with the workers. The Spartacists saw this as their chance to attack the government. They called for an uprising and a strike in Berlin. Over 100,000 workers took to the streets. They seized the government’s newspaper offices. The Weimar government was losing control of the capital.

The Freikorps

Chancellor Ebert needed to stop the Spartacist rebels. However, the German armed forces were weak after the war, so Ebert had to find soldiers from elsewhere.

Thousands of soldiers released from the army at the end of the First World War had returned to Germany, but had kept their weapons. Many of them hated the communists. Ebert ordered army officers to organise these former soldiers into Freikorps (Free Corps) military units.

The end of the Spartacist Revolt

As the Spartacist Revolt grew, Ebert sent the Freikorps to defeat the rioters. The mainly unarmed workers were no match for the Freikorps soldiers. By 13 January, the rebels had been driven off the streets. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were arrested and killed by Freikorps officers. The left-wing communist rebellion had been defeated.

Source D

A Spartacist poster from the 1920s. The Spartacist champion of the people slays the three-headed monster – the army, big business and landowners – considered by the extreme left wing to be oppressing* the people.

Key terms

Uprising*
An act of resistance or rebellion.

Oppress*
To restrict someone’s freedoms or exploit them.
The Kapp Putsch* – a right-wing uprising
The Weimar government had to defend itself against right-wing as well as left-wing unrest. Even the Freikorps turned against the government.

The Freikorps units were growing very powerful.

Ebert decided to send home some Freikorps units in order to make the Freikorps less powerful.

This angered the Freikorps and they turned against the government.

Five thousand Freikorps rebels took control of Berlin. The Weimar government fled the city.

The rebels put a right-wing politician called Wolfgang Kapp in control of the city.

Kapp invited the Kaiser to return to Germany to rule the country.

The workers of Berlin did not want the Kaiser back so they went on strike. With workers on strike, the city came to a standstill.

Kapp realised that he could not govern the city and ran away. Because of the actions of the workers, the Kapp Putsch had failed.

Figure: Events of the Kapp Putsch.

The challenge of ongoing political violence 1919–23
Even after the defeat of the Spartacist and Kapp uprisings, political challenges to the Weimar Republic continued from the left and right wings.

There was a series of political assassinations*. For example, Matthias Erzberger, the politician who signed the surrender to the Allies in 1918, was killed in August 1921.

Activities

1. Choose three people from your class to talk – without pausing or repeating themselves – about the Spartacist Revolt, the Kapp Putsch and the Freikorps. The person who can talk for the longest wins. Afterwards, list the key facts about each one.

2. Using pages 20–22, write down two things that each of the following parties believed in: the Communists, the Social Democrats, and the Nationalists.

Between 1919 and 1922 there were 376 political murders. They were mostly of left-wing or moderate politicians. No right-wing murderer was convicted. Some judges supported the right wing.

Due to all this political violence, most political parties hired armed men to guard their meetings. At first, these private political armies were for protection, but they often caused political meetings and marches to become violent.

The Weimar Republic struggled through the years 1919–22, with threats from left-wing and right-wing extremists. Things would become even worse in 1923.

Figure 1.5 The political attacks on the Weimar Republic.

Key terms

Putsch*
A German word for a rebellion or revolt.

Assassination*
When an important individual is killed, often for political reasons.
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

The challenges of 1923

French occupation of the Ruhr

All Germany’s wealth had been spent during the war. Germany was being forced to pay reparations, mostly to France. Germany lost some of its wealthiest areas in the Treaty of Versailles.

Germany had no money.

The German government could not pay reparations.

The French were angry about this. In December 1922, France sent soldiers into the Ruhr – an area of Germany that contained many factories, and around 80% of Germany’s coal, iron and steel. This was called the occupation of the Ruhr.

The French soldiers tried to take control of industry in the Ruhr.

In protest, German workers went on strike. This was known as passive resistance*.

The German workers’ strike upset the French but also damaged Germany’s economy, as it meant that the Ruhr was no longer producing the coal, iron and steel that the country needed.

Some Germans blamed the Weimar government for not doing more to stand up to the French.

Figure: Germany and the occupation of the Ruhr.

Source E

A poster from Germany in 1923. The figure represents France. The caption reads ‘Hands off the Ruhr area!’.

Inflation and hyperinflation

The economic problems in early 1923 meant that the price of things went up – this is called inflation. People had to pay more money to get what they needed.

The government needed money to pay its debts. So it printed more money. Printing extra money made it easier for the government to pay reparations, but it also made inflation even worse. The more prices rose, the more money was printed and this made prices rise again. By 1923, prices were incredibly high (see the table below). This extreme inflation is called hyperinflation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price of a loaf of bread</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key term

Passive resistance*
To resist something in a non-violent way.
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

The effects of hyperinflation and the damage done

Hyperinflation had many bad effects and some positive effects.

**Key term**

*Hoarded*

To stock-up on valuable items to stop other people from getting them.

**Figure:** How hyperinflation affected German people.

**Source F**

A photograph of children using stacks of bank notes as building blocks in Germany in 1923.
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

Activities

1. Working with a partner, create a list of reasons why the German government had run out of money by December 1922. (Hint: think about the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles (see page 18), as well as the figure in Source E on page 23.)

2. Outline the reasons for and effects of the French occupation of the Ruhr.

**THINKING HISTORICALLY Interpretations 2a**

The work of the historian

Historians do not aim to tell us about the whole past – they need to choose certain parts of the past to investigate. They do this so that their work is not overloaded with detail. For example, an overview history of the creation of the Weimar Republic might not include witness statements from rioters on the streets, but a work about how the Spartacist Revolt was defeated might contain many such witness statements.

Political unrest in the Weimar Republic 1918–23 – some key information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>55% of German troops in the First World War were killed or wounded.</th>
<th>The price of bread was 200,000 million times higher in 1923 than it was in 1919.</th>
<th>Money put into savings in 1919 was worthless by 1923.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1920, Freikorps shot or arrested people who demonstrated in the streets.</td>
<td>Germans believed that their army had been ‘stabbed in the back’ by the November Criminals.</td>
<td>French occupation of the Ruhr caused many German factories to stop working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Allies said that Germany was to blame for the start of the First World War.</td>
<td>In late 1923, if you ordered a coffee for 5,000 marks you could be charged 8,000 by the time you drank it.</td>
<td>Germany was told to pay £6.6 billion in reparations as compensation to the Allies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the above pieces of information would you use to investigate the following issues? Write out each of the four questions below and then choose two pieces of information from the table for each.

1. How fair were the terms of the Treaty of Versailles?
2. Why was there so much unrest in Germany at the end of 1918?
3. What were the main causes of suffering in Germany 1919–23?
4. What were the effects of hyperinflation in 1923?

With a partner, discuss the following question:

1. Why is it important to carefully choose the information that you put in your historical writing?
1.2 Early challenges to the Republic, 1919–23

**Exam-style question, Section A**

Explain why there were economic problems in the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923.
You may use the following in your answer:
• reparations
• the French occupation of the Ruhr.
You **must** also use information of your own.

12 marks

**Exam tip**

A good answer will:
• include several different things that caused economic problems. Reparations and the occupation of the Ruhr are both mentioned in the question, but you can also include other factors
• contain detailed information about each factor and its economic effects, for example for the occupation of the Ruhr, you might write how it was a very important industrial area for Germany
• explain why each factor caused economic problems. Keep your focus on the question very clear by using words from the question. The phrase, ‘This led to economic problems because…’ would be one that you could use for each factor.

**Summary**

• The Treaty of Versailles and the idea that Germans had been ‘stabbed in the back’ made the Weimar Republic unpopular after 1919.
• From 1919 to 1923, the Weimar Republic was attacked by extreme left-wing and right-wing political groups, inside and outside the Reichstag.
• Examples of these attacks include the Spartacist Revolt and the Kapp Putsch.
• 1923 brought new challenges for the Weimar Republic, such as the French occupation of the Ruhr and hyperinflation.

**Checkpoint**

**Strengthen**

**S1** List the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which made the Weimar Republic unpopular.
**S2** Describe the causes, events and reasons for the failure of the Spartacist Revolt and the Kapp Putsch.
**S3** What were the reasons for, and the effects of, the French occupation of the Ruhr?
**S4** What were the reasons for, and the effects of, hyperinflation?

**Challenge**

**C1** Explain the reasons for political and economic problems in the Weimar Republic, 1919–23.

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you are unsure, look again at pages 18–24 for C1. If you are still unsure about a question, join together with others and discuss a joint answer. Your teacher can provide hints.
1.3 The recovery of the Republic, 1924–29

Learning outcomes

- Understand Stresemann's plan for the recovery of the Weimar Republic.
- Understand reasons for economic recovery, including the Dawes and Young Plans.
- Understand reasons for recovery in foreign relations*, including the Locarno Pact and the League of Nations.

In August 1923, President Ebert appointed Gustav Stresemann as his new chancellor and foreign secretary*. Stresemann resigned the chancellorship in November 1923, but remained as foreign secretary until 1929.

Stresemann’s strategy

Stresemann’s aims were:

- to make the political situation more stable
- to improve the economy
- to build positive relationships with other countries
- to increase support for moderate political parties
- to reduce support for extreme parties.

Source A

From a speech by Stresemann, describing his support for middle-of-the-road policies in 1924.

I regard it as my duty, as a party man and as a minister, to do all I can to unite the German people for these decisions, and not to force upon them the choice: bourgeois [middle class] or socialist [left wing, e.g. communists].

Reasons for economic recovery

Rentenmark

In November 1923, Stresemann set up a new currency called the Rentenmark. The supply of these notes was strictly limited in order to stop inflation*.

Later, in August 1924, a new national bank, called the Reichsbank, was given control of this new currency.

The currency was renamed the Reichsmark. This solved the problem of inflation, and hyperinflation was at an end.

The Dawes Plan, 1924

In April 1924, an American banker called Charles G. Dawes and Stresemann agreed to a plan to deal with the problem of reparations. It was called the Dawes Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the Dawes Plan agreed</th>
<th>How the plan helped Germany</th>
<th>Problems caused by the plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reparations were reduced to £50 million per year</td>
<td>✓ Germany could afford reparations</td>
<td>X Extreme political parties were angry that the Weimar government agreed to pay reparations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• US banks would loan huge sums of money to German businesses</td>
<td>✓ It kept the Allies happy, especially France</td>
<td>X Germany was now in huge debt to America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ It stopped businesses from going bankrupt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Employment and trade increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of this improved the Weimar Republic’s economy.

- Industrial output doubled between 1923 and 1928.
- Employment, trade and income from taxation increased.

Key terms

Foreign relations*

The relationships between different countries, such as alliances, treaties and trade deals.

Foreign secretary*

The person within a government who is in charge of foreign relations.

Inflation*

When prices increase.
Activities

In pairs, read the following statement by Streseman in 1929: ‘The economic position only flourishes [grows] on the surface. Germany dances on a volcano. If loans are called in by the USA, a large section of our economy will collapse.’

What Streseman meant by this was that the economy of Germany would collapse again if America asked for the money that it had loaned to Germany to be paid back.

1. Using pages 27–28, list four economic changes made from 1923 to 1929.

2. What was the name of the agreement that led to Germany borrowing money from the USA?

3. In what way could Germany borrowing money from the USA be seen to be a bad thing?

The Young Plan, 1929

Five years later, Stresemann agreed to another economic plan: the Young Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the Young Plan agreed</th>
<th>How the plan helped Germany</th>
<th>Problems caused by the plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Total reparations were reduced from £6.6 billion to £2 billion</td>
<td>✓ Germany now owed less money to the Allies</td>
<td>✗ Germany still had to pay £50 million per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Germany was given more time to pay (59 years)</td>
<td>✓ This meant that the Weimar government could reduce taxes</td>
<td>✗ Extreme parties were angry that Germany would be in debt until 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Lower taxes meant people had more money to buy goods, so industries benefited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Many Germans were happy with the Young Plan and the Weimar government gained popularity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recovery in foreign relations

Stresemann hoped his work in foreign affairs would make the Weimar government more popular in Germany.

The Locarno Pact, 1925

On 1 December 1925, Stresemann signed the Locarno Pact*. This was a treaty between Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium.

Unlike the Versailles Treaty, the Locarno Pact was agreed by Germany, on the same terms with the other main powers.

Stresemann saw this as a major success.

- It made war in Europe less likely.
- Germany was also being treated as an equal.
- The treaty gave Germans more confidence in the Weimar Republic, and increased support for moderate parties.

Source C

A picture from the front of the German magazine Kladderadatsch in 1926. The hands represent Germany. The tombstone is labelled Treaty of Versailles. The figures on the top represent Germany’s wartime enemies.

Figure: Terms of the Locarno Pact.

Key terms

Pact*
An agreement, like a treaty.

League of Nations*
An organisation set up in 1920. It aimed to promote world peace by encouraging countries to co-operate and talk through their differences.
The League of Nations
At the end of the First World War, the Allies had set up the League of Nations. This was a new international organisation in which powerful countries discussed ways of solving the world’s problems in order to avoid war. At first, Germany was not allowed to join the League. In September 1926, Stresemann got the other countries to accept Germany as a member.

Again, this increased support for the moderate parties which supported Stresemann. However, not all political parties agreed. Some people hated the League and they wanted nothing to do with it. Stresemann disagreed (see Source D).

Kellogg-Briand Pact
In August 1928, Germany and 61 other countries signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This promised that countries would not use war to achieve their aims.

This was another positive step for Germany.

- It showed that Germany was now included amongst the most powerful countries.
- It also showed that the Weimar Republic was now a respected, stable state.
- This increased German people’s confidence in the Weimar Republic.

However, not all Germans agreed. The Kellogg-Briand Pact did not remove the hated terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which still limited Germany’s power (see Source E).
The impact on domestic politics
Stresemann had tried to end the hardships of the German people, to cut support for extreme parties and reach agreements with other countries. The impact of his successes is clear. Figure 1.6 shows that support for moderate political parties rose and support for extreme parties fell.

Election results to the Reichstag

![Election results graph]

**Key**
- Moderate parties (SPD, DDP, ZP, DVP)
- Extreme parties (KPD, DNVP, NSDAP)
- Other parties

**Figure 1.6** A breakdown of the election results.

The German people's confidence in the Weimar Republic grew in 1925, when President Ebert died. He was replaced by Paul von Hindenburg, a former army general. Hindenburg was very popular and seen as a strong leader.

However, problems were not over for the Weimar Republic. A world economic crisis began in 1929. This led to a new wave of extreme economic and political problems for the Weimar Republic.

**Source F**
A German journalist, writing in 1929.

In comparison with what we expected after Versailles, Germany has raised herself up. It now shoulders the terrific burden [heavy load] of that peace in a way we should never have thought possible. The bad feeling of Versailles has been conquered [overcome].

**Interpretation 1**
From a history textbook for schools, published in Britain in 2015.

As the economy improved, so social conditions stabilised and political violence died down. Between 1924 and 1929, no major political figures were assassinated. The Weimar government had been in power for long enough for many people to accept that it was now the political system in Germany – as long as things continued to improve. Support for extremist parties (both left wing and right wing) reduced… Coalition* governments were still the norm, although they changed less often: between 1924 and 1929, there were just six different coalitions. Stresemann's influence was vital to this. However, none of the weaknesses of the constitution had been resolved. And in 1929, Stresemann died.

**Activities**

1. Create a table, like the one below, to show the ways in which Stresemann's policies between 1923 and 1929 helped Germany to become more stable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the policy helped</th>
<th>Ways in which it didn’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923 Rentenmark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawes Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locarno Pact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League of Nations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg-Briand Pact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Hold a class debate about whether you agree with this statement: ‘Between 1923 and 1929, Gustav Stresemann solved the problems of the Weimar Republic’. One half of the class should support the statement and the other half should oppose it.

**Key term**
 Coalition*
A government where different political parties share power.
1.3 The recovery of the Republic, 1924–29

**Exam-style question, Section B**

Study Source B (page 28) and Source F (page 31).

How useful are Source B and Source F for an enquiry into the recovery of the Weimar Republic between 1923 and 1929?

Explain your answer, using Source B, Source F and your knowledge of the historical context. **8 marks**

**Exam tip**

A good answer will consider:

- how useful the information in each source is for this particular enquiry
- how the provenance (i.e., the type of source, its origin, author or purpose) of each source affects how useful it is
- how knowledge of history at that time affects a judgement of how useful each source is (note that one of the sources was created in 1923, when the situation was very bad, whereas the other was made in 1929, when things had improved slightly).

**Summary**

- The new currency, introduced in 1923, ended hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic and aided economic recovery in Germany.
- The Dawes Plan and Young Plan reduced the amount of reparations that the Weimar Republic was expected to pay.
- The Locarno Pact, membership of the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact marked the return of Germany as a world power. This helped the Weimar Republic to become a respected state.
- However, not all the problems of the Weimar Republic were solved. In 1929, Stresemann died and later that year a new economic crisis began.

**Checkpoint**

**Strengthen**

**S1** Describe the introduction of the Rentenmark, the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan.

**S2** Describe Germany’s part in the Locarno Pact, the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

**S3** What economic improvements were there in the Weimar Republic from 1924 to 1929?

**Challenge**

**C1** Explain why the Weimar Republic became more stable from 1924 to 1929.

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you are unsure, look again at pages 27–29 for S1 and S3, pages 29–30 for S2, and pages 27–31 for C1. If you are still unsure about a question, join together with others and discuss a joint answer. Your teacher can give you hints.
1.4 Changes in society, 1924–29

Learning outcomes

- Examine the changes in the standard of living for the German people, 1924–29.
- Understand changes for women in the Weimar Republic.
- Understand cultural changes in the Weimar Republic.

Changes in the standard of living

- **War pensions**: War veterans* were offered help. Pensions were paid to 750,000 war veterans. 400,000 war widows* received pensions.
- **Unemployment and insurance**: Unemployment fell, from 2 million in 1926 to 1.3 million by 1928. Help for the unemployed improved – the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1927 provided sickness and unemployment benefits.
- **Work and wages**: Wages and working conditions improved. People worked fewer hours. Wages rose by 25% (1925 to 1928).
- **Housing**: Housing improved. Private companies built 37,000 new homes. New government associations built 64,000 homes. But there was still a shortage of housing.
- **Education**: The number of students at university increased.

An improvement in the standard of living?

There were still problems. Jobs were not always permanent. The savings that people had lost during hyperinflation could not be recovered. Not everyone was pleased by the social improvements in 1924–28 (see Interpretation 1).

**Interpretation 1**


Working people actually improved their situation with better real wages, unemployment insurance and lower working hours. What this did, however, was to alienate* other groups such as big business, who resented their loss of power and profit, and the lower middle class, who saw their own position threatened by a system that seemed to favour the working class.

**Key terms**

- **War veteran***: Someone who fought in a war, in this case the First World War.
- **Widow***: A woman whose husband has died.
- **Alienate***: To make someone feel left out.
1.4 Changes in society, 1924–29

Activities

1. 'The Weimar Republic brought an improvement in living standards for the German people.' In groups, make a list of evidence to support this statement and a list to oppose it. Draw up a table and write your evidence under these headings: unemployment, wages, housing, education, pensions, the lives of women.

2. Debate this statement in class: 'Weimar Germany brought social change for women.' Note down the key evidence for each side. Write your own view on paper and justify it.

Changes for women in the Weimar Republic

Women in politics

Women had equal legal rights* to men.
Women were given the right to vote.
Women could become politicians.
90% of women voted in Weimar elections.
By 1932, 10% of the Reichstag were women.

The rights of women

Women at work

Positive changes

Improvements in the economy meant more jobs for women in retail and offices.
More women were employed in education.
The number of female doctors doubled between 1925 and 1932.

Negative changes

Only 36% of women went to work (about the same as before the First World War).
Women got paid one third less than men for the same work.
Most women stopped working when they married.

Figure: The rights of women, 1918–32.

Figure: There were some improvements for women in the workplace between 1918 and 1932.

Despite improvements, women and men were still not equal in the workplace. Many men opposed women workers and equal pay.

Key term

Legal rights*
Your rights according to the law.

Interpretation 2

From an article on women in Weimar Germany, written by Rudiger Graf in 2009.

Because of women's improved position in the workforce and their newly acquired rights as citizens… women themselves seemed to have changed… Magazines… presented a new generation of women that differed fundamentally from their mothers.
1.4 Changes in society, 1924–29

Women at leisure

‘New women’ was the name given to a group of young, wealthier women in the cities, who enjoyed new fashions and opportunities. Images of these ‘new women’ became common in advertisements and films, but they were not popular with all Germans.

Figure: ‘New women’.

Source A

A magazine cover from 1925, comparing a woman from the past (in the foreground) with a ‘woman of today’ (at the back).

Society divided

People in the Weimar Republic had different feelings about the changes in society:

• some women enjoyed the new opportunities and freedoms; however, other women were scared by the idea that they should change
• some men accepted changing roles for women, others felt that ‘new women’ threatened their role in society
• some people blamed the economic problems in Germany in the 1920s on women. They said that women were taking the jobs that men needed.

Key term

Conservative/traditionalist*
People who oppose change and want to continue with old traditions.
Cultural changes in the Weimar Republic

A variety of factors led to cultural experimentation* in Weimar Germany.

**Interpretation 3**

From *Weimar and Nazi Germany*, by Stephen Lee published in 1996.

The 1920s saw a huge cultural revival in Germany. Indeed, these years have been seen as the greatest period of experimentation in the whole of Germany’s history. As things settled down politically, writers and artists had more of a chance to try out new ideas. The results were impressive and spread across all areas of the Arts*.

In the 1920s, several factors led to new artistic and cultural ideas:

- **When the Kaiser ruled Germany**, creative ideas had been restricted – this changed under the Weimar Republic.
- The new Weimar Constitution allowed freedoms – such as freedom of speech.
- Economic recovery after 1924 created wealth to fund new artistic ideas.

This caused the growth of a number of new ways of looking at the Arts:

- **New Objectivism**
  The idea that art should show life as it really is, including poverty and hardship.

- **Modernism**
  The idea that art should focus on the future and see beauty in cities, industry, technology.

- **Expressionism**
  The idea that art should show the thoughts and feelings of the artist rather than only showing things as they really look.

There were two factors which helped these ideas to spread:

- **The Bauhaus movement**
  The Bauhaus was a design college in Berlin. The college developed a style of design which influenced all areas of the Arts. The Bauhaus style focused on the beauty in technology, simple lines and careful craftsmanship.

- **Government support**
  The Weimar government gave funding to support art galleries, theatres, orchestras, museums and libraries.

All these factors combined to cause culture to change dramatically in Weimar Germany.

**Figure 1.7** The Arts in the Weimar Republic.

**Key terms**

- **Cultural experimentation***
  When people come up with new ideas about music, art, film and other creative projects.

- **The Arts***
  A term used to cover many cultural activities, including art, music, theatre and dance.
Art
In art, painters like Otto Dix (see Source B) often painted scenes from German life which made German society look very bad.

Source B
A painting by Otto Dix, showing a Berlin street scene, from 1927. It is expressionist in style and shows the harsh life of war veterans and falling standards of behaviour in Germany’s night life during the Weimar Republic.

Source C
A poster for Metropolis (1926). It shows an artist’s view of the wonders of life in the 20th century.

Architecture
Some architects, like Erich Mendelsohn, were influenced by the Bauhaus school of design. When Mendelsohn was asked to design the Einstein Tower, an observatory in Potsdam, he designed a futuristic tower which looks like a rocket. It was unlike anything seen before.

Cinema
Films became popular all over the world in the 1920s. Some German films were very creative and original. Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang and released in 1926, was a science fiction film about life and technology in the 20th century. It was partly funded by the government. Germany’s first film with sound was made in 1930, and by 1932 there were 3,800 German cinemas showing films with sound.
Opposition
Not everyone agreed with the changes in the Arts. Some people criticised the Weimar Republic.

• Left-wing parties like the KPD said that art funding was a waste, when working people needed basic help.
• Right-wing parties, like the nationalists and the Nazi Party, said the changes went against traditional German culture.

Activities
1. Look at Source B on page 37. Write a sentence to explain why this is an example of expressionist art (see page 36 for a definition of expressionism).
2. List reasons why there was so much cultural change in Weimar Germany in the 1920s (look at Figure 1.7 on page 36).

Exam-style question, Section B
Study Interpretations 2 and 3 on pages 34 and 36. They give different views about the attitudes towards women in Weimar Germany.

What is the main difference between these views?
Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations. 4 marks

Exam tip
It is not enough just to find differences of detail between the interpretations. The key is:
• to decide how the view in one interpretation is different from the view in the other
• to use details in each interpretation to illustrate how the views differ.
The following sentence starters might be useful: ‘Interpretation 2 suggests that women in the Weimar Republic were… This can be seen where it says…’ ‘However, Interpretation 3 gives a different view. It suggests…’

Summary
• Some improvements in the standard of living took place. However, helping the working classes was not popular with all Germans in the Weimar Republic.
• There were some improvements in the position of women in politics, at work and in leisure. However, the improvements did not go very far and they did not please all Germans.
• Major changes occurred in culture – in art, architecture and the cinema. However, these changes did not please all Germans.

Checkpoint
Strengthen
S1 Give some figures that illustrate changes in unemployment, working hours, wages, housing and the treatment of veterans.
S2 Give examples of how the position of women improved in politics, work and leisure.
S3 Describe the new ideas in the Arts in Weimar Germany and give examples of how these affected art, architecture and cinema.

Challenge
C1 Give your view about whether the standard of living went up for most people in Weimar Germany, using specific details to support your answer.

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you are unsure, look again at page 33 for S1 and C1, pages 34–35 for S2 and pages 36–38 for S3. If you are still unsure about your answers, join together with others and discuss a joint answer. Your teacher can give you hints.
Recall quiz

1. Who was the first president of the Weimar Republic?
2. Which political party did he belong to?
3. Who replaced him as president in 1925?
4. Who was the minister responsible for Weimar economic and foreign policy from 1923?
5. In what year did he die?
6. What was the Reichstag?
7. What was the minimum age for voting under the Weimar Constitution?
8. What was the title of the Weimar equivalent of the British prime minister?
9. Under the Weimar Constitution, what power did the president have?
10. What were the initials of the five main political parties in the Weimar Republic?

Activities

1. Make a timeline for 1918 and 1919. On the timeline, mark each of the following events. If possible, give the month and year.
   - a. The abdication of the Kaiser
   - b. The announcement of the start of the Republic
   - c. The Council of Representatives take over control of the government
   - d. The armistice ends the First World War
   - e. Elections for the National Assembly
   - f. The National Assembly meets for the first time
   - g. The Weimar government signs the Treaty of Versailles
   - h. The new Weimar Constitution is announced

2. Make a list of the reasons why Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles.

3. Divide a sheet of A4 paper into four. Use the four quarters to list key information about each of the following events:
   - a. the Spartacist Revolt, 1919
   - b. the Kapp Putsch, 1920
   - c. the French occupation of the Ruhr, 1923
   - d. the struggle against inflation, 1923–24.

4. Finish these sentences in as much detail as you can:
   - a. The Rentenmark was...
   - b. The Dawes Plan was...
   - c. The Young Plan was...
   - d. The Treaty of Locarno was...
   - e. Joining the League of Nations meant...
   - f. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was...

5. Give each of the aspects listed below a mark out of 10, to show how much social change it involved. Then write two or three sentences to explain each of your marks.
   - a. Standards of living
   - b. The role of women
   - c. Culture
Writing historically: organising ideas

The most successful historical writing is clearly organised, guiding the reader through the writer's ideas.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you will understand how to:

- organise your ideas into paragraphs
- link your paragraphs to guide the reader.

Definition

Paragraph: a unit of text that focuses on a particular point or idea and information related to it.

How can I organise my ideas into paragraphs?

Look at the notes below written in response to this exam-style question:

Explain why there was opposition in Germany to the Treaty of Versailles (1919). (12 marks)

Armistice
Stab in the back – November Criminals
Treaty of Versailles
Diktat
War guilt
Reparations – money had to be paid to allies
Loss military force
Loss total population
Loss of land - colonies
There were many reasons why Germans opposed the Treaty of Versailles. Because Germany surrendered, the Treaty of Versailles was a Diktat. This meant that the Germans were given no say in the terms of the treaty, they were not entitled to an opinion. This angered many Germans.

Another reason why Germans opposed the Treaty of Versailles was the ‘war guilt’ clause. This meant that, since Germany was to blame for the war, it had to pay reparations. Germany had to repay 136,000 million marks to the Allies. It also had to give away land surrounding Germany, such as Alsace and Lorraine as part of the Treaty of Versailles.

A key part of the ‘war guilt’ clause was reducing the German military. The Allies believed that this would prevent Germany starting another war. The German army was limited to 100,000 men, Germany was the only country made to reduce its military, which the German people opposed.

1. a. What is the key focus of each of these paragraphs (choose from the list on page 40)?
   b. Why do you think this response focused on these key areas?
   c. Why do you think this response put the paragraphs in this order?
   d. Which points in the notes have not been included in the final response (again, look at the list on page 40)? Why do you think the writer decided not to include them?

2. Look closely at the structure of the first paragraph. Which sentences:
   a. show the central topic of the paragraph
   b. show knowledge and understanding of that topic
   c. show that the student is directly answering the question (why there was opposition to the Treaty of Versailles)?