Nazi policies towards the young
“My programme for youth is hard. Weakness must be hammered away... I want a brutal, domineering, fearless, cruel youth. It must bear pain. There must be nothing weak and gentle about it... That is how I will create the New Order.

Adolf Hitler, 1933
How important do you think the youth of Germany would be for the ‘Thousand Year Reich’?

**Nazi Ideals:** All young Germans should be brought up to be...

1. Proud Germans who support a strong independent Germany
2. All girls should be brought up to be healthy and strong so they will be strong wives and healthy fertile mothers
3. Nazi Party supporters who believe in Nazi policies
4. All boys should be healthy and strong, they will need to be productive for the German economy and fight in the German armed forces

The Nazis believed boys and girls were equal but different. They had different strengths.

Hitler knew that not every adult supported him, so he believed if he got the youth support it would secure his ‘1000 year Reich’
Youth Groups:

What reasons can you think of to explain this graph?

- Hitler had banned all other youth groups (other parties, Church youth groups)
- More children were being pressured into joining the Nazi youth groups during the 1930s
- All sports facilities had been taken over by Nazis by 1936, to use them, children had to join the Hitler Youth
- **March 1936 – Compulsory for all young Germans to join Nazi youth groups from the age of 10**

Boys:

6-10 – Pimpfe (Little Fellows)
10-14 – Deutsche Jungvolk (German young people)
14-18 - Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth)

Girls:

10-14 – Jungmadel (young maidens)
14-21 – BDM (League of German Maidens)
The Hitler Youth:

**Political training:**
- Swear an oath to the Fuhrer
- Attend Nazi ideas residential courses
- Lessons set out for each year group ‘Adolf Hitler and his fellow fighters’ & ‘The evil of the Jews’
- Had to report anyone who was disloyal to the Nazis, including parents and teachers

**Physical training:**
- Camping and hiking expeditions
- Regional & national sports competitions
The Hitler Youth:

**Military Training:**
- Map reading and signalling
- Trained in small-arms shooting
- Specialist training options – Naval, Gliding, Flying and Motor

**Character Training:**
- Activities that stressed comradeship and loyalty
- Competition & ruthlessness
- SA instructors – Ice plunging challenges to toughen them up
- Exercise in wintry weather
- Harsh punishments for errors or disobeying orders
- Making the oath – “I devote all my energies and strength to the Saviour of our Country, Adolf Hitler, I am willing and ready to give up my life for him, so help me God”
The Hitler Youth:

Which training category do you think these photographs would fit?
Where did the HJ lead?

The last known picture of Hitler: encouraging members of the HJ to fight to the very last in Berlin.

How old does this boy look?
The League of German Maidens

Read Source E and make a list of the activities the girls in the BDM did

- Political activities including rallies and oaths of allegiance
- Physical and character building activities like camping and marching
- No military training

Kinder, Kirche, Kuche training:

- Trained to cook, Iron, Make beds & Sew
- Housewife preparation
- Racial Hygiene lessons – how to keep the German race pure by only marrying Aryan men

Source E

A German woman, Ilse Mckee, remembering her time in the BDM. This was originally published in 1966, in a book of contemporary accounts of life in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1939.

We had to be present at every public meeting and at youth rallies and sports. The weekends were crammed full with outings, camping, and marches when we carried heavy packs on our backs. It was all fun in a way, and we certainly got plenty of exercise, but it had a bad effect on our school reports. There was hardly ever any time for homework.

... girls of my age had to attend evening classes twice weekly. The evening classes were conducted by young girls, usually hardly older than we were ourselves... we were of course lectured on a lot of Nazi ideology, and most of this went over our heads... we were told from a very early age to prepare for motherhood, as the mother in the eyes of our beloved leader... was the most important person in the nation. We were Germany’s hope and Germany’s future.
The League of German Maidens
The League of German Maidens

Why was the HJ attractive to many young people?

_Martha Wolf describes the impact that the League of German Girls made on her as a child, and how it caused friction with her mother. Joining was an act of rebellion against her family._

... What a pleasure it was to enjoy the joviality of the leader, a merry young woman by the name of Marianne, called Mickey. ‘Just call me Micky, I look like Mickey Mouse anyway.’ Another kind of pleasure was to crowd around the leader, together with all the others, at the end of the evening, forgetting one's own shyness, to grasp her hand, to enjoy the extraordinary familiarity...

...And on the ride home, to become familiar with a new word by repeating it to herself: 'comradeship'. It meant the promise of a better life, far removed from the small area of the store, filled with cans of fish, bags of sugar, loaves of bread, sausages hanging from the ceiling...

... far removed also from the white figure in the store smock who was standing outside waiting for Nelly: her mother had probably been waiting for a long time. Why had she been late? ... Not a word about 'comradeship'. She wiped her feet (Not a word to her mother). Nor could she admit to her mother that Micky sang and played and marched with them... there was something her mother couldn't give her, something she didn't want to miss...

Why did this young girl like the HJ?
**Did Nazi youth groups achieve their aims?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some were enthusiastic and committed</td>
<td>• Some didn't like being forced to activities they didn't enjoy or believe in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some felt comradeship and belonging</td>
<td>• Many German adults had worries too, as they felt their own authority was being undermined by the youth groups as they were told their loyalty lies with the state not your family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many enjoyed the activities and residentials</td>
<td>• Many didn't like the obedience policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many felt like they were contributing to a strong Germany again</td>
<td>• As they got older, many got bored of military drills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Many families argued and were investigated by children complaining to their youth leader about things being said at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What overall purpose do you think the Nazi youth groups were designed for?
Photo Album of the Hitler Youth

• A unique insight into the memories of the young people who lived through Nazi Germany and the youth groups...