

Weimar and Nazi Germany

For your Germany exam, you need to make sure you can answer key questions in detail. You must be able to explain:

- *the problems faced by the Weimar government immediately after WWI*
- *why the Nazis could not have come to power in the 1920s*
- *why Hitler became Chancellor*
- *how Hitler became Dictator*
- *what impact the Nazis had on life in Germany*
- *the impact WWII had on the Nazis*

For each thing we have studied, there is a detailed version of your class notes. To revise content for Nazi Germany, highlight the main points of each section, the effect on the government at the time and the effect on the Nazis.



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| <p>1919 Spartacist Rising (Jan)
Treaty of Versailles (June)</p> <p>1920 Kapp Putsch (Jan)</p> <p>1923 Hyperinflation
Occupation of the Ruhr (Jan)
Stresemann becomes Chancellor (Aug)
Rentenmark introduced (Oct)
Munich Putsch (Nov)</p> <p>1924 Stresemann made Foreign Minister
Dawes Plan (April)</p> <p>1925 Locarno Treaty (Oct)
Hindenburg elected President</p> <p>1926 Germany in League of Nations</p> <p>1929 Young Plan
Stresemann dies
Wall Street Crash (Oct)</p> <p>1932 Nazis become the biggest single party
(July)</p> | <p>becomes Chancellor (Jan)
Reichstag Fire (Feb)
Enabling Act (March)
Other parties banned (July)
Boycott of Jewish shops</p> <p>1934 Night of the Long Knives (June)
Hindenburg dies (Aug)
Army oath (Aug)
Hitler becomes dictator (Aug)</p> <p>1935 Reich Law on Citizenship
Law for the Protection of German
Blood and Honour</p> <p>1936 Compulsory to join Hitler Youth
Berlin Olympics</p> <p>1938 Kristallnacht (Nov)
Jews banned from German schools</p> <p>1939 T4 starts
Outbreak of WWII (Sept)</p> <p>1942 Wannsee Conference (Aug)</p> <p>1944 Operation Valkyrie (July)</p> <p>1945 Hitler dies
End of WWII (Sept)</p> |
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NAZI GERMANY
1933 Hitler



What problems were the Weimar government facing? And how did Hitler become Chancellor in 1933?

November 1918 – WWI ends

After Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated and fled to Holland, an armistice to end WWI was agreed between Germany and the allies. This was hard for Germany to take as their fortunes had changed so quickly. The Kaiser had led Germans to believe that they were winning the war. The men who signed the armistice were known as the November Criminals and hated. The Germans claimed they had been 'stabbed in the back'. The head of the delegation, Matthias Erzberger, was assassinated in August 1921 for signing the armistice.

The Weimar Republic was formed under Freidrick Ebert, the first democratically elected leader of Germany, and the Social Democrats. The government had to be formed in Weimar, a town away from Berlin, because Berlin was too dangerous.

January 1919 – Spartacist Uprising

Spartacists wanted a revolution similar to the Communist Revolution in 1917 in Russia (the violence that had gone with the revolution in Russia made most of Europe terrified of Communism). The uprising was lead by Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Leibknecht. On 5th January, the group captured the government newspaper and telegraph in Berlin. They struggled to get support and were easily crushed by the Freikorps (a group of ex-soldiers, demobilised after WWI, that the government used like a militia). The leaders were arrested, interogated and murdered. After the uprising, the Freikorps were used to crush other Communist uprisings across Germany.

June 1919 – Treaty of Versailles signed

Germany forced by the allies to sign a 'diktat' (dictated peace) to punish them for starting WWI. It was 'dictated' because German delegates weren't invited to the discussions, they were just forced to sign the treaty.

Main terms:

Land - lose 13% of land with 6 m people living on it, lost all overseas colonies, Alsace-Lorraine (given to France) and the Polish Corridor, 10% of industry and 15% of agricultural land lost

Army - army limited to 100 000 soldiers, navy to 15 000 sailors, 6 battleships, no submarines or air force

Money - pay £6600 million to the allies to rebuild after WWI

Blame - Article 231 blamed Germany for starting WWI, this was hated by the German people, who didn't believe that they had started the war at all.

Hitler hated the treaty and repeatedly promised to rip it up and make Germany great again.

March 1920 – Kapp Putsch

Soldiers who lost their jobs under the Treaty of Versailles joined the Freikorps. The German government tried to disband the Freikorps after they started to exceed the number of troops Germany was allowed to have. This caused Wolfgang Kapp to march into Berlin with the Freikorps and declare a new government. The government asked

for help from the workers, who went on general strike (every worker goes on strike). This caused the putsch to collapse four days after it started. The leaders were not punished.

June 1922 – Rathenau assassinated

Germany experienced political violence after WWI in the form of putsches and assassinations, all of which made the government look weak. In 1922, the German foreign minister, Walter Rathenau, was assassinated by an ultra-nationalist group.

January 1923 – Occupation of the Ruhr

Reparations had been set in 1921 but in 1923, Germany could not afford to pay their reparations payment so French and Belgian troops invaded the industrial region of Germany, the Ruhr, intending to ensure they got their money. The German workers responded with passive resistance, a policy of refusing to cooperate with the troops and refusing to work. The factories stopped working and the government promised to keep paying the wages of the men no longer working, causing even more financial problems.

January 1923 – Hyperinflation

The German government could not pay the people striking in the Ruhr when they were getting no money from trading goods from the factories, so they started to print more. This caused hyperinflation, when the value of the money decreases and cost of things like food increase. The effect was devastating, money was worthless so people bartered and the value of money was so unpredictable that workers were paid twice a day and often picked up their wages in wheelbarrows. People who lived on their savings (like pensioners) and the middle classes who owned businesses had all their money wiped out. Those in debt could pay their debts off for a fraction of the value. This caused a lot of people to lose faith in the government.

August 1923 – Stresemann becomes Chancellor

Stresemann became Chancellor in 1923 and started a period of stability in Germany. He called off passive resistance even though the public thought he should have continued and got the workers back into the factories. He introduced the Rentenmark and signed the Dawes and Young Plans and got Germany into the League of Nations. He was not Chancellor for long, but stood as Foreign Minister until 1929 and continued to be a stabilising influence on Germany, effectively stopping extreme parties like the Nazis from gaining support. As Foreign Minister, he signed the Locarno Pact, which guaranteed the borders of European countries, effectively making them promise not to invade each other, making Germany more trustworthy to their European neighbours.

8/9th November 1923 – Munich Putsch

The Nazi Party attempted to take over the government after the Weimar government announced that passive resistance was to end. Hitler wanted to take over Bavaria and then march to Berlin with his supporters as Mussolini had in Italy, so plotted with two nationalist politicians to do so. Kahr (the leader of Bavaria and one of the plotters)

called of him and Hitler's plan at the last minute. On 8th November, Kahr was making a speech in a beer hall when Hitler and his supporters stormed in. Kahr agreed, at gun point, to support Hitler. Hitler let Kahr go, who informed the police. On 9th November, the Nazis started marching out of Munich but were met by armed police who shot 16 Nazis and arrested Hitler. He used the trial as a publicity stunt and made himself better known. Hitler was sentenced to 5 years in Landsberg prison, but only served 7 months, during which he was treated really well. Whilst in prison, he wrote Mein Kampf and as the Nazi Party was then banned, worked out how to get them back on track. He decided to go for 'the ballot not the bullet' – be voted in to power rather than storming his way in with violence. The putsch was a short-term failure but a long-term success.

November 1923 – Rentenmark introduced

The old money was scrapped and burnt and a new currency introduced. The government controlled the amount of money in circulation and stopped hyperinflation. The people who had lost money during hyperinflation were not compensated.

September 1924 – Dawes Plan

Plan signed to set Germany's reparations payments and make them more manageable. The Americans lent money to Germany to boost trade and industry and ensure their reparations could be paid. The plan also instructed the allies to leave the Ruhr. This was a brilliant short-term solution to Germany's problems but made Germany very reliant on the American economy.

November 1928 – election

Hitler joined that Nazi Party in 1919 and became the leader in 1921. After he was released from prison, he changed the way they worked. He used the SA to break up meetings of political rivals, protect important Nazis and hand out propaganda leaflets. In the 1928 election, most workers supported the Social Democrats because of Stresemann's policies. They received 3% of the overall vote, they don't have the support of the working class, Germany is stable and the people are scared by Hitler's anti-Semitic ideas and by the SA.

August 1929 – Young Plan

Reduced the amount of money Germany had to pay in reparations to make sure they could pay.

October 1929 – Stresemann dies

Died of a stroke. Germany lost its stabilising influence.

October 1929 – Wall Street Crash

Germany had borrowed 800 million marks from the USA under the Dawes Plan. When America needed the money back when Wall Street crashed, Germany went into an economic depression. The Chancellor cut wages and raised taxes to try to stop

hyperinflation, something the people hated. Businesses collapsed, young people and factory workers became unemployed and the government cut unemployment benefits. The worse things got, the less money people had to spend and so the situation continued to get worse. People began to support extreme parties such as the Nazis and Communists as the Weimar government failed to solve the problem. People also remembered hyperinflation, both of these events showed that the Weimar government couldn't be relied upon.

July 1932 – elections

The Nazis become the single biggest party in the Reichstag, winning 230 seats. Hitler uses the run up to the election to use new technology by flying to parade grounds to give speeches under Hitler Over Germany. This looks impressive and gets him lots of publicity. The Nazis make a lot of promises to the German people. They promise to make Germany great again, to overcome the Treaty of Versailles and to deal with the threat from the Communist party. They often make conflicting promises, promising farmers more money for their crops and the people lower food prices.

November 1932 – elections

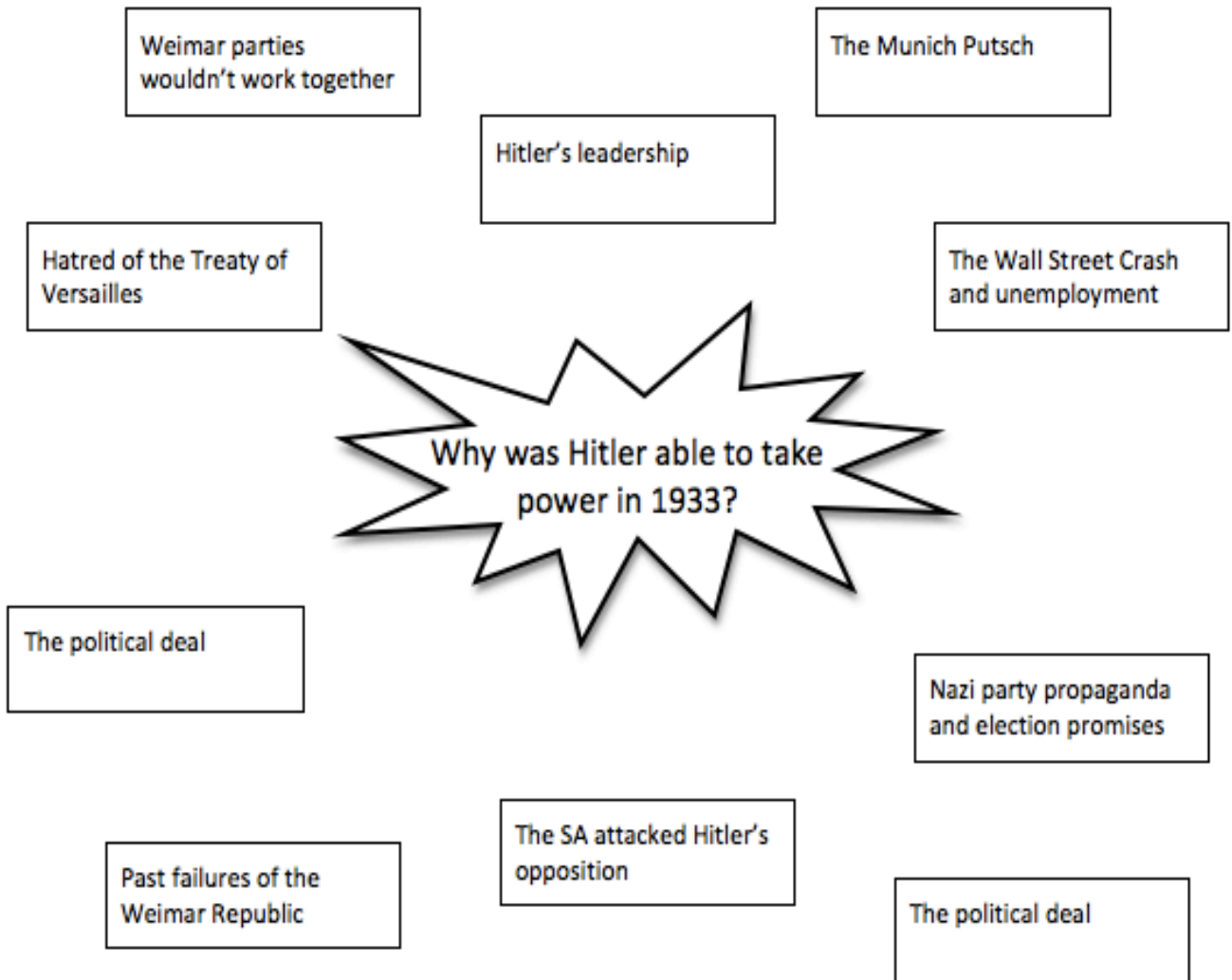
The Nazis lost 34 seats as the Communists gained 11. The Nazis were still the largest party in the Reichstag but were disappointed not to gain an overall majority, which would have made Hitler Chancellor automatically. The SA lost the Nazis support as they were seen as thugs causing trouble.

30th January 1933 – Hitler becomes Chancellor

Hindenburg didn't want Hitler to be Chancellor even though he had the most seats in the July 1932 elections (no one would work under him), so he made Franz von Papen Chancellor. He had no support and Hitler refused to cooperate so Hindenburg called the November elections. General von Schleicher persuades Hindenburg to make him Chancellor. Von Schelicher can't raise enough support to keep his position and has to resign. Hindenburg can't reappoint von Papen so Hitler is made Chancellor and von Paper Vice Chancellor. Hindenburg wrongly believes he can control Hitler. Hitler became the Chancellor and the leader of the largest party in the Reichstag, making President Hindenburg the only person who could veto his decisions.

EXAM HELP!

You obviously can't write about all that in an exam answer, so which ones are the most important? Underline the most important long-term example and the most important short-term example. Make sure you explain how each helped Hitler to become more popular.



How did Hitler become Dictator?

Hitler became Chancellor but didn't have an overall majority in the Reichstag. He arranged to hold another election on 5th March and upped his use of propaganda to get more votes.

Reichstag Fire - 27th February 1933

A Dutch Communist called Marinus van der Lubbe was caught inside the building and arrested. Hitler used it to persuade Germany that the fire was a Communist plot and that the Communists were going to take over Germany. That night, 4000 Communist leaders were arrested and imprisoned. The next day, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to give him emergency powers to suspend freedom of speech, assembly and the press so he could stop the Communists. Hindenburg believed Hitler and passed the Law for the Protection of People and State which gave Hitler the legal basis for his rule and meant the Nazis could crush the Communists. It said:

- the Nazi controlled police had the power to search houses
- the police could hold people indefinitely, without trial
- the death penalty was used for more crimes
- meetings and newspaper were shut down
- political opponents, like 4000 Communists, were arrested by the SA and taken away to concentration camps
- the Nazi police took control of state radio

After the Reichstag Fire, thousands of political opponents were arrested and Communists meetings and newspapers were shut down. Emergency laws are only supposed to stay for a few months but these stayed for 12 years and became the basis for Hitler's rule. The fire was so convenient that historians have suggested that the Nazis started the fire themselves, with a senior General reporting that Goerring confessed to starting the fire.

Elections - 5th March 1933

These elections gave the Nazis more seats in the Reichstag as they used the police and SA to stop their opposition. Only the Nazis had been allowed to campaign before the election and political opponents had been rounded up and imprisoned, and in the case of the Communists, could be shot. Many opponents went into exile. The Nazis used the radio to broadcast their propaganda and anti-Communist message. On election day, the Nazis used the SA and police to intimidate voters by watching over their shoulders as they filled in their ballot slips. However, they still did not have a majority and needed a coalition. Hitler persuaded the Nationalist Party to join the Nazis, giving them just over half of the seats in the Reichstag, and the majority Hitler needed. At the same time, using his emergency powers, he banned the Communists from serving in the Reichstag and piled pressure on other parties such as the Social Democrats to support him.

Enabling Act - 2nd May 1933

What Hitler now wanted was a law that would mean he didn't have to ask the Reichstag's permission to pass laws and allow him to become a dictator. To do this, he needed to change the constitution (laws of the country), which could only be done with the backing of 2/3 of the Reichstag. He already had roughly half of the Reichstag's backing, but he needed more.

The Reichstag were due to meet at the Kroll Opera House (as the Reichstag building had burnt down). Hitler used this meeting to intimidate his opposition by posting supporters outside shouting 'we want an Enabling Act' and insulting members of opposition parties. Hitler filled the Kroll Opera House with armed SA and SS men, covering the exits and threatening the men if they voiced any opposition to Hitler speaking. The Communists weren't allowed to vote and the Catholic Centre Party were persuaded to vote in favour of the Enabling Act because Hitler promised to protect the Catholic Church. All parties apart from the Social Democrats gave in to Nazi pressure and the Enabling Act was passed 94 votes to 444. The Act meant the Reichstag had voted itself out of existence and given all their power to Hitler, who could pass laws without consulting the Reichstag. Whenever the Reichstag met from then on, they only met to hear Hitler speak.

Trade Unions banned - 2nd May 1933

Hitler used his new powers from the Enabling Act to bring the country into line, this was the rapid change that is called the Nazi Revolution. On 2nd May, the Nazis broke into trade union offices all over Germany and arrested the trade union leaders. All the trade unions were then merged under the DAF, the German Labour Front, which was controlled by the Nazis. This meant the Nazis could impose whatever working conditions they liked and control workers in Germany.

All parties banned - July 1933

On 10th May, the Nazis took over the Social Democrats, the only party still willing to stand up to them. They destroyed the Social Democrat newspaper and took all their money. Two weeks later, they took all the money the Communist Party owned. Other smaller parties had the same thing done to them and were broken up, leaving only the Nazis. On 14th July, Hitler passed a law that allowed only the Nazi Party to exist in Germany and banning all other parties from forming as opposition. This meant there was no political opposition left.

Night of the Long Knives - 29/30th June 1934

Hitler had removed all of his opposition, his only rivals were left inside his own party. He had become worried about the rising power of the SA, especially in the increasing popularity of their leader, Rohm. The SA were 2 500 brown shirts who broke up political meetings and caused problems on the streets. They were undisciplined and wanted to benefit from their loyalty to Hitler by being given jobs and powerful positions. Rohm also wanted to take over the army. Rohm was popular amongst the Nazis and one of Hitler's friends. This made him a potential successor to Hitler and made Hitler worried that Rohm might try to oust him. This would be a real possibility if Rohm was allowed to take over the army.

The army, on the other hand, were a small organisation with only 100 000 men after the Treaty of Versailles, but they still had the power to overthrow Hitler and were well trained and disciplined. The army was supported by powerful, rich, businessmen, who wanted to buy new weapons and expand the army. The army and the army generals did not want to be ruled by Rohm and didn't like the way the SA used violence. When he had become Chancellor, Hitler had promised the army generals that he would rip up the Treaty of Versailles and knew he was going to have to go to war with France to do this. Although a lot of the army generals disliked him, they went along with it. So, on 29th/30th June, SA leaders were dragged to Nazi headquarters and shot on Hitler's orders. In the next week, hundreds of other SA leaders and Hitler's rivals, such as ex-Chancellor von Schleicher, were executed. Rohm was arrested and when he refused to commit suicide, was shot.

The Night of the Long Knives was important because it showed that Hitler was not going to let anyone stand in his way, not even his own party. He also gained the support of the army and removed the last of the potential opposition within his party.

Hindenburg dies - 2nd August 1934

Within hours of 87 year old President Hindenburg dying, Hitler combined his post of Chancellor with Hindenburg's post of President to become Fuhrer. He was then head of the government with no President to tell him what to do.

Army Oath - August 1934

After Hindenburg's death, every soldier in the German army swore personal loyalty to Hitler. This meant the army had sworn allegiance to him rather than Germany and with their obedience and discipline, were not going to break it. This also made Hitler Supreme Commander of the armed forces.

EXAM HELP!

You may be asked to compare two of the events as the most important behind Hitler's consolidation of power. Make sure for each event you can:

- describe what they are
- explain how they helped Hitler gain more power

You will then need to write a conclusion explaining why one is more important than the other.

For example:

'The Enabling Act was more important than the Reichstag Fire in Hitler's consolidation of power.' Explain whether you agree or disagree with this view.

The Enabling Act was...

It was important to Hitler's consolidation of power because...

The Reichstag Fire was...

It was important to Hitler's consolidation of power because...

The most important of the two was..... because...



Nazi Germany before WWII

Hitler's ideas

- Nationalism – a strong Germany
- Socialism – state to control the economy, although Hitler did not see this as so important (did not want to upset big business)
- Race – Aryans were the most superior, Jews and Slavs the most inferior
- War – inevitable so it was important to keep Aryans healthy
- Lebensraum – Living space for German colonists in the conquered land of the East
- Leadership – one leader who made all the decisions (dictatorship), democracy was seen as weak.

The economy

Hitler's aims for the economy were: reducing the unemployment figures (6m when he came to power), building up the military to make Germany strong again, be self-sufficient in case of war (in WWI, British blockades had nearly starved Germany).

New Plan (1933-1935) – Hjalmar Schacht, a talented economist and President of the German national bank, was going to control the level of imports, make trade agreements, spend money on industry and reduce unemployment by getting unemployed people to build new motorways and hospitals, compulsory labour, conscription and sacking Jews and opposition groups from their jobs. The plan worked up until 1936 when Hitler announced he wanted to rearm faster and sacked Schacht.

Four Year Plan (1935-1939) – Schacht was replaced by Goerring, the head of the air force, who had no economic experience. His aim was to prepare for war by rearming and making Germany self-sufficient (autarky). He increased the production of raw materials that were needed to rearm over producing food (Arms Not Butter), reduced imports, controlled wages, use forced labour to build new industrial plants. The plan wasn't successful because the government were still relying on imports from other countries for basic survival, some food was still rationed and they didn't have enough raw materials.

The Nazis also tried to change the way workers worked to make sure they were loyal (many working class people had voted for socialist parties). They banned trade unions and instead introduced new organisations:

DAF (Deutsche Arbeitsfront) – built new motorways, hospitals and schools. They also settled conflict between workers and their bosses.

Beauty of Labour – part of the DAF, used to campaign for better working conditions

Strength Through Joy – part of the DAF, organised workers' free time by arranging activities and holidays

Reich Labour Service (RAD) – all 18-25 year old men had to do six months work duty, it was hard and poorly paid, they often had to plant trees and dig ditches

Young men also had to do two years military service when they turned 18. Increasing the size of the army from 100 000 to 1.4m.

The Nazis also worked to gain the support of economic groups:

Small businesses – benefited from Nazi rule because laws were passed to stop new department stores from opening, Jewish businesses were closed down

Farmers – benefited because food prices increased, but they hated being given government quotas and a lot of their labour force left to work in towns

Big business – benefited because they made money from rearmament and trade unions were banned, but the government decided what they should make and who should get raw materials

Unskilled workers – were put to work on government building projects, some hated the jobs they were given and the work was hard and poorly paid, but some were happy to be able to work and the government started to build cheap flats for them to live in.

However, during Nazi rule, workers had no rights, their wages were lower than before the Nazis came to power and they worked longer hours. People who refused to take part in compulsory work could end up in a work camp.

Young people

Hitler wanted to make sure that he got his thousand year Reich. To do this he controlled the next generation. School life changed for German children. Their teachers became a part of the Nazi Teachers' Association and taught the Nazi curriculum. Those that didn't conform were sacked. Subjects were changed:

PE was given more time and sports such as boxing encouraged to prepare boys for the army and were compulsory. Pupils had to pass an exam in PE.

History concentrated on how Germany became a Nazi state, the injustices of the end of WWI and the role of the Communists and Jews in the German state. No history from before WWI or from another country was taught.

Biology became a way to recognise perfect Aryan features and which people they should be marrying.

German taught pupils about heroes from WWI. Teachers used fairy stories to explain the rise of the Nazis. Children also analysed speeches and writings by prominent Nazis. Geography used the loss of land under the Treaty of Versailles to teach about the land the Nazis wanted back. It also taught the importance for an increase in Lebensraum (living space).

Maths became a way of teaching children Nazi ideas through economics. For example, pupils might be asked to work out how much money it would cost to keep a disabled person in care.

RE became less and less important as the Nazis tried to move Germany away from organised religion. You could drop RE altogether from 1937.

Girls were also taught skills for motherhood, cooking, sewing and how to choose a suitable husband (eugenics).

There were also special schools. The SS ran Napolas for future government and army

chiefs. There were also military Adolf Hitler Schools. Jews were treated differently in schools from Aryan children. They were brought to the front of the class and ridiculed, banned from certain activities and, eventually, banned from schools altogether. Universities complained that under the Nazis, academic standards fell.

Outside of school, children had their free time planned. Youth movements had been popular for a long time in Germany so Hitler took over these organisations. In the 1920s, Hitler formed the Hitler Youth and encouraged young people to join up. By 1933, most non-Nazi youth groups had been shut down and by 1936 it was compulsory to join the Hitler Youth. By 1939, 80% of German young people belonged to a Hitler Youth organisation.

The Hitler Youth had organisations for all young people:

For Boys:

- 6-10 Pimpf (Little Fellows) – lots of camping and games.
- 10-14 Deutsch Jungfolk (German Young People)– learnt about Nazis and the army.
- 14-18 Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) –training for the army.

For Girls:

- 10-14 Jungmadel (Young Maidens) –health and how to look after a family.
- 14-21 Bund Deutsche Madel (League of German Maidens) - more on health, the family and choosing a good Aryan husband.

It was seen to be less important for girls to go to youth groups than boys, because they weren't being prepared for the army. To prepare boys for war, they were given intense physical assessments and given bravery tests like jumping out of first floor windows. Boys were also given a smart uniform, a knife and took part in rallies. They were given tests on the Nazi party and had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler, just like the army did. The Nazis used this oath of loyalty to encourage young people to tell Hitler Youth leaders if their parents were being disloyal to the party.

However, a lot of young people hated the Hitler Youth and 20% never joined. The talks they were given were repetitive and didn't like being bossed around or made to go on weekends away to camp.

Women

The position of women isn't always straightforward because a lot of Nazi ideas contradict themselves. The Nazis wanted more children for their future, so women were really important.

The birth rate had dropped before Hitler came to power because women wanted careers and because contraception was given out. Hitler increased the birth rate by controlling women's lives. They were sacked from their jobs, offered loans when they got married and had children, given medals called the Honour Cross of the German Mother (the medals were handed out on Hitler's mother's birthday and you got a gold medal if you had 8 children). At the same time, the Nazis brought in compulsory

sterilisation for women who carried genetic diseases. They also glorified the image of the perfect woman. This woman would: not work, be blonde, athletic, wearing traditional clothes and flat shoes, not dye their hair, diet or smoke, be a good cook who made up special stew of left-overs once a month. These women would also love the Fuhrer and encourage their children to do the same. The birth rate increased by 30% between 1933 and 1936.

However, in 1937, policies towards women became more complicated. The Nazis discovered that in the process of rearming, they needed women to fill the jobs left by men joining the army. This meant that marriage loans were scrapped and women had to do a year of labour duty. By the outbreak of war, fewer women were working than had been in the 1920s. The Nazis changed the divorce law in 1938 to make it easier to divorce women who couldn't produce children, or who had STIs, even if it was given to the woman by her husband. The Nazis even set up Lebensborn, where pure women could go to a home and give birth to a pure baby by an SS officer.

Some women liked the life the Nazis encouraged. They were able to get jobs if they wanted them as employers preferred women, who were paid less than men. Some women idolised Hitler, they wrote him letters and screamed his name at rallies.

Terror

The terror state was overseen by Heinrich Himmler. He was an ex-chicken farmer who rose up the ranks of the Nazi party to become head of the SS in 1929 and head of the entire police system in 1936. He was the man in charge of the Holocaust.

The SS (Schutzstaffel or protection squad) were Hitler's personal bodyguard. They wore black uniforms with SS written in lightning on their badges. By 1939, the SS was made up of 240 000 pure Aryan men. The SS had specific physical standards their man had to achieve, with even a filling being grounds for disqualification. They were ruthless and loyal and had been a part of the Night of the Long Knives. They would arrest people and search houses and were the main way of terrorising the German people. They also ran concentration camps. During the war, they became even more important and had a fighting unit, the Waffen SS.

When Hitler first came to power, the SS arrested his opponents and put them in prison camps. These temporary prisons camps then became permanent concentration camps. Camps were used for questioning, torture and re-education. People did die in these early camps and families were usually told their relative had died of a disease or trying to escape. By the outbreak of WWII, the prisons were being used as slave labour. Himmler controlled about 150 companies that used slave labour for making all kinds of goods. These later became death camps.

The Gestapo, the secret police, was used to spy on German people and report back to the Nazis. Their job was to read people's mail, listen in on their phone calls and collect information from informers. The Nazi Party had Block Wardens, who would go into

homes to collect donations to the party and check on people. They would then report any suspicious activity. People could be arrested by the Gestapo, tortured and imprisoned in a concentration camp. Because it was very difficult to know who was informing, this was a very effective way of stopping opposition.

Police bosses were all Nazis and the police was under the control of the SS. The Nazi Party appointed judges who took an oath of loyalty to Hitler so fair trials were unlikely. Nazis could use the courts to try opponents of Hitler on technicalities and the number of offences that lead to the death penalty increased.

Propaganda

In 1928, Joseph Goebbels was put in charge of Nazi propaganda. He was a brilliant propaganda designer and an excellent speechmaker. Goebbels controlled the media as Minister for National Enlightenment through various channels:

Newspapers – Goebbels told them what to print and controlled who worked for a newspaper. Boards were set up so everyone could read them. The Nazi newspaper was called *Der Sturmer*.

Rallies – political rallies showed how strong the Nazis were. There was a special parade ground built in Nuremberg and in 1937, 100 000 Nazis paraded through the stadium with flags. During these rallies, everyone marched in step and showed how unified the Nazis were. The Nazis also expected that on days that were special to them, such as the anniversary of the Munich Putsch, that people would hang flags and go to parades. There was a weeklong rally at Nuremberg every year to celebrate the Nazis.

Books – Nazis had a very specific idea on what was appropriate to read. They banned authors from publishing and any books that did not support the Nazi message or were written by Jews or Communists, were burnt on big bonfires.

Radio – cheap radios were made and public loudspeakers set up in town squares so everyone could listen to the radio programming. The Nazis set up the Reich Radio Company, which broadcast Hitler's speeches and history programmes. Goebbels even had programmes made for children. By 1939, 70% of the population of Germany owned a radio. Radio signals from foreign broadcasters were blocked.

Films – Goebbels made over 1000 Nazi films. People watched short news programmes before the film, controlled by the Nazis, and you had to watch the newsreel. There were also pro-Nazi films made such as *The Eternal Jew* in 1940, and films such as *The Triumph of the Will*, made in 1934 about the Nuremberg Rally.

Culture – Hitler set up the Reich Chamber of Culture. The Nazis liked classical art and architecture, not the modern art that had been produced during the Weimar Republic, and opened the House of German Art to exhibit the work they approved of next to 'degenerate art' (art considered unacceptable) with rude notes written underneath. They liked music that was traditional. Shows in the theatre were political or historical and books concentrated on Nazis ideas such as WWI heroes. To be able to work in the arts, you had to belong to the Chamber of Culture so if you didn't tow the line, you would not be able to work.

The Olympics – awarded to Germany years before the Nazis came to power and by

1936, the other countries knew how the Nazis treated Jewish people and some threatened to boycott the games. The Nazis decided to use the opportunity to show how strong and unified the Nazis were, and to try to stop the criticism, they toned down the anti-Jewish propaganda and placed a Jewish athlete on the German team. The German athletes were all professional athletes, whereas the athletes from other countries were all amateurs.

Pictures – Goebbels tightly controlled the way the leading Nazis, and especially Hitler, were represented in pictures. He censored pictures that showed any weakness, for example photographs of Hitler wearing his glasses. Hitler was presented as a man that Germany needed and could relate to, he was shown to be good with children, to work really hard (even though in reality he often didn't get up until midday and was unreliable), to be generous and brave.

Churches

In 1933, nearly all Germans were Christian, with 32% of the population being Catholic and 58% of the population being Protestant and 2/3 of German children attending a Church School. The Protestant Church had more members than the Nazi Party. The power and influence the church held over Germany worried the Nazis, but: Protestant pastors made excellent, pro-Nazi speeches and people listened to them, and the church some Nazi ideas. The majority of church leaders wanted to keep religion away from politics. Hitler made a speech when he first came to power explaining how important the churches were, even though in reality he hated Christianity.

He then made two important deals:

In June 1933, Hitler and the Roman Catholic church signed a concordat (understanding) saying the Nazi Party and the Catholic Church would stay out of each other's way.

Hitler then united all the Protestant churches under one bishop, Ludwig Muller. They used Nazi uniforms and salutes and had the motto 'the swastika on our breasts and the cross in our hearts'.

The Nazis also introduced the German Faith Movement, which was the Nazi alternative to Christianity. It meant the worship of nature and the sun and introduced pagan-style marriage and burial ceremonies.

In 1933, Hitler hadn't felt strong enough to fight the churches, but by 1935 that had changed. In 1935, Hitler set up the Department for Church Affairs and arrested Protestant ministers who weren't supporting the Nazis. Despite the fact that he promised to leave the churches alone, Hitler shut down all church youth groups between 1936 and 1939, in favour of the Hitler Youth. He also had hundreds of Catholic priests and nuns arrested in 1936 and banned Christian Christmas celebrations in schools in 1937, before banning religious classes in schools in 1938. During this time, local Nazis had a lot of power and depending on where you lived depended on policy towards religion. Some local leaders sent SS men round to beat up preachers and some still paid their church taxes.

Nazi Germany in World War Two

WWII splits into four periods for the Nazis:

1939 – 1941 : The war goes well for Germany

Countries invaded: Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, North Africa, Greece

Defeats for the Allies: Britain evacuates soldiers from Dunkirk, night bombing in cities during the Blitz

Tactics used: Blitzkrieg (lightning war)

In Germany: rationing of food, tobacco, soap and clothes introduced (more things were rationed than in Britain), imported luxury goods from the countries they invaded but most went to Nazi leaders and the black market, some people had better diets under rationing.

1941 – 1943 : The tide turns

Operation Barbarossa: Hitler tried to invade Russia. The German army got within 60 miles of Moscow.

The USA: Joined the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

Failures of the German army: driven out of Russia, North Africa and the British invaded Italy

In Germany: hospital trains brought injured soldiers back, propaganda campaigns and extra rations at Christmas used to try to improve morale.

1943 – 1944 : Total war

Total war: every part of German society and industry helping the war effort

German military failures: attempted another Blitz, Operation Valkyrie nearly assassinated

Hitler, German counter-attack in France failed

D-Day: the allies took back France

In Germany: professional sport banned, non essential businesses shut, civilian clothes were no longer being produced, women were sent to work, 7 million PoW's were used in factories, air raids worsened, people were evacuated to the countryside.

1944 – 1945 : Failure and defeat

Allied bombing: Dresden bombings

Russians in Berlin: Russian troops stormed Berlin and Hitler committed suicide

In Germany: refugees were fleeing the Russian troops and coming into Germany, Goebbels tried one last big push, the Home Guard was formed, the worst air raids happened and 150 000 people were killed in Dresden alone, the rationing system collapsed and people had to scavenge or use the black market.

The war also impacted upon Nazi rule.

Opposition

When the invasion of Russia failed, opposition increased. Young people had become bored of the HJ as the most talented leaders went into the army. Some joined the Swing Youth, a group that listened to jazz, wore English clothes and met in nightclubs. The Edelweiss Pirates went on HJ-style hikes, although hoped they would meet the HJ and could beat them up. Some of them got involved in the assassination of the head of the Cologne Gestapo and were executed. Some students formed the White Rose group, which distributed leaflets attacking the Nazis for their policies towards the Jews. The leaders were arrested, tried and executed.

Some Church ministers were also willing to oppose the Nazis. Dietrich Bonhoeffer preached anti-Nazi sermons, helped Jews to escape Germany and became involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler. He was arrested and executed at Flossenburg concentration camp. Martin Niemöller and Paul Schneider were also sent to concentration camps for refusing to stop preaching anti-Nazi sermons.

Hitler needed the army on his side, but in July 1944, army leaders came very close to assassinating him. Von Stauffenberg saw the suffering of German soldiers in Russia and disagreed with what the SS were doing in Eastern Europe, so he planned to use a briefcase bomb to kill Hitler. After a lot of failed attempts, he got the briefcase under the table, but it was moved at the last minute and when it went off, failed to kill Hitler. Von Stauffenberg was executed and nearly 5000 of Hitler's enemies were killed in retaliation.

Minorities

Hitler's policies towards minorities slowly increased. In 1933, there was a boycott of Jewish shops, where the SA stood outside shops to threaten people going inside. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 banned marriage between Germans and Jews (Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour) and took away German Jewish citizenship (Reich Citizenship Law).

In November 1938, Kristallnacht (the Night of the Broken Glass) happened. A young Jew had assassinated a German diplomat in Paris in opposition to the German treatment of Jewish people. The Nazis then used this as an excuse to attack Jewish shops, homes and synagogues. The police were told to allow Nazi supporters to do this and after two nights of violence, on 9/10th November, 91 Jews had been killed and streets were covered in broken glass. This led to a sharp increase in Nazi policy towards Jewish people as 30,000 were quickly arrested and sent to concentration camps.

After WWII began, policy worsened again. As the Nazis invaded Eastern Europe, the SS Einsatzgruppen went into towns, rounded up Jewish people and made them dig their own graves, before shooting them. Some cities also held ghettos, where Jews were

made to live away from the rest of the city in appalling conditions. By 1941, Jews had to wear Stars of David on their clothes to identify them.

Hitler attacked people he did not believe fitted in to his ideal Germany. This meant the introduction of T4 (1939-1941), the programme to kill around 70,000 disabled people. At the Wannsee Conference in 1941, Hitler decided upon the Final Solution to 'the Jewish question'. This was the decision to build death camps, with gas chambers and ovens. By the end of the war, 6 million Jews had been murdered, as well as Gypsies, homosexuals, habitual criminals and 4 million Russian PoWs.

EXAM HELP!

You could be asked a question on any of the topics in the last section. Make sure that for each you can:

- describe the main components*
- explain their effect on Germany*
- explain why Hitler did it*

Germany keywords

Write a definition next to these keywords

Adolf Hitler Schools

Aryan

Anti-Semitism

Block Wardens

Bund Deutsche Madel

Concordat

DAF

Einsatzgruppen

Freikorps

German Faith Movement

Gestapo

Hitler Jugend

Hyperinflation

Kraft Durch Freude

Kristallnacht

Lebensborn

Lebensraum

Mein Kampf

Napolas

Nationalist

Night of the Long Knives

NSDAP

Passive Resistance

President

Putsch

RAD

Reich Labour Service

Reichstag

Rentenmark

SA

SS

Waffen SS

Weimar Republic

