

The War Ends

World War I lasted from **1914-1918**. Fighting ended with the **armistice** on November 11th 1918. By this time, Germany was experiencing **widespread unrest**, which eventually resulted in a **revolution**.

The war was **Devastating for Germany**

- 1) Near the war's end, **German** people were suffering **severe hardship**.
- 2) The Allies had set up **naval blockades** which prevented **imports** of **food** and **essential goods**. By 1918, many people faced **starvation**.
- 3) Public opinion turned against **Kaiser Wilhelm II**, who ruled the German Empire like a **king**. Many Germans wanted a **democracy** and an **end to the war** — there was widespread **unrest**.

- In November 1918 some members of the German navy **rebelled** and **refused to board** their ships.
- In Hanover, German troops **refused** to control rioters.
- A Jewish communist called Kurt Eisner encouraged a **general uprising**, which sparked **mass strikes** in Munich.



A British cartoon from 1917. German civilians queue for food as an over-fed official walks past them. The cartoonist is highlighting the difference between the lifestyle of Germany's rich officers and that of the rest of its struggling population.

Social Unrest turned into **Revolution**

- 1) By **November 1918**, the situation in Germany verged on **civil war**. A huge **public protest** was held in Berlin, and members of the **SPD** (Social Democratic Party) called for the Kaiser's **resignation**.
- 2) Kaiser Wilhelm **abdicated** (resigned) on 9th November 1918. On the same day, two different **socialist** parties — the Social Democratic Party and the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) — declared a **republic**.
- 3) On November 10th, all the state leaders that had been appointed by the monarchy left their posts. New **revolutionary** state governments took over instead. The monarchy had been **abolished** and Germany had the chance to become a **democracy**.

A **republic** is a country ruled **without a monarch** (king or queen) — power is held by the **people** via elected representatives.

Germany was made up of **18 states**, and each had its **own** government. The national government decided **national** affairs, and state governments dealt with more **local** affairs.

The signing of the armistice

- On 11th November 1918, a **ceasefire** to end the First World War was agreed. The Allies (Britain, France and the USA) signed an **armistice** (truce) with Germany.
- The new republic was under pressure to sign. The government didn't think Germany could continue fighting — its people were **starving** and military morale was **low**.
- The armistice **wasn't supported** by some right-wing Germans, who saw the truce as a **betrayal**. They believed Germany could **still win** the war.

The **Socialists** set up a **Temporary Government**

- 1) After the abdication of the Kaiser, Germany was **disorganised**. Different **political parties** claimed control over different **towns**.
- 2) A **temporary** national government was established, consisting of the **SPD** and the **USPD**. It was called the **Council of People's Representatives**.
- 3) It controlled Germany until **January 1919**, when elections were held for a new **Reichstag** (parliament) — see p.114.

Revolutions pop up in history over and over and over again...

Explain the reasons for the German Revolution in 1918.

Your answer could consider naval blockades and/or the monarchy. [12]



The Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic was the first time Germany had ever been governed as a democracy. It was designed to give the German people a voice. However, there were major flaws in its constitution that made it weak.

The Weimar Republic was formed

- 1) The Council of People's Representatives organised elections in January 1919 to create a new parliament. Germany was now a democracy — the people would say how the country was run.
- 2) Friedrich Ebert became the first President, with Philip Scheidemann as Chancellor. Ebert was leader of the SPD, a moderate party of socialists.
- 3) In February 1919, the members of the new Reichstag (parliament) met at Weimar to create a new constitution for Germany. Historians call this period of Germany's history the Weimar Republic.

The constitution decided how the government would be organised, and established its main principles.

The Weimar Constitution made Germany More Democratic...

The new constitution reorganised the German system of government.

Proportional representation is where the proportion of seats a party wins in parliament is roughly the same as the proportion of the total votes they win.

President

- Elected every 7 years.
- Chooses the Chancellor and is head of the army.
- Can dissolve the Reichstag, call new elections and suspend the constitution.

The President was elected by the German people, and so were the parties in the Reichstag. The President had the most power, but the Chancellor was in charge of the day-to-day running of government.

Reichstag

- The new German parliament.
- Members are elected every 4 years using proportional representation.

Reichsrat

- Second (less powerful) house of parliament.
- Consists of members from each local region.
- Can delay measures passed by the Reichstag.

- 1) The new constitution was designed to be as fair as possible. Even very small political parties were given seats in the Reichstag if they got 0.4% of the vote or above.
- 2) The constitution allowed women to vote for the first time, and lowered the voting age to 20 — more Germans could vote and the German public had greater power.

...but the Constitution had Weaknesses

Even though the new constitution was more democratic, it didn't prove to be very efficient.

- 1) Proportional representation meant that even parties with a very small number of votes were guaranteed to get into the Reichstag. This meant it was difficult to make decisions because there were so many parties, and they all had different points of view.
- 2) When a decision couldn't be reached, the President could suspend the constitution and pass laws without the Reichstag's consent.
- 3) This power was only supposed to be used in an emergency, but became a useful way of getting around disagreements that took place in the Reichstag. This meant it undermined the new democracy.

The President's ability to force through his own decision was known as 'Article 48'.

The Weimar Republic was vulnerable from the beginning...

When you're writing an answer in the exam, make sure you develop the points you make. For example, don't just say that Weimar Republic was weak — explain why it was weak.

EXAM TIP

Early Unpopularity

The Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919. The treaty was very unpopular in Germany and many Germans resented the new government for accepting its terms — not exactly a great start for the Republic.

Ebert signed the Treaty of Versailles

- 1) After the armistice, a peace treaty called the Treaty of Versailles was imposed on Germany.
- 2) The terms of the treaty were mostly decided by the Allied leaders — David Lloyd George (Britain), Georges Clemenceau (France) and Woodrow Wilson (USA).

Comment and Analysis

As a result, the Weimar Republic became associated with the pain and humiliation caused by the Treaty of Versailles.

The new German government wasn't invited to the peace conference in 1919 and had no say in the Versailles Treaty. At first, Ebert refused to sign the treaty, but in the end he had little choice — Germany was too weak to risk restarting the conflict. In June 1919, he accepted its terms and signed.

The Terms of the Versailles Treaty were Severe

- 1) Article 231 of the treaty said Germany had to take the blame for the war — the War-Guilt Clause. Many Germans didn't agree with this, and were humiliated by having to accept total blame.
- 2) Germany's armed forces were reduced to 100,000 men. They weren't allowed any armoured vehicles, aircraft or submarines, and could only have 6 warships. This made Germans feel vulnerable.
- 3) Germany was forced to pay £6600 million in reparations — payments for the damage caused by German forces in the war. The amount was decided in 1921 but was changed later. The heavy reparations seemed unfair to Germans and would cause lasting damage to Germany's economy.
- 4) Germany lost its empire — areas around the world that used to belong to Germany were now called mandates. They were put under the control of countries on the winning side of the war by the League of Nations — an organisation which aimed to settle international disputes peacefully. People opposed the losses in territory, especially when people in German colonies were forced to become part of a new nation.
- 5) The German military was banned from the Rhineland — an area of Germany on its western border with France. This left Germany open to attack from the west.

Germany Felt Betrayed by the Weimar Republic

The Treaty of Versailles caused resentment towards the Weimar Republic.

- 1) Germans called the treaty a 'Diktat' (a treaty forced upon Germany), and many blamed Ebert for accepting its terms.
- 2) Some Germans believed the armistice was a mistake and that Germany could have won the war. They felt 'stabbed in the back' by the Weimar politicians, who brought the Treaty of Versailles upon Germany unnecessarily.

The Weimar politicians involved in signing the armistice became known as the 'November Criminals'.

Comment and Analysis

The Treaty of Versailles played an important part in the failure of the Weimar Republic. It harmed the Republic's popularity, and created economic and political unrest that hindered the government for years.



This German cartoon demonstrates Germany's feelings towards the Treaty of Versailles. The Allies are shown as demons, out for revenge.

Germans felt 'stabbed in the back' by the government...

Scribble down as much as you can remember about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Include how Germans felt about it and the consequences for the Weimar Republic.



Years of Unrest

The first four years of the Weimar Republic (1919-1923) were dominated by political, social and economic unrest. It created hardship for the German people, and fuelled criticism of Ebert's government.

There was Widespread Discontent in Germany

- 1) By 1919, thousands of Germans were poor and starving, and an influenza epidemic had killed thousands.
- 2) Many Germans denied they had lost the war and blamed the 'November Criminals' who had agreed to the armistice and the Treaty of Versailles.
- 3) Others who were blamed for losing the war included communists and Jews.
- 4) The government was seen as weak and ineffective — the Treaty of Versailles made living conditions worse.

Soon there were Riots and Rebellions

The government faced threats from left-wing and right-wing political groups.

The extreme left wanted a revolution...

- In January 1919, communists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg tried to take over Berlin. They took control of important buildings like newspaper headquarters, and 50,000 workers went on strike in support of the left-wing revolution. This became known as the Spartacist Revolt.
- Ebert asked for help from the right-wing Freikorps (ex-German soldiers) to stop the rebellion. Over 100 workers were killed. The Freikorps' use of violence caused a split on the Left between the Social Democratic Party and the communists.

The right also rebelled against the Weimar government...

- In March 1920, some of the Freikorps themselves took part in the Kapp Putsch ('Putsch' means revolt) — led by Wolfgang Kapp. They wanted to create a new right-wing government.
- The Freikorps marched into Berlin to overthrow the Weimar regime. But German workers opposed the putsch and staged a general strike. Berlin was paralysed and Kapp was forced to give up.
- Even after the putsch failed, threats to the government remained. In 1922, some former Freikorps members assassinated Walter Rathenau — he'd been Foreign Minister and was Jewish.

As Germany's economic problems got worse after the war, anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) feelings increased.

In 1923 Germany Couldn't Pay its Reparations

- 1) By 1923, Germany could no longer meet the reparations payments set out by the Treaty of Versailles.
- 2) France and Belgium decided to take Germany's resources instead, so they occupied the Ruhr — the richest industrial part of Germany. This gave them access to Germany's iron and coal reserves. The occupation led to fury in Germany, and caused a huge strike in the Ruhr.
- 3) German industry was devastated again. Germany tried to solve her debt problem by printing more money, but this plunged the economy into hyperinflation.
- 4) In 1918, an egg cost $\frac{1}{4}$ of a Mark. By November 1923, it cost 80 million Marks.

Hyperinflation happens when production can't keep up with the amount of money in circulation, so the money keeps losing its value.

The consequences of hyperinflation

- Germany's currency became worthless. Nobody wanted to trade with Germany, so shortages of food and goods got worse.
- Bank savings also became worthless. The hardest hit were the middle classes.

By 1923, even basic necessities were hard to get hold of. The German people were undergoing immense hardship, which they'd now come to associate with the rise of the Weimar Republic.

Hyperinflation — sounds good for blowing up balloons...

To what extent do you agree that the crises and revolts in Germany between 1918 and 1923 were inevitable, given the circumstances of the Weimar Republic? [16]



Recovery

In 1923, Gustav Stresemann became **Chancellor** of the Weimar Republic. His **domestic** and **international** policies helped the German economy to recover, resulting in the '**Golden Years**' of the Weimar Republic

Stresemann introduced a New Currency

- 1) Gustav Stresemann was **Chancellor** of the Weimar Republic between **August** and **November 1923**. He made important changes to help Germany to recover from its economic crisis.
- 2) In September 1923, he **ended the strike** in the Ruhr. This **reduced tension** between Germany, France and Belgium, and meant the government could stop **compensation payments** to strikers.
- 3) In November 1923, Stresemann replaced the German Mark with the **Rentenmark** to stabilise Germany's currency.
- 4) Stresemann created the '**great coalition**' — a group of moderate, pro-democracy socialist parties in the Reichstag who agreed to **work together**. This allowed parliament to make decisions **more quickly**.

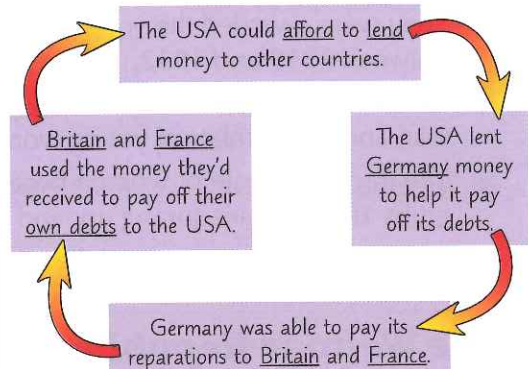
Stresemann wanted International Cooperation

In November 1923, Stresemann became **Foreign Minister**. He tried to cooperate more with other countries and build better **international relationships**. Germany's economy prospered as a result.

- 1) **The Dawes Plan** was signed in 1924. Stresemann secured France and Belgium's **withdrawal** from the **Ruhr** and agreed more **realistic** payment dates for the reparations. The USA **lent** Germany £40 million to help it pay off its other debts.
- 2) **The Young Plan** was agreed in 1929. The Allies agreed to **reduce** the reparations to a **quarter** of the original amount, and Germany was given **59 years** to pay them.
- 3) **The Locarno Pact** was signed in October 1925. Germany, France and Belgium agreed to respect their **joint borders** — even those created as a result of the Treaty of Versailles.
- 4) **The League of Nations** (see p.115) allowed Germany to join in **1926**. Germany was **re-established** as an international power.
- 5) **The Kellogg-Briand Pact** was signed by Germany in 1928, alongside 65 other countries. They promised **not** to use **violence** to settle disputes.

The Dawes Plan helped Germany's **economy**, but meant its success was **dependent** on American loans.

The Structure of the Dawes Plan



Germany had begun to Recover — but Depended on US Money

- 1) Life was beginning to **look better** for Germany thanks to the work of Stresemann.
- 2) But he **died** in October **1929**, just before the disaster of the **Wall Street Crash** — a massive stock market crash in the USA which started a global economic depression.
- 3) The plans he had agreed would only work if the **USA** had **enough money** to keep lending to Germany — but after the crash, it didn't. Things were suddenly going to **get worse again** (see p.121).

Comment and Analysis

Germany's economic recovery helped **restore faith** in the Weimar Republic — there was strong support for pro-Weimar political parties in the **1928 elections**.

No need to Strese, mann — it's all under control...

Don't forget to make sure that your spelling, punctuation and grammar are all accurate — you'll be marked on it in some questions in the exam. See p.136-137 for a few useful pointers.



Changes Under the Weimar Republic

Despite political, social and economic unrest, life did improve for some under the Weimar Republic.

Living standards **Improved** for the **Working Classes**

During the 'Golden Years', living standards improved in the Weimar Republic. This was a result of Germany's economic prosperity, but also of the reforms which took place throughout the 1920s.

What Improved	How It Improved
Unemployment	The unemployed were <u>more protected</u> . In 1927 the government introduced <u>unemployment insurance</u> . Workers could pay into the scheme and would receive <u>cash benefits</u> if they became unemployed.
Wages	The <u>working classes</u> became more <u>prosperous</u> . Wages for industrial workers rose quickly in the late 1920s.
Housing	The government launched mass <u>housing projects</u> . More than <u>2 million</u> new homes were built between 1924 and 1931. This also provided <u>extra employment</u> .

Comment and Analysis

Not everyone benefited from higher standards of living. The middle classes felt ignored by the Weimar government and their resentment made it easier for the government's political opponents to gain support.

Despite these changes, some problems remained:

- 1) Higher living standards could only be maintained with a strong economy, and Germany's was fragile.
- 2) The changes mainly helped the working classes — the middle classes couldn't access the welfare benefits.

Women gained more **Freedoms**

Women were given more freedom and greater access to public life under the Weimar Republic.

- 1) Politically, women were more given more representation. They were awarded the vote and could enter politics more easily — between 1919 and 1932, 112 women were elected to the Reichstag.
- 2) Women showed that they were capable workers during the war, and the number of young women working increased.
- 3) The traditional role of women began to change. New female sports clubs and societies sprang up, and women had more opportunities.
- 4) Divorce became easier, and the number of divorces rose.

Comment and Analysis

These changes fuelled right-wing criticism — some German nationalists thought giving women more power and freedom threatened traditional family life and values in Germany.

The Weimar Republic had many **Cultural Achievements**

- 1) The Weimar Republic was a period of creativity and innovation in Germany. Freedom of expression generated new ideas. Artists began to question traditional forms and styles, especially ones that focused on authority and militarism.
- 2) There were advances in the arts — some developments were bold and new, like the drama of Bertholt Brecht. The Bauhaus School of design was highly influential, especially in fine arts and architecture.
- 3) There were also important changes in music, literature and cinema. German films were successful — e.g. 'Metropolis' directed by Fritz Lang.
- 4) The Weimar Republic encouraged new ways of critical thinking at places like Frankfurt University, and a cabaret culture developed in Berlin.

Not all Germans liked the rejection of traditional forms and values in Weimar culture. Some were afraid it symbolised a loss of German tradition.

It wasn't all doom and gloom...

'There were no great changes to German society under the Weimar Republic.'
To what extent do you agree with this view? [16]



Early Stages of the Nazi Party

Hitler entered German politics around the time the Weimar Republic was formed. By the time the Nazi Party was founded in 1920, he was growing in influence and became an opponent of the Weimar government.

Adolf Hitler became the Voice of the German Workers' Party

Hitler began his political career in the German Workers' Party — a nationalist party led by Anton Drexler.

- 1) Hitler joined the German Workers' Party in January 1919, when he was still in the German army. He became known for his talent as a passionate and skilled speaker, and crowds gathered to hear him talk.
- 2) The German Workers' Party began to rely on him to get new party members, and in 1920 he was made chief of propaganda.
- 3) In 1920, the party was re-branded as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazi Party). In July 1921, Hitler became its leader.
- 4) The party was a nationalist party — it thought that the interests of Germans should be at the centre of government policy. It was anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) and was opposed to the Weimar Republic. Above everything, it wanted to restore Germany's greatness.
- 5) This extract from one of Hitler's speeches shows his nationalist passion.

In 1919, the German Workers' Party had around 60 members. By the end of 1920, it had around 2000.

'For the murderers of our Fatherland who all the years through have betrayed and sold Germany, they are the same men who, as the November criminals, have plunged us into the depths of misfortune.

We have the duty to speak since in the near future, when we have gained power, we shall have the further duty of taking [...] these traitors to their State and of hanging them on the gallows to which they belong.'

Extract from a speech made by Hitler in Munich in 1923.

Hitler implies Germany is a victim that has been 'betrayed'.

He appears loyal to his country. He says it was Germany's 'duty' to get rid of 'traitors' like Weimar's 'November criminals'.

Hitler wanted revenge. This appealed to many who felt Germany had been treated unfairly.

The Nazi Party Developed its Identity

As the Nazi Party grew in popularity, it established an identity that appealed to as many people as possible.

- 1) In February 1920, the Nazi Party promoted its policies in the 'Twenty-Five Point Programme'.
- 2) The Programme stressed the superiority of the German people and promoted anti-Semitism.
- 3) The party wanted to raise pensions, and improve health and education — but only for Germans.
- 4) Rejecting the Treaty of Versailles and promoting German greatness gave the party a nationwide appeal.
- 5) In 1921, Hitler founded his own party militia called the SA ('storm troopers'). The SA were political thugs — they carried out violent anti-Semitic attacks and intimidated rival political groups. Many people were scared of them, but some Germans admired them.

Extract from the Twenty-Five Point Programme:

- The Treaty of Versailles should be abolished.
- All German-speakers should be united.
- Only Germans (people with German blood) can be classed as citizens. Jews cannot be citizens.
- Improved pensions and land reform.

Comment and Analysis

The Nazis took advantage of economic problems to provide Germans with useful scapegoats like the Jews. The SA gave the party a military feel, which made it seem organised and disciplined. It also gave many ex-soldiers a job and a purpose.

Hitler was charismatic and stood for German greatness...

When you're asked to infer something from a source in the exam, you'll need to pick out individual words or phrases used in the text and say what those words suggest.



The Munich Putsch

In 1922, a nationalist party overthrew the Italian government, inspiring Hitler to do the same in Germany.

Hitler tried to **Overthrow** the **Government** in the **Munich Putsch**

In 1923, the Weimar Republic was in crisis:

Hitler thought the time was right to attempt a putsch (revolt)...

- In 1923, things were going badly for the Weimar Republic — it seemed weak.
- Hyperinflation was at its peak and there were food riots.
- Many Germans were angry at the French and Belgian invasion of the Ruhr (see p.116). When the government stopped resistance by ending the strike there in 1923 (see p.117), discontent increased.



In November 1923, the Nazis marched on Munich...

- Hitler's soldiers occupied a beer hall in the Bavarian city of Munich where local government leaders were meeting. He announced that the revolution had begun.
- The next day Hitler marched into Munich supported by his stormtroopers. But news of the revolt had been leaked to the police, who were waiting for Hitler. The police fired on the rebels and the revolt quickly collapsed.

- 1) Hitler was imprisoned for his role in the Munich Putsch, but his trial gave him valuable publicity.
- 2) He wrote a book in prison called 'Mein Kampf' ('My Struggle') describing his beliefs and ambitions.
- 3) Mein Kampf was vital in spreading Nazi ideology — millions of Germans read it. It introduced Hitler's belief that the Aryan race (which included Germans) was superior to all other races, and that all Germans had a right to 'Lebensraum' (more space to live).

After the **Munich Putsch** Hitler **Changed Tactics**

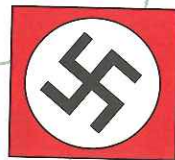
- 1) By the mid-1920s, the German economy was starting to recover under Stresemann (see p.117). As a result, general support for the Nazis declined and overturning the government through a coup no longer seemed realistic.
- 2) The Nazi Party was banned after the Munich Putsch, along with the SA. Hitler was released from prison in December 1924 and the ban on the party was lifted in February 1925. Hitler re-established the Nazi Party with himself as supreme leader.
- 3) Hitler changed tactics — he now tried to gain control through the democratic system. This involved restructuring the Nazi Party so it could compete more successfully in national elections.

Comment and Analysis

The dip in support for the Nazi Party between 1924 and 1928 shows how important economic unrest was to Hitler's success. Nazi ideology thrived when Germany was struggling.

1 In 1926, Hitler held a conference with the Nazi leadership at Bamberg. He was worried that the party had become divided — some members wanted the party to go in a more socialist direction. He made it clear that the party would only follow his agenda.

2 The Nazi Party adopted a national framework and became more centralised. In 1926 Hitler appointed leaders called 'gauleiters' to run regional branches of the Nazi Party. Gauleiters were controlled by the party leadership in Munich, and supervised district and local branches of the party. This brought every level of the party under Hitler's control.



3 Nazi propaganda increased and was centrally controlled by the leadership in Munich. This made propaganda campaigns more efficient. In 1926 Hitler re-established the SA and began to use them for propaganda purposes.

4 The Nazi Party created new organisations for different social groups. In 1926 it founded the Hitler Youth to attract younger voters, and it also created societies for different professions, e.g. The National Socialist Teachers' League. These organisations made different sectors of society feel valued by the party.

The Nazis needed to **putsch** a bit harder...

Summarise the events of the Munich Putsch and list three reasons why it was important.



The Great Depression

The Wall Street Crash in 1929 caused the Great Depression, leading to a fall in support for the government.

The Wall Street Crash **Ended economic Recovery**

In October 1929 the Wall Street stock market in America crashed. It sparked an international economic crisis and meant the USA couldn't afford to prop up the German economy any longer.

- 1) Germany's economic recovery between 1924 and 1929 was built on unstable foundations. The biggest problem was that it was dependent on loans from the USA, which had been agreed in the Dawes Plan (see p.117).
- 2) After the Wall Street Crash, the USA couldn't afford to lend Germany money anymore. It suspended future payments and wanted some old loans to be repaid.

- Germany's economy collapsed without American aid. Industrial production went into decline — factories closed and banks went out of business.
- There was mass unemployment. In October 1929 1.6 million people were out of work, and by February 1932 there were over 6 million.



© Photo Researchers / Mary Evans

German money became almost worthless — here, it's being used as wallpaper.

Brüning's policies **Decreased Support for Weimar**

In March 1930, the Weimar Republic appointed a new Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, to deal with the crisis. He introduced tough economic policies to keep inflation from rising like it had done in 1923 (see p.116).

Brüning's economic policies weren't popular...

- Brüning increased the cost of imported food to help German agriculture, but this also raised food prices.
 - Government salaries and pensions were reduced and taxes increased.
 - Social services were cut back, and unemployment benefits were reduced.
- 1) Everyday life in Germany seemed to be made worse by Brüning's policies.
 - 2) They were designed to help the economy, but they also caused standards of living to fall — Brüning was nicknamed the 'Hunger Chancellor'.
 - 3) By 1932, many different sectors of society were discontent with the Weimar government. High unemployment and reduced benefits also meant the government lost some backing from the working classes, who had always formed a large part of their support.

As many Germans were struggling financially, the government seemed to be adding pressure by reducing support.

Comment and Analysis

Not all historians think that Brüning's policies made German society worse — some think the economic crisis was so severe that it would've taken years for any improvements to be seen.

The Government became **Less Democratic**

- 1) Brüning's economic policies were so unpopular that he had difficulty passing them in the Reichstag. He began to rely on 'Article 48' of the Weimar constitution (see p.114). Brüning asking President Hindenburg to suspend the constitution, so he could make decisions without parliamentary approval.
- 2) By 1932, Brüning was regularly bypassing parliament to force his economic measures through.

Comment and Analysis

Weimar no longer felt like a democracy and the German people felt neglected. They began to look towards alternative political parties like the Nazi Party and the Communist Party.

Germany's extremist parties became more attractive...

Explain why the Great Depression weakened support for the Weimar Republic. [12]
You could write about unemployment and/or Chancellor Brüning.



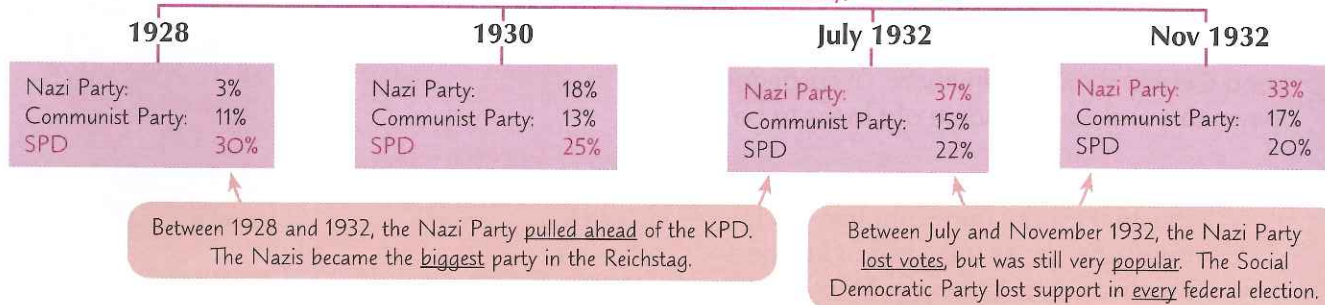
The Rise of the Nazis

The desperation caused by the economic Depression in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s meant that the German people were willing to consider any political party that promised something different.

The Nazis increased in Popularity during the Depression

Popular discontent with the Weimar government and economic instability meant that many Germans had lost faith in democracy. This created an opportunity for extremist parties to grow.

Federal Election Results in Germany, 1928-32



- 1) The KPD (the Communist Party of Germany) and the Nazi Party both grew in popularity after the Depression. Both parties competed for the support of Germans hit hard by the economic crisis.
- 2) Between 1928 and 1932, membership of the KPD grew from 130,000 to almost 300,000. However, Nazi Party membership grew even more rapidly — soon the KPD got left behind.

Comment and Analysis

An important factor in the Nazis' popularity was Hitler's personality. Hitler was patriotic and energetic, and was able to effectively convey his enthusiasm to his supporters. His speeches brought hope to those who listened. In the Nazis' 1932 election campaigns, Hitler was depicted as Germany's saviour — he stood up to the Weimar government and opposed the 'threat' of communism.

The Nazi Party Appealed to many Different Groups in Society

The Nazis promised a more prosperous and less humiliating future, which was very popular among the German people — by 1930, membership had grown to over 300,000.

- 1) After the onset of the Depression, the Nazi Party's popularity soared. Hitler's promise to make Germany great again appealed to the growing ranks of unemployed and young people who wanted a brighter future.
- 2) Some people also supported the Nazis' anti-communist and anti-Jewish views. Communists and Jews were useful scapegoats for Germany's economic problems and gave Germans someone to blame.
- 3) Some wealthy businessmen who had lost out in the Great Depression turned to the Nazi Party. They approved of the Nazis' anti-communist stance and wanted the economic prosperity Hitler had promised.

Comment and Analysis

After the Depression hit Germany, more Germans began to vote. Participation in elections increased by around 10% between 1928 and 1932. Many of these new voters were attracted by the changes the Nazi Party promised.

The Nazi Party was well organised...

- By the 1930s, the Nazi Party seemed strong and organised in comparison to the Weimar government. The SA held demonstrations, distributed propaganda and appeared more disciplined than they had been in the early 1920s. The Nazi Party became more respectable and this helped Hitler secure support from the middle classes.
- Propaganda was very efficient. It often focused on regional issues and targeted specific groups. This made individuals feel valued by the Party and stole votes from smaller parties.

The Nazis and Communists both gained in popularity...

Scribble down as many reasons as you can think of for the rise of the Communist Party and the Nazi Party between 1928 and 1932. Think about who supported each party and why.



Hitler Becomes Chancellor

As the Depression got worse, political instability grew. Several parties were competing for power in the elections of 1932 (see p.122). In 1933, the Nazis would emerge on top. Hitler's rise continued.

Hitlenburg **Refused** to give the Nazis power

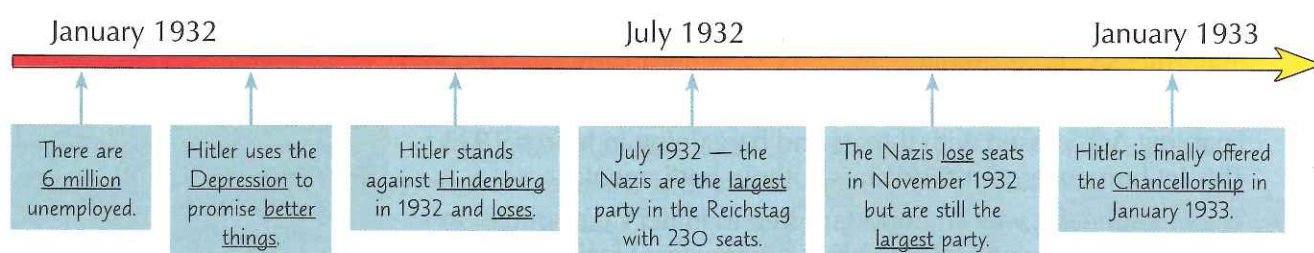
- 1) By April 1932, economic conditions had worsened. The country was desperate for a strong government.
- 2) President Hindenburg had to stand for re-election because his term of office had run out. He was a national hero, but Hitler decided to run against him. Despite claiming he'd win easily, Hindenburg didn't win a majority in the first election. In the second ballot he won 53%, beating Hitler's 36.8%.
- 3) In May 1932, Chancellor Brüning was dismissed and replaced by Franz von Papen.
- 4) In the elections of July 1932, the Nazis became the most popular party in the Reichstag (see p.122). Hitler demanded to be made Chancellor, but Hindenburg didn't trust him and refused his request.

This could have been a dead end for Hitler — Hindenburg was the only one who could legally appoint him Chancellor of Germany.

Hitler became **Chancellor** with the aid of a **Political Deal**

- 1) The Nazis lost 34 seats in the November 1932 election — they seemed to be losing popularity.
- 2) In December 1932 Hindenburg replaced Papen with one of his advisors, Kurt von Schleicher. Schleicher tried to cause divisions in the Nazi Party by asking another leading Nazi to be Vice-Chancellor — Gregor Strasser. But Hitler stopped Strasser accepting.
- 3) Papen resented Schleicher because he suspected Schleicher had persuaded Hindenburg to dismiss him. He wanted to get back into government, so he made a deal with Hitler. They agreed that if Papen persuaded Hindenburg to make Hitler Chancellor, Hitler would make Papen Vice-Chancellor.
- 4) In January 1933, Papen persuaded Hindenburg to replace Schleicher with Hitler — Papen argued that they could control Hitler and use him as a puppet. He was wrong.

'In two months time we will have pushed Hitler so far into a corner, he'll be squeaking.' — Franz von Papen, 1933.



Here are two different interpretations of Hitler's rise to power. There's evidence to support both opinions.

Interpretation 1: 'After the onset of the Great Depression, Germans were willing to support any strong extremist party as an alternative to the democratic Weimar government.'

After the Great Depression, both the Nazi Party and the Communist Party became more popular, and support for moderate parties like Social Democratic Party dropped off.

Interpretation 2: 'There was only one credible party to turn to after the Great Depression hit — the Nazi Party. It was the only party with a charismatic leader who had mass appeal.'

The Nazi Party grew more rapidly than any other party after 1928. Hitler's passion and energy made the Nazis stand out, and support for the KPD simply couldn't keep up.

Papen and Hindenburg misjudged Hitler's strength...

You need to know Hitler's rise to power in full for the exam. Write a summary of events between Schleicher's Chancellorship in December 1932 and Hitler's Chancellorship in January 1933.



Achieving Total Power

After Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, he took measures to establish a dictatorship.

The Nazis used **Dirty Tricks** to Win in 1933

Hitler needed to increase the Nazi Party's seats in the Reichstag to get a majority and be able to pass new laws. If they got a two-thirds majority, then the Nazi Party would be able to make changes to the constitution.

- 1) In the elections of March 1933, the Nazis took no chances. Hitler tried to stop other political parties from carrying out effective campaigns. They controlled the news media, and opposition meetings were banned.
- 2) Hitler used the SA (see p.119) to terrorise opponents. In February 1933, the SA raided the Communist Party headquarters in Berlin and claimed to have found evidence that the communists were planning an uprising against the government.
- 3) In February 1933, just 6 days before the elections, a fire broke out in the Reichstag. Hitler blamed the Communist Party and used the event to whip up anti-communist feelings.

This would mean the Nazi Party could change the way the government was structured and give Hitler absolute power.

- Hitler used the fire to claim that communists were a threat to the country. Nazi newspapers used the event as an excuse to publish anti-communist conspiracy theories.
- President Hindenburg issued a decree giving Hitler emergency powers to deal with the supposed communist threat — many basic rights given to the German people under the Weimar constitution, e.g. freedom of speech, were suspended.
- Hitler used these powers to intimidate communist voters. The decree also enabled the SA to round up and imprison nearly 4000 communist members.

Comment and Analysis

The emergency powers granted to Hitler were a turning point — they mark the first step towards making Germany a dictatorship. Hitler justified them by saying that they were necessary to protect the German people. This meant he faced little opposition from the German public.

The **Enabling Act** helped Hitler to create a **Dictatorship**

- 1) In the March 1933 elections, the Nazi Party won 288 seats but didn't have an overall majority. So Hitler simply made the Communist Party (which had 81 seats) illegal.
- 2) This gave him enough support in parliament to bring in the Enabling Act, passed with threats and bargaining in March 1933. This let him govern for four years without parliament:
- 3) The Enabling Act was an important step in Hitler's consolidation of power. It allowed Hitler to bring controversial legislation into force to strengthen the Nazi Party's position.

Hitler could now pass laws and amend the constitution without the Reichstag's consent. Other Chancellors in the Weimar government had used Article 48 to bypass parliament (see p.121), so the new Act may not have seemed that extreme to some Germans.

1

In May 1933, Hitler abolished Trade Unions and arrested union officials.

Hitler saw Trade Unions as a threat because they had great influence over the working class. After May 1933, workers had to join the Nazi-controlled Labour Front instead.

2

In July 1933, all political parties, apart from the Nazi Party, were banned.

The new law also banned new parties from forming. After July 1933, Germany was officially a one-party state.

Comment and Analysis

Some Germans thought a one-party state would be an improvement. Parties often couldn't reach an agreement in the Reichstag and Germans were tired of political instability — between March 1930 and March 1933, there were four different Chancellors.

Democracy in Germany had gone up in flames...

In the exam, remember to consider people's circumstances and the limited knowledge they had at the time. Most Germans had no idea what the Nazi Party would grow into after it gained power.

EXAM TIP

Achieving Total Power

Hitler had power, but he still had enemies.

The SA was a Threat to Hitler

- 1) The SA (a 'private Nazi Party army' of over 400,000 men — see p.119) had helped Hitler come to power.
- 2) But Hitler now saw the SA as a threat, because its members were loyal to Ernst Röhm, the SA's leader.
- 3) The SA was also unpopular with the leaders of the German army and with some ordinary Germans.

The 'Night of the Long Knives' — Hitler removes his enemies

- 1) Ernst Röhm was the biggest threat to Hitler, but Hitler was also worried about other members of the Nazi Party who disagreed with his views.
- 2) On the 29th-30th June 1934, Hitler sent men to arrest or kill Röhm and others. Altogether, several hundred people were killed or imprisoned, including Röhm and various other leaders of the SA and senior politicians.
- 3) Hitler claimed that those who had been killed had been plotting to overthrow the government, so he declared their murders legal.
- 4) This became known as the 'Night of the Long Knives', and was a triumph for Hitler.
- 5) It stamped out all potential opposition within the Nazi party and sent a powerful message to the party about Hitler's ruthlessness and brutality. It also showed that Hitler was now free to act above the law.

Comment and Analysis

Most Germans wouldn't have known exactly what had happened on the 'Night of the Long Knives' until a few days later, when Hitler declared the events legal. Even then, there was little outcry. It's likely that some people believed Hitler's claims that the violence was necessary to protect the country. Others were too scared to speak out.

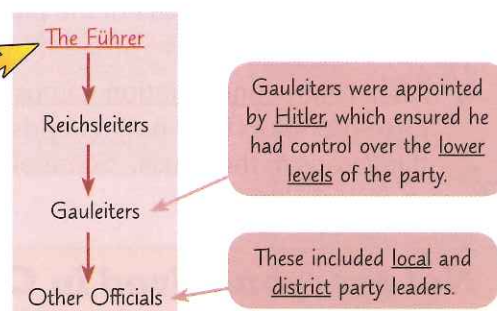
Hitler took full control of National and Local government

- 1) In August 1934, Hindenburg died. Hitler used the opportunity to combine the posts of Chancellor and President, and also made himself Commander-in-Chief of the army.
- 2) He called himself Der Führer (the leader) — this was the beginning of the dictatorship.
- 3) At this point, Hitler reorganised local government — in 1926 he had created branches of the Nazi Party in different areas of Germany called Gau (plural: Gaue). These now became official provinces of Germany, with a Gauleiter (a loyal Nazi) in charge of each (see p.120).
- 4) Above them were the Reichsleiters, who advised Hitler, e.g. Goebbels who was in charge of propaganda, and Himmler who was chief of the German police.
- 5) At the top and in absolute control was the Führer — Hitler.
- 6) Every aspect of life was carefully controlled, and only loyal Nazis could be successful.

Comment and Analysis

When the Nazis took over, some Germans were glad that someone was at last taking control after the chaos and political weaknesses of the Weimar years.

The army had to swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler, instead of pledging to protect Germany. Some German workers were also forced to take an oath of obedience, promising loyalty to Hitler. Those who refused could lose their jobs.



The Nazis — eliminating opposition...

In your own words, summarise the events of the 'Night of the Long Knives'.
Then jot down a couple of sentences explaining why it was a triumph for Hitler.



The Machinery of Terror

The Nazis aimed to make Germany a totalitarian state (where the government controls all aspects of life).

Germany became a **Police State**

- 1) The Nazis wanted complete control over the machinery of government and people's lives.
- 2) Hitler's Enabling Act of 1933 (see p.124) allowed the government to read people's mail, listen in on their phone calls, and search their homes without notice.
- 3) The Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich (1934) gave the Nazis total power over local governments.
- 4) There were laws to sack civil servants who didn't support the Nazis and accept their rules.
- 5) The Nazis also made changes to the justice system. Judges didn't have to be 'fair' and unbiased. Instead, they were expected to make rulings that were in line with Nazi Party policy.
- 6) The Sicherheitsdienst (SD) was the Nazi intelligence service. It was initially run by Reinhard Heydrich — he aimed to bring every German under continual supervision.

The legal system was far from fair...

- In 1933, the Nazis set up special courts where the basic rights of those accused were suspended — they couldn't appeal or question evidence given against them.
- In 1934, Hitler established the People's Court in Berlin, which held trials for important political crimes. Defendants were nearly always found guilty.

People could be **Terrorised into Conforming**

The government was also prepared to use terror and even violence against the German people.

- 1) The SS (Schutzstaffel) began as a bodyguard for Hitler. It expanded massively under the leadership of Himmler during the 1930s. Its members were totally loyal to Hitler, and feared for their cruelty.
- 2) Himmler was also in charge of the secret police — the Gestapo. The Gestapo's job was 'to protect public safety and order', but their methods included harsh interrogations and imprisonment without trial.
- 3) Local wardens were employed to make sure Germans were loyal to the Nazis. Members of the public were encouraged to report disloyalty. Many were arrested by the Gestapo as a result.
- 4) After 1933, concentration camps were created across Germany and its territories to hold political prisoners and anybody else considered dangerous to the Nazis. Some of these were later turned into death camps.



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Security Police search a car in Berlin on the orders of the Gestapo.

Not everyone lived in **Constant Terror**

- 1) Most Germans were prepared to go along with the new regime. Some people accepted the new rules out of fear.
- 2) Others went along with them because they believed in their aims, even if they didn't approve of the Nazis' brutal methods.

Comment and Analysis

For those that didn't fit in with the Nazi ideals (e.g. Jews), life under the SS and the Gestapo could be terrifying. But Hitler was supported, not feared, by many Germans.

The Nazis exercised control using any means necessary...

'Everybody lived in fear of the Nazis after 1933.' To what extent do you agree with this view? Explain your answer using your own knowledge of the police state. [20]



Propaganda

The Nazis also used propaganda to help them control the German people's lives.

Propaganda aims to Control how people Think

- 1) Propaganda means spreading information that influences how people think and behave.
- 2) It gives only certain points of view and often leaves out important facts.
- 3) The Nazis used powerful propaganda to get the support of the German people. Dr Joseph Goebbels was in overall charge of the Nazis' 'propaganda machine'.

Nazi propaganda took Simple Ideas and Repeated them

- 1) Nazi propaganda was used to unite the German people and convince them that the Nazis would make Germany strong.
- 2) Germans were encouraged to hate the countries that signed the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis said Germany should fight to get back the territory 'stolen' by the treaty.
- 3) Goebbels created the 'Hitler Myth', which made Hitler seem like a god and the saviour of Germany. This was the 'cult of the Führer'.
- 4) The Nazis' propaganda also said that Jews and communists were the biggest cause of Germany's problems. One Nazi paper claimed that Jews murdered children for the Passover Feast.
- 5) The Nazis encouraged a return to traditional German values and a revival of traditional German culture.

A popular slogan was 'One people, one empire, one leader'. Many Germans devoted their lives to Hitler.

The Government had to Approve all Artistic Works

- 1) Goebbels founded the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1933.
- 2) It had departments for music, theatre, film, literature and radio. All artists, writers, journalists and musicians had to register to get their work approved.

Nazis used the Media as a tool of Propaganda

- 1) The Nazis wanted to surround people with their propaganda. They used censorship to prevent Germans from seeing or hearing anything that gave a different message.
- 2) They sold cheap radios and controlled broadcasts. By 1939 approximately 70% of households had a radio, which gave the Nazis a voice in most people's homes.
- 3) In 1933, only 3% of German daily newspapers were controlled by the Nazis. By 1944, this had risen to 82%. This meant the Nazis could decide what was published in the papers.
- 4) The Nazis also produced hundreds of films. Many films showed the strengths of the Nazis and Hitler, and the weakness of their opponents. An important German director was Leni Riefenstahl.
- 5) Another method of spreading propaganda was through posters showing the evil of Germany's enemies and the power of Hitler. Propaganda also let Germans know what was expected of them.

According to Goebbels, radio was a 'weapon of the totalitarian state' — it was another way to control the people.



Nazi propaganda poster, 1935. It says that 'the German student' fights for the Führer and for the German people.

Radio Nazi — broadcasting to you wherever you are...

Cover this page up and then jot down as much as you can remember about what messages the Nazis were trying to put across in their propaganda.



Propaganda

Nazi propaganda was sophisticated and it was everywhere.

Nazi propaganda could involve **Spectacular Displays**

- 1) The Nazis used public rallies to spread their propaganda. The annual Nuremberg Rallies focused on speeches by leading Nazis, like Hitler and Goebbels. The 1934 Nuremberg Rally was recorded by Riefenstahl in her film 'Triumph of the Will'.



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- 2) One million people attended the 1936 rally. There were displays of lights and flags to greet the arrival of Hitler. These made him look more powerful.
- 3) Sporting events like the 1936 Berlin Olympics were used to show off German wealth and power. But the success of non-Aryan athletes like African-American Jesse Owens (who won four gold medals) undermined Hitler's message.
- 4) Nazi power was also shown through art and architecture, and grand new buildings appeared in Nuremberg and Berlin.

Hermann Goering at a Nuremberg Rally, as shown in 'Triumph of the Will'.

Propaganda was used to change **Culture and Society**

- 1) The Nazis promised an empire that would last a thousand years — based on traditional values.
- 2) Modern art was banned, in favour of realistic paintings that fit with Nazi ideology. Modern art was labelled 'degenerate' and exhibitions were created to show people how 'bad' it was. The Nazis celebrated the works of 'German' composers, such as Wagner, but much modern classical music, works by Jewish composers, and jazz were all attacked.
- 3) School textbooks were rewritten to make Germans look successful. Children were taught to believe in Nazi doctrines (see p.132).
- 4) The 'Strength through Joy' programme sought to show ordinary workers that the Nazi regime cared about their standard of living (see p.131).

In the Weimar Republic, artists had started to use ideas that were new and experimental. For more about this, see p.118.

Propaganda was most **Effective when Reinforcing Existing Ideas**

Surprisingly, it's quite difficult to tell how effective Nazi propaganda was.

- 1) Some historians say Nazi propaganda was better at reinforcing people's existing attitudes than making them believe something different.
- 2) Many Germans felt angry and humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles, so Hitler's promises to reverse the treaty and make Germany great again were very popular.
- 3) After the political weakness of the Weimar Republic, people found the image of Hitler as a strong leader appealing. So the 'Hitler Myth' was very effective and made Hitler an extremely popular leader.
- 4) Anti-Jewish and anti-communist attitudes already existed in Germany before the Nazis came to power.
- 5) The Weimar Republic was seen as too liberal by many — they thought standards in Germany had slipped. These people liked the promise of a return to traditional German values.
- 6) The Depression had left many German people in poverty. This made them easier to persuade, and the Nazis' promises of help extremely popular.

Comment and Analysis

However effective their propaganda was, the Nazis' control of the media made it almost impossible for anyone to publish an alternative point of view.

Nazi spin — **sophisticated, but probably not 100% effective...**

'Propaganda was generally ineffective in influencing the German people during the Nazi era.'
Do you agree with this statement? Explain why or why not. [20]



Attitudes Towards Religion

The Nazi Party publicly supported religious freedom, but in reality saw Christianity as a threat.

Hitler wanted to **Reduce the Church's Power**

- 1) In the 1930s, most Germans were Christians and the Church was very influential. During the Weimar Republic, the state and the Church had worked closely together and the Church was involved in national matters like education.
- 2) Some prominent Nazis were anti-Christian and Nazi ideology disagreed with the role the Church had traditionally had in society.
- 3) Hitler thought religion should comply with the state and wanted churches to promote Nazi ideals. He was also worried that some members of the Church might publicly oppose Nazi policies.
- 4) The Nazi Party was careful to maintain support from the Catholic and Protestant Churches during its rise to power because they were so popular. However, as Hitler consolidated his totalitarian state, his control over churches increased.

The **Catholic Church was Persecuted**

- 1) In July 1933, an agreement called the Concordat was signed between the Pope and the Nazi government. Hitler promised not to interfere with the Catholic Church if the Church agreed to stay out of German politics.
- 2) The Catholic Church was now banned from speaking out against the Nazi Party, but Hitler soon broke his side of the deal.

Comment and Analysis

The Concordat reassured Christians that Hitler was consolidating ties with the Catholic Church, but he was actually restricting its power.

- The Nazi Party started to restrict the Catholic Church's role in education.
- In 1936 all crucifixes were removed from schools and by 1939 Catholic education had been destroyed.

- The Nazis began arresting priests in 1935 and put them on trial.
- Catholic newspapers were suppressed and the Catholic Youth group was disbanded.

- 3) In 1937, the Pope spoke out against Hitler in a letter to Catholic Churches in Germany. The stance of the Church had changed, but many German Catholics were too scared to speak out against the Nazi Party.

Catholics tried to protect their religion by avoiding confrontation with the Nazi Party.

The Nazi Party **Controlled the Protestant Church**

The Protestant Church was reorganised and fell under Nazi control.

- 1) When Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, there were 28 independent Protestant Churches. These Churches were politically divided — some formed a group known as the 'German Christians'. They supported Hitler and favoured an anti-Semitic version of Christianity.
- 2) The Nazi Party backed this version of Christianity and believed all Christians should follow its principles. In 1936 all Protestant Churches were merged to form the Reich Church.

The Reich Church 'Nazified' Christianity...

The Reich Church replaced the symbol of a cross with the Nazi Swastika, and the Bible was replaced by 'Mein Kampf' (see p.120). Only Nazis could give sermons and the Church suspended non-Aryan ministers.

- 3) The Reich Church was an attempt to increase state control over the Protestant Church and make a National Socialist version of Christianity.

Comment and Analysis

Not everyone supported the Reich Church — it was opposed by a Protestant group called the 'Confessing Church' (see p.130).

The Nazis wanted the state to come first...

You might get sources in the exam that give different viewpoints on Nazi religious policies. Don't forget that Catholic and Protestant Christians were treated differently by the Nazis.



Opposition

The Nazis had a tight grip on Germany, but some opposition remained.

The Political Left opposed Hitler, but was Divided and Weak

- 1) Once in power, the Nazis had banned other political parties, including those on the political left, such as the Communist Party (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD).
- 2) But their members formed underground groups to try and organise industrial unrest (e.g. strikes). These networks were often infiltrated by the Gestapo (secret police), and party members could be executed.
- 3) Their impact was also limited because the different parties of the left were divided and didn't cooperate.

Some members of the Church Opposed the Nazis

There was little opposition to the Nazis in Germany from Christian groups. But a number of Church members did oppose the Nazis, even though they risked being sent to concentration camps:

- 1) Martin Niemöller was a Protestant pastor, a former U-boat captain, and a one-time Nazi supporter. He objected to Nazi interference in the Church, and was one of the founders of the Confessing Church. He used a sermon in 1937 to protest against the persecution of Church members, and as a result spent several years in concentration camps.
- 2) Another key member of the Confessing Church was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Protestant theologian and pastor who opposed the Nazis from the beginning. He joined the resistance, helped Jews escape from Germany and planned an assassination of Hitler. He was caught and imprisoned, then executed just weeks before the fall of the Nazis.
- 3) Clemens August von Galen was the Catholic Bishop of Münster, who used his sermons to protest against Nazi racial policies and the 'euthanasia' of the disabled. His protests didn't stop the killing, but they did force the Nazis to keep them secret. Only the need to maintain the support of German Catholics stopped the Nazis from executing him.

The Confessing Church protested against Hitler's attempt to unite the different Protestant Churches into one Reich Church (see p.129).

The Edelweiss Pirates and Swing Kids were Youth Movements

- 1) The Edelweiss Pirates was the name given to groups of rebellious youths who rejected Nazi values and opposed the Hitler Youth organisation (see p.132).
 - They helped army deserters, forced labourers and escaped concentration camp prisoners.
 - At first the Nazis mostly ignored them, but cracked down after they started distributing anti-Nazi leaflets. Many members were arrested, and several were publicly hanged.
- 2) The Swing Kids (or Swing Youth) were groups of young people who rebelled against the tight control the Nazis had over culture, acting in ways considered 'degenerate' by the Nazi regime (e.g. listening to American music and drinking alcohol). They were mostly considered a nuisance rather than a threat, but some members were arrested and even sent to concentration camps.

Comment and Analysis

German opposition to the Nazis didn't really threaten their dominance, but it did mean the Gestapo was kept busy tracking down people who had distributed anti-Nazi leaflets, held secret meetings, committed acts of sabotage, etc.

Comment and Analysis

Other Germans expressed their dissatisfaction with the Nazi regime in 'low level' ways — e.g. by grumbling about the government or spreading rumours. Not everyone considers this genuine opposition, but even this was probably risky.

If you weren't with the Nazis, you were against them...

Some people claim the Nazis faced little opposition from within Germany.
To what extent do you think this claim is true? [20]



Work and Home

The Nazis encouraged women to be homemakers and tried to provide jobs for men.

Women were expected to raise Large Families

- 1) Nazis didn't want women to have too much freedom. They believed the role of women was to provide children and support their families at home.
- 2) Women were banned from being lawyers in 1936, and the Nazis did their best to stop them following other professions.
- 3) The League of German Maidens spread the Nazi idea that it was an honour to produce large families for Germany. Nazis gave awards to women for doing this and encouraged more women to marry by offering financial aid to married couples.
- 4) Women were expected to dress plainly and were discouraged from wearing make-up and smoking. At school, girls studied subjects like cookery. It was stressed that they should choose 'Aryan' husbands.

A shortage of workers after 1937 meant more women had to go back to work.

Public Works and Rearmament meant Unemployment Fell

- 1) Hitler started a huge programme of public works, which helped to reduce unemployment — e.g. from 1933 jobs were created as a result of the construction of autobahns (motorways).
- 2) All men between 18 and 25 could be recruited into the National Labour Service and given jobs.
- 3) Industrial output increased and unemployment fell.
- 4) Hitler also brought in military conscription and encouraged German industry to manufacture more ships, aircraft, tanks and weapons for the military. This rearmament meant further falls in unemployment.
- 5) Trade Unions were banned (see p.124), so workers had to join the Nazis' Labour Front instead. But workers weren't allowed to go on strike or campaign for better conditions, and wages were relatively low.

Comment and Analysis

Although unemployment fell after the Depression, the Nazis fiddled with the statistics to make it look lower than it really was — e.g. they didn't count women or Jewish people without jobs. The official unemployment statistics didn't include this invisible unemployment.

Many groups in society Felt Better Off

- 1) The Nazis made efforts to maintain the support of German workers. They wanted workers to feel important and believe that they were an essential part of the Volksgemeinschaft.

'Volksgemeinschaft' means a community of people working hard towards the same aims.

- The Nazis introduced the Volkswagen (the 'people's car') as a luxury people could aspire to own.
- They also introduced 'Strength through Joy' — a scheme which provided workers with cheap holidays and leisure activities.
- The 'Beauty of Labour' scheme encouraged factory owners to improve conditions for workers.



© Mary Evans / SZ Photo / Scherl

- 2) Many members of the middle classes also felt better off — e.g. small-business owners were able to advance more in society than previously.
- 3) But even though many people felt better off, workers and small-business owners had lost out in some ways.
 - The cost of living rose by about 25% — but wages didn't go up.
 - Workers didn't have the right to strike or resign.
 - Small businesses had to pay high taxes.

Comment and Analysis

During the Depression, one third of all workers had been unemployed. Many Germans had been desperate, so life under the Nazis did feel genuinely better for them.

Hitler reduced unemployment — and gained popularity...

It's important to remember that for some Germans life really did get better under the Nazi Party.



Young People

An important key to Nazi success was controlling the minds of German youth.

Youth Movements helped produce Committed Nazis

- 1) Hitler knew that loyalty from young people was essential if the Nazis were to remain strong.
- 2) Youth movements were a way of teaching children Nazi ideas — so they would be loyal to the Nazi Party when they grew up.

The Hitler Youth seemed exciting...

- The Hitler Youth was founded in 1926. Boys aged fourteen and over were recruited to the movement. It became compulsory in 1936 and lasted until 1945.
- Boys wore military-style uniforms and took part in physical exercise preparing for war. High-achieving boys might be sent to Hitler Schools to be trained as loyal Nazi leaders.
- They also went on camping trips and held sports competitions. Some of those who took part said the organisation was fun, made them feel valued and encouraged a sense of responsibility.

The League of German Maidens was for girls...

- The League of German Maidens was the female branch of the Hitler Youth, aimed at girls aged between fourteen and eighteen.
- Girls were trained in domestic skills like sewing and cooking.
- Sometimes they took part in physical activities like camping and hiking. This gave girls new opportunities that were normally reserved for boys.

Comment and Analysis

After 1936, children were obliged to join the Hitler Youth and all other youth organisations were banned. However, towards the end of the 1930s, attendance actually decreased as activities adopted an increasingly military focus.

Education across Germany was 'Nazified'

- 1) Education in schools meant learning Nazi propaganda. Most teachers joined the Nazi Teachers' Association and were trained in Nazi methods. Children had to report teachers who did not use them.
- 2) Subjects were rewritten to fit in with Nazi ideas. Children were taught to be anti-Semitic (i.e. prejudiced against Jews) — for example, Biology courses stated that Jews were biologically inferior to 'Aryans'. History courses explained that the First World War was lost because of Jews and communists.
- 3) Physical education became more important for boys to prepare them for joining the army. They sometimes even played games with live ammunition.
- 4) In universities, students burned anti-Nazi and Jewish books, and Jewish lecturers were sacked. Jewish teachers were also dismissed from public schools.

German children were always being bombarded with Nazi propaganda. Erika Mann, a German who opposed the Nazis, described Nazi education in Germany. 'Every child says 'Heil Hitler!' from 50 to 150 times a day...[it] is required by law, if you meet a friend on the way to school, you say it; study periods are opened and closed with [it]... [The Nazis'] supremacy over the German child...is complete.'

German Youth eventually became involved in Fighting the War

- 1) During the Second World War, members of the Hitler Youth contributed to the war effort — for example, helping with air defence work, farm work and collecting donations for Nazi charities.
- 2) Towards the end of the war, many Hitler Youth members ended up fighting alongside adults. They were known for being fierce and fanatical fighters.

Comment and Analysis

The Nazis' attempts to impose their ideology on children weren't always effective. See p.130 for more about how unofficial youth movements resisted Hitler and the Nazis.

The Hitler Youth — not everyone's favourite youth group...

'Germans joined the Hitler Youth because it looked like fun'. To what extent is this true? [20]



Nazi Discrimination

The Nazi belief in the idea of a 'master race' caused a huge amount of harm.

Hitler wanted to '**Cleanse**' Germany of '**Inferior**' groups

- 1) Most Nazis believed that Germans were members of a superior ancient race called the 'Aryans'. Hitler thought people who were not pure Aryans (e.g. Jews) did not belong in Germany, and had no part to play in the new German Empire.
- 2) He wanted to 'cleanse' the German people by removing any groups he thought 'inferior'. Jews were especially targeted, but action was also taken against other groups.

Hitler always claimed the Jews were responsible for many of Germany's problems.

- Many Romani (gypsies) and Slavs (an ethnic group from central and eastern Europe) were sent to concentration camps. The Nazis believed that they were racially inferior.
- The Nazis practised eugenics policies — they wanted to create a strong race by removing all genetic 'defects' from its gene pool. Many people with mental and physical disabilities were murdered or sterilised. Many people of mixed race were also sterilised against their will.
- Homosexual people were sent to concentration camps in their thousands. In 1936 Himmler, Head of the SS, began the Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion.

Nazis **Changed the Law to Discriminate against Jews**

- 1) In 1933, the SA organised a national boycott of Jewish businesses, which resulted in Nazi-led violence against Jews. The violence wasn't popular with the German people, so the Nazis decided to use the legal system to persecute Jews instead.
- 2) Over time, the number of jobs that Jews were banned from gradually increased.
- 3) The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 were based on the idea that Jews and Germans were biologically different. They removed many legal rights from Jews and encouraged 'Aryan' Germans to see them as inferior.
 - The Nuremberg Laws stopped Jews being German citizens.
 - They banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany.
 - They also banned sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews.
- 4) Jews were later forced to close or sell their businesses, and they were banned from all employment.
- 5) By 1938, all Jewish children had been banned from attending German schools and Jews were no longer allowed in many public places, including theatres and exhibitions.

Some Jews were given passports enabling them to leave Germany but preventing them from returning.

Comment and Analysis

The Nazis' racial policies aimed to isolate Jews from the rest of society. 'Aryan' Germans were even encouraged to break off friendships with Jews and avoid any contact with Jewish people.

Kristallnacht 1938 — the '**Night of the Broken Glass**'

- 1) In November 1938, a German diplomat was murdered in Paris by a Jew.
- 2) There was anti-Jewish rioting throughout Germany — thousands of Jewish shops were smashed and almost every synagogue in Germany was burnt down. In the days that followed, thousands of Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps.
- 3) The Nazis claimed that the events of Kristallnacht were a spontaneous reaction by the German people to the Paris murder. In fact, they had been planned and organised by the Nazi government. Few ordinary Germans had participated.

Comment and Analysis

Kristallnacht was a turning point in the Nazi persecution of Jews — it was the first widespread act of anti-Jewish violence in Nazi Germany. After Kristallnacht, conditions for German Jews got even worse.

Nazi Germany — a climate of cruelty and fear...

Make a timeline showing how conditions in Germany became gradually worse for Jews between 1933 and 1939. Show all the important turning points.



Revision Summary

Now you've had your fill of Weimar and Nazi Germany, test your knowledge with a revision summary.

- Try these questions and tick off each one when you get it right.
- When you've done all the questions for a topic and are completely happy with it, tick off the topic.

The Weimar Republic, 1918-29 (p.113-118) ☒

- 1) Describe the events of the German Revolution in 1918. ☐
- 2) Name the three separate bodies of the Weimar government and describe what each one did. ☐
- 3) Give two weaknesses of the Weimar constitution. ☐
- 4) Give five terms from the Treaty of Versailles and explain why they were unpopular in Germany. ☐
- 5) Why did Germany feel 'stabbed in the back' by the Weimar government? ☐
- 6) What was the Kapp Putsch? ☐
- 7) How did Gustav Stresemann try to build better international relationships? ☐
- 8) How did life improve for the working classes and women under the Weimar Republic? ☐

Hitler's Rise to Power, 1919-33 (p.119-123) ☒

- 9) What was the Twenty-Five Point Programme? ☐
- 10) Describe the events of the 1923 Munich Putsch. ☐
- 11) How did Hitler reorganise the Nazi Party between 1924 and 1928? ☐
- 12) How did the Weimar government deal with the Depression? ☐
- 13) Which party rivalled the Nazi Party's popularity during the Depression? ☐
- 14) Describe how Hitler rose to the position of Chancellor. ☐

Nazi Control and Dictatorship, 1933-39 (p.124-128) ☒

- 15) What was the Enabling Act? When was it introduced? ☐
- 16) What happened on the 'Night of the Long Knives'? ☐
- 17) Describe three powers the Nazis had that suggested Germany had become a police state by 1934. ☐
- 18) What were the aims of Nazi propaganda? ☐
- 19) What was the 'Hitler Myth'? ☐

Life in Nazi Germany, 1933-39 (p.129-133) ☒

- 20) What was the Concordat? When was it signed? ☐
- 21) Why was the Reich Church created? ☐
- 22) Name two members of the Church who opposed the Nazis. ☐
- 23) Who were the Swing Youth? ☐
- 24) What expectations did the Nazi Party have of women? ☐
- 25) Describe one measure the Nazis used to reduce German unemployment. ☐
- 26) How was education in Germany affected while the Nazis were in power? ☐
- 27) What were the Nuremberg Laws? Why were they important? ☐
- 28) Describe the events of Kristallnacht. ☐