

Section 3 Germany in transition, c.1919–1939

3.1 The impact of the First World War

Key question

What challenges were faced by the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923?

The Weimar Republic

REVISED

The First World War broke out in 1914 with the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) fighting against the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). By the autumn of 1918 the German army was on the point of collapse. On 9 November the **Kaiser** abdicated and fled to the Netherlands. Germany became a **republic** and on 11 November the provisional government agreed to an **armistice** which brought Germany's fighting in the First World War to an end. Not all Germans welcomed the new republic and Berlin faced armed unrest from both left-wing and right-wing extremist groups. For this reason the newly elected Constituent Assembly, which met for the first time in January 1919, did so in the town of Weimar in southern Germany. This town gave its name to the **Weimar Republic**.

The Weimar Republic lasted from 1919 to 1933. During that time it was ruled by two presidents – Friedrich Ebert (1918–25) and Paul von Hindenburg (1925–34). They often battled to keep weak and unstable governments in office.

Kaiser The hereditary emperor of Germany.

Republic A government in which power is exercised by representatives elected by the people.

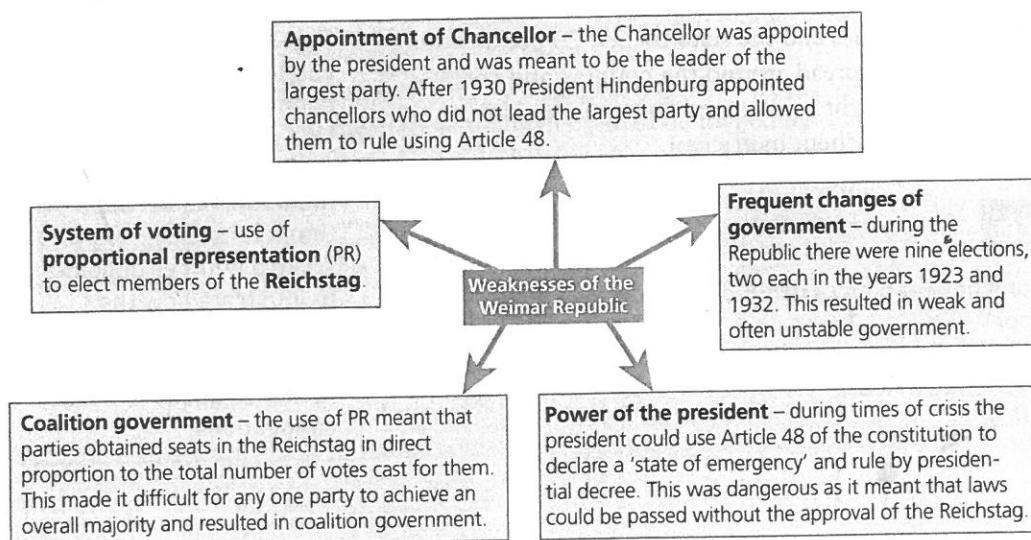
Armistice An agreement to end hostilities in a war.

Weimar Republic Following the abdication of the Kaiser in November 1918, Germany became a republic. It is named after the town of Weimar where the temporary government met to write a new constitution.

The weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution

REVISED

The Republic faced many weaknesses.



Until the appointment of Hitler, most Chancellors came from moderate parties, yet they ruled over **Reichstags** which included extreme parties such as the Communists and Nazis, both of whom wanted to destroy the Republic.

Revision task

TESTED

Copy and complete the following table to show how each factor helped to weaken the Weimar Republic.

Factor	How this factor helped to weaken the Weimar Republic
Proportional representation	
Coalition government	
Article 48	

Reichstag The German parliament.

Proportional representation System where the number of votes won in an election directly determines the number of seats in parliament.

Coalition government A government made up of two or more political parties.

The impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany

REVISED

The new German government had no choice but to sign the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919 which formally punished Germany for its involvement in the First World War. The majority of Germans were horrified by the terms and viewed the treaty as a great humiliation.

The treaty contained 440 clauses. The main terms were:

- Territorial terms – Germany lost 13 per cent of its land, 6 million citizens and all her colonial possessions; Germany was forbidden to unite with Austria; Alsace-Lorraine was given to France; East Prussia was to be cut off from the rest of Germany by the Polish corridor; the Saarland was to be administered by the League of Nations.
- Military terms – the German army was limited to 100,000 men; it was forbidden to possess any tanks, heavy guns, aircraft or submarines; its navy was limited to ships of less than 10,000 tons; the Rhineland was to be demilitarised.
- Financial terms – under Clause 231 (War Guilt) Germany had to accept full responsibility for having caused the war and agree to pay money as **reparations** for the damage caused (a figure of £6,600 million was fixed in 1921).
- Political terms – Germany was forbidden to join the newly created League of Nations. Germany also had to accept blame for causing the war.

Reparations War damages to be paid by Germany.

Revision task

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For your exam you need to remember the key terms in the treaty. To remember these, use the acronym LAMB.

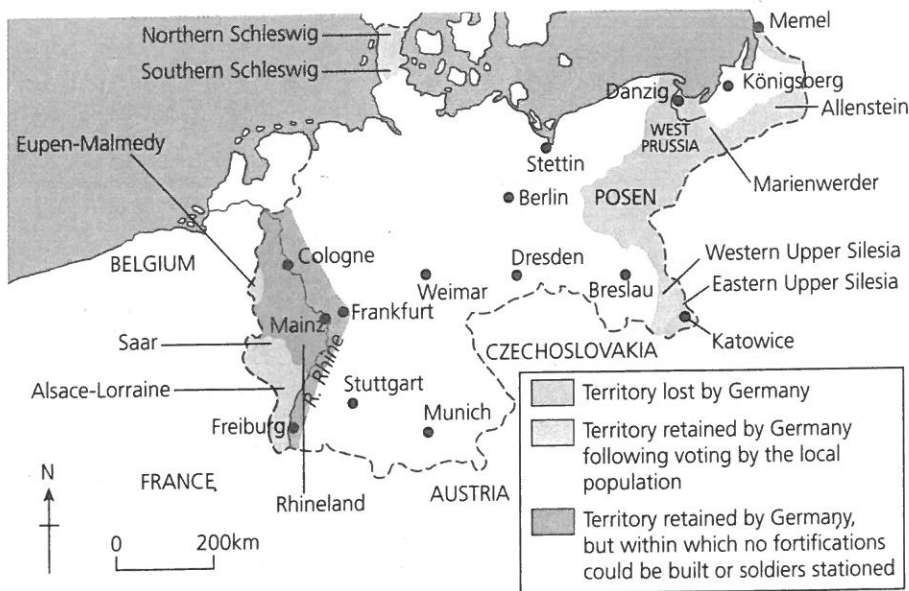
L = LAND

A = ARMY

M = MONEY

B = BLAME

Write down one specific example to go with each letter of this acronym.



Territorial terms of the Treaty of Versailles

The shame and humiliation of the Treaty and the fact that the Germans were not allowed any role in negotiating the terms, gave ammunition to the opponents of Weimar, especially the extreme parties.

Political instability – the Spartacist, Kapp and Munich Putsches

REVISED

The Weimar government was initially unpopular among many Germans because it had surrendered, established a weak constitution and failed to end food shortages. Weimar was hated by communists, **socialists**, **nationalists**, army leaders and those who had run Germany before 1918. It faced constant threats from the left and right and there were several uprisings across Germany that threatened the government's existence.

Socialist A person who believes in state ownership.
Nationalist A person who has a passionate devotion to his or her country.

The Spartacist uprising

The Spartacist League, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, wanted to establish a state based on communist ideals. In December 1918, the Spartacists' demonstrations against the government led to clashes with the army. The Spartacists formed the German Communist Party (KPD – Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands). On 6 January 1919, the Spartacists began their attempt to overthrow Ebert and the Weimar government in order to create a communist state. The government used the **Reichswehr** and the **Freikorps** to put down the rebellion. They succeeded. Spartacist leaders were captured and executed.

Reichswehr The regular German army.
Freikorps Paramilitary groups formed from demobilised soldiers at the end of the war.
Chancellor The head of the German government, chosen by the president.
Putsch A political uprising.

The Kapp Putsch

The Weimar government tried to reduce the size of the army and disband the Freikorps in March 1920. The Berlin Freikorps refused to comply. They worked with leading Berlin politician, Wolfgang Kapp, to seize Berlin and form a new right-wing government with Kapp as the **Chancellor**. The Reichswehr in Berlin supported Kapp. The Weimar government moved to Dresden and then Stuttgart. The new regular army refused to fire on Kapp's supporters. Ebert called on the people of Berlin to go on strike. Trade unionists and civil servants supported the government so the **Putsch** collapsed.

The Munich Putsch

On 8 November 1923, Hitler and 600 Nazis burst into a public meeting held in a beer hall in Munich. At gunpoint, the Bavarian chief minister von Kahr and the army chief von Lossow agreed to help in the planned takeover of the German government in Berlin. They later informed the police and authorities of Hitler's plan. Next morning they were met by the police. Sixteen Nazis and four policemen were killed. Hitler was put on trial and the Nazi Party was banned.

Revision task

TESTED

Use the information on pages 78–79 and your knowledge to complete the table below.

Revolt	Brief description of revolt	How revolt was stopped
Spartacist Uprising		
Kapp Putsch		
Munich Putsch		

The hyperinflation crisis and events in the Ruhr, 1923

REVISED

The currency had been devalued by **inflation** since 1914. The Weimar government claimed that it could not pay reparations. The loss of industrial areas after Versailles made this even more difficult. As inflation continued, the Weimar government began to print more money to pay France and Belgium, as well as its own workers. The value of the German currency started to fall rapidly.

French and Belgium troops invaded the industrial district of the Ruhr in the Rhineland in 1921 and then again in January 1923 when Germany failed to pay reparations. The French were angry because they needed the money to help to pay off their war debts to the USA.

The occupation was met with **passive resistance** and industrial sabotage. German workers went on strike in protest. A number of strikers were shot by French troops and their funerals led to demonstrations against the invasion. It reminded people of the war. The strikers became German heroes and the government printed more money to pay them even though fewer goods were being produced. The extra strike money plus the collapse in production turned inflation into **hyperinflation**.

People with savings or on a fixed income like pensions found themselves with nothing. They blamed Weimar politicians. However, inflation did benefit certain people:

- businessmen who had borrowed money from the banks were able to pay off these debts
- serious food shortages led to a rise in prices which helped farmers
- foreigners who were in Germany suddenly found that they could afford things that ordinary people couldn't.

Inflation When the value of a currency is reduced; the same amount of money buys you fewer things.

Passive resistance Opposition that does not involve violence.

Hyperinflation A very extreme form of inflation where money becomes almost worthless.

Hyperinflation

July 1914
£1 = 20 marks

July 1923
£1 = 1,413,648 marks

November 1923
£1 = 1,680,800,000,000,000 marks

Exam practice

Study the source below and then answer the question that follows.

Source A



A German woman in 1923 burning currency notes, which burn longer than the amount of firewood they can buy.

Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the effects of hyperinflation on life in Germany in 1923

Exam tip

Underline key words in the question. This will enable you to focus upon what the examiner wants you to write about. Describe what you can see or read in the source, remembering to make use of the information provided in the caption of a visual source. Link this information to your knowledge of this period. Aim to make at least two developed points.

3.2 The recovery of Weimar

Key question

Why were the Stresemann years considered a 'golden age'?

Recovery from hyperinflation

REVISED

German economic recovery was largely due to the work of Gustav Stresemann who worked successfully with Britain, France and the USA to improve Germany's economic position by organising the Dawes Plan, the Rentenmark and the Young Plan.

The Dawes Plan

Stresemann persuaded the French, British and Americans to change the reparation payment terms in August 1924. The main points of the plan were:

- reparations payments were reduced to more sensible and manageable payments and were based upon Germany's capacity to pay
- the Ruhr area was to be evacuated by Allied occupation troops. This was carried out in 1925
- the USA would give loans to Germany to help its economic recovery – \$3,000 million over six years.

The Rentenmark

In November 1923, Stresemann introduced a temporary currency called the Rentenmark. This was issued in limited amounts based on property values. In 1924 the Rentenmark was converted into the Reichsmark, a new currency now backed by gold reserves.

The Young Plan

In 1929, the Allied Reparations Committee asked an American banker, Owen Young, to come up with a new plan for payments. The reparations figure was reduced from £6,600 million to £1,850 million, while the length of time Germany had to pay was extended to 59 years. Right-wing politicians objected to any further payment of reparations.

The extent of economic recovery

Compared to the years of inflation and hyperinflation there was an economic recovery. The economy seemed to grow as money came to Germany from the USA:

- public works provided new stadiums, apartment blocks and opera houses
- big business had paid many of its debts and benefited from a period of industrial growth
- there were fewer strikes between 1924 and 1929
- unemployment, which had risen to 9 million by 1926, fell to the 6 million mark.

However, for all the good that had been done, the Weimar economy was over-dependent on American loans. The economic recovery did not affect everyone equally:

- factory workers' hours stayed the same while their wages rose, but not as fast as living costs
- the lower middle-class did not fully recover from the savings they lost to hyperinflation in 1923
- farmers struggled as prices fell and they did not have the money to modernise their farms and food production was not recovering as fast as industrial production.

Revision task

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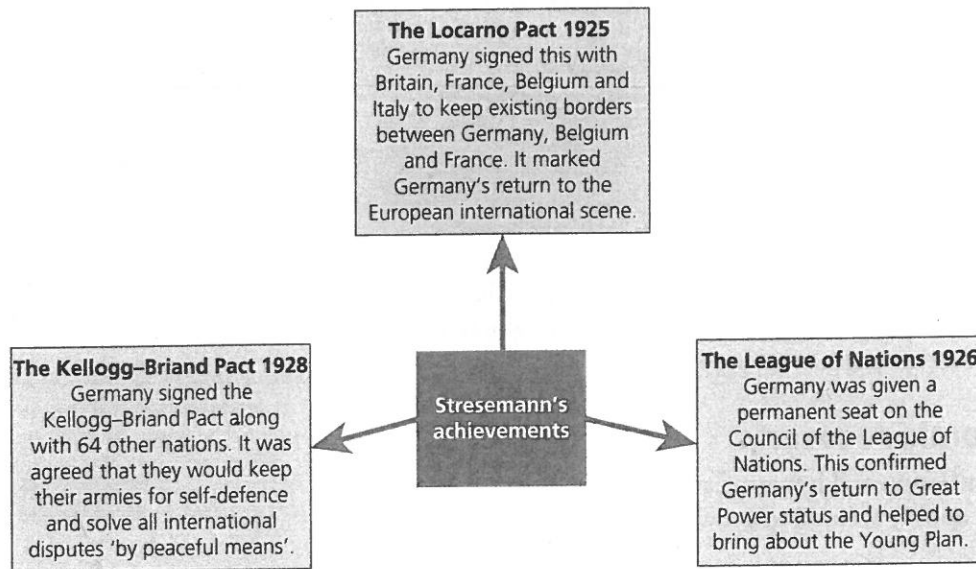
Use the information on pages 81–82 and your knowledge to complete the table below.

Action	How this helped economic recovery
Dawes Plan	
Rentmark	
Young Plan	

Improvement in relations between Germany and other countries

REVISED

Stresemann, who was Foreign Secretary from 1923 to 1929, had several achievements abroad.



As a result of Stresemann's foreign policies:

- in 1925, France withdrew from the Ruhr
- the Allies agreed to the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan
- in 1927, Allied troops withdrew from the west bank of the Rhine, five years before the original schedule of 1933.

Overall, Stresemann had played a crucial role in the recovery of the Republic, particularly through the Dawes Plan and American loans as well his successes abroad, which re-established the international position of Germany and brought closer relations with Britain and France.

Revision task

For each of these international agreements write a sentence to explain why it was good for Germany:

- Locarno Pact, 1925
- League of Nations, 1926
- Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928.

TESTED

The main political developments in Germany, 1924–29

REVISED

The period 1924 to 1929 saw greater support for the parties like the moderate **Social Democrats** that supported the Weimar Republic and generally less support for extremist groups such as the Nazis, because of the economic recovery and successes abroad. This political stability was also due to two key personalities – Stresemann and Hindenburg. Stresemann's successes abroad made him the most popular political leader of the Weimar Republic. Hindenburg, one of Germany's war leaders, was elected president in 1925 which showed that the old conservative order now accepted the Republic.

Social Democrats The moderate political party that had set up the Weimar Republic.

The main social developments in Germany, 1924–29

REVISED

The period 1924–29 is described as a 'golden age' in the Weimar Republic due to significant changes.

Improvement in the standard of living

There were improvements in wages, housing and unemployment insurance. By 1928, Germany had some of the best paid workers in Europe, but many of the middle class did not share in this increased prosperity as they had been bankrupted by inflation and found it hard to get suitable jobs

Housing

The government employed architects and planners to devise ways of reducing housing shortages. Government investment, tax breaks, land grants and low-interest loans were also used to stimulate the building of new houses and apartments. Between 1924 and 1931 more than 2 million new homes were built.

Unemployment insurance

The Unemployment Insurance Law in 1927 required workers and employees to make contributions to a national scheme for unemployment welfare. There were also benefits for war veterans, wives and dependents of the war dead, single mothers and the disabled.

The position of women

Women over 20 were given the vote and took an increasing interest in politics and guaranteed equality in education, equal opportunity in civil service appointments and equal pay in the professions. There were growing numbers of women in new areas of employment, for example the civil service, teaching or social work, as well as in shops or on the assembly line. Women also enjoyed much more freedom, socially. They went out unescorted, drank and smoked in public and were fashion conscious, often wearing relatively short skirts and make-up.

Revision task

Explain how each of these developments show that life in Germany improved between 1924 and 1929:

- political stability
- standard of Living
- housing
- unemployment insurance
- the position of women.

TESTED

Exam practice

Describe how Stresemann improved Germany's relations with foreign powers between 1923 and 1929.

Exam tip

Make sure you only include information that is directly relevant. It is good practice to start your answer using the words from the question. Try to include specific factual details such as dates, events and names of key people. Aim to cover a number of key points in some detail.

3.3 The Nazi rise to power and the end of the Weimar Republic

Key question

How and why did the Weimar Republic collapse between 1929 and 1934?

The early development of the Nazi party

REVISED

In 1919, Anton Drexler founded the German Workers Party (Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, DAP) in Munich, Bavaria. It was a right-wing, nationalistic party which stressed the ideal of a pure German people. Adolf Hitler joined in September 1919. In 1920, he was put in charge of the party's propaganda machine. In February 1920, Hitler and Drexler wrote the party's 'Twenty-Five Point Programme', which became its political manifesto. In July 1921, Hitler replaced Drexler as leader and he changed the name of the party to National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). He adopted the title Führer (leader), developed a party symbol, the swastika, and introduced the raised arm salute. Party membership increased from 1,100 members in June 1920 to 55,000 in November 1923.

In 1921, Hitler set up the Sturmabteilung (SA) which was led by Ernst Röhm. Often referred to as the 'Brownshirts' because of the colour of their uniform or the 'Stormtroopers', this armed group of mostly ex-military men were charged with protecting Nazi speakers from attacks by rival political groups.

The Munich Putsch

REVISED

The political atmosphere in the early years of Weimar was one of chaos and disruption. In this atmosphere, Hitler thought the time was right for the Nazi Party to seize power, first in the Bavarian state capital in Munich, followed by a march on Berlin. This became known as the Munich Putsch.

The Putsch failed and its leaders were arrested. The Nazi Party was banned. Hitler's trial started in February 1924 and lasted one month. It gave him national publicity. He criticised the '**November Criminals**', the Treaty of Versailles and the '**Jewish Bolsheviks**' who had betrayed Germany. While Ludendorff was let off, Hitler was found guilty of treason and sentenced to five years in Landsberg prison. He served only nine months.

November Criminals

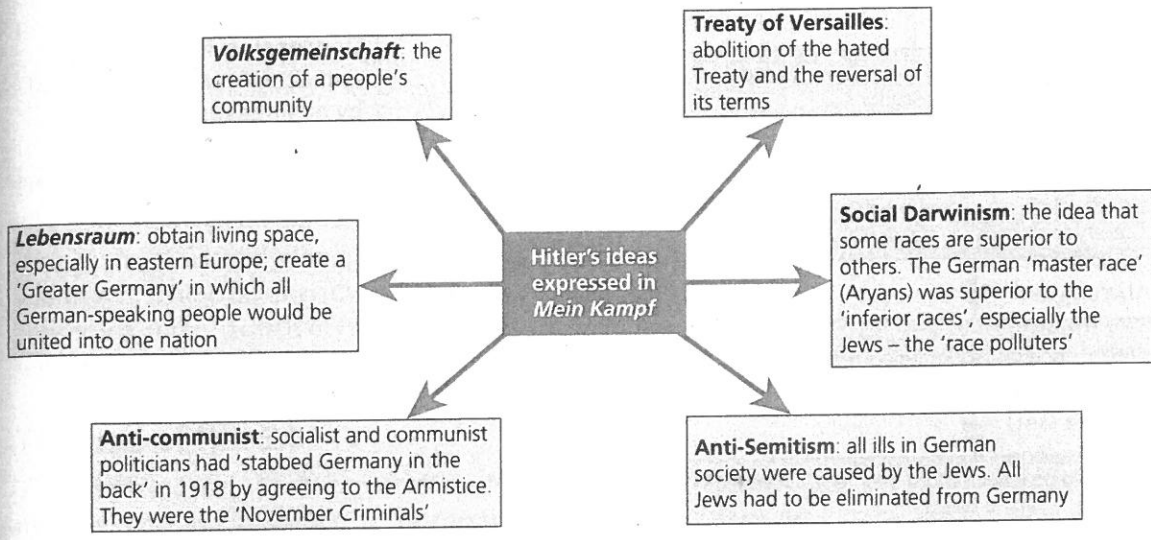
Those politicians who had agreed to the signing of the Armistice in November 1918.

Bolshevists or Bolsheviks

Followers of Lenin who carried out a Communist Revolution in Russia in February 1917.

The importance of the Munich Putsch

While in prison Hitler had time to reflect. He realised that in order to win power the Nazi Party would have to change its strategy. Instead of an armed rising, the party would have to build upon recent publicity and work towards achieving a majority in the polls and be elected into office through the ballot box. He also used the time to complete his autobiography, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which contained his political views.



Further development of the Nazi Party

Upon his release from prison, Hitler managed to have the ban on the Nazi Party lifted and he quickly set about reorganising and re-establishing his leadership.

- He created his own bodyguard, the **Schutzstaffel (SS)**.
- He introduced the **Hitler Jugend** (Hitler Youth) to attract younger members.
- He used every opportunity to attack the weaknesses of Weimar, and the Nazi Party began to attract support from all classes.
- In 1925 the Party had 27,000 members and by 1928 this had increased to over 100,000.

Despite these changes, the Nazis won only 12 seats in the Reichstag in the 1928 general election, having held 32 in 1924. The lack of success was largely due to the economic recovery brought about between 1924 and 1929 by the Chancellor and later Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, whose policies dissuaded people from voting for the extreme parties.

Anti-Semitism Hatred and persecution of the Jews.

Schutzstaffel The SS, which originally started as Hitler's private bodyguard but which grew into a powerful organisation with wide powers; they wore black uniforms.

Hitler Jugend The Hitler Youth organisation set up in 1925 to convert young Germans to Nazi ideas.

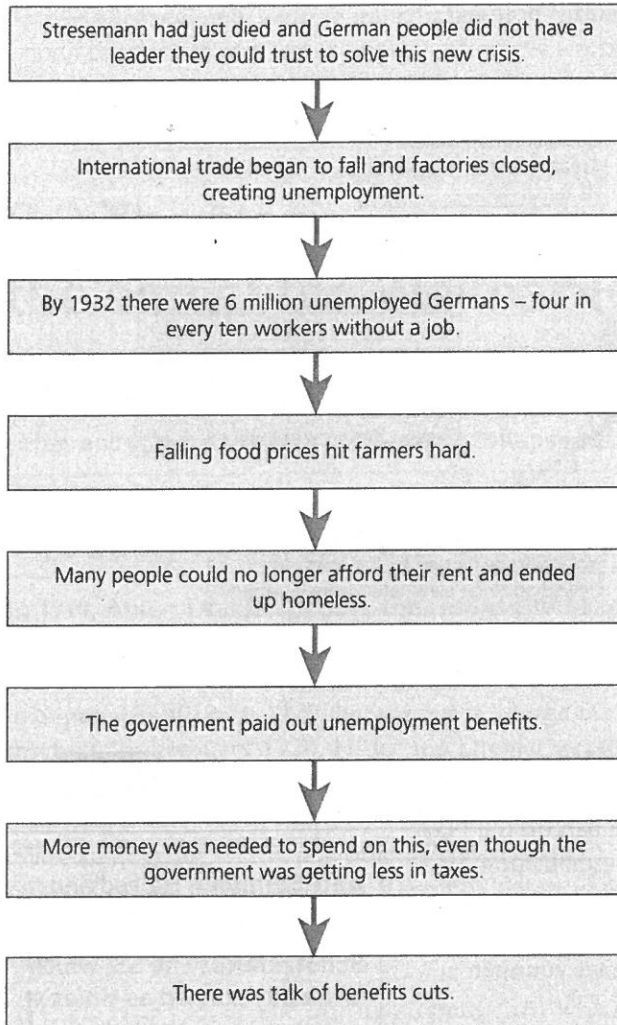
Revision tasks

- 1 Construct a timeline to show the key events in the history of the Nazi Party between January 1919 and November 1923.
- 2 Identify three ways in which the Nazi Party developed into a more powerful political force between 1924 and 1929.

The social and political impact of the Depression on the Weimar Republic

REVISED

Much of the economic recovery in Germany in the late 1920s was heavily reliant upon American loans. Following the **Wall Street Crash** in October 1929, US banks recalled their loans. **Depression** hit the German economy.



Wall Street Crash The collapse of the American stock market in October 1929 that resulted in a world-wide economic depression.

Depression A social and economic slump caused by businesses failing and rising unemployment.

Weimar politicians appeared to be doing too little too late and in desperation people increasingly began to turn to the extremist parties for solutions. Support for the communists and Nazis rose sharply in the general election of September 1930. Middle-class voters feared a communist uprising if the problems of the Depression could not be solved.

Increasing support for the Nazis

REVISED

By 1932, the Nazi Party was the largest party in the Reichstag and had attracted electoral support from all sections of German society. There were many reasons for this electoral success.

Impact of the Depression

The onset of the Depression created the political and economic conditions that caused millions of Germans to switch their voting habits and vote for the extreme parties. The moderate parties which had formed the coalitions appeared unable to tackle the worsening economic conditions. What was needed was radical action and the Nazi Party seemed to offer this.

The appeal of Hitler

Hitler was a gifted public speaker who captivated his audiences. He projected the image of being the messiah, the saviour who would solve the problems facing Germany. Using his private plane he toured the country delivering speeches to mass audiences, offering something to all sections of society. He kept his message simple, blaming scapegoats for Germany's problems, especially the Jews and communists.

The use of propaganda

Dr Josef Goebbels was in charge of the party **propaganda** machine. Through staging mass rallies, huge poster campaigns, using the radio and cinema, he ensured that the Nazi message was hammered home.

Financial support

The Nazi Party could not have financed its electoral campaigns without large-scale financial backing from big industrialists like Thyssen, Krupp and Bosch. These industrialists feared a communist takeover and were concerned at the growth of trade union power. Hitler promised to deal with both fears.

The use of the SA

The SA played a vital role in protecting Nazi speakers during election meetings and also in disrupting the meetings of their political rivals, especially the communists. These 'bully boy thugs' of the party engaged in street fights with the political opposition.

The end of parliamentary democracy: the coalition of Brüning

The harsh economic climate created severe problems for the weak coalition governments of Weimar and they soon collapsed, resulting in three general elections between 1930 and 1932. In March 1930, President Hindenburg appointed Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party as Chancellor. Brüning lacked a majority and had to rely on President Hindenburg and Article 48 to allow him to rule using presidential Decrees. From this point on, the Reichstag was used less frequently and the use of Article 48 marked the end of parliamentary democracy in Germany.

As the Depression deepened, Brüning's government became more and more unpopular. It was forced to cut unemployment benefits and Brüning became known as the 'hunger chancellor'. In May 1932 he resigned and in the general election which followed in July the Nazis polled their highest ever vote, securing 230 seats (37 per cent) making them the largest party in the Reichstag.

Propaganda Using information to persuade people to support a particular point of view.

Revision task

Write down how these developments explain why support for the Nazis grew between 1929 and 1933:

- the Depression
- the appeal of Hitler
- propaganda
- financial support
- the SA.

TESTED

REVISED

Party	Elections to the Reichstag						
	May 1924	Dec 1924	May 1928	Sept 1930	July 1932	Nov 1932	March 1933
Social Democrats	100	131	152	143	133	121	120
Centre Party	65	69	61	68	75	70	73
People's Party	44	51	45	30	7	11	2
Democrats	28	32	25	14	4	2	5
Communists	62	45	54	77	89	100	81
Nationalists	106	103	79	41	40	51	53
Nazis	32	14	12	107	230	196	288

The coalitions of von Papen and von Schleicher

REVISED

In March 1932, Hitler stood against Hindenburg in the presidential elections. He polled 13.4 million votes against 19.3 million cast for Hindenburg. Hitler was becoming a well-known figure in German politics and following the Nazi Party success in the July election he should have been appointed Chancellor. Hindenburg, however, despised him and instead appointed the Nationalist leader Franz von Papen as his Chancellor.

Unable to obtain a working majority, von Papen was forced to call another election in November when the Nazi vote fell and they obtained 196 seats, 34 fewer than July. As the Nazi Party was still the largest party in the Reichstag, Hitler again demanded the post of Chancellor and again he was denied it. This time Hindenburg turned to General von Schleicher, the Minister of Defence, and appointed him Chancellor. His attempts to form a working majority failed and in January 1933 von Papen managed to persuade Hindenburg to appoint a **Nazi-Nationalist government** with Hitler as Chancellor and von Papen as vice-Chancellor. Von Papen believed he could control Hitler as only three of the eleven cabinet seats would be held by Nazis.

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany – he had attained power by legal and democratic means.

Nazi-Nationalist government Coalition of NSDAP (Nazi Party) and DNVP (German National People's Party) after January 1933.

German chancellors and their governments, 1930–33

Bruning	March 1930–May 1932
Von Papen	May 1932–December 1932
Von Schleicher	December 1932–January 1933
Hitler–Von Papen	January 1933–March 1933

Revision task

TESTED

Construct a timeline showing political developments in Germany between March 1930 and March 1933. Mark on unemployment figures, the presidential election, chancellors and governments.

Exam practice

Study the source below and then answer the question that follows.

Source A



A Nazi Party election poster of 1924. The large figure represents a member of the German government. The small figure represents a Jewish banker.

What was the purpose of Source A?

[Use details from the source and your own knowledge and understanding of the historical context to answer the question.]

Exam tip

You need to spell out why this source was produced. Use your knowledge of this topic area when considering the content of the source and what it shows. Make use of the information provided in the caption/attribution of the source. This can supply important information such as publication date, the name of the newspaper, book or magazine. Use this information to help identify motive by explaining who the intended audience was and what the source aimed to do.

3.4 Consolidation of power, 1933–34

Key question

How did the Nazis consolidate their power between 1933 and 1934?

Between January 1933 and August 1934, Hitler turned Germany into a one-party **dictatorship**. By August 1934, the posts of Chancellor and president had been merged into a new post – Führer (leader). For the next twelve years Germany was ruled by a **totalitarian** regime known as the **Third Reich**.

Dictatorship A regime in which the leader has total power and does not tolerate any opposition.

Totalitarian A state that has a one-party political system which holds total power.

Third Reich The period of Nazi government, 1933–45.

The importance of the Reichstag fire

REVISED

When Hitler became Chancellor there were only two other Nazis in the cabinet – Wilhelm Frick and Hermann Goering. Hitler's position was not strong as the Nazi–Nationalist alliance did not have a majority in the Reichstag. Hitler therefore persuaded Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag

and call a general election for 5 March in which he hoped to increase the support for the Nazi Party. The Nazi propaganda machine helped deliver the party's message and the SA took to the streets to harass left-wing groups.

On 27 February, one week before the election, the Reichstag building was set on fire. A young Dutch communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested and charged with starting the fire. Hitler used this event to his advantage.

- He argued that the communists were planning a revolution.
- He persuaded Hindenburg to sign the 'Decree for the Protection of the People and State'.
- This gave Hitler the power to restrict free speech, limit the freedom of the press and imprison enemies of the state without trial.
- Communist and socialist newspapers were banned.

Revision task

Make a list of reasons why the Reichstag Fire was important in the Nazi's consolidation of power.

TESTED

The 1933 election and the Enabling Act

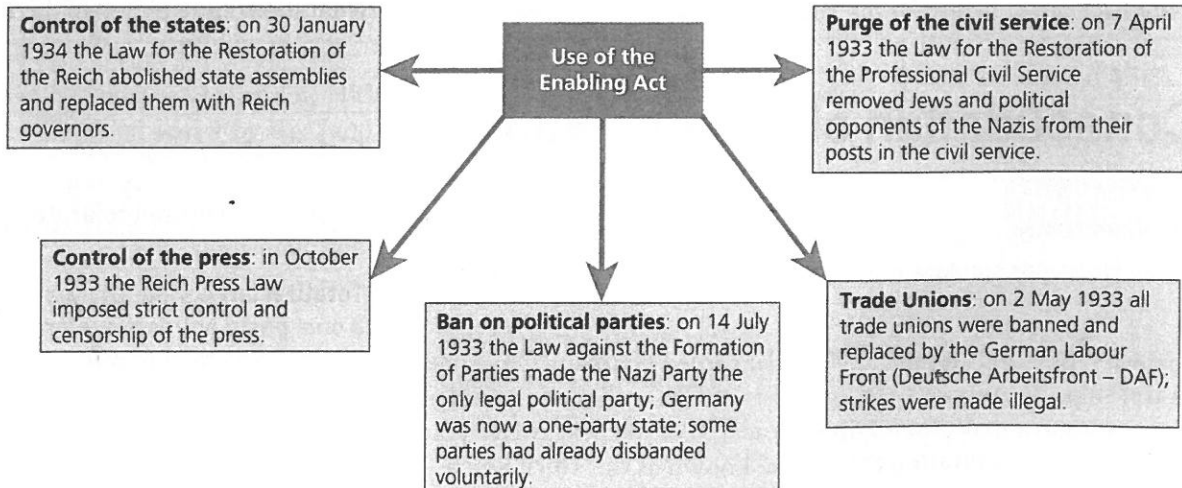
REVISED

In the election on 5 March 1933, the Nazis won 288 seats but they still lacked an overall majority. A coalition was formed with the National Party. Hitler was disappointed as he needed two-thirds of the seats to be able to change the constitution, which was necessary to secure the passing of his Enabling bill.

On the day the Enabling bill was discussed in the Kroll Opera House (the temporary home of the Reichstag), Hitler banned the communists from attending and encircled the building with SA men who prevented known opponents from entering. Absentees were counted as present and therefore in favour of the proposed bill. Promises were made by Hitler to the Catholic Centre Party to secure their votes. As a result the bill was passed, by 444 votes in favour to 94 against. Its passing marked the end of the Weimar Constitution. The Enabling Act became the 'foundation stone' of the Third Reich and it was used by Hitler to establish his dictatorship.

Through the use of the Enabling Act, Hitler was able to establish his dictatorship and impose his policy of **gleichschaltung**.

Gleichschaltung Nazi policy of forced co-ordination, bringing all social, economic and political activities under state control.



The removal of Hitler's political opponents

REVISED

With the new Enabling Act, Hitler wanted Gleichschaltung – to create a truly National Socialist state by bringing every aspect of life in Germany under Nazi control. To achieve this he got rid of any organisations who could resist this.

- Trade unions – on 2 May 1933, all trade unions were banned. The Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront – DAF) was set up to replace them. The DAF decided wages and workers could not get work without their DAF work book. Strikes were made illegal.
- Political parties – the Communist Party (KPD) had been banned after the Reichstag fire in March 1933. The Social Democratic Party had its headquarters, property and newspapers seized in May. The remaining political parties disbanded themselves voluntarily by July. On 14 July 1933 the Law Against the Formation of Parties was passed.
- State government – Germany was made up of eighteen Länder, each with its own parliament. Sometimes they refused to accept decisions made in the Reichstag. Hitler decided that the Länder were to be run by Reich governors and their parliaments were abolished in January 1934.

The Night of the Long Knives, 30 June 1934

The SA had played a key part in the growth of the Nazi Party and as a reward their leader, Ernst Röhm, now wanted to incorporate the army into the SA. Röhm also wanted more government interference in the running of the country and he began pushing for a social revolution which would do away with Germany's class structure.

Hitler now saw the SA and its leadership as an increasing threat to his power. He needed the support of the army but the generals would never agree to Röhm's demands for the SA to control them. Hitler had to make a choice between the SA and the army. He decided upon the latter and on the night of 30 June 1934 he used the SS to carry out a purge. Codenamed 'Operation Hummingbird' and known as the 'Night of the Long Knives', over 400 'enemies of the state' were arrested and shot by the SS. They included Röhm, former Chancellor von Schleicher and Bavarian Chief Minister von Kahr.

The importance of the Night of the Long Knives

The Night of the Long Knives is seen as a turning point in establishing Hitler's dictatorship:

- it eradicated would-be opponents to Hitler's rule
- it secured the support of the army
- it relegated the SA to a minor role
- it provided Himmler with the opportunity to expand the SS.

The death of Hindenburg: Hitler becomes Führer

On 2 August 1934, President Hindenburg died. Hitler seized the opportunity to combine the two posts of president and Chancellor and gave himself the new title of Führer (leader). He was now Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

That same day the officers and men of the German army were made to swear an oath of loyalty to the Führer. In a **referendum** on 19 August more than 90 per cent of votes agreed with his action. Hitler was now absolute dictator of Germany.

Revision task

Explain how Hitler got rid of:

- trade unions
- other political parties
- State government.

TESTED

REVISED

Revision task

Explain why the Night of the Long Knives was important in the Nazis' consolidation of power.

TESTED

REVISED

Referendum When people are asked to vote on important decisions about their country.

Revision tasks

TESTED

- How did each of the factors below help to increase Hitler's power and control over Germany?
 - Reichstag Fire
 - Night of the Long Knives
 - Decree for Protection of the People and State
 - Death of Hindenburg
 - Enabling Act?
- Which of these events were the most important in making Hitler dictator of Germany? Rank them in order of their importance, giving reasons for your choice.

Exam practice

Study the sources below and then answer the question that follows.

Source A

I have decided to follow the advice of my doctors and take a cure [go to a health spa] to restore my energies which have been severely strained by a painful nervous complaint. 1934 will require all the energies of every SA fighter. I recommend, therefore, to all SA leaders to begin organising leave now in June. Therefore, for some SA leaders and men, June, and for the majority of the SA, July, will be a period of complete relaxation in which they can recover their strength. I expect the SA to return on 1 August completely rested and refreshed.

An announcement made by Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA, on 7 June 1934, following a long interview with Hitler.

Source B

General Goering explained that he and Herr Himmler, who were responsible for security, had been watching for weeks, even months, and had been aware that preparations for a 'second revolution' were being made by certain ambitious SA leaders, headed by Röhm. Hitler had decided to suppress the movement with a firm hand at a suitable moment.

Part of a press conference given by Hermann Goering to justify the Night of the Long Knives. It was reported in *The Times* newspaper on 2 July 1934.

Which of the above sources is more useful to an historian studying the threat posed by the SA in the June 1934?

[You should refer to both sources in your answer and use your knowledge and understanding of the historical context.]

Exam tip

Underline key words in the question. This will enable you to focus upon what the examiner wants you to write about. In your answer you have to evaluate the usefulness of two sources to the historian studying the key issue named in the question. For each source you must determine usefulness in terms of:

- content value (what the source tells you about the key issue)
- authorship (who said it and when)
- the intended audience (why was the source produced and what was its purpose)
- the context (link the source content to the bigger picture of what was happening at that time).
- Remember to provide a reasoned judgement upon which source is the most useful and why.

3.5 Nazi economic, social and racial policies

Key question

How did Nazi economic, social and racial policy affect life in Germany?

The impact of Nazi policies on German workers

REVISED

When Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, Germany had experienced more than three years of economic depression. Hitler immediately introduced a number of measures designed to reduce unemployment, which stood at 6 million.

- **Creation of the National Labour Service Corps (RAD):** From 1935 it was compulsory for all males aged 18–25 to serve in the RAD for six months undertaking manual labour jobs. Workers lived in camps, wore uniforms and carried out military drill as well as work.
- **Public works programme:** Men were put to work on public works schemes which included the building of 7,000 km of autobahns (motorways), tree planting and the construction of hospitals, schools and houses.
- **Rearmament:** Hitler's decision to re-arm transformed German industry and created jobs. Heavy industry expanded. Coal and chemical usage doubled between 1933 and 1939, while oil, iron and steel usage trebled.
- **Control of the economy:** In 1934, Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, was made Economic Minister. He believed in **deficit spending** to create jobs and used **Mefo bills** (credit notes) to finance public spending. In 1936, Schacht was replaced by Hermann Goering as Economic Minister and he introduced the **Four-Year Plan** (1936–40). This was designed to speed up rearmament, prepare the country for war and establish the policy of **autarky** which was designed to make Germany self-sufficient, e.g. extracting oil from coal.
- **Invisible unemployment:** Unemployment fell dramatically, from 6 million in 1933 to 350,000 by 1939. However, these figures hid the true picture as they did not include Jews or women dismissed from their jobs, or opponents of the Nazi regime held in concentration camps.
- **Control of the workforce:** Hitler viewed trade unions as the breeding ground for socialism and communism. To avoid strikes and industrial unrest he banned the unions and in May 1933 replaced them with the German Labour Front (DAF). It had complete control over the discipline of workers, regulating pay and hours of work.
- **Rewarding the workforce:** To reward loyal workers, the Strength through Joy (Kraft durch Freude – KdF) organisation was set up. It aimed to improve leisure time by sponsoring subsidised leisure activities and cultural events. These included concerts, theatre visits, sporting events, weekend trips, holidays and cruises. The Beauty of Work organisation aimed to improve working conditions through the building of canteens and sports facilities. In 1938 the Volkswagen (People's Car) Scheme was introduced, allowing workers to save five marks a week to buy their own car.

Deficit spending When the government spends more money than it receives in order to expand the economy.

Mefo bills Credit notes issued by the Reichsbank and guaranteed by the government. They were used to fund rearmament.

Four-Year Plan A plan which aimed to make Germany ready for war within four years, giving priority to rearmament and autarky.

Autarky A Nazi government policy of making Germany self-sufficient with no foreign imports.

Revision task

Identify five factors which drove forward Germany's economic recovery after 1933. Rank them in order of importance.

TESTED

The Nazi's policies toward women

REVISED

Progress made by women during the Weimar period

During the Weimar period, women made substantial advances in German society. They had achieved equal voting rights with men; they had been encouraged to obtain a good education and had taken up careers in the professions, especially in the civil service, law, medicine and teaching. German women (who chose to) could go out unescorted, follow fashion, wear make-up, smoke and drink in public.

Nazi attitudes towards women

Nazi attitudes were very traditional and they introduced policies which reversed many of the gains made by women during the 1920s. The Nazis viewed men as the decision makers and political activists, while women were relegated to being responsible for the home and for bringing up children. They discouraged women from wearing make-up, trousers, high heels and from dyeing their hair.

Aryan Nazi term for a non-Jewish German; someone of supposedly 'pure' German stock.

Nazi policies aimed at women

The Three Ks	Law for the Encouragement of Marriage (1933)	Lebensborn (Life Springs) Programme (1936)
Instead of going to work women were encouraged to stick to the Three Ks (Kinder, Küche, Kirche – Children, Kitchen, Church). They were expected to give up their jobs, to get married and start a family.	This provided loans to encourage couples to marry, provided the wife left her job. Couples were allowed to keep one-quarter of the loan for each child born, up to four children. The Motherhood Cross medal was introduced to reward women with large families.	In an effort to boost the population, unmarried Aryan women were encouraged to devote a baby to the Führer' by becoming pregnant by 'racially pure' SS men.

Nazi control of education

REVISED

Hitler realised the importance of **indoctrinating** young people in Nazi beliefs. His aim was to turn them into loyal and enthusiastic supporters of the Third Reich. This was to be achieved through the control of education.

- Teachers had to belong to the Nazi Teachers' League; they had to promote Nazi ideas in the classroom and swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler.
- The curriculum was strictly controlled: 15 per cent of the timetable was devoted to physical education; for the boys the emphasis was upon preparation for the military; for the girls it was needlework and cookery to enable them to become good homemakers and mothers.
- Lessons started with pupils saluting and saying 'Heil Hitler'. Every subject was taught through the Nazi point of view – biology lessons were used to study racial theory and the importance of the 'master race'; geography lessons were used to show how Germany was surrounded by hostile neighbours.
- Textbooks were rewritten to reflect Nazi views – history textbooks contained a heavy emphasis upon German military glory and the evils of communism and the Jews who were blamed for the problems of the Depression.

Indoctrinating Making someone accept a system of thought without question.

Nazi control of the German youth

REVISED

The Nazis wanted to influence young people in school but also out of school. This was achieved through the Hitler Youth Movement which had existed since 1925. The Hitler Youth Law of 1936 made it difficult to avoid joining, blocking the promotion of parents who refused to allow their children to join. The Second Hitler Youth Law of 1939 made membership compulsory. By 1939 there were 7 million members. Baldur von Schirach was Reich Youth Leader.

There were several divisions of the Youth Movement, according to age.

Age	Boys	Girls
6-10	Pimpfen (Little Fellows)	
10-14	Jungvolk (Young Folk)	Jungmädels (Young Girls)
14-18	Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth)	Bund Deutsche Mädchen (German Girls League)

- Boys were instructed in military skills such as shooting, map reading and drill; they took part in athletics, hiking and camping.
- Girls received physical training and learned domestic skills in preparation for motherhood and marriage; their groups had less emphasis upon military training.

Attitudes to religion

REVISED

Nazi ideals were opposed to the beliefs and values of the Christian Church. Hitler could not immediately persecute Christianity as Germany was a Christian country. Protestants mostly lived in the north, while Catholics lived in the south. He set up the Ministry of Church Affairs in 1935 to weaken the hold that Catholic and Protestant Churches had on the people. The German Faith Movement was encouraged by the Nazis to replace Christian values with pagan (non-Christian) ideas. Few Germans joined it.

The Catholic Church

Despite the fact that many Catholics supported Hitler because of his opposition to Communism, Hitler saw the **Catholic Church** as a threat to his Nazi state.

- Catholics owed their first allegiance to the Pope, not to Hitler.
- Catholic schools taught children different ideas to the Nazi Party.

In July 1933, Hitler signed a concordat (agreement) with Pope Pius XI. They agreed to leave each other alone. Within a few months Hitler had broken this agreement – priests were arrested, many ended up in concentration camps; Catholic schools were abolished.

Protestant Churches

There were some Protestants who admired Hitler. They established a new Reich Church, to combine all Protestant groups under one Church. Their leader was Ludwig Müller, who became the Reich bishop in 1933. Many Protestants opposed Nazism, which they believed contradicted their Christian beliefs. They were led by Pastor Martin Niemöller. In December 1933 they set up the Pastors' Emergency League for those who opposed Hitler.

Revision task

Describe how the Nazis tried to control young people through:

- education
- the Hitler Youth.

TESTED

Revision task

How did the Protestant and Catholic Churches react differently to Nazi rule?

TESTED

Catholic Church Once the only Christian Church in Europe; the Pope is its leader.

Protestant Churches Religious groups that broke away from the Catholic Church; they do not have a single leader.

The treatment of the Jews

REVISED

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had spelled out his ideas on race. He argued that pure Germans – Aryans – formed the ‘master race’ and they were characterised by being tall, having fair hair and blue eyes. However, over time this race had been contaminated by ‘subhumans’ – the Untermenschen. In order to rebuild the ‘master race’ as a pure line, it would be necessary to introduce selective breeding, preventing anyone who did not conform to the Aryan type from having children and, in extreme cases, eliminating them. Measures were introduced to sterilise the mentally ill, the physically disabled, homosexuals, black people and gypsies. Among those groups who received widespread persecution were the Jews.

The Nazi policy of anti-Semitism

REVISED

Anti-Semitism goes back to the Middle Ages and attacks upon Jews were common in Europe in the early twentieth century, particularly in Russia. The Nazis played upon existing hatred and found a scapegoat in the Jews, blaming them for Germany’s defeat in the First World War, the hyperinflation of 1923 and the economic depression of 1929. Hitler had no master plan to eliminate Germany of its Jews and until 1939 most of the measures introduced against the Jews were unco-ordinated.

To begin with, Jews were encouraged to leave the country – in 1933 there were 550,000 Jews living in Germany, by 1939 280,000 had emigrated (including Albert Einstein who left for America in 1933). Life for German Jews got harsher as the 1930s progressed, starting with acts of public humiliation, until the Nazis eventually took away their human rights.

The persecution of German Jews, 1933–39

April 1933	Boycott of Jewish shops and businesses
April 1933	Jews banned from working in the civil service and holding positions such as teachers, doctors, dentists, judges
October 1933	Jews banned from working as journalists
May 1935	Jews banned from entering the armed forces
September 1935	The Nuremberg Laws: the Reich Law on Citizenship took away from Jews the right of German citizenship; the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour made it illegal for them to marry or to have sexual relations with Aryans
November 1936	Jews banned from using the German greeting ‘Heil Hitler’
July 1938	Jews issued with identity cards; Jewish doctors, dentists and lawyers were forbidden to treat Aryans
August 1938	Jews forced to adopt the Jewish forenames of ‘Israel’ for a man and ‘Sarah’ for a woman
October 1938	Jewish passports had to be stamped with the large red letter ‘J’
November 1938	Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass): the murder of a Nazi official in Paris by a young Polish Jew, resulted in the events of 9–10 November. In reprisal for the murder, Goebbels organised attacks on Jewish property in cities across Germany; so many windows were smashed that the event became known as the ‘Night of Broken Glass’; over 7,500 Jewish shops were destroyed, 400 synagogues burnt down and about 100 Jews were killed; over 30,000 Jews were arrested and taken to concentration camps; Jews were fined one billion Reichsmarks as compensation for the damage caused
December 1938	Forced sale of Jewish businesses
February 1939	Jews forced to hand over precious metals and jewellery
April 1939	Jews evicted from their homes and forced into ghettos

Revision task

Give five examples of how life for Jews living in Germany became more difficult after 1933.

TESTED

Ghetto Part of a city inhabited by a minority because of social and economic pressure.

Exam practice

Did Nazi rule benefit all Germans living in Germany between 1933 and 1939? Use your own knowledge and understanding of the issue to support your answer.

Exam tip

You need to develop a two-sided answer which has balance and good support. Start by discussing the key issue identified in the question. Use your knowledge to explain why this factor is important. You then need to consider the counter-argument – you need to cover a range of 'other factors'. Support each factor with relevant factual detail. Conclude your answer with a link back to the question and provide a judgement – how important is the factor identified in the question when compared against other factors? Check over your answer for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

3.6 Terror and persuasion

Key question

What methods did the Nazis use to control Germany?

The Nazi police state

REVISED

By 1934 Germany was a police state. The key organs for ensuring conformity were the SS and the Gestapo.

The SS (Schutzstaffel)

Formed in 1925 as a bodyguard for Hitler, they were part of the SA. They wore black uniforms and after 1929 they were led by Heinrich Himmler. After the Night of the Long Knives (see page 91), the SS replaced the SA as the main security force, responsible for the removal of all opposition to the Nazis within Germany. SS officers had to be pure Aryans. By 1934 the SS numbered 50,000.

The Gestapo (Secret State Police)

Set up by Goering in 1933, in 1936 they came under the control of the SS and were led by Himmler's deputy, Reinhard Heydrich. The Gestapo became feared as they could arrest and imprison suspected 'enemies of the state' without trial. Many of those arrested ended up in **concentration camps**. By 1939, 160,000 people were under arrest for political crimes.

Control of the legal system

REVISED

The Nazis also aimed to control the courts and the legal system.

- Judges and lawyers had to belong to the National Socialist League for the Maintenance of Law and Order which forced them to accept Nazi policy. Those who refused were sacked.
- In October 1933, the German Lawyers Front was established and its 10,000 members swore an oath of loyalty to the Führer.

Revision task

What role did the following groups play in Nazi Germany?

- the SS
- the Gestapo

TESTED

Concentration camp A
prison camp for opponents
of the Nazi regime.

- In 1934 a new People's Court was set up to try enemies of the state. By 1939 it had sentenced over 500 people to death. The number of crimes punishable by death rose from three in 1933 to 46 in 1943. They included such crimes as listening to a foreign radio station.

Goebbels and propaganda

REVISED

In March 1934, the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda was set up under Dr Josef Goebbels. The aim of the organisation was to control the thoughts, beliefs and opinions of the German people. It attempted to brainwash them through a variety of methods.

- Cinema – all films had to be given pro-Nazi story lines, for example, *Hitlerjunge Quex*, about a boy who runs away from a communist family to join the Hitler Youth; film plots had to be shown to Goebbels before going into production; official newsreels which glorified Hitler and Nazi achievements were shown with every film.
- Rallies – an annual mass rally of over 100,000 was staged in September at Nuremberg to showcase the Nazi regime; floodlights, stirring music, flags, banners and marching columns, followed by a speech by Hitler, created an atmosphere of frenzy; spectacular parades were held on other special occasions such as Hitler's birthday in April.
- Radio – all radio stations were placed under Nazi control; cheap mass-produced radios were sold; radio sets were placed in cafés and factories and loudspeakers broadcast programmes in the streets; by 1939, 70 per cent of German families owned a radio.
- Posters – great use was made of posters to put across the Nazi message, for example 'Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer' – 'One State, One People, One Leader' about Hitler's leadership.

Revision task

Explain the purpose of propaganda in Nazi Germany.

TESTED

Censorship of newspapers and the arts

REVISED

Goebbels set up the Reich Chamber of Culture. All musicians, writers and actors had to be members.

- Newspapers – all newspapers were subject to strict censorship and editors were told what they could print; the German people only read what the Nazis wanted them to know; by 1935 the Nazis had closed down thousands of magazines and newspapers; the German Press Agency told editors what foreign stories to print.
- Books – all books were censored and those published had to put across the Nazi message; over 2,500 writers were banned; in May 1933 Goebbels organised the burning of banned books through mass bonfires; authors like Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Mann went into exile.
- Music – Hitler hated modern music, jazz in particular; he preferred German folk music and the classical music of German composers Bach, Beethoven and Wagner.
- Theatre – this was meant to focus on German history and political drama; cheap tickets encouraged people to see Nazi-inspired plays.
- Architecture – Hitler favoured the 'monumental' style of architecture and liked the ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans as they had not been influenced by the Jews.
- Art – Hitler hated modern art and preferred more heroic imagery that promoted Nazi ideals, for example, women as housewives and mothers.

Revision task

Use the information in this section to explain how each of the following factors helped the Nazis gain control over the German people:

- use of the SS and Gestapo
- control of the legal system
- control over central government
- propaganda
- censorship.

TESTED

Exam practice

Study the source below and then answer the question that follows.

Source A



German citizens searched in the street by the Gestapo and armed uniformed police

Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the role of the Gestapo.

Exam tip

Underline key words in the question. This will enable you to focus upon what the examiner wants you to write about. Describe what you can see or read in the source, remembering to make use of the information provided in the caption of a visual source. Link this information to your knowledge of this period. Aim to make at least two developed points.

3.7 Hitler's foreign policy

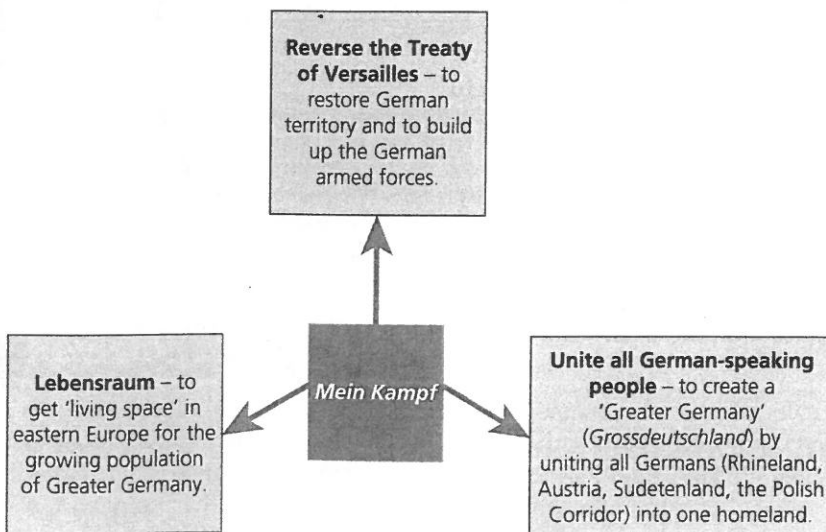
Key question

What factors led to the outbreak of war in 1939?

Hitler's foreign policy aims

REVISED

Part of Hitler's popularity was down to his promise to make Germany great again after the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. He wrote ideas about how to achieve this in *Mein Kampf* (1924).



How did Hitler plan to achieve this? In November 1937 Hitler told his military chief in Berlin that, 'Germany's problem could only be solved by the use of force' – in other words, by war.

Rearmament and conscription

REVISED

When Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, there were a number of circumstances that made it easier for him to break the Treaty of Versailles and begin building up Germany's armed forces.

- After the recent world economic depression, countries were more concerned about focusing on their internal problems than issues abroad.
- The **League of Nations** was seen as weak after its failure to stop the Japanese in Manchuria.
- The British people and politicians felt that Germany had been harshly dealt with by the Treaty of Versailles.

League of Nations

International body established after the First World War in order to maintain peace.

The Disarmament Conference

REVISED

At the Disarmament Conference in 1932, countries met to discuss ways in which they might disarm to prevent war in future. The Conference failed because of differences between France and Germany. When they argued about all countries disarming equally, Hitler withdrew from the Conference. Hitler could now say he wanted to re-arm to make Germany equal with other countries, for self-defence against the growing armies of France and the Soviet Union. In October 1933, he withdrew Germany's membership of the League of Nations.

Hitler said he would set up a new Air Ministry to train pilots and build 1,000 aircraft. Nothing was done to stop Germany. In March 1935, Hitler announced that he was breaking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which dealt with **disarmament**. The army, navy and airforce were all built up openly. **Conscription** was introduced. The army was increased from 100,000 in 1933 to 1,400,000 in 1939. In 1933, 3.5 billion marks was spent on producing tanks, aircraft and ships. By 1939 this figure had increased to 26 billion marks.

Rearmament and conscription made Hitler popular within Germany. Jobs were created and people could see that Germany was beginning to be seen as a strong nation once again.

Disarmament When countries reduce the number of weapons they have.

Conscription Compulsory military service.

Rearmament When countries build up the number of weapons they have.

Stresa Front, April 1935

REVISED

German rearmament alarmed the other European powers. To restrict German rearmament, France, Italy and Britain met at Stresa, a town in Italy. They formally protested about Hitler's plans. This show of unity, known as the Stresa Front, did not last long because of:

- the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of June 1935, which said Germany was allowed to build a fleet up to 35 per cent of the size of Britain's. This encouraged Hitler to break the Treaty of Versailles further
- Anglo-French reactions to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935. This destroyed co-operation between France, Italy and Britain.

Revision task

What steps did Hitler take to re-arm Germany in the 1930s?

TESTED

Hitler's attempts to unify German-speaking peoples

REVISED

Section 3 Germany in transition, c.1919–1939

STEP 1: Return of the Saarland, January 1935

- In 1935 the Saar, which had been taken from Germany in the Treaty of Versailles and run by the League of Nations since 1920, voted by 477,000 to 48,000 to rejoin Germany.

STEP 2: Re-militarising the Rhineland, 1936

- The Rhineland had been demilitarised under the Treaty of Versailles. Allied troops were withdrawn from the Rhineland in 1935 and in the following March Hitler re-occupied it. This was a risk.
- Hitler was convinced that neither Britain nor France would stop him. It convinced Hitler that Britain and France were unlikely to act against further aggression.
- A referendum was held asking the German people to approve the re-occupation and 98.8 per cent voted in favour.

STEP 3: Anschluss, 1938

- In 1934, there was a failed attempt to bring about Anschluss with Austria. The Austrian Nazi Party killed the Austrian chancellor, Dollfuss, after he banned the Nazi Party. Hitler did not support them because he was afraid that Mussolini would use the Italian Army to stop him.
- Hitler was in a much stronger position in 1938 after re-armament. Mussolini was now on his side. Hitler encouraged the Nazi Party in Austria to protest, demanding union with Germany.
- Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg decided to allow the Austrians to vote on this; 99.75 per cent of Austrians voted in favour of Anschluss.
- Mussolini did not protest.
- Britain, France and the League did protest but took no further action as they did not have the armed forces to stop the Nazis. No one in Europe wanted a repeat of the First World War.

STEP 4: The Sudetenland Crisis, 1938

- The Sudetenland was a part of Czechoslovakia and contained 3 million German speaking people, as well as three-quarters of Czechoslovakia's industry and important armament factories.
- Hitler ordered the Sudeten Nazi Party to stir up trouble in the area. German newspapers published reports of atrocities committed against Sudeten Germans by Czech officials.
- Because of the 'crisis' Hitler said he would support the Sudeten Germans with military force. It would leave Czechoslovakia defenceless against a German attack.
- Four leaders met at Munich in Germany in September 1938 – Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and the French Prime Minister, Daladier. Czechoslovakia and the USSR were not invited.
- They agreed that the Sudetenland would be transferred to Germany. Czechoslovakia's new frontiers would be guaranteed by the four powers.
- Chamberlain also met Hitler alone and they agreed an Anglo-German Declaration, promising never to go to war with each other again. They would settle all disputes between the two countries by talks.
- Britain and France were relieved that war had been avoided but Hitler was convinced that no one would now stop him when he moved on Czechoslovakia and Poland.

STEP 5: The takeover of Czechoslovakia, 1939

- In March 1939, Hitler put pressure on the Czech leader, Hacha, threatening invasion.
- German troops were invited in to restore order, even though there was no disorder. Hitler claimed he had not broken any international laws by securing control of Czechoslovakia even though the Czechs were not Germans.
- The Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia became German provinces. Slovakia became a republic but was controlled by Germany.
- Britain and France ended their policy of **appeasement** and agreed that they had to stop further German aggression.

STEP 6: Danzig and the Polish Corridor, 1939

- Danzig and the Polish Corridor had been taken from Germany at the end of the First World War.
- The Polish Corridor was created to allow Poland access to the Baltic Sea and Danzig was controlled by the League of Nations. Britain had guaranteed Poland's borders.
- Hitler began to make preparations for the invasion of Poland.
- The date for the invasion was set for 1 September 1939.

Revision task

TESTED

Put these steps in Hitler's attempts to unify German-speaking peoples in order of their importance to Hitler's foreign policy and explain your choice:

- re-militarising the Rhineland
- Anschluss with Austria
- Sudetenland Crisis
- invasion of Poland.

Anschluss Union between Germany and Austria.

Appeasement Trying to avoid conflict, in this case allowing Hitler to take over other countries to avoid a future war.

Alliances and agreements between Germany and other countries

REVISED

Non-aggression pact with Poland, 1934

In the **non-aggression** pact with Poland in January 1934, Hitler promised to accept the borders of Poland and encouraged trade. The pact was to last ten years and meant Hitler no longer feared an attack from Poland.

Non-aggression Agreeing not to attack each other.

Comintern The international organisation set up to spread communism around the world.

Rome–Berlin Axis, 1936

In October 1936, Italy and Germany signed the Rome–Berlin Axis. They agreed to follow a common foreign policy and stop the spread of communism in Europe. Mussolini was keen on closer relations with Germany after Anglo–French opposition to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

Anti-Comintern Pact, 1936

In November 1936, Hitler signed a treaty with Japan, called the **Anti-Comintern** Pact. Mussolini joined in November 1937. Their aim was to limit communist influence around the world. It resulted in closer relations between Germany, Japan and Italy.

Pact of Steel, 1939

In May 1939, Hitler and Mussolini formed the Pact of Steel, a full military alliance. They agreed to assist each other in the event of war and would plan operations together. There would be closer economic co-operation between them.

Revision task

Draw a timeline from 1933 to 1939 and record on it all the main events mentioned in Section 3.7 on Nazi foreign policy in the 1930s. Make a list of any connections you can find between agreements made with other countries and Germany's aggressive actions towards other countries.

TESTED

Nazi–Soviet Pact, 1939

Hitler wanted to destroy Poland, not just take back Germany's lost land. He needed the co-operation of the Soviet Union. Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister, and Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, signed the Nazi–Soviet Pact in August 1939. The public terms of the pact included promising not to support attacks on each other. In secret they agreed to divide Poland and the Soviet Union was to be allowed to occupy the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It meant Hitler could easily invade Poland without worrying about the Soviet Union stopping him.

The outbreak of the Second World War in Europe

REVISED

On 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland. The British and French governments gave Hitler an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of all troops from Poland. Hitler did not reply and on 3 September, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Exam practice

Study Sources A and B. Which of the sources is more useful to an historian studying Hitler's foreign policy aims?

Source A

We turn our eyes towards the lands of the east ... When we speak of new territory in Europe today, we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to her. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way for us here. Colonisation of the eastern frontiers is of extreme importance. It will be the duty of Germany's foreign policy to provide large living spaces for the nourishment and settlement of the growing population of Germany.

From Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, published in 1924

Source B

Germany is at any time willing to undertake further disarmament ... if all other nations are ready ... to do the same. Germany would also be perfectly ready to disband her entire military forces and destroy the small amount of arms remaining to her if the other countries will do the same thing with equal thoroughness.

From a speech by Hitler to the Reichstag, May 1933

Exam tip

Underline key words in the question. This will enable you to focus upon what the examiner wants you to write about. In your answer you have to evaluate the usefulness of two sources to the historian studying the key issue named in the question. For each source you must determine usefulness in terms of:

- content value (what the source tells you about the key issue)
- authorship (who said it and when)
- the intended audience (why was the source produced and what was its purpose)
- the context (link the source content to the bigger picture of what was happening at that time).

Remember to provide a reasoned judgement upon which source is the most useful and why.