

GERMANY IN TRANSITION, 1919-1939

There are seven key issues to learn:

1. What challenges were faced by the Weimar Republic from 1919-1923?
2. Why were the Stresemann years considered a 'golden age'?
3. How and why did the Weimar Republic collapse between 1929 and 1933?
4. How did the Nazis consolidate their power between 1933 and 1934?
5. How did Nazi economic, social and racial policy affect life in Germany?
6. What methods did the Nazis use to control Germany?
7. What factors led to the outbreak of war in 1939?

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

- ★ The Weimar Republic was Germany's new democratic government after WW1. Faced many problems in the first few years of power.
- ★ Following Germany's surrender, many people were unhappy and disillusioned.
- ★ The terms of the Versailles Treaty were very harsh. Germans felt betrayed, bitter and desperate for revenge.
- ★ Weimar faced challenges to its power: Spartacist Uprising, Kapp Putsch, Munich Putsch, the Ruhr Crisis
- ★ Hyperinflation

Key words

Weimar Republic Democracy Coalition Treaty Reparations KPD
Spartacists Communists Putsch Kapp Ruhr Passive resistance
Hyperinflation

2. Weimar recovers! Was the period 1924 to 1929 a 'golden age'?

- ★ The economy recovered: Dawes Plan; a new currency called the Rentenmark; the Young Plan; too dependent on US loans?
- ★ A number of successes abroad: the Locarno Pact; the League of Nations; the Kellogg-Briand Pact; the role of Stresemann.
- ★ Political developments: support for the moderate parties; lack of support for the extremist parties.
- ★ Social developments: improved standard of living (housing, wages, unemployment insurance); the status of women improved; cultural changes

Key words

Dawes Plan Recovery Locarno League of Nations Kellogg-Briand
Stresemann

3. How and why did the Weimar republic collapse between 1929 and 1933?

- ★ The impact of the Great Depression: why the Wall St Crash impacted upon Germany; unemployment; the government's response; increasing fear of communism
- ★ Rise of the Nazis: main ideas in the early years, especially the 25-point programme; the SA; the Munich Putsch
- ★ The appeal of Hitler and the Nazis after 1929: the use of propaganda; increased support for the Nazis; the role of the SA; financial support for the Nazis; Hitler's appeal
- ★ Political developments of 1932-33 which led to Hitler being appointed chancellor: reasons why Hitler was appointed chancellor, and in particular the roles of von Papen and Hindenburg

Key words

SA Putsch Volksgemeinschaft Depression Unemployment Propaganda
Industrialists Political Scheming Von Papen Hindenburg Von Schleicher
Chancellor

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

- ★ Consider the reasons why Hitler was able to establish a dictatorship: the Reichstag Fire; the Enabling Act; the removal of opposition; the Night of the Long Knives; Hitler becomes Fuhrer.

Key words

Reichstag Fire Communist Censorship Trade Unions Gleichschaltung SS
SA Ernst Rohm Army Fuhrer

5. How did Nazi economic, social and racial policies affect life in Germany?

- ★ Policies to reduce unemployment: RAD; job creation schemes; invisible unemployment; rearmament;
- ★ Policies towards workers: DAF; Strength through Joy (KdF)
- ★ The changing role of women: Nazi views on women; marriage and family; work; appearance
- ★ Control of the young: Hitler Youth; League of German Maidens
- ★ Treatment of Jews: selective breeding; education; boycott; Nuremberg Laws; the Olympics; Kristallnacht and its aftermath

Key words

RAD	Autobahns	Conscription	DAF	Trade Unions	KdF	Aryan
Indoctrination	Compulsory	Subhumans	Master Race	Anti-Semitism		
Persecution	Boycott	Kristallnacht	Ghettos			

6. What methods did the Nazis use to control Germany?

- ★ The setting up of a police state: the SS and the Gestapo; concentration camps;
- ★ Control of the legal system: removal of some judges; a People's Court;
- ★ The use of propaganda: the role of Goebbels; radio; cinema; rallies; posters; books
- ★ Censorship: newspapers; music; theatre; art; architecture

Key words

SS	Gestapo	Himmler	Concentration Camps	Goebbels	Propaganda
Radio	Cinema	Rallies	Nuremberg	Posters	Books
Newspapers	Music	Art	Architecture	Theatre	Censorship

7. What factors led to the outbreak of war in 1939?

- ★ Hitler's foreign policy aims: reverse the Treaty of Versailles; unite all German-speaking people; destroy communism; lebensraum; Anschluss
- ★ Hitler's policies: the Disarmament Conference; Non-aggression pact with Poland; return of the Saarland; rearmament and conscription;
- ★ The invasion of the Rhineland and its impact
- ★ Alliances in 1936-37: Rome-Berlin Axis; Anti-Comintern Pact
- ★ Anschluss 1938 and its impact
- ★ The Sudetenland Crisis 1938: aims; Munich Conference; invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia; Pact of Steel
- ★ Nazi-Soviet Pact and the start of war: agreement with Stalin; invasion of Poland

Key words

Communism	Anschluss	Lebensraum	Disarmament	Pact	Plebiscite
Rearmament	Conscription	Rhineland	Appeasement	Sudetenland	Munich
Czechoslovakia	Stalin	Poland	Blitzkrieg		

There are five different types of questions on this paper. You must answer **ALL** of them.

Question 1 (5 marks)

You will be asked to analyse an historical source and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding by describing the key feature in the source.

Tips:

1. Underline key words in the question and focus on these. This is what the examiner wants you to write about.
2. Describe what you can see or read in the source, and remember to make use of the information provided in the caption of a visual source.
3. Link this to your knowledge of this issue.
4. Aim to make at least two developed points

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

In the photograph a German woman is about to burn a pile of bank notes so she can have fuel for her cooker. This demonstrates the effects of hyperinflation, as it suggests the money was worthless. This is confirmed by the caption, which tells me that it would cost more to buy a pile of firewood in 1923 than it would to burn the bank notes. ***This part of the answer describes***

what can be seen in the source, as well as remembering to make use of the information provided in the caption.

Inflation had been rising sharply in Germany in the early 1920s, and it reached a peak in 1923. The German mark lost all value, prices kept on rising and people lost their savings overnight. People began trading with items rather than buying them with money. This source shows how hard life had become very hard for people living in Germany in 1923. ***This shows use of knowledge to expand on what has been said about the source. It provides context and specific detail.***

Question 2 (8 marks)

You have to show knowledge and understanding by explaining the purpose behind a source i.e. explain why it was produced.

Tips:

1. You must state clearly why this source was produced
2. Use your knowledge of this topic when looking at the content of the source
3. Make use of the information provided in the caption. This can give you important information, such as date, title of the publication
4. Use this information to identify who was the intended audience and what the source aimed to do.

Source C shows an election poster produced by the Nazi Party during the 1924 election campaign. The main purpose of the source was to attract votes. It tried to do this by attacking the other parties and making negative comments about them. ***Picks out key details from the caption and from what can be seen/read in the source.***

The source shows a large man who represents the German government. He has his hands tied, meaning he is unable to operate freely. There is a chain around his neck with the label 'Dawes

Plan' attached to it. This plan limited the German economy to ensure reparation payments were made on time. Riding on top of the government figure is a smaller man holding a whip and a cane representing a rich Jewish banker. This shows the Nazi view that Jews were really in control of Germany and they were responsible for all the country's problems. **Uses knowledge to develop the main message of the source. Picks out key details and links these to what was happening at the time. This provides context.**

The poster was produced when the Nazi Party was attempting to break into German politics. The Nazis used shock tactics like racism to win votes. This poster suggests the Jews were a major problem, and that the Nazis could protect Germany from such threats. Therefore, Germans should vote for the Nazi Party. **Addresses the key issue, and gives a reason why the poster was produced at that time.**

Question 3 (10 marks)

You must explain **why** two interpretations (points of view) put forward by historians differ

Tips:

1. Underline key terms in the question. This means you will focus on what the examiner wants you to write about.
2. Begin by dealing with the first interpretation
 - What is the message?
 - Does this message support or contradict the main focus of the question?
 - Develop the argument in the interpretation by bringing in your own knowledge.
3. Repeat this process for Interpretation 2

Do the interpretations support the view that the Nazis came to power due to political weakness within the Weimar Republic? (in your answer you should refer to how and why the interpretations differ. Use your knowledge and understanding of the wider historical debate over the issue to reach a well-supported judgement.)

Interpretation 1: The American historian William L. Shirer writing in his book 'The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich', published in 1959.

The weaknesses of the Weimar regime were obvious. There were too many political parties, and they were unable to form a lasting majority in the Reichstag that could back a stable government. By 1932 political power was concentrated in the hands of a senile President and in those of a few shallow, ambitious men around him. Hitler saw this clearly, and it suited his purposes.

Interpretation 2: C. L. Holtfrerich, a specialist historian on German history writing in a book *Weimar: Why Did German Democracy Fail?*, published in 1990.

Conflict was going on throughout the lifetime of the Weimar Republic. Yet Nazism was not then successful. The Nazi rise to power was essentially linked to the Great Depression which was a world-wide phenomenon and had little to do with the domestic conflict.

Interpretation 1 clearly supports the view that the Nazis came to power due to political weaknesses within the Weimar Republic. The historian claims that one of the major weaknesses was that the political system suffered from there being too many political parties competing for votes. **Identifies whether Interpretation 1 supports or contradicts the focus of the question.**

This, together with the system of proportional representation, meant it was difficult for any one party to achieve a majority in an election. This resulted in coalition government and the various parties which made up the government often failed to agree which then triggered another election. There was a lack of political stability, a situation made worse by the fact that President Hindenburg was old and ineffective. There was also a great deal of political scheming to try to persuade Hindenburg to appoint the leaders of the various parties as the next chancellor. **Explains and develops the main message of the interpretation.**

The author of Interpretation 1 is an American journalist and historian who produced his study on the rise and fall of the Nazis. It was produced in 1959, so the author would be able to write freely and not be held back by censorship. The book is not a detailed study of the Weimar period and just refers to it in the context of Hitler's rise to power. The focus of the book is the Nazi Party, not wider events. **Considers the author, date and intended audience.**

Interpretation 2 is less supportive of the view provided in the question, and suggests it was outside factors, the impact of the Wall St Crash and the onset of the Great Depression that explains why the Nazis came to power in 1933. **This describes how Interpretation 2 contradicts the question.**

The author suggests that the Weimar Republic had experienced political and economic problems throughout its lifetime, and during much of the period the Nazis had remained a small party, with very little support. What changed the fortunes of the Nazi Party was the impact of the Depression, such as unemployment and poverty. **Develops the main message of the interpretation.**

Interpretation 2 is a more detailed study of this period and the title suggests it concentrates in some depth on the period in question. The author seems to suggest that no world depression would have meant no electoral success for the Nazis. The historian is writing in a specialist book which examines in detail why Weimar democracy failed, so this makes its view more likely to be accurate. **Considers the author and type of publication.**

Both interpretations provide reasons to help explain why the Nazis came to power in 1933. Interpretation 1 confirms that it was due to political weakness at home, while Interpretation 2 looks at the bigger picture. All these events suited the Nazis and helped them win votes. Both interpretations have their merits. ***Provides a reasoned judgement that addresses the question.***

Question 4 (11 marks)

You must show knowledge and understanding in order to provide a judgement about the usefulness of two sources.

Tips:

1. Underline key words in the question. This means you will focus on what the examiner wants you to write about.
2. For each source you must determine the usefulness in terms of:
 - ★ Content (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)
 - ★ Provide a reasoned judgement. Which source is the most useful and why?

Which of the following sources is more useful to an historian studying the threat posed by the SA in June 1934? (You should refer to both sources in your answer and use your knowledge and understanding of the historical context)

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

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.

Source B: 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.

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 Rohm. Hitler had decided to suppress the movement with a firm hand at a suitable moment.

Both sources are of some use. This supposed threat resulted in the Night of the Long Knives on 30 June 1934, during which the leaders of the SA were arrested and executed, having been accused of plotting to overthrow Hitler. ***Provides an initial judgement, supported by contextual knowledge.***

Source A is useful because it suggests that there was no real threat posed by the SA in June 1934. It gives the impression that the opposite was true as Rohm was announcing that the men of the SA were to go on holiday during June and July, not returning to work until 1 August. Rohm claims that he was following medical advice and he was going to the time off to relax. There is no indication that the SA was planning to challenge Hitler's leadership. He even suggests that he has Hitler's approval to send the men on holiday. These are the words of the SA leader, so must be seen as providing an accurate account of how the SA felt at this time. The source is therefore useful and it clearly gives no indication that Rohm was unhappy with Hitler. ***Evaluates the usefulness in terms of content, context and author.***

Source B is useful because it provides a very contrasting view of events during late June 1934. It suggests that the Nazi leadership of Goering and Himmler was becoming increasingly concerned about the threat posed by Rohm. They were able to convince Hitler that Rohm was planning a 'second revolution' to overthrow him. They pressed Hitler to take action before it was too late. The result was the ordering of the Night of the Long Knives. In Source B Goering is trying to justify the action taken by Hitler against the SA leadership. It was presented during a press conference held shortly after the event. He explains that Hitler was left with no choice but to take action. The source is useful because it provides the reasons the Nazis gave to the public as to why they did what they did. It was reported in a British newspaper, which would be accurate in recording what was said during the press conference. ***Evaluates the usefulness in terms of content, context and author.***

Both sources are useful. Source A contains a widely held belief that the SA did not want power, but Source B is probably more useful because it shows us how the Nazis believed there was a very real threat to Hitler's leadership which had to be eliminated. ***A reasoned judgement.***

Question 5 (16+3)

In this question you need to show an understanding of a key issue, thinking about the accuracy of an interpretation (opinion).

Tips:

1. Underline key words in the quotation and question. This means you will focus on what the examiner wants you to write about.
2. Make an initial judgement about the accuracy of the interpretation.
3. Use your knowledge to support the interpretation.
4. Use your knowledge to suggest other interpretations, and support these with evidence
5. Conclude with a judgement on the interpretation. Is it convincing?

To what extent do you agree with the interpretation that follows? (Use your knowledge and understanding of this issue to reach a well-supported judgement). Marks for spelling, punctuation and accurate use of grammar are given to this question.

Interpretation? G. Lacey and K. Shephard, two historians, writing in a school history textbook, Germany 1918-1945, published in 1999

The Nazis brought prosperity and improved living condition after the harsh years of the depression. The German people benefited from these changes.

To a certain extent the interpretation is accurate as it is possible to argue that in many ways the lives of Germans did improve. Many Germans were able to live a more prosperous lifestyle to the one they had before 1933. **Makes an initial judgement.**

Life for Germans improved in a number of ways. Unemployment fell from 6m in 1933 to about 300,000 by 1939. This was achieved through a number of job creation schemes such as RAD, conscription and a massive rearmament programme. Germans now had money to spend, and this led to an improvement in their standard of living. Loyal workers were offered incentives and the KdF gave them rewards like cheap holidays and cruises. This argument could also mention the Hitler Youth, changes in education. **Uses knowledge to support the interpretation.**

The interpretation would have been influenced by the fact that they were writing a GCSE textbook. The statement is only providing an outline of life under the Nazis, and doesn't provide any supporting evidence. **Evaluates the reliability of the author.**

The interpretation does not consider the full picture. Many people suffered under Nazi rule. For example, the Jews had many laws passed against them and suffered events like Kristallnacht. Women had to give up their jobs. Trade unions were banned, so workers lost the right to defend themselves. **Use knowledge to suggest another point of view.**

The interpretation given by Lacey and Shephard does not give the full picture. It's a very one-sided opinion which ignores many important negative points about life in Germany. **Conclude with a reasoned judgement.**

Now try to answer this question, following the guidance above.

Interpretation: P. Grey and R. Little, two historians, writing in a school history textbook, *Germany 1919-1945*, published in 2003.

The Weimar Republic was successful in dealing with its problems. By 1929 prosperity and stability had been restored to Germany.