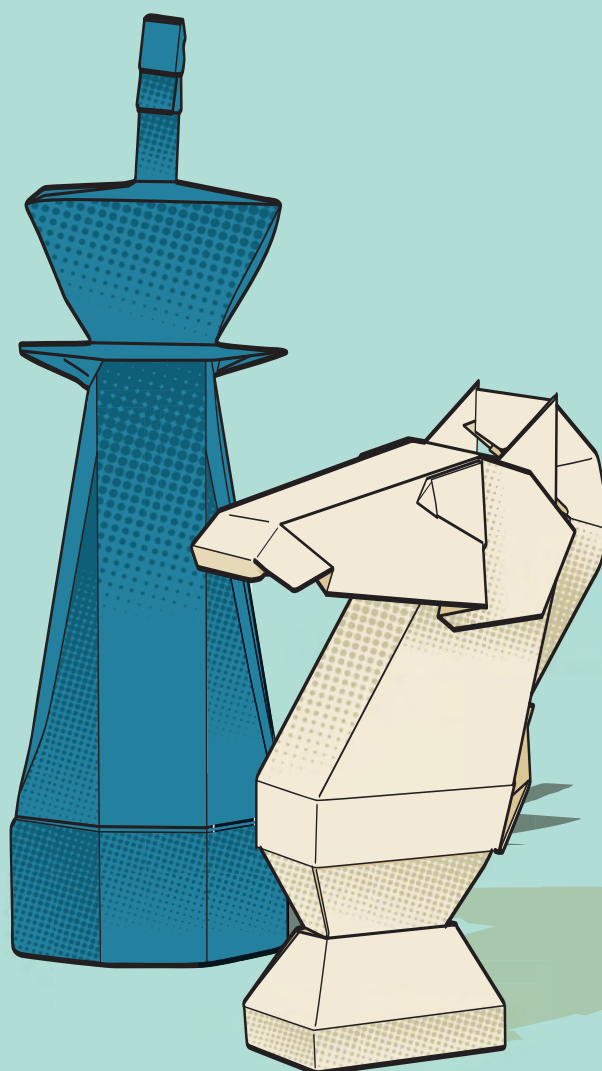


Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1)

History

**Weimar and Nazi Germany,
1918–39**

Revision Guide & Workbook + App



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**Weimar and Nazi Germany,
1918–39****Revision Guide & Workbook + App****Series Consultant: Harry Smith****Author: Victoria Payne**

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A small bit of small print

Pearson Edexcel publishes Sample Assessment Material and the Specification on its website. This is the official content and this book should be used in conjunction with it. The questions in *Now try this* have been written to help you practise every topic in the book. Remember: the real exam questions may not look like this.

The legacy of the First World War

The First World War ended in 1918 and left Germany scarred and crumbling, having been defeated by the combined force of Britain, France, Russia, Italy and the USA. Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democratic Party, became the first German president and declared Germany a republic.

What was the impact of the First World War on Germany?

- Two million German troops died and over four million were wounded (11 million in total fought in the war).
- Government debts increased from 50 billion marks to 150 billion marks.
- More than 750 000 Germans died because of food shortages.

The devastating effects of the war left many people with no option other than to revolt by striking and rioting.

The abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II (the Emperor)

Timeline

9 November 1918

- The Kaiser visited army headquarters in Spa.
- Ministers tried to persuade the Kaiser to abdicate.
- The Kaiser refused.
- Army officers refused to support the Kaiser.
- The Kaiser had no option but to abdicate.

10 November 1918

The Kaiser fled to Holland.

Revolution and the declaration of the republic

Once the Kaiser had abdicated, the German Republic was declared on 9 November 1918.

On 10 November, Friedrich Ebert suspended the old Reichstag and formed the Council of People's Representatives as a temporary measure.

The Berlin streets were crowded. Some people were armed, hoping to take over parts of the city.



Scheidemann talking to the crowds from a window of a house in Berlin, 9 November 1918.

Philipp Scheidemann, of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the largest party in the German government (Reichstag), declared the new Republic to the crowds. He was fearful that armed rioters were preparing to declare a communist government in Berlin, and, keen to prevent this, he promoted a peaceful transition.

The revolutionary period continued until August 1919, when the Weimar Republic was finally established.

The armistice – the peace agreement between Germany and the Allies

- It was signed on 11 November.
- It was the first major decision of Ebert's new Republic.
- The terms of the peace, the Treaty of Versailles, became a very big burden for the country.



War leaders outside the railway carriage where the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918.

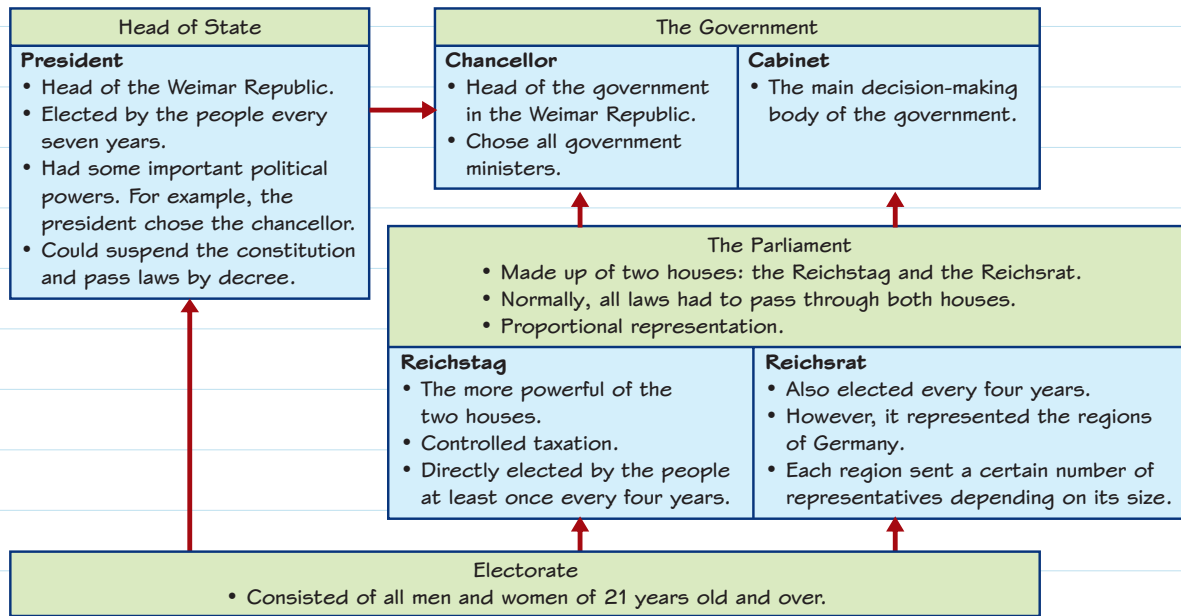
Now try this

Why did the end of the First World War lead to economic and political problems for Germany?

Strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution

Democratic government was established in the drawing up of a new constitution. This was done on 31 July 1919 in the town of Weimar, rather than in Berlin where there was still unrest.

The Weimar Constitution



Strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportional representation made sure small parties had a fair share of seats. Women able to vote as well as men. Voting age reduced from 25 to 21. No one group or person could have too much power. There was an election for president every seven years. Central government was more powerful than before, but local government still retained power in the regions. The Reichsrat could regulate the power of the Reichstag by delaying new laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportional representation led to coalition governments that were unstable, or found it difficult to have strong policies and often fell apart. Lack of strong government led to weakness in a crisis that ended up with the president passing laws without the prior consent of the Reichstag. Article 48 of the constitution enabled the president to do this. It was not the choice of the people so was not that popular.



A poster encouraging women to vote for the SDP and proclaiming equal rights and obligations.

Now try this

Describe the key strengths and the key weaknesses of the new constitution.

Why the Republic was unpopular

The Treaty of Versailles damaged Germany's economy making the Weimar Republic weak from the start. People blamed the leaders of the new German republic for signing it. They were labelled the 'November Criminals' because they surrendered in November 1918 and were seen as traitors to their country.



Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles said that Germany was guilty of starting the war. Ordinary German people hated this blame and felt very resentful because of it. They believed they fought the war in self-defence and that other countries were to blame. These people are demonstrating in Leipzig against the treaty.

The treaty and reparations

As the war guilt clause made Germany accept the blame for the war, the Allies said they were entitled to reparations (compensation). £6600 million was to be paid in yearly instalments to the Allies to repair damage in their countries.

The treaty and military forces

- ✓ Army limited to 100 000.
- ✓ Navy limited to six battleships, six cruisers, 12 destroyers and 12 torpedo boats (and no submarines).
- ✓ All planes were destroyed and no air force was allowed.
- ✓ No military was allowed in the land bordering France (the Rhineland).

The treaty and land losses

Northern Schleswig voted to become part of Denmark.

Eupen and Malmédy were lost to Belgium.

Alsace and Lorraine were lost to France.

Germany lost 13% of its European territory.



Memel was lost to Lithuania in 1923.

Polish corridor (Posen and West Prussia) was lost to Poland.

Upper Silesia voted to become part of Poland.

Germany also lost 11 of its colonies.

The 'stab in the back' theory

Many German people never believed their army had been defeated in the war. Those who criticised the treaty said that the army had been betrayed by politicians – that they were 'stabbed in the back' and forced to surrender when they could have won.

Now try this

Write an acrostic poem to sum up why the Treaty of Versailles was so unpopular with the German people. Try using the word 'Versailles' as your base word.

Remember, an acrostic poem is when the first letters of each line spell out a phrase.

Challenges from left and right

The new Weimar Republic government faced opposition from groups inside and outside the Reichstag, and from both the left and right wings.

The Spartacists

- ✓ Left-wing
- ✓ Came from the Independent Socialist Party
- ✓ Had backing from the Soviet Union
- ✓ Led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht
- ✓ Based in Berlin

The Freikorps

- ✓ Right-wing
- ✓ Made up of ex-soldiers who had kept their weapons
- ✓ Had 250 000 men in March 1919
- ✓ Organised by regular army

Challenge from the left – the Spartacist Revolt

In January 1919, the Spartacists took over the government's newspaper and telegraph bureau, and tried to organise a general strike in Berlin. The Weimar government sent Freikorps units to put down the revolt.

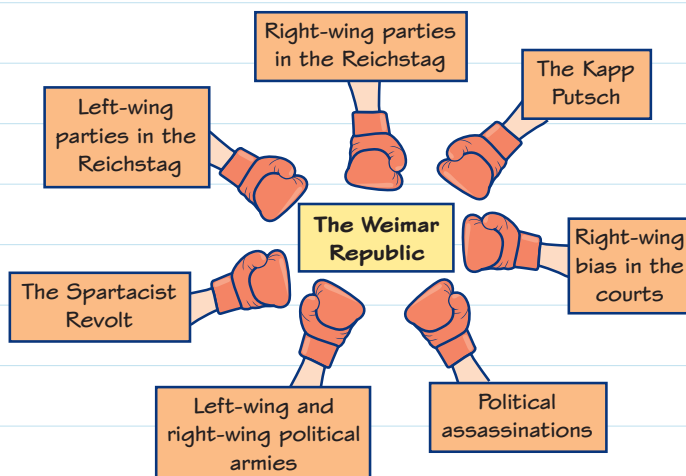


There was street fighting in Berlin for several days before the revolt ended and Spartacist leaders were shot.

Challenge from the right – the Kapp Putsch

In March 1920, Freikorps troops, fearing unemployment, decided to march on Berlin. Ebert asked the head of the army to resist the Freikorps but he refused. A nationalist politician, Dr Wolfgang Kapp, was put in charge by the rebels and the Weimar government fled Berlin seeking safety. In order to put down the rebels, or Kapp Putsch as it became known, the government organised the trade unions to go on strike. This they did and the national strike caused such chaos that Kapp could not rule Germany and was forced to flee. The Weimar ministers returned.

Political attacks on the Weimar Republic



Political assassinations

- From 1919–1923 politicians in the Weimar Republic were worried about assassinations.
- In the early years of the republic, 376 political assassinations took place.
- Some right-wing extremists used the murders to weaken the new republic.
- Conservative judges were sympathetic to the conservative cause and gave them light punishments.

Now try this

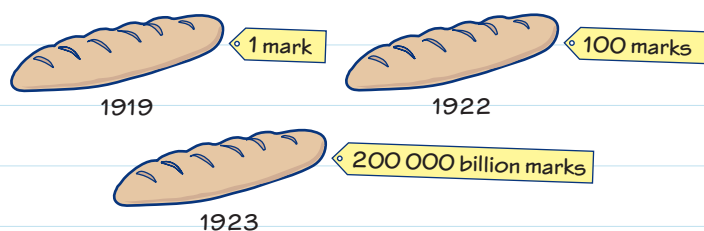
Describe the role of the Freikorps in the Kapp Putsch and the Spartacist Revolt.

The challenges of 1923

In 1923 the German people faced a terrible economic crisis. There was hyperinflation that made the German currency worthless.

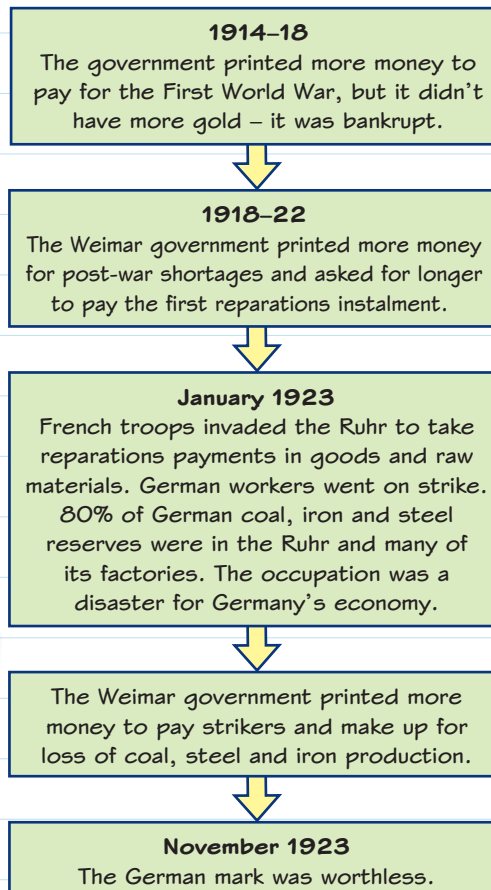
Hyperinflation

When the price of goods increases it is called inflation; when it increases spectacularly, it is called hyperinflation.



Men pile useless banknotes into a press.

Why there was hyperinflation



The effects of hyperinflation

Negative effects

- 🗨️ Some people could not afford essentials like bread.
- 🗨️ Wages rose, but not as quickly as prices.
- 🗨️ Some businesses went bankrupt. (Those that made money took over the struggling ones.)
- 🗨️ People with fixed or monthly incomes, such as pensioners, suffered most.
- 🗨️ Savings became worthless. This affected the middle classes most.
- 🗨️ People blamed the Weimar government, which made it even more unpopular.

Positive effects

- 👍 Farmers benefited, as they were paid more for food.
- 👍 Some people and businesses could pay off loans and mortgages.
- 👍 Fixed rents for rooms or shops became very cheap.
- 👍 Foreign visitors could buy more for their money.

Now try this

Make a list of all the ways in which Germany was affected by hyperinflation.

Include the groups or types of person most affected.

The effects of hyperinflation on Germany are important for understanding various topics, so make sure you revise them.

- Remember that middle-class people were worst affected.
- Include positive and negative effects of hyperinflation in your list.

Reasons for recovery, 1923–29

From 1923–29 Germany managed to recover from the immediate crisis of 1923, but there were still significant weaknesses in its economy. Gustav Stresemann, the new chancellor, played an important role.

Rentenmark

- ✓ In November 1923, Stresemann set up the Rentenbank and issued the new currency called the Rentenmark.
- ✓ Supply of these notes was tightly controlled. Their value was tied to the price of gold so it had real value. This encouraged more public confidence.
- ✓ In August 1924 the Reichsbank was given control of this new currency. It was renamed the Reichsmark. Hyperinflation was over.

International loans after the First World War



The Reichsmark provided a much stronger basis for the recovery of jobs and businesses, but it could not bring back the losses experienced in the hyperinflation crisis.

The Dawes Plan, 1924

In 1924, Charles Dawes, an American banker, designed a plan so Germany could pay its reparations.

- Instalments were temporarily reduced to £50 million a year.
- US banks agreed to make loans to German industry. The Allies felt more confident that they would get their reparations payments.



Gustav Stresemann (far left) at the London conference in 1924, where the Dawes Plan was agreed.

Young Plan, 1929

In August 1929, a committee, set up by the Allies and led by an American banker called Owen Young, proposed a plan.

- 👍 The Young Plan reduced the total reparations debt from £6.6 billion to £2 billion.
- 👍 The payments could be made over a longer time, up until 1988.
- 👍 Lower reparations meant lower taxes for German people.
- 👎 There was a lot of opposition, especially from the extreme political parties, like the Nazis, who felt it was extending the burden for future generations.

Improvements in the economy

The Weimar Republic's economy improved because:

- 👍 industrial output doubled by 1928 and finally passed pre-First World War levels
- 👍 employment and trade increased.

However, there were still problems.

- 👎 The extreme political parties were completely against Germany paying the reparations at all.
- 👎 The economic recovery depended on American loans, so it remained fragile.

Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain how the German economy was still vulnerable, despite improvements.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐

Stresemann's success at home and abroad

Stresemann's most important achievements were in economic and foreign policy. However, his main aim was to stabilise the political situation in Germany.

Stresemann's success

Gustav Stresemann resigned the chancellorship in November 1923, but stayed as foreign secretary until 1929. His work in foreign affairs:

- ✓ strengthened the confidence of the German people in the Weimar Republic
- ✓ reduced the support for extremist political parties like the Nazis and the communists
- ✓ increased support for moderate parties
- ✓ reduced the economic hardships of the German people.

Stresemann was instrumental in making sure Germany was a member of three important international pacts or agreements: The Locarno Pact, the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

Locarno Pact 1925

This was an agreement between Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. In it:

- Germany agreed to its new border with France improving relations with the French
- the Allies and Germany agreed to the permanent demilitarisation of the Rhineland
- German membership of the League of Nations was up for discussion.

Why was it a success for Germany?

- It improved relations with France with the border agreement.
- The Locarno Pact was not imposed on Germany, unlike the Treaty of Versailles.
- It increased the status and popularity of the Weimar Republic.
- It helped boost confidence in more moderate political parties.

League of Nations

This was a new international body that hoped to discuss world problems in order to avoid war. It was set up in 1920 but Germany was initially excluded. In 1926, they were invited to join and they became a member of the council.

Why was it a success for Germany?

- It showed that Germany's views counted.
- It boosted the confidence held by most Germans in the Weimar government.

Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928

This was an agreement between 62 nations. It committed countries to avoiding the use of war to achieve foreign policy objectives.

Why was it a success for Germany?

- It showed that Germany was once again a major power.
- It showed that moderate political parties could build Germany's strength internationally.
- It increased public confidence in how Germany was being led.

It wasn't all a success

There were still some areas of discontent in spite of Stresemann's work.

- 🗨 The hated terms of the Treaty of Versailles were still in place.
- 🗨 The League of Nations was, for some, a symbol of the unpopular Treaty of Versailles.
- 🗨 Some didn't like the confirmation of the new border with France.
- 🗨 There were still extremist parties around.

Think about Stresemann's position, his achievements and their results.

Now try this

Explain how Stresemann's foreign policy helped to stabilise Germany.

Changes for workers and women

The period 1924–29 saw some important improvements for workers and women in Germany, but there were still underlying problems in German society.

Changes in living standards

Living standards improved after 1924, brought about by government funding and policies.

Wages and work

- 👍 Working hours reduced.
- 👍 Wages rose.
- 👍 Working conditions improved.
- 👎 Hyperinflation made employment insecure.
- 👎 Well-off Germans resented seeing workers benefiting.




Standard of living

Unemployment insurance

- 👍 3% of workers' earnings were deducted to be put towards insurance that would give them a basic amount of benefits if they became unemployed or sick.

Housing

- 👍 15% rent tax was introduced to fund building associations.
- 👍 Between 1925 and 1929, 101 000 homes were built.
- 👎 There was still a housing shortage but things had improved.

Women at work	Women at leisure	Women in politics
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the gains in equality brought about by the war were lost. Most women gave up work after they married. There was a drop in women working from 75% in 1918 to 36% in 1925. Few women secured high status jobs. There was an increase in part-time work. Some professions, like teaching and medicine, offered new opportunities to women. Women were encouraged to go to university. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater earning power led to more independence for younger, single women. Women were less interested in marriage and family and more interested in having a 'good time'. The behaviour of 'new women' was not liked by some men and women who felt traditional values were being eroded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women earned the vote in 1918 and could stand for elections. 90% turned out at elections. Article 109 of the constitution stated that women had equal rights with men and could enter professions on an equal basis. Marriage was an equal partnership.

Now try this

For each of the following groups in Germany between 1924 and 1929, give **one** example of progress and **one** example of lack of progress: a) workers b) women.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐

Cultural changes, 1924–29

A variety of factors led to a rise in cultural changes and experimentation in Germany between 1924 and 1929. The main driving force in art and cinema was the movement called Expressionism.

Art

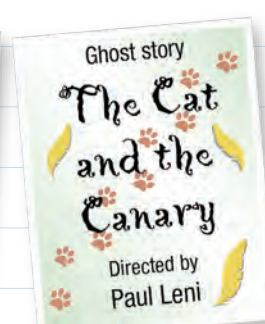
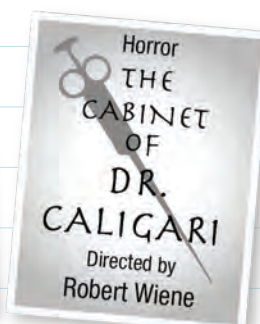
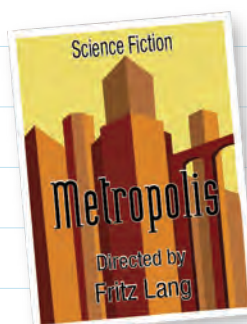
Weimar artists painted everyday life so that everyone could have access to their art. They wanted to make art that commented on problems in German society, or to make people think. Their style of work was called Expressionism, which was concerned with raw emotion, the seedier side of everyday life and confronting the disaster of the First World War. Artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz were influential to the movement, as was Paul Klee.



Cave Flowers by Paul Klee, 1926. Klee taught at the Bauhaus school.

Cinema

Films became popular all over the world in the 1920s. Expressionism flourished in film-making, particularly in Weimar Germany due to fewer restrictions. Some German films were very new and exciting in how they challenged traditional cinema.



All these films were marked by dark shadows, dramatic lighting and grotesque characters.



A famous and very popular German actress of the time was Marlene Dietrich. Here she is in the film *The Woman One Longs For*, directed by Curtis Bernhardt in 1929.

Architecture

New designers and architects challenged traditional ideas and practices in building and interiors.

The Bauhaus school was set up in Weimar, in 1919, by the architect Walter Gropius.

Gropius wanted to bring together all the disciplines (art, architecture, design, typography, sculpture, etc).



The Bauhaus School in Dessau designed by Gropius, 1925–26.

The school attracted many talented artists and designers.

Their ideas challenged traditional styles that had been popular before the war.

Their approaches looked radical compared to what had come before.

Now try this

How did the new Weimar culture challenge traditional attitudes and values in Germany?

Hitler and the early growth of the party

Adolf Hitler was born in Austria in 1889. He moved to Munich in 1913 and became obsessed with all things German. He fought in the First World War and his experience confirmed his views that Germany had a special destiny. He was shocked by Germany's defeat and the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles.

Hitler and the early DAP/NSDAP

Timeline

- **1919** Hitler joined the DAP.
- **1920** Hitler was second in command of the DAP.
- **1920** In August the DAP changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party.
- **1921** Hitler took over control of the Nazi Party from Drexler.

Hitler's early political career

- 1** The German Workers' Party (DAP) was set up by Anton Drexler in February 1919, in Munich; Hitler joined in September 1919.
- 2** The DAP set up permanent headquarters, Hitler became second in command.
- 3** Hitler suggested a new name for the party – the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) or NAZI Party for short.
- 4** In July 1921, Hitler became leader of the Nazi Party.
- 5** Hess, Goering, Streicher and Röhm were selected as some of his party supporters.

The 25-point programme

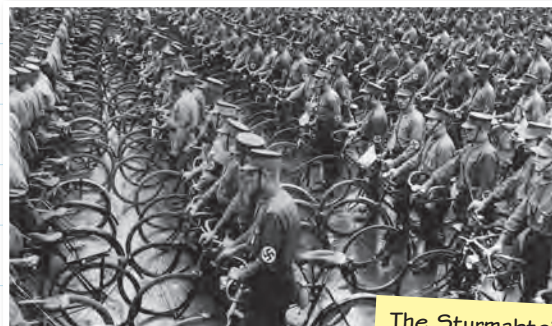
The Nazi programme, written by Hitler and Drexler in 1920, included the following points.

- Increase pensions for the elderly.
- Nationalise industries.
- Get rid of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Everybody should have a job.
- Build up Germany's armed forces.
- Only German races may be members of the nation. No Jew may be a citizen.
- Expand Germany across new territory to feed the people and to settle surplus population (known as Lebensraum).
- All citizens should have equal rights and duties.
- Every hard-working German to have the chance of higher education.
- State must protect mothers and infants, stop children working; make laws for compulsory sports.

The programme opposed: the Weimar politicians who agreed to the Treaty of Versailles; democracy, which they thought was weak; and Jews, who they felt undermined the German economy.

The Sturmabteilung (SA)

The Sturmabteilung (or stormtroopers) were a paramilitary force, made up of unemployed ex-soldiers. They were formed in August 1921 by Hitler and put under the command of Ernst Röhm. They wore brown uniforms and were nicknamed 'Brownshirts'. They were used to disrupt opposition meetings and to control crowds and any opposition to Hitler – often violently.



The Sturmabteilung

Now try this

Choose **three** Nazi policies from the 25-point programme and explain to whom they would have appealed and why.

The Munich Putsch and its aftermath

Hitler attempted to overthrow the Weimar government in November 1923. This was known as the Munich Putsch. After this date, and up to 1928, the Nazi Party struggled to get support.

Reasons for the Munich Putsch

Long term	Medium term	Short term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Stab in the back' • Reparations • The loss of Germany's colonies. • Resentment of Weimar government, particularly by the Bavarian government. 	<p>Hitler was influenced by Mussolini's right-wing party in Italy – the Fascists. Mussolini marched on Rome in 1922, forcing the democratic government to accept him as leader.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyperinflation • French troops entered Ruhr in 1923 and took over German businesses. • Hitler thought that he had support.

The events of the Putsch

Timeline

9 November 1923

Hitler gathered with 1000 SA and 2000 volunteer supporters and marched on Munich town centre to declare himself President of Germany. The group was met by state police. Someone opened fire and there was chaos. Ludendorff, Röhm and Streicher were arrested.



- **8 November 1923**
- Hitler with 600 SA entered a beer hall in Munich where the Bavarian government were meeting.
- At gunpoint, Hitler forced government leaders to support him.
- Röhm took over local police and army headquarters.
- Ludendorff, behind Hitler's back, let the government leaders go.

11 November 1923

- Hitler was found hiding at a friend's house and was arrested.

SA storming Munich town centre

Consequences of the Putsch

In the short term, the Putsch was not good for Hitler. He was in prison and the NSDAP was banned, and the Putsch had failed miserably because of lack of support. In the long term, however, the consequences were more positive for Hitler and the NSDAP.

- Hitler used his trial to publicise his views.
- He used his time in prison to write *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). This book became a bestseller when published – it outlined his political ideas and in particular his views on Jews.
- The events of the Putsch made Hitler realise that the party needed to rethink its tactics and be more organised in order to win support nationally, using violence and force wasn't enough.

Hitler was released from prison after only nine months. The ban on the NSDAP was lifted by 1925.

Bamberg Conference 1926

Hitler organised this conference to address splits between the socialist and nationalist wings of the Nazi movement. Hitler's power as leader was secured and his vision of Nazism taken forward.

Now try this

Design **two** mind maps to sum up the reasons for and consequences of the Munich Putsch.

Growth in support, 1929–32

In this period, the Nazis reorganised to benefit from the Weimar Republic's weaknesses and economic problems. Hitler's appeal as a leader also benefited them.



Bank panic, Germany 1931

Wall Street Crash, USA, October 1929
US companies lost billions of dollars in value overnight. Many banks and businesses were ruined, and worldwide depression resulted.

US stopped lending money to Germany and demanded all loans be repaid.



Food distribution, Berlin 1931

German businesses

- Had to pay back loans.
- Received no more investment from the US.
- Had to pay increased taxes to government.

German government

- Couldn't borrow money from the US.
- Refused to print more money.
- Increased taxes.
- Made cuts in unemployment benefit.
- Government workers had wages cut and some lost their jobs.

German people

- Businesses reduced staff or closed.
- Millions of workers and farm labourers lost their jobs.
- Young people were badly affected by job losses.
- With no work, and benefits slashed, families suffered terrible poverty.

The Hitler appeal

1 He was a strong leader.

2 His image appeared on most publicity material.



3 He travelled around the country giving speeches and talking on the radio.

4 The party adopted modern technology, e.g. used aeroplanes.

The intimidation tactics of the ever-growing SA (stormtroopers) helped to increase support for the Nazis.

How the depression benefited Hitler

Economic problems

Unemployment

Dissatisfaction with weak Weimar government

Increased membership of extreme left and right wing parties

Support for the Communist Party grew during this period but the Nazi Party grew faster. Support for the Communist Party was mainly from the working classes living in cities who wanted a party that could protect their jobs and wages.

Hitler's propaganda

Using propaganda techniques, Hitler persuaded:

- ✓ business people that he could solve the economic crisis
- ✓ working-class people that he could give them work and food
- ✓ middle-class people that he could protect them from the communists, solve the economic crisis and return Germany to traditional values
- ✓ rural communities that he could protect them from the communists, who might seize their land
- ✓ young people to join him by providing something exciting for them to be part of
- ✓ women that the Nazis were the best party to save the nation and their families.

Now try this

Complete a table listing the reasons for the rise of the Nazis in one column and the problems of the Weimar Republic in the other.

Remember that, until the economic problems after 1929, the Nazis had very little success in elections.

Political developments in 1932

The actions of four key people resulted in Hitler becoming Chancellor. You will need to know who these people were and the sequence of political events.

The four key players

Paul von Hindenburg – hero of the First World War and President of the Weimar Republic.

Heinrich Brüning – the Chancellor.

General Franz von Papen – the politician and friend of Hindenburg.

Kurt von Schleicher – the army general.



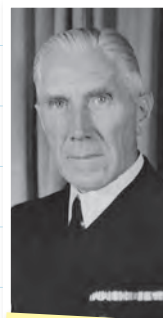
Paul von Hindenburg



Heinrich Brüning



Kurt von Schleicher



General Franz von Papen

Hitler's road to power

Timeline

May 1932

Election with Hindenburg being re-elected as President. Hitler increases his share of the vote. Chancellor Brüning's plan to buy up land from landowners and use it to house the unemployed is opposed by Hindenburg. Brüning resigns. Brüning is replaced by von Papen – he is put forward by von Schleicher. Von Schleicher had been planning a coalition between right-wing supporters and the Nazis. Hitler agrees to the coalition if the ban on the SA is removed. The coalition takes power.

November 1932

Further election. Von Schleicher warns Hindenburg that if von Papen stays as Chancellor there will be civil war. Von Papen goes.

January 1933

Von Schleicher does not have the support of the public or the Nazis. He persuades Hindenburg that he could be the head of a military dictatorship. Hindenburg refuses. Von Papen persuades Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor to avoid von Schleicher's military dictatorship. He also suggests that he should become Vice-Chancellor so that he can keep a check on Hitler. Hitler becomes Chancellor.

April 1932

Hindenburg stands for re-election as President. No one party has 50% of the vote. Chancellor Brüning bans the SA.

July 1932

Further elections take place – there is widespread fighting between the communists and the Nazis. The Nazi share of the vote increases from 18% in 1930 to 38%. Hitler demands that he be made Chancellor – Hindenburg refuses.

December 1932

Von Schleicher becomes Chancellor.

Now try this

- 1 Write down the reasons why Hitler was able to become Chancellor.
- 2 Number them in order of importance, from least to most important.

Causes that are more important often have an effect on other causes.

The Reichstag Fire and the Enabling Act, 1933

Now the Nazis and Hitler were in power, they used every opportunity, legal and illegal, to remove any opposition and secure a dictatorship.

The Reichstag Fire

- 1** A lone Dutch communist was executed for starting the fire but Hitler seized the opportunity to accuse the Communist Party of a conspiracy against the government. Four thousand communists were arrested.
- 2** It gave Hitler an excuse to issue a Decree for the Protection of the People and the State, giving him powers to imprison political opponents and ban opposition newspapers.
- 3** He persuaded Hindenburg to call an election in March 1933 to secure more Nazi seats.
- 4** The Nazi Party managed to secure two-thirds of the seats by using the emergency powers to prevent the communists from taking up their 81 seats.
- 5** Hitler was now able to change the constitution.



The Reichstag Fire of 27 February 1933. Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested and killed for starting the fire – some people believed the Nazis had started the fire deliberately.

The Enabling Act, 1933

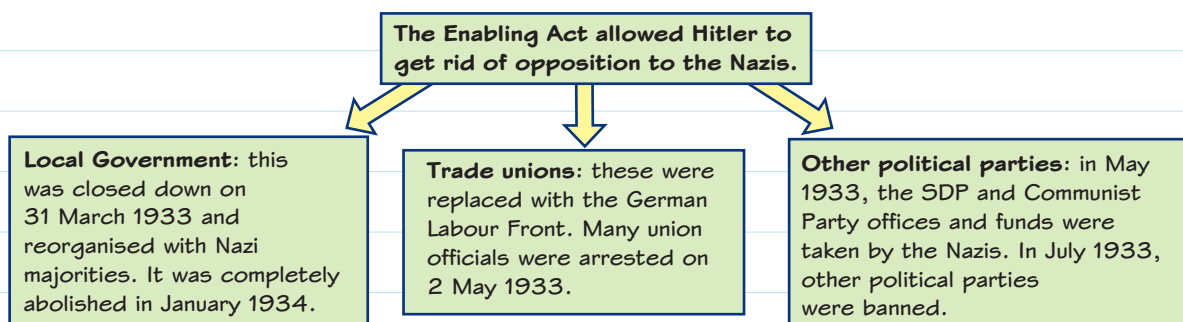
Hitler proposed the Enabling Act in order to destroy the power of the Reichstag and give himself total power to make laws. It stated that:

- ✓ the Reich Cabinet could pass new laws
- ✓ the laws could overrule the constitution
- ✓ Hitler would propose the laws.

Result: Germany would no longer be a democracy.

Hitler expected resistance to the act and so used the SA to intimidate the opposition. The vote was won by the Nazis 444 to 94.

The effect the Enabling Act had on trade unions and political parties



Now try this

Summarise the events of the Reichstag Fire and what followed.

Hitler becomes Führer

Hitler continued to assert his authority and power. Key events occurred in 1934 which led to Hitler declaring himself Führer.

Röhm, Hitler and the SA

Röhm did not like Hitler's policies.

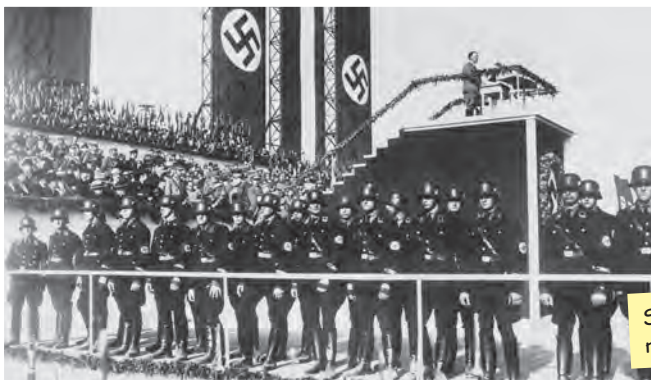
The leaders of the Schutzstaffel (SS) wanted to reduce the size of the SA in order to increase their own power.

Why Röhm and the SA were a threat to Hitler

Many of the SA were bitter because they felt undervalued and angry because many were still unemployed, but they were loyal to Röhm.

The SA was much bigger than the army and the army feared Röhm wanted to replace them.

The 'SS'



The SS was set up by Hitler in 1925 to act as his bodyguards. They were a select group run firstly by Schreck and then by Himmler. They appeared menacing in their black uniforms.

SS troops guarding Hitler as he makes a speech, May 1934.

The Night of the Long Knives

Hitler decided to rid himself of the threat of Röhm and the SA. He did this by inviting Röhm and 100 SA leaders to a meeting in the town of Bad Wiessee on 30 June 1934. It was a ruse – when the leaders arrived they were arrested by the SS, taken to Munich and shot.

After the arrests, von Papen's staff were arrested and his home surrounded. Von Papen was no longer able to watch what Hitler was up to. Further killings occurred, including that of von Schleicher.

It was thought that not many people fully realised how many people were being killed – many were relieved that the power of the SA had been curtailed.

Death of Hindenburg

President Hindenburg was the only person senior to Hitler. In August 1934, he died. Within hours, a Law Concerning the Head of State merged the offices of Chancellor and President to create a new office of Führer.

Führer means 'leader' and Hitler used propaganda to ensure that he looked all powerful. The 'Heil Hitler!' Nazi salute made people swear loyalty to him personally, and he was portrayed as having superhuman, heroic qualities.

Army oath of allegiance

The day Hindenburg died, Hitler announced the army should swear an oath of allegiance to him, not to Germany.

Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain the steps Hitler took in 1934 to secure his power in Germany.

A police state

A police state is when a government uses the police to control everyone's lives. The Nazis used the SS, SD and the Gestapo to do this. Anyone the Nazis were suspicious of could disappear, at any time. They could be killed or taken to concentration camps.

Policing

Hitler set up his own security forces as he realised not all the existing German police supported him. These forces were run by the Nazi Party, not by the government. Their main weapon was fear.

SS (Protection Squad)

- Set up by Heinrich Himmler in 1925.
- They were led by Himmler.
- They wore black uniforms.
- They controlled all Germany's police and security forces.
- They acted outside the law.
- Members had to marry 'racially pure' wives.
- They ran the concentration camps.

SD (Security Service)

- Set up by Heinrich Himmler in 1931.
- They were led by Reinhard Heydrich.
- They wore uniforms.
- Spied on all opponents of the Nazi Party, both at home and abroad.

Gestapo (Secret State Police)

- Set up by Hermann Goering in 1933.
- They were led by Reinhard Heydrich.
- They wore plain clothes.
- They spied on people.
- Prosecuted people for speaking out against the Nazis.
- Sent people to concentration camps and used torture.

The legal system

Hitler controlled the legal system so that meant it was very difficult for anyone to oppose him. He did this by controlling the judges.

- All judges had to belong to the National Socialist League for the Maintenance of the Law.
- All judges had to favour the Nazi Party in any decision.

He also did this by controlling the law courts.

- He abolished trial by jury – only judges were able to decide whether someone was innocent or guilty.
- He set up a People's Court to hear all treason cases. Trials were held in secret and judges were hand-picked.

Concentration camps up to 1939

The first camp was built at Dachau in 1933 to house the growing number of people being arrested.

Camps were built in isolated areas so no one could see what was going on. Many more were built.



Dachau concentration camp in 1933.

Inmates were made up of:

- political prisoners
- undesirables, such as prostitutes and homosexuals, and minority groups like Jews.

Inmates were treated very badly and forced to do hard labour.

Now try this

jot down **three** ways in which the SS was used to control the German people.

Any answer about how the Nazis controlled Germany should feature the SS.

Policies towards the churches

The Nazis wanted total loyalty to Hitler and his beliefs. The churches were potentially a threat to his power and therefore Hitler needed to control the churches' influence.

Nazi vs Christian beliefs

Nazi beliefs	Christian beliefs
Hitler as all-powerful leader.	God as the ultimate authority.
Aryan racial superiority.	Everyone equal in the eyes of God.
War, military discipline and violence important.	Peace is what everyone should strive for.
Dominance of the strong over the weak.	The strong should look after the weak.

The Catholic Church

Hitler worried that the Catholic Church would oppose him because Catholics:

- were loyal to the pope
- usually supported the Catholic Centre Party
- sent their children to Catholic schools and the Catholic youth organisation.

The Concordat

In July 1933, Hitler agreed with the pope in a Concordat that Catholics were free to worship and run their own schools in return for staying out of politics. However, Hitler broke his promise and:

- priests opposing the Nazis were harassed and/or sent to concentration camps
- Catholic schools had to remove Christian symbols and were later closed
- Catholic youth organisations were banned.

By 1937, the pope spoke out against Hitler in his statement known as 'With Burning Anxiety', which criticised Nazi policies.

Hitler's strategy was to try and consolidate his power before openly attacking the influence and power of the churches in Germany. His ultimate goal was to replace the churches with a Nazi-based religion.

For more information on churches in the Nazi period, see page 19.

The Protestant churches

Two Protestant churches were formed during the 1930s.

- 1 The Reich Church:
 - was founded in 1933
 - was made up of about 2000 Protestant churches
 - supported the Nazis
 - was led by Ludwig Müller
 - had some members that wore Nazi uniform and called themselves German Christians.



SA troops outside a pro-Nazi church service, July 1933.

- 2 The Confessing Church:
 - was founded in 1934
 - was made up of about 6000 Protestant churches
 - opposed the Nazis
 - was led by Martin Niemöller
 - was repressed by the Nazis.

For more on Martin Niemöller see page 19.

Now try this

- 1 List **three** ways that the churches cooperated with the Nazis.
- 2 List **three** ways that the churches resisted the Nazis.

Propaganda and censorship

Hitler wanted to use propaganda (information to spread ideas) and censorship (government control over what people see, hear and read) to create a generation of people loyal to the Nazi regime and its values.



Joseph Goebbels -
Reich Minister of
Propaganda 1933–1945

Goebbels played a central role as Nazi Minister of Enlightenment and Propaganda. He was a master at spreading Nazi ideas in a subtle as well as an unsubtle way. He essentially controlled newspapers, the radio, book publishing, film and the arts.

Methods of censorship

- ✓ Public burning of books by Jewish writers or others who disagreed with Nazi views.
- ✓ Radio producers, playwrights, filmmakers and newspapers were told what to say.
- ✓ Newspapers opposing the Nazis were closed.
- ✓ Only radios that couldn't receive foreign stations were made.

Methods of propaganda

Hitler featured in much propaganda, either with a photograph or his name or title.



Posters showing
Nazi beliefs were
displayed everywhere.



Huge rallies and military parades were held, projecting a power and strength that would either make Germans proud of their country or fill them with terror depending on their viewpoint.



The cinema showed
propaganda films, but mainly
entertainment films that had
subtle Nazi messages.



Hitler made radio speeches which were played through loudspeakers in factories, cafés and on the streets. Entertainment programmes contained Nazi ideas and beliefs.



The Nazis encouraged artists and playwrights to produce work highlighting Nazi ideas. 'Degenerate' art, such as modern art and jazz music, was banned.



The Olympic games held in Berlin in 1936 was the ideal event to promote Nazi ideologies such as Aryan superiority. It was also an opportunity to present Nazi Germany in a good light. It was well organised and a grand spectacle.

The Reich Chamber of Culture

Set up in 1933 and overseen by Goebbels, this monitored all aspects of culture and made sure they were consistent with Nazi ideas. The Nazis wanted grand and classical architecture, particularly the work of Albert Speer; artists to be members of a Reich Chamber of Visual Arts; to listen to traditional German composers like Beethoven and Bach.

Now try this

Write down **one** method of propaganda that targeted each of the following groups in Germany: workers, women and young people.

Church opposition

The extent of support for the Nazi regime differed between groups and individuals. Although Hitler tried to suppress opposition from the churches, there were still Catholic priests and Protestant ministers and pastors who preached against Nazi policies.

Pastor Martin Niemöller

One of the main church opponents of Hitler was Martin Niemöller, but he didn't always oppose the Nazis.

Niemöller's changing attitude to Hitler.

Pro-Nazi

- Niemöller voted for them in the 1924 and 1933 elections as he felt the Weimar Republic needed a strong leader.
- He didn't oppose Nazi restrictions on Jews.
- He wanted to be let out of prison to fight on the side of the Nazis in the Second World War.

Against Nazis

- He didn't like Nazi interference in the Protestant Church.
- He opposed the Nazi restrictions on Jews becoming Christians.
- He set up the Confessing Church in 1934.

Very against Nazis

- Niemöller was arrested many times for speaking out against the Nazis and Hitler between 1934 and 1937.
- He was sent to a concentration camp in 1938 where he stayed until 1945.

For more on the Confessing Church, see page 17.

How pastors and priests opposed the Nazis

- 6000 Protestant pastors joined Niemöller's Confessing Church as a protest against Nazi policy, only 2000 remained in the German Christian Church.
- About 800 pastors were arrested and sent to concentration camps.
- 400 Catholic priests spoke out and were arrested and imprisoned in the Priests' Block at Dachau concentration camp.

Niemöller sermon

Niemöller preached this sermon to remind church leaders of the importance of speaking out against Nazi policies.

First they came for the Socialists,
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists,
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews,
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me
and there was no one left to speak for me.

Martin Niemöller

How much opposition was there?

Opposition to the Nazis by church leaders was difficult because it was so dangerous to speak out openly. However, attendance at Christian churches remained high throughout the period, in spite of the Nazis' attempt to curtail the churches.



Pastor Martin Niemöller preaching

Now try this

Why couldn't Hitler gain complete control of the churches?

Youth opposition

Another group that opposed the Nazis was the young. Some young people set up secret groups or refused to conform to what the Nazis wanted from them.

The Edelweiss Pirates

They sang 'Smash the Hitler Youth in twain, our song is freedom, love and life'.

The Nazis were not threatened by their activities.

They were made up mainly of boys who copied an American style of clothing (checked shirts and white socks).

They were formed in the late 1930s, possibly as a consequence of Nazi policies enforcing Hitler Youth membership.

The Alpine flower, the edelweiss, was used as their symbol.

They were mainly based in working-class districts of large cities.



A group of Edelweiss Pirates in 1938.

By 1939 they had 2000 members.

They went on hikes and camping expeditions in the countryside to get away from Nazi restrictions.

They taunted the Hitler Youth.

They read and listened to banned music and literature and wrote anti-Nazi graffiti.

For more on the Hitler Youth, see page 22.

The Swing Youth

Another group of young people similar to the Edelweiss Pirates was the Swing Youth. Like the Pirates, they chose not to conform to Nazi ideas. They liked wearing American clothes. They listened to American music and watched American films. They gathered to drink alcohol, smoke and dance. They organised illegal dances attended by thousands. Unlike the Pirates they were largely made up of children from wealthy families with the money to buy records and own record players.

How effective was youth opposition up to 1939?

It was limited to:

- writing anti-Nazi graffiti
- telling anti-Nazi jokes
- attacking the Hitler Youth
- listening to banned music
- wearing American-style clothing.

The motives of the youth opposition groups were cultural rather than political and their numbers were limited.



A 1930s portable gramophone on which records would have been played.

Now try this

List **three** ways that young people resisted the Nazis.