

Option 31: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39

Key topic 1: The Weimar Republic 1918–29

1 The origins of the Republic, 1918–19

- The legacy of the First World War. The abdication of the Kaiser, the armistice and revolution, 1918–19.
- The setting up of the Weimar Republic. The strengths and weaknesses of the new Constitution.

2 The early challenges to the Weimar Republic, 1919–23

- Reasons for the early unpopularity of the Republic, including the ‘stab in the back’ theory and the key terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Challenges to the Republic from Left and Right: Spartacists, Freikorps, the Kapp Putsch.
- The challenges of 1923: hyperinflation; the reasons for, and effects of, the French occupation of the Ruhr.

3 The recovery of the Republic, 1924–29

- Reasons for economic recovery, including the work of Stresemann, the Rentenmark, the Dawes and Young Plans and American loans and investment.
- The impact on domestic policies of Stresemann’s achievements abroad: the Locarno Pact, joining the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

4 Changes in society, 1924–29

- Changes in the standard of living, including wages, housing, unemployment insurance.
- Changes in the position of women in work, politics and leisure.
- Cultural changes: developments in architecture, art and the cinema.

Key topic 2: Hitler’s rise to power, 1919–33

1 Early development of the Nazi Party, 1920–22

- Hitler’s early career: joining the German Workers’ Party and setting

up the Nazi Party, 1919–20.

- The early growth and features of the Party. The Twenty-Five Point Programme. The role of the SA.

2 The Munich Putsch and the lean years, 1923–29

- The reasons for, events and consequences of the Munich Putsch.
- Reasons for limited support for the Nazi Party, 1924–28. Party reorganisation and Mein Kampf. The Bamberg Conference of 1926.

3 The growth in support for the Nazis, 1929–32

- The growth of unemployment – its causes and impact. The failure of successive Weimar governments to deal with unemployment from 1929 to January 1933. The growth of support for the Communist Party.
- Reasons for the growth in support for the Nazi Party, including the appeal of Hitler and the Nazis, the effects of propaganda and the work of the SA.

4 How Hitler became Chancellor, 1932–33

- Political developments in 1932. The roles of Hindenburg, Brüning, von Papen and von Schleicher.
- The part played by Hindenburg and von Papen in Hitler becoming Chancellor in 1933.

Key topic 3: Nazi control and dictatorship, 1933–39

1 The creation of a dictatorship, 1933–34

- The Reichstag Fire. The Enabling Act and the banning of other parties and trade unions.
- The threat from Röhm and the SA, the Night of the Long Knives and the death of von Hindenburg. Hitler becomes Führer, the army and oath of allegiance.

2 The police state

- The role of the Gestapo, the SS, the SD and concentration camps.
- Nazi control of the legal system, judges and law courts.

- Nazi policies towards the Catholic and Protestant Churches, including the Reich Church and the Concordat.

3 Controlling and influencing attitudes

- Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda: censorship, Nazi use of media, rallies and sport, including the Berlin Olympics (1936).
- Nazi control of culture and the arts, including art, architecture, literature and film.

4 Opposition, resistance and, conformity

- The extent of support for the Nazi regime.
- Opposition from the Churches, including the role of Pastor Niemöller.
- Opposition from the young, including the Swing Youth and the Edelweiss Pirates.

Key topic 4: Life in Nazi Germany, 1933–39

1 Nazi policies towards women

- Nazi views on women and the family.
- Nazi policies towards women, including marriage and family, employment and appearance.

2 Nazi policies towards the young

- Nazi aims and policies towards the young. The Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens.
- Nazi control of the young through education, including the curriculum and teachers.

3 Employment and living standards

- Nazi policies to reduce unemployment, including labour service, autobahns, rearmament and invisible unemployment.
- Changes in the standard of living, especially of German workers.

The Labour Front, Strength Through Joy, Beauty of Labour.

4 The persecution of minorities

- Nazi racial beliefs and policies and the treatment of minorities: Slavs, 'gypsies', homosexuals and those with disabilities.

- The persecution of the Jews, including the boycott of Jewish shops and businesses (1933), the Nuremberg Laws and Kristallnacht