This awesome booklet has been designed to help you get exam-ready. It contains the ‘essential’, need-to-know points for the Germany unit, plus useful revision boosters and guidance on answering exam questions. Remember, getting your exam technique sorted is a must if you’re going to succeed in the exam - it’s just as important as knowing your stuff!

CONTENTS.... There are 4 sections to this booklet, with a glossary of keywords and phrases at the end.

1 The rise and fall of the Weimar Republic 1918-33

Introduction
If, just for fun, we were to make a graph showing the fortunes of the Weimar Republic, it would probably look like this....

Phase A 1918-23: The WR suffers from a few major teething problems, and struggles to survive.

Phase B 1924-28: ‘The Golden Twenties’. Things are on the up for the WR, as it recovers from its earlier problems. But beneath the surface, there are still weaknesses.

Phase C 1929-1933: With the Wall St. Crash and the Great Depression, the WR comes ‘crashing’ down!

Of course, during each phase, the Nazis were experiencing their own political rollercoaster ride. Broadly speaking, whenever the WR was enjoying success, the Nazis were not, and vice versa. More about that later.

What was the Weimar Republic and why was it set up?
A lot of students struggle to get to grips with this, but it’s really very simple! The Weimar Republic is the name of a new government that was set up in 1918 to rule Germany. Before 1918, Germany had been a monarchy. The ruling monarch was called the Kaiser - Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1918, there was a revolution in Germany, and the Kaiser abdicated.

What role did Germany’s defeat in WW1 play in all this?
In 1917, the USA had joined the Allies. By the early autumn of 1918, the German army was being pushed back on the Western Front in France. After four years of warfare, it was clear that Germany had to surrender.

The Allies said that they would not accept Germany’s surrender unless the Kaiser (who they blamed for starting the war) went. Chaos ensued. Armed soldiers and factory workers took control of many German cities. They wanted the Kaiser to go. Reluctantly, the Kaiser was persuaded by his military advisers to abdicate. Overnight, Germany went from being a monarchy to a republic.
A constitution is a list of rules setting out how a government should work. The new Weimar Constitution was completed in August 1919. At the time, it made Germany the most democratic country in Europe (yes, even more so than Britain!) However, the German people were not used to democracy. For many years beforehand, Germany had been ruled as an autocracy. Now, all of a sudden, the people were to be given a say in the running of the country. Would they be able to handle this power responsibly? The Weimar Constitution contained many flaws. When things didn’t go well for the Weimar Republic, its politicians were blamed for creating a weak system of government. The diagram below shows the constitution and its key weaknesses.

**Why was Germany difficult to govern during the years 1920-22?**

**DIFFICULTY 1: Drawing up a workable constitution**

Article 48 was a rule which said that in a national emergency, the President could make any law he wanted without having to go through the Reichstag.

**The President**
- voted for every 7 years by the German electorate

**The Chancellor**
- chosen by the President. Has to have the support of the majority (over 51%) of the politicians in the Reichstag.

**The Reichstag**
- The German parliament. It makes laws. The deputies (MPs) are voted for by the German electorate. Proportional Representation is used. This means parties get the same % of seats as their % of the national vote.

**The electorate**
- All German adults could vote. Elections for the Reichstag took place every 4 years.

**Challenge from the army**
- Leaders of the army did not like democracy. They wanted the Kaiser back because their status would be preserved under him.

**Challenge from the civil service and judiciary**
- Many judges and people working for the government did not like democracy. They preferred working for the Kaiser.

**Weaknesses of the Constitution**

**Perplexed by PR?** Don’t worry. Understanding it won’t help your grade go up, and not getting it won’t make your grade go down. If you do get it, it’ll help improve your understanding of why Hitler was able to get power in 1933.
DIFFICULTY 2: Signing the armistice and the Treaty of Versailles, 1918-19

On 11 November 1918, when he had just taken power, Chancellor Ebert of the Social Democrats signed the armistice. The armistice brought an end to WW1 as both sides agreed to lay down their weapons and stop fighting. This meant that Germany had surrendered to the Allies. When the peace talks started, Germany wasn’t even allowed in! The Allies didn’t hold back in making sure that Germany was well and truly punished in the ‘peace’ treaty to end WW1 (and start WW2!) - the Treaty of Versailles. Ebert had no choice but to sign it. There was no way Germany could return to war and win. The treaty was so humiliating for Germany that it was called the "shameful diktat" by the press (it was if it had been dictated upon Germany). What were the terms (punishments) of the Treaty?

### Key terms of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/punishment</th>
<th>How it affected Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany lost 13% of its land. Alsace Lorraine, rich in iron ore, was given back to France (G. had won it from F. in a war in 1871). Germany also lost the coal rich Saarland to the League of Nations.</td>
<td>Germany’s economy depended on the money it earned from exporting coal and other natural resources. With less agricultural land, it would have to increase food imports. This would place a strain on the economy and make it tougher to pay reparations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany’s army was reduced to a maximum of 100,000 soldiers. It wasn’t allowed to have an air force, nor any tanks or submarines. The aim was to limit Germany’s ability to wage war again.</td>
<td>This was particularly shameful for Germany, which had always been especially proud of its military. It strengthened the feeling that many Germans had had before the war—that Germany was encircled by its enemies. Now, it was unable to defend itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany was forced to accept the War Guilt Clause. This stated that G was to blame for starting the war. G was made an outcast in Europe, and denied entry to the League of Nations.</td>
<td>This term held up the rest of Treaty—by making Germany admit guilt, the other punishments could be enforced. The War Guilt Clause was the most humiliating of the terms. Germany felt that countries should share the blame for starting the war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany lost its empire. All of its colonies were handed over to the Allies.</td>
<td>This resulted in a further loss of international status for Germany. It would also deprive Germany of markets and raw materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany had to pay the Allies £6.6 billion in reparations (compensation). This money would help the Allies repair any damage caused by the war, and stop G from going to war again.</td>
<td>At the time, this was a huge amount of money. It would take Germany until the 1980s to pay it off. In 1923, reparations indirectly caused 2 crises for the Weimar Republic—the occupation of the Ruhr and hyperinflation (see later pages).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How else did the armistice & Treaty of Versailles affect Germany in the years 1919-23?

**The November Criminals:** Right wingers such as the Nazi and Freikorps labelled the politicians who’d signed the armistice the ‘November Criminals’. It was said that they’d let Germany down by signing the armistice.

**The Stab In The Back Myth:** This myth said that the politicians of the Weimar Republic had ‘stabbed the German army in the back’ by signing the armistice & TOV. It didn’t help that it wasn’t public knowledge that the Allies threatened to restart the war if Germany refused to sign the TOV.

**The Kapp Putsch 1920 & the Munich Putsch 1923:** partly because of the TOV & the SITB myth, both the Freikorps and the Nazis attempted to take over the government (see later pages).

**The crises of 1923:** The terms of the Treaty of Versailles indirectly led to the occupation of the Ruhr and hyperinflation in 1923 (see later pages).
Opposition to the Weimar Republic from the political left and right

The Social Democrats (SDs): Being the largest party in the Reichstag, they took power once the Kaiser had gone. After the revolution they wanted to restore law and order and get on with the serious task of running the country. They wanted some social change to make Germany a better place, but wanted to keep the support of the rich – especially industrialists. They were scared of communists, and wanted to keep them in check. The SDs were led by Ebert.

The Freikorps: Not a political party, but a group of ex-soldiers organised by Ebert (leader of SDs) to help keep control in Berlin. They looked back to Germany’s ‘glory days’ before the war. They were proud of Germany’s achievements, and angry that it lost the war. They wanted Germany to be strong and powerful, and to have a strong leader. They hated democracy, communists and the Allies (Britain, USA, France, Russia).

The Freikorps during the Kapp Putsch. They are waving the flag that Germany used when it was ruled by the Kaisers.

Although the Social Democrats were in power, were they really in control? Between 1918 and 1923, the Weimar Republic faced constant threats from both left and right – from groups who didn’t support Germany’s new government. It seemed that the WR could not win. Its politicians were criticised for signing the armistice, accepting the TSV and then introducing high taxes for the Allied reparations. How serious were these threats?

Revision booster! 16 mark questions will require you to make a judgement about how far these uprisings made it difficult for the WR to govern Germany. Try giving each one a score out of 5, and listing 3 reasons to justify each of your scores.

The Spartacist Rising, Jan 1919:
- They managed to capture the government’s newspaper and telegraph buildings, but that’s as far as they got...
- The whole uprising was badly planned.
- They didn’t get the support of other left wing groups.
- The Spartacists’ leaders disagreed about the timing of the uprising, and only supported it once it started.
- The rising was easily crushed by the Freikorps and the army, who killed 100 Spartacists. Leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered. Over the next 4 months, thousands more were killed by the Freikorps in other Communist risings.
- Therefore, the Spartacist Uprising of Jan 1919 was not a big threat to the Weimar Republic.

The Munich Putsch, November 1923: The Nazis tried to seize power by marching through Munich and declaring a new government. It was easily crushed by the army and police, but the publicity gained for the Nazis at Hitler’s subsequent trial proved to be a greater threat for the Weimar Republic. Read more about the Munich Putsch later on in this booklet.
So, how serious were these threats?

- All 3 uprisings were relatively simple for the Weimar Republic to defeat, showing there was some support for the WR (especially when the workers went on strike to defeat the Kapp Putsch)....
- BUT they revealed a fundamental weakness. Whilst 10 left-wingers were sentenced to death for their part in uprisings, no right-wingers were. The leaders of the Kapp Putsch went unpunished. Since the Freikorps had the army’s support, Ebert could do nothing. This, coupled with the fact that the WR had relied so heavily on the Freikorps to crush left wing uprisings, showed how dependent the WR was on the right-wing’s goodwill for its continued existence. Similarly, at Hitler’s trial in 1923, right-wing judges only sentenced him to five years imprisonment (and he only served 9 months!)

**Describe** the measures taken in the Treaty of Versailles to limit German power. (6 marks)

Here’s a sample answer:

*One measure to limit German power was the reduction of their armed forces. The army was reduced to a maximum of 100,000 soldiers. They were not allowed an air force, tanks or submarines. This would limit German power because they would be unable to attack other countries or start a war.*

*A second measure was making Germany pay reparations as compensation for the damage caused by the war.*

This answer got 4/6. The first point is particularly well linked to the question, starting with the same words as the question and using them again later on in the paragraph (see underlined bits). That’s what examiners want! The first point also provides factual detail to back up and explain the first sentence. The student has used 2 clear paragraphs—this makes it easy for the examiner to see where the 2 points are! Can you work out what could be added to the second point to improve it?

**Explain why** Germany was difficult to govern in the years 1919–22. (8 marks)

*One reason why Germany was difficult to govern in this period was the effects of the war. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to sign the War Guilt Clause and to accept reductions in their armed forces and in their land size. They also had to agree that they should pay £6.6 billion pounds in reparations. This meant that the government would have to raise taxes, making wealthier Germans resent the Weimar Republic, and the right-wing even labelled the politicians the ‘November Criminals’ because they felt that the government had betrayed Germany by accepting the Allies’ demands.*

*The terms of Versailles made the Weimar Republic very unpopular and there were attempts to overthrow it, which is a second reason why Germany was difficult to govern. For example in 1919 there was a communist uprising by the Spartacists. It was put down only when the government called on the Freikorps for help. There was also the Kapp Putsch of 1920, triggered by the government’s attempt to reduce the size of the armed forces in order to obey the Versailles limit. Obviously it was difficult to govern Germany if it was having to defend itself against uprisings from the left and right, instead of concentrating on running Germany.*

This answer got 8/8!

- It has two reasons—you need more than one to get beyond half marks on an 8 mark question. They are presented in 2 clear paragraphs, and the student uses ‘signposts’ like ‘one reason’ and ‘a second reason’.
- The student has provided factual detail to support their reasons.
- The student has explained why each reason made Germany difficult to govern (see underlined bits). This is needed in order to get the top marks. It is not enough just to identify reasons—you’ve got to link them to the Q, even if it’s obvious!
- The student scores that 8th mark by explaining how the 2 reasons connected to make G difficult to govern. (See double underlined bits). Alternatively, they could have added a conclusion explaining the link between the two reasons.
What were the crises of 1923?

CRISIS 1: The Occupation of the Ruhr

- In 1923, Germany fell behind in its reparations payments.
- The French were determined to make Germany pay up. Under the TOV, the French were allowed to invade Germany and seize raw materials as payment—if the Germans didn’t pay up (like bailiffs!)
- So, in Jan 1923, this is what the French did. They marched into the Ruhr, Germany’s most important industrial region (see green area on map), and occupied it. They wanted to take Germany’s coal.
- The Germans in the Ruhr responded with passive resistance. This meant refusing to work. The idea was that if no coal was being mined, the French couldn’t take it.

What problems were caused by the occupation of the Ruhr?

1. There was violence between French troops and German strikers. This stirred up old hatred and reminded people of the war. The right-wing pointed to the French occupation as another weakness of the Weimar Republic.
2. The economy was further disrupted. The government had to pay the strikers to keep them on strike. But with no coal being mined and exported, the government didn’t have the money. So it printed money. This caused the value of the German mark to rapidly fall, and prices of ordinary goods to rapidly rise. This is called hyperinflation.

CRISIS 2: Hyperinflation

How did it affect different people in different ways?

- Workers were OK at first. Unemployment benefit rose, and those employed received higher and higher wages;
- Rich businessmen, at first, could take over smaller companies which were going bankrupt;
- Those who had debts could pay the money back at a fraction of the real cost;
- The rich had land, possessions and foreign currency. Possessions could be bartered (swapped) for food and other essentials;
- In the end, normal business and trade became impossible – businesses went bankrupt, causing much unemployment;
- Old people living on fixed pensions/savings soon found these were worthless;
- The middle classes saw their savings and small businesses destroyed—they were the biggest losers during hyperinflation.

A left-wing German cartoon from 1923. The caption reads ‘Bread! Bread!’

IMPORTANT EXAM STUFF!

Explain how the Treaty of Versailles affected Germany in the years up to 1924. (8 marks)

- This is an 8 mark question, so you will need to fully explain 2 points.
- Once again, to get beyond 5/8 marks, you will need to link your points clearly to the question. This means making sure you talk about the results of the terms of the TOV. In other words, try to explain an overview of how life in Germany changed as a result of the TOV. Eg. you could explain that reparations led to the occupation of the Ruhr, and then hyperinflation. Reparations also lost support for the Republic—leading to the Kapp Putsch.
How did Stresemann restore stability to Germany between 1924 and 1929?

**Background**

In Aug 1923, Stresemann became Chancellor. He is still highly regarded by historians, who claim that his policies (actions) led the WR out of crisis—to recovery. Between 1924-29 Germany became both economically, politically and internationally more stable. This period is usually called ‘The Golden Twenties’. But, underneath the surface, Germany was still struggling. Stresemann may have covered up the symptoms, but he didn’t cure the disease. There were bad times ahead for Germany, but, of course, no one saw them coming.  

What were Stresemann’s policies and their impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1923: Calling off passive resistance in the Ruhr</th>
<th>The extremists lose out in the Reichstag</th>
<th>1926: The League of Nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was bankrupting Germany. Coal exports could resume, earning Germany money. By 1925, French troops left the Ruhr.</td>
<td>Up until 1930, the SDs always won the most votes in elections. Extremist parties lost votes – eg. Nazi seats fell from 32 to 12 between 1924 and 1928. This created political stability.</td>
<td>Germany was allowed in! This confirmed G’s return to ‘Great Power’ status. G could use its position in the LON to bring about changes to the TOV.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nov 1923: a new currency**

Hyperinflation had destroyed the value of the German mark. In Nov ’23, S. launched the Rentenmark. Issued in small amounts, it gradually restored the confidence of the German people in the currency. It came to be called the Reichsmark.

**1925: The election of President Hindenburg**

Hindenburg had been an important war leader between 1914 and 1918. His election as President showed that the moderate right wing were beginning to accept the WR.

**1925: The Locarno Treaties**

G signed treaties with France, Britain, Belgium & Italy. They agreed to keep existing borders between them (ie. G was not seeking land from them). This helped France feel secure and boosted cooperation between them.

**1928: The Kellogg-Briand Pact**

G signed this with 64 other nations. They agreed to keep their armies for self defence only, and solve all disputes peacefully.

What were the drawbacks of these policies?

Exam questions don’t tend to focus on this much, but understanding the limitations of Stresemann’s policies could help you if you get a 16 mark question about the importance of Stresemann’s policies. Eg. *Was the introduction of a new currency the most important action taken by Stresemann in restoring stability to Germany in the years 1924–28?* With these questions, you need to show you can make a judgement about the relative importance of different policies. Here’s a few points to help you:  

- The Dawes Plan made Germany’s economy dangerously dependent upon the USA’s economy. If something were to happen with the US economy, the loans could be withdrawn, and the German economy would come crashing down again. Not very stable! (But that’d never happen, right?!)  
- The new currency restored confidence in Germany’s money, leading to greater spending and investment from foreign businessmen, but it didn’t restore the savings of those who had lost them during hyperinflation  
- The right-wing resented Stresemann’s cooperation with the Allies (Dawes & Young Plans, Locarno, Kellogg-Briand). Germany was supposed to be getting revenge, not canoodling with the ‘enemy’!
So, which one of Stresemann’s policies was the most important in restoring stability?

None of them, really! They were all connected, and worked together to help restore stability to Germany after the various problems of 1918-23. Here’s how….

- As the currency stabilised, foreign investors became more willing to invest their money in Germany.….  
- Increased cooperation with foreign investors led to the Dawes Plan with the USA.….  
- Increased communication with other countries led to Locarno and Kellogg-Briand…..  
- Which involved Germany proving that they were now peaceful, not war-seeking, leading to G’s entry into the League of Nations…..  
- Which led to the Allies being more willing to reduce some of the worst features of the Treaty of Versailles….  
- Which led to the reduction of reparations in the Young Plan….  
- Which (partly) led to greater support for the Weimar Republic/moderate parties like the SDs, and less votes for extremist parties like the Nazis and Spartacists!

TOTALLY IMPORTANT EXAM STUFF!

Examiners would appear to have a big crush on Stresemann, judging by the frequency of his appearances on exam papers. For example….

- Describe the economic policies of Gustav Stresemann in the years 1924–29. (6 marks)
- Explain the effects of Stresemann’s economic policies in the years 1924–29. (8 marks)
- Explain how Germany recovered from its economic and political difficulties in the years 1924–29 under Stresemann’s leadership. (8 marks)

In fact, there isn’t an exam paper which doesn’t have a question about his policies—so you should assume that you too will be treated to one this summer.

THE 16 MARK QUESTION

It’s not tricky to get a high mark on this question, as long as you know and follow the rules!

Was the introduction of a new currency the most important action taken by Stresemann in restoring stability to Germany in the years 1924–28? You may use the following in your answer and any other information of your own.

- The introduction of a new currency  
- Taking Germany into the League of Nations  
- Signing Pacts with other European countries  
- Dealing with the occupation of the Ruhr. (16 marks)

RULE  

- Go for 3 strikes: You should write about 3 of the bullet points. Always write about the first one, then any 2 others.
- Signpost your answer: Start paragraphs with ‘one action Stresemann took was….’ ‘Another action was…..’
- Make obvious links to the Q!: Finish each paragraph with ‘this helped to restore stability because/by….’
- Use factual detail: Show your knowledge—you can only get marks for what you put onto paper.
- Conclusion: With no conclusion, you can only reach a C grade max. on this Q. (See next page for more detail.)
Conclusions to 16 mark questions

These are so important, they get a section in this booklet all to themselves! Many students make the mistake of writing a conclusion which just picks out the most important factor/action etc, and only explains why that one was the most important. This won’t get you any marks! Here’s what to do instead...

To get...

What to do in your conclusion

11-12 marks

Explain why one of the actions/factors you’ve written about was more important than one of the other actions you’ve written about, when it came to restoring stability. This means you have to say why the one you haven’t chosen was less important.

13-14 marks

Explain why one of the actions you’ve written about was more important than the other 2 actions you’ve written about. This means you have to explain why the other 2 were less important than the most important one!

15-16 marks

Say ‘In conclusion, none of Stresemann’s actions were more important than the others. They all worked together to restore stability’. Then explain how they worked together.

Do the best you can! Chances are, you’ll be racing against the clock by this point in the exam, anyway.

Here’s an example of a conclusion to answer that got 14/16 marks:

**In conclusion, introducing a new currency was not the most important of Stresemann’s actions in restoring stability—signing pacts with other countries was. The Rentenmark did restore Germans’ confidence in the currency, but it didn’t bring back the savings people had lost in hyperinflation. They were still bitter towards the government for that. What really brought stability was signing pacts with other European countries, like the Locarno Treaties. Without convincing Europe that Germany was peaceful, France would not have let Germany into the League of Nations, and foreign investors would not have started to put money into the German economy, boosting the new currency and creating support for the Weimar Republic.**

REVISION BOOSTERS!

Only a handful of very clever people, like your teacher, are fortunate enough to be able to successfully revise by just reading through notes. Most people have to revise actively in order to be successful. This doesn’t mean reciting facts whilst doing star jumps (unless that works for you). It means knowing a few revision tricks, trying them out, and finding what works best for you. Here’s a couple of ideas:

Make your own card ‘game’*

1 Cut up a piece of paper or card into 9 squares.
2 On one side of each square, write the name of an event/fact eg. the Locarno Treaties. Focus on the ones you’re having trouble remembering.
3 On the reverse side, write no more than 3 bullet points to show the details of that event/fact (eg. what it was, when it happened, why it was important).
4 Lay them out on the table/floor/sofa, event side up. Pick one—can you recall the bullet points without looking? Say them out loud. Then check. If you got it right, turn the card over. See how long it takes you to turn over all 9 cards.

* doesn’t promise to be entertaining.

Connections maps

This could really help you with those conclusions to 16 mark questions!

1 Make a spider diagram of points, but with no legs (as spiders should be). Add a central title eg. difficulties in governing Germany 1918-1923.
2 Can you spot connections between any points? Draw connecting arrows. Along the arrow, make a note of the connection.
3 Make as many connections as you can.
What impact did the Great Depression have on the people of Germany and the Weimar Republic?

By 1929, Germany had experienced 5 years of stability. The loans from the USA (Dawes Plan) had helped to halt inflation, and lots of money had been invested into German industry, boosting production and employment. This had created an upwards cycle of prosperity—if more people are employed, they can afford to buy more goods. This boosts production, which creates more jobs, and so on. The problem was, this prosperity depended upon the USA. When the US stock market collapsed in 1929, this had huge consequences for the German economy....

Doom and gloom! Gloom and doom!!

The USA withdraws the loans made to Germany under the Dawes Plan

By 1932, 6 million, or 1 in 3 men, were unemployed in Germany.

Many Germans are living on the streets. We can’t afford our rent.

The Wall Street Crash 1929: the US stock market collapses

If only there was a political party that offered clear and simple solutions to our problems. I’d vote for them!

Farmers also lost out. Food prices, which had been falling since 1925, continued to fall.

I’m worried that the workers will turn to the Communist Party, and there’ll be a Communist Revolution. The middle classes will lose all their property.

Remember! The Great Depression (1929-1933) was NOT the same as hyperinflation (1923). The main effect of hyperinflation was rising prices and loss of savings, caused by there being too much money. The main effect of the Depression was falling prices and loss of jobs, caused by there being not enough money. Lots of students get the two mixed up. Don’t be one of them!

How did the Great Depression weaken the Weimar Republic between 1929 and 1933?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unpopular economic policies</th>
<th>Taxes were raised and unemployment benefit was cut. This meant that German people had even less money to spend on essentials like food. To be fair, other countries did the same.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collapse of democracy</td>
<td>The Chancellor at the time (Brünинг) didn’t have a majority in the Reichstag. He had to fall back on asking the President to pass laws using Article 48. Not very democratic! In 1932, 66 presidential decrees were issued, compared with just 5 in 1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased support for extremist parties</td>
<td>Parties like the Communists and Nazis offered solutions to unemployment. The Communists said that the Depression showed capitalism was flawed, and communism was the only answer. The Nazis pointed the finger at the TOV, Communists and Jews, and promised to get rid of the ‘enemy within’ who were destroying Germany. Both parties increased their number of votes, and violence on the streets increased as the parties battled it out with renewed energy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rise of the Nazis: how was Hitler able to become Chancellor by January 1933?

This topic usually comes up in 16 mark questions. For this topic, 6 (describe) or 8 (explain) mark questions are most likely to focus on the Munich Putsch. Still, better to be prepared for all eventualities! From the founding and early growth of the Nazi Party, to Hitler becoming Chancellor in January 1933, what were the steps to Hitler taking power?

**STEP TO POWER 1: BUILD UP THE PARTY**
- The right wing German Workers’ Party was founded by Anton Drexler in 1919 in the German state of Bavaria—known for its right wing views.
- Hitler joined the party that same year. In 1919, it had around 50 members. Drexler soon spotted Hitler’s talents for public speaking and propaganda. Hitler personally designed the Nazi flag, with its symbol, the swastika. Red, white and black had been the colours of Germany’s flag under the Kaiser. Hitler’s speeches focused on his disgust at the TOV, his hatred of the Weimar Republic and the November Crim-inals, and the so called ‘enemy within’ - Communists and Jews.
- By 1921 Hitler had become the leader of the party. Membership rapidly grew, largely because of the attention Hitler’s speeches attracted.

**STEP TO POWER 2: HAVE BOLD IDEAS**
In 1920, Hitler and Drexler wrote the 25 point programme—a political manifesto. Here are some of its key ideas:

- Scrap it! The November Criminals have betrayed Germany and stabbed the army in the back
- Only people of German blood (Aryans) – not Jews – can be citizens and can vote. Jews are to blame for Germany’s problems
- Strong central government is better than ‘weak’ democracy – decisions can be made more easily
- Big businesses should be nationalised (taken over by the government)

**Treaty of Versailles**
**Anti-Semitism**
**Government**
**Businesses**

**STEP TO POWER 3: GET YOUR OWN PRIVATE ARMY (THE SA)**
- Political meetings in Munich (capital of Bavaria) usually resulted in violence in the early 1920s. In 1921, a protection squad called the SA (Stormtroopers) were set up, led by Ernst Rohm. It was supposedly formed to protect speakers at Nazi meetings from left wing violence.
- They were mostly young men, and many were ex-members of the Freikorps. The SA were often called ‘brownshirts’, because of their uniform.
- Rather than protecting the Nazis, the SA were often sent to disrupt political meetings of the SDs and Communists. They would start fights, let the violence take hold, make a swift exit and then return later on to ‘break up’ the fight. This gave the impression that only the Nazis could keep order in dangerous times!
- In 1923, the SA marched with Hitler through Munich in the Munich Putsch. After 1924, the SA were also used to intimidate voters into voting Nazi.
STEP TO POWER 4: CREATE A STIR AND MAXIMISE THE PUBLICITY—THE MUNICH PUTSCH

In 1923, the Nazi Party was pretty much a regional party, with most of its support based in Munich. However, with the Weimar Republic at an all time low (see page 6), Hitler decided that the time had come to launch himself and the Party onto the national scene. If the Nazis could overthrow the regional government in Munich (the capital of the German state of Bavaria), then they could march on to Berlin and take over the national government—the Weimar Republic.

Hitler knew that he would have to win the support of 4 important men in order to take over the Bavarian government, and then make an attack on the Weimar Government in Berlin....

All of these men had never fully supported the Weimar Republic. The advantage of having Ludendorff on side was that he was extremely popular with the right wing, and might help secure the support of the regular German army—the Reichswehr—which Hitler would need if he was going to take over the German government.

What were the causes of the Munich Putsch of November 1923?

1. Hitler hated the Weimar Republic. He detested the terms of the TOV, and wanted them removed. In 1923, the Hitler and German right wing felt humiliated by the occupation of the Ruhr and hyper-inflation. Hitler was confident that the German people would support him over the WR.
2. Hitler was also confident that he could gain the support of von Kahr and the Bavarian army. He already had Ludendorff’s support.
3. Hitler could use the SA as armed support.

What happened during the Munich Putsch?

Hitler and 600 Nazis seized a beer hall in Munich where von Kahr, Lossow and Seisser were holding a political meeting. Hitler held the 3 leaders at gunpoint, forcing them to promise they would support his planned takeover.

The three leaders were then allowed to leave! Behind Hitler’s back, they organised troops and police to resist Hitler’s planned armed march through Munich.

Hitler made his march through Munich. The Nazis were no match for the police force. They only had 2000 rifles. 16 Nazis were killed, and Hitler was arrested. The Putsch had failed to take over the government.

Exam Stuff!

- **Describe the events of the Munich Putsch, 1923.** (6 marks)
- **Explain why the Munich Putsch failed.** (8 marks)
How was Hitler’s trial and imprisonment after the putsch important for the Nazis?

Although the Putsch was a spectacular failure for the Nazis, what mattered was that it was spectacular! Hitler was able to bounce back by taking advantage of the publicity it created.....

**Hitler the action man!**

Hitler’s attempt at taking over the government made him look like a man of action, and a man of his word. This helped to keep the restless SA on side (they were eager for revolution) and gave him an advantage over other right-wing leaders like Kahr.

Nationwide publicity

Hitler used his trial as an opportunity to get nationwide publicity for him and the Nazis—via the German press. At his trial (for the crime of treason, in Feb 1924) Hitler gave speeches criticising the November Criminals, the Treaty of Versailles, the Communists and Jews who had ‘betrayed’ Germany, and the ‘weak and feeble’ Weimar Government. In this way, he used his trial to put across his political views, as his speeches were reported in German newspapers.

Soft sentence

Although Hitler was found guilty of treason, the judges were sympathetic and treated him leniently (see page 2), sentencing him to a minimum 5 years in prison—which actually turned out to be a luxury castle, where Hitler was allowed as many visitors as he liked! He actually only served 9 months of his 5 year sentence.

**Mein Kampf & a change in tactics**

Being in prison gave Hitler time to reflect on his plan for getting power. He wrote *Mein Kampf*, a book which outlined his political ideas, earning further publicity. He also made the decision to change tactics once he got out of prison, by entering the Nazis into elections instead of trying to gain power through force.

**STEP TO POWER 5 : RE-ORGANISE THE PARTY**

The Nazi Party was banned immediately after the Putsch. However, while Hitler was in prison, the Nazis entered Reichstag elections for the first time, in 1924, under a different name. In the afterglow of the trial, they won 32 seats. However, just seven months later, there was another election. The Nazis did disastrously, their seats reduced to just 14. Clearly, getting power through votes was going to take a different kind of party. After his release from prison in Dec 1924, Hitler began to reorganise the Party to make it more successful in elections. Here are some of the things Hitler did:

**The Fuhrer-prinzip**

Hitler got the ban on the Party lifted. He made sure only his closest associates—called Gauleiters—helped run the Party, and pushed the idea of the Fuhrerprinzip—that he was in charge and answerable to no one.

**Win over rivals**

At the Bamberg Party Conference in 1926, Hitler won over Goebbels, a possible rival to his leadership. Hitler also forced Rohm to resign as leader of the SA (he was given his job back in 1931, as he thought he couldn’t trust Rohm to follow his orders.

**Target specific groups**

Before 1928, Hitler targeted the urban working classes—who liked the Nazis’ anti-Jewish message. After 1928, Hitler found more success with targeting the middle classes and farmers—who were beginning to experience economic problems at this time.

**REVISION BOOSTER!**

Shrink it! – the info, silly, not you. Pick out the 5 most important keywords from a topic. (Strangely, your brain remembers odd numbers more easily.) Write them onto little cards. Make sure you can explain the importance of each one. Carry the cards around with you — read whilst waiting for buses, whilst on buses, in queues. Yes, revision makes everyday life more fulfilling and exciting!
**THE NAZIS DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION, 1929-33**

The years 1923-29 are often known as the ‘lean years’ for the Nazi Party. Despite the publicity surrounding the Munich Putsch and Hitler’s attempts to reorganise the Party to boost its election results, the Nazis failed to gain many seats. In the 1928 elections the Nazis won only 12 seats in the Reichstag (down from 32 seats in 1924). Of course, 1923-29 were the Stresemann years, when employment was high, businesses were doing well, and Germany seemed to be recovering from the war and its effects.

The events of 1929 transformed the fortunes of Hitler and the Nazis, making the Nazis the largest party in the Reichstag by 1932. The Depression was a gift to Hitler and the Nazis. So, how did they take advantage of the situation?

**STEP TO POWER 6 : USE PROPAGANDA (THE ROLE OF GOEBBELS)**

- Goebbels was the Head of Propaganda in the Nazi Party. He understood how to use the media and manipulate mass audiences in order to win votes for the Nazis.
- Goebbels used every trick in the book to get the Nazi message across. A variety of methods were used, giving the appearance that the Nazis were everywhere.
- Goebbels also ensured that the Nazi message was kept simple and was frequently repeated. Propaganda was also used to put down rivals—for example, propaganda whipped up fear and hatred of the Communists.

**STEP TO POWER 7 : GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Hitler received money from leading industrialists like Bosch (yes, the dishwasher people!) They hoped that Hitler would destroy the Communists and limit the power of the trade unions. Of course, Hitler’s war aims also attracted support from industries involved in the manufacture of arms and war materials.
STEP TO POWER 8: BE FLEXIBLE AND VAGUE

- If the Nazis found that an idea was losing them support, they changed it. For example, one of the Nazis’ ideas had always been the nationalisation of industry (this means the government taking over large businesses so the state can feed off the profits). When the Nazis found out how alarmed industrialists were, they quickly dropped the idea!

- The Nazis realised that it doesn’t really matter what you promise, as long as you have the trust of voters. So, they went for vague promises: ‘The Nazis will make Germany great again!’ Many Germans were actually very unsure of what the Nazis stood for.

STEP TO POWER 9: HITLER THE SUPERMAN!

Throughout election campaigns there was an unblinking focus on Hitler—the strong leader whom Germany wanted and needed. Posters and rallies built him up into a superman. On posters, his physical appearance was adapted. In reality, he wore spectacles to read, but he refused to be seen wearing them in public and so his speeches were typed in large print! Hitler was the Nazis’ trump card. The campaigns focused around his personality and skills, and the opposition had no one to match him.

STEP TO POWER 10: MAKE PROMISES TO VOTERS

Besides the usual points about the Treaty of Versailles and the November Criminals, the Nazis replayed 3 key promises to German voters:

- They were Communists;
- They had helped to cause the Depression and mass unemployment;
- They had weakened the German army in WW1, leading to Germany’s defeat;
- They were preparing to launch a revolution in Germany, which would mean that all private property and wealth would be seized by the state (this was particularly effective with middle class voters).
THE FINAL STEP: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL INTRIGUE

‘Political intrigue’ means dodgy, secretive deals between rival politicians who are usually out to stab each other in the back. Once the Nazis had become the leader of the largest party in the Reichstag (in the July 1932 elections), political intrigue played a very important role in making Hitler Chancellor. It’s a complicated story, so here’s the simple version:

1. President Hindenburg did not want to offer Hitler the job of Chancellor. He had to give it to someone—Germany was being run pretty much through Article 48, because the Reichstag couldn’t agree on any laws.
2. There were two other men for the job, but neither had the support of a majority in the Reichstag. When they tried to form coalitions between parties in order to make a majority, they failed.
3. One of these two men (Von Papen), in a bid to oust the other one (von Schleicher), persuaded Hindenburg to make Hitler the Chancellor, with himself (Papen) the vice-Chancellor. He thought this would be a good way to keep an eye on Hitler and control him. Hindenburg agreed to this plan, because he thought it would restore stability to Germany.

EXAM STUFF!

So far, this is the only exam question there’s been about Hitler’s rise to power:

THE 16 MARK QUESTION
It’s not tricky to get a high mark on this question, as long as you know and follow the rules!

Was the growth of unemployment after 1929 the main reason why the Nazi party was able to take power in Germany in 1933? You may use the following in your answer and any other information of your own.

• The growth of unemployment after 1929
• Fear of Communism
• Nazi use of propaganda
• The role of the SA

RULE
Do it!

Go for 3 strikes
You should write about 3 of the bullet points. Always write about the first one, then any 2 others.

Signpost your answer
Start paragraphs with ‘One reason the Nazis were able to take power was….’ ‘Another reason

Make obvious links
to the Q!
Finish each paragraph with ‘this helped the Nazis to take power because….’ (You should explain how each of your 3 factors helped the Nazis get votes)

Use factual detail
Show your knowledge—you can only get marks for what you put onto paper.

Conclusion
With no conclusion, you can only reach a C grade max. on this Q. (See page 9 for more detail.)

Here’s a great paragraph about one of the bullet points, and a final conclusion.

One reason the Nazis were able to take power in 1933 was the growth of unemployment. In 1929, the Wall Street Crash plunged Germany into the Great Depression. This led to there being 6 million men out of work by 1932. Hitler promised voters that if the Nazis were voted into power, he would set up public works schemes, building roads, schools and hospitals. This would get men back into work. Nazi election posters targeted unemployed workers, presenting Hitler as their ‘last hope’ and saviour. This helped the Nazis get power because many unemployed workers voted for Hitler in the July 1932 elections. 

...In conclusion, none of these factors was more important than the others. They all worked together to enable the Nazis to take power. Nazi propaganda, such as election posters, was able to target key groups like workers because of the growth of
unemployment, presenting Hitler as a leader who would save them from the Depression. The growth of unemployment also increased the middle class' fear of a Communist revolution. Propaganda highlighted that the Nazis would deal with this threat, and the Nazis were able to point to the SA's work in battling Communists.

The answer (with missing bits) would have scored 16/16, because it has done all the points shown in the table on page 16, and in the conclusion it explains how all 3 factors connected.

In the exam, when you get to the 16 mark question (always leave yourself 20 minutes at least for this one), you should focus on the rest of your answer before your conclusion. This is because you cannot get marks for your conclusion unless the rest of your answer is good enough!

**3 HOW DID HITLER REMOVE HIS OPPOSITION, 1933-34?**

By the end of January 1933, Hitler was Chancellor. But it wasn’t enough. He still had the President above him, and he was answerable to the Reichstag. He also couldn’t guarantee that he had the support of the army. Until Hitler had dealt with these key sources of opposition, he would be unable run Germany along Nazi lines.

Here’s a summary what’s coming up....

**Exam Tip!**

By the end of January 1933, Hitler was Chancellor. But it wasn’t enough. He still had the President above him, and he was answerable to the Reichstag. He also couldn’t guarantee that he had the support of the army. Until Hitler had dealt with these key sources of opposition, he would be unable run Germany along Nazi lines.

**Exam Tip!**

Questions about The Reichstag Fire, The Enabling Act and the Night of the Long Knives are very popular.

Be ready for a question about one or more of these events!

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Hitler calls new elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hitler wanted a majority in the Reichstag, so he could make laws unopposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He called new elections for March 1933.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 The 48 hour law is passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to pass a law saying all election meetings had to be notified to the police within 48 hours of them taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This allowed Hitler to send the SA to Communist meetings &amp; disrupt them – he knew when and where the meetings were taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Communists wouldn’t be able to campaign for votes ahead of the election.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 The Reichstag Fire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In February 1933, a week before the election, the Reichstag building burnt down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is not known who started the fire, but a Communist, called van der Lubbe, was arrested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This was a great opportunity for Hitler to exploit.....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exam TIP! Don’t get bogged down in the issue of who started the fire. It’s interesting, but not relevant! Instead, focus on how Hitler and the Nazis took advantage of the fire to remove their opposition and strengthen Hitler’s power.

Exam stuff!

Here are two exam questions about this topic:

Explain the effects of the Reichstag Fire in 1933. (8)

Explain how Hitler used the Reichstag Fire to weaken opposition to the Nazis. (8)

Notice how neither of these questions ask you to explain what happened/who started the fire. Instead, they are asking you to focus on the impact or consequences of the fire! Although these are different types of question (explain the effects of & explain how), you should answer them pretty much the same way. Make sure your paragraphs focus on the results of the fire.

As for all 8 mark questions, to get a good mark, try to focus on two points.

For example:

- The fire gave Hitler an excuse to arrest and imprison his opponents
- The fire enabled Hitler to present himself as Germany’s saviour from a Communist takeover.

However, it is not enough just to identify these two points. In each paragraph, you should explain them further. Remember to make your links to the question at the start and end of each paragraph! Here’s an example of a full mark answer:

The fire gave Hitler an excuse to arrest and imprison his opponents, increasing the Nazis’ chances of winning a majority in the March 1933 elections. After the fire, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to pass a law suspending civil liberties. This enabled Hitler to imprison thousands of Communists so they couldn’t vote in the elections or campaign for votes. This led to the Nazis increasing their share of the vote to 44% in elections which took place a week later, providing Hitler with a firmer support base in the Reichstag.

Hitler justified this law by saying that the fire was evidence of a Communist plot to seize power, and that Germany was in danger. Therefore, the fire also enabled Hitler to present himself as the saviour of Germany. Goebbels was quick to take advantage of this opportunity, using propaganda to promote this idea. This boosted the support that Hitler had among the middle classes and the industrialists. They were scared of a Communist takeover, because they would lose their property and wealth. So, in this way, the fire led to Hitler getting increased financial backing from industrialists and more votes from the German people.

This got 8/8 because it has explained 2 points which are clearly linked to the question—it explains the impact/results of the fire and how it affected Germany/the Nazis, instead of focusing on what happened or who started the fire. It picks up the 8th mark for linking the two points (see underlined bit).

What if I can only think of one point, not two? Am I gonna fail?

NO! You can get 7/8 marks for explaining one point really well! It is ideal to explain 2 points, if you can, just in case you forget to link your points to the question (then you’d get 5/8). Also, if you’re super-good, you can link your two points to access that 8th mark. Confused? Just remember this golden rule...STICK TO THE TIMINGS! (see next page) If you hang around finishing off a question, and miss out later questions as a result, you are guaranteed to lose more marks. NOT FINISHED A QUESTION? ALWAYS LEAVE A SPACE AND MOVE ON! DON’T HANG AROUND.
RECOMMENDED TIMINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1a source question</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1b describe</td>
<td>5-10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1c explain the effects of</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1d explain why (causes)</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 explain how (change)</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 importance of different factors</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL—with 5 minutes to spare</td>
<td>1 hr 10 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT QUESTION 2

Explain how Hitler used the Reichstag Fire to weaken opposition to the Nazis. (8)

Ok, so, on the previous page it said you would answer this in pretty much the same way as question 1c. BUT, if you want to get more than 5 marks, you need to try to give an overview of how the Reichstag Fire weakened opposition. This means just adding a few general comments about the long term changes it caused.

Eg. The law suspending civil rights put Hitler in place to become a dictator. This law was not cancelled once the crisis blew over, so it allowed Hitler to keep on removing his opposition well after the fire, ensuring that he could set up and run a dictatorship.

The same goes with all question 2s. Always try to show you know how things changed long term as a result of the event/issue shown in the Q.