How had people’s living standards changed between 1924-29?
Recap: What was it like living in Germany from 1918-1923?
Draw this graph on a new page (landscape), then plot the events you know so far...
Add the following facts to your timeline

By 1928: 110,000 young people went to University, up from 70,000

There was a shortage of 1 million homes by 1923

By 1924, 4% of Germans were unemployed

1920s: 750,000 war veteran, 400,000 widows and 200,000 parents of dead soldiers were paid a pension

Unemployment fell to 2 million in 1926 and 1.3 million in 1928

Working hours fell by 4 hours a week and wages rose by 25% by 1928

1925: 15% rent tax helped to build over 100,000 new homes by 1928

Unemployed insurance Act 1927: 16.4 million workers paid 3% of their wages in tax for unemployment or sickness benefit
But... Was it really so good?

As we know, all of the improvements in Germany were based on US $$$ making the recovery FRAGILE. People were still angry and suffering from lost [Savings] and hardships following 1923.

Interpretation 1


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

What is the view of this interpretation?
Create a mind map with the following information:

Women in Weimar Germany 1924-29
Women: Politics

Ebert’s new government in 1918 believed women should have the vote as they worked hard during the war and proved themselves. Women could also stand for elections.

The Weimar Constitution said:
- Women had equal rights with men
- Marriage was an equal partnership
- Women should be able to enter all professions and be equal to men

112 women had been elected by 1932 (10%)
Women: Work

WWI ended with 75% of women in work, by 1925 this went down to 36%. Some women were not actually treated as the Constitution said...

Key Facts:

• Women were paid 33% less than men in the same job
• Expected to give up work when they got married
• Few women were in high status jobs by 1933, eg only 36 female judges

Trade Unions strongly opposed women being paid the same and especially hated ‘double earners’.

I think women’s lives had not improved

The main evidence for my opinion is...

Further evidence for my opinion is...
Women: Work

It wasn’t all bad though...

Key Facts:
• The booming retail and service sectors produced plenty of part time jobs in shops and offices
• There was much progress in liberal professions like education and medicine – female doctors rose from 2,500 to 5,000 between 1925 and 1932

112 women had been elected by 1932 (10%)

On the contrary I think women’s lives had improved...
The main evidence for my opinion is...
Further evidence for my opinion is...
Women: Work

• In conclusion, I believe women’s lives had ... (give a scale here)
• The main evidence for my conclusion is...
• Furthermore...
• Although, there were still some examples of...

Interpretation 2

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

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

What is the message of this interpretation?
Does your mini essay agree?
Watch the following clip and write down your interpretation of ‘life in Weimar Germany 1924-32’

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBkB8RJEEc

‘New Women’ of the 1920s:

- Young, unmarried working women seeking to live in the cities became the norm
- Bought more clothes, and partied more
- Less interested in having a family and took advantage of the sexual liberation
- Shorter hair, more makeup, more jewellery and more revealing clothes.
- Smoked and drank more, went out unaccompanied

Financial independence
Many Germans, mainly men, but some women worried that this new independence and growing equality threatened to change traditional society such as motherhood, family and good housekeeping…

**Evidence:**
- Birth rate fell by about 38%, many people felt that Germany needed women to be mothers
- Divorce rate rose by 50%, many people felt that Germany needed women to be wives
Was society divided?

Some women felt liberated

Some men accepted changing roles of women

Some men felt scared by the expectations

Some men thought the changing roles of women were inappropriate and threatened the role of men

Conservatives and traditionalists complained loudly that women should concentrate on being mothers and wives, including the clergy

Some blamed the economic instability in Germany on women upsetting the labour market

Some men encouraged women playing a larger role in society
How did Culture change in 1924-29?

**Interpretation 3**

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

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

What is the view of this interpretation?
In the 1920s, several factors caused a surge of artistic and cultural energy.

- The restrictions of the old imperial regime of the Kaiser had been thrown off.
- The new Weimar constitution enshrined freedoms – such as freedom of speech – in law.
- Economic recovery after 1924 created wealth to finance the Arts.

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

**New Objectivism**
The idea that the Arts should not show a romantic view of the world, but should show life as it really is, including poverty and squalor.

**Modernism**
The idea that the Arts should not always hark back to the past, but should, instead, embrace the future and see beauty in cities, industry, technology.

**Expressionism**
The idea that the Arts should reflect the thoughts and feelings of the artist rather than being limited to showing things exactly as they really look.

There were two factors which helped these ideas to spread.

**The Bauhaus movement**
Walter Gropius was the head of The Bauhaus, a design college in Berlin. Under Gropius, the college developed a style of design which influenced all areas of the Arts. The Bauhaus style stressed the beauty in technology, simple lines and careful craftsmanship.

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

All these factors combined to cause a blossoming of culture in Weimar Germany.
Source B

A painting by Otto Dix, showing a Berlin street scene, from 1927. It is expressionist in style and shows the harsh life of war veterans and falling standards of behaviour in Germany’s night life during the Weimar Republic.
Grey Day (George Grosz, 1921) – Using expressionism

Non traditional subject and style

A worker

A city scene

Supports a monarchy

A Jew?

A wounded soldier
Venus and Adonis (Arthur Kampf, 1939)

- Determined and purposeful
- A conqueror
- Muscular – a “real man”
- Warlike
- Traditional theme and style
- Of the countryside
- Aryan
- Dependant
- Maternal

NAZI IDEAL
The ‘Bauhaus’ movement represented modernism:

- It used materials like concrete and steel,
- It sought to unify ‘art and technology’,
- It was functional,
- It was urban.

Why did the Nazis hate this style of building?
Einstein Tower:

Influenced by the Bauhaus movement
A triumphal arch designed by Hitler in 1925 and a building in Berlin from the Nazi era.

To the Nazis buildings should:

• Have classical roots;
• Demonstrate the power of the state;
• Use traditional materials.
Cinema became popular around the world in the 1920s, some Weimar German films were very innovative and funded by a government agency.

By 1932 there were 3,800 German cinemas showing films with sound.
Theatre

Theatre and opera had long attracted large audiences in Germany, but most performances were of classical works. In the 1920s these gave way to Zeittheater and Zeitoper – literally ‘theatre and opera ‘of the time’. These works were set in the society of the time and included greater realism – the heroine of one opera sings an aria in the bathtub! In Erwin Piscator’s *The Salesman of Berlin* three street sweepers sweep away the ‘rubbish’ of the early 1920s – a pile of paper money, a steel helmet, and the body of the man who had worn it. In Piscator’s adaptation of Jaroslav Hasek’s novel *The Good Soldier Schweik*, the hero delivers his criticisms of Germany as he sits on the toilet.

Cinema

This was a golden age for German cinema, with its best known director, Fritz Lang producing epic films such as *Metropolis* which was the most technically advanced film of the decade. German actress Marlene Dietrich became one of the most popular film stars in the world playing strong, mysterious and glamorous women.

Cabaret and nightlife

Berlin became famous for its nightlife. Alongside the theatres and cinemas was a vibrant nightlife scene with daring floor shows, risqué songs and naked dancing. To some this was experimental, to others shocking. Berlin was also famous for its transvestite balls, where hundreds of men in women’s clothes and women in men’s clothes danced together. Sex was discussed openly, and homosexuality, which had been treated as a taboo before the war, was – at least in Berlin – no longer frowned upon.

Architecture

A new group of architects emerged called the Bauhaus. They designed anything from chairs, built-in cupboards and cigarette kiosks to town halls and housing estates. Their aim was to ‘avoid decoration, use basic shapes and colours, simplicity and economy with space, materials, time and money.’
**Exam-style question, Section B**

Study Interpretations 2 and 3 on pages 34 and 36. They give different views about the attitudes towards women in Weimar Germany.

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations. **4 marks**

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**Exam tip**

It is not enough just to find differences of detail between the interpretations. The key is:

- to decide how the view in one interpretation is different from in the other
- to use details in each interpretation to illustrate how the views differ.

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**Homework: Due**