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.

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 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?
It was Germany’s defeat in WW1 which pushed the Kaiser to abdicate. By the early autumn of 1918, 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.
Why was Germany difficult to govern during the years 1920-22?

DIFFICULTY 1: Drawing up a workable constitution

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.

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.
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 diklat” by the press (it was if it had been dictated upon Germany). What were the terms (punishments) of the

**Key terms of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919** Clemenceau (France) & Lloyd George (Britain)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/punishment</th>
<th>How it affected Germany</th>
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<tr>
<td>L 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, who were to run it for 15 years. Also, France were allowed to take coal from the Saarland. Although Germany didn’t lose the Rhineland, it was demilitarised (Germany wasn’t allowed to put any troops or military equipment in the Rhineland).</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>
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<tr>
<td>A 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>G 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>E 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>R 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>
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**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 it.

**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 StIB 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).
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 TOV and then introducing high taxes for the better off in order to meet the Allied reparations. How serious were these threats?

The Spartacists (Communists): The revolution of 1918, which set up the WR, was not enough. They wanted a serious revolution, like the Communist revolution that took place in Russia (1917). If they had their way, the (factory) workers would run the country. All private property and wealth would be confiscated by the government and shared out amongst the people.

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).

DIFFICULTY 3: Opposition to the Weimar Republic from the political left and right

The Kapp Putsch, March 1920:
- The Freikorps were concerned by the Communist threat, and angry about the TOV/SITB myth.
- By early 1920, the Allies were getting worried about the size of the Freikorps. They put pressure on Germany to disband the Freikorps to bring the number of soldiers down below the 100,000 limit stated in the TOV.
- This triggered an attempted takeover by the Freikorps. Led by Wolfgang Kapp, they marched into Berlin and declared that they were setting up a new government!
- The army didn’t stop them.
- Ebert called on the workers to launch a general strike. Public services ground to a halt. Without transport or communications, the new right wing government collapsed.

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.

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’d started.
- The uprising 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 uprisings.
- Therefore, the Spartacist Uprising of Jan 1919 was not a big threat to the Weimar Republic.

Try giving each one a score out of 5, to justify each of your scores.
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!)

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 miners were on strike. 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. Over 140 Germans were killed in clashes with French troops. This stirred up old hatred and reminded people of the war. The right-wing (eg. Nazis) 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.
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?

1923: Calling off passive resistance in the Ruhr

It was bankrupting Germany. Coal exports could resume, earning Germany money. The government no longer had to pay striking workers, or import coal for its own use. By 1925, the French had got their coal and troops left the Ruhr.

Nov 1923: a new currency

Hyperinflation had destroyed the value of the German mark. In Nov 1923, S. launched the Rentenmark. Printed in controlled amounts, and with its value backed up by property, 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 (although this wasn’t really down to Stresemann!)

1926: The League of Nations

Germany was allowed to join! This confirmed G’s return to ‘Great Power’ status. G was no longer an outcast in Europe, and could use its position in the LON to bring about changes to the TOV.

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. This boosted trust, and therefore trade.

The Dawes Plan (1924) and Young Plan (1929)

The Dawes Plan saw the USA loan Germany over $3000 million. This was injected into German industry, boosting production and employment. People had more money to spend, so there was economic growth. This helped G pay reparations. The Young Plan reduced the original reparations bill by 75%

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 and trade between them.

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 (ending passive resistance, Dawes & Young Plans, Locarno, LON, 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!
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....

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 (Bruning) 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>
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</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 Criminals, 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**
- **Anti-Semitism**
- **Only people of German blood (Aryans) – not Jews – can be citizens and can vote. Jews are to blame for Germany’s problems**
- **Government**
- **Strong central government is better than ‘weak’ democracy – decisions can be made more easily**
- **Businesses**
- **Big businesses should be nationalised (taken over by the government)**

**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 hyperinflation. 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.

What’s with the focus on the Munich Putsch?

It’s likely to come up in any exam question, most probably 6 or 8 mark questions.

Now use the advice on page 5 to help you answer these two questions, or if you have limited time, just create a bullet pointed plan. Exam question practice is a crucial part of revision!
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 only served

Mein Kampf & a change 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 aftermath 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
- Win over rivals
- Target specific groups

After 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.

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.

*Remember!!*

Don’t get confused between the use of propaganda to get power and the use of propaganda to keep power (after 1933). Before 1933, Hitler didn’t have control over the media. He wasn’t able to censor books and newspapers, or control radio stations.

**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.

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:

If anyone doubted that the Weimar Republic and/or the Communists were at fault, then Hitler had another scapegoat lined up: **the Jews**. He blamed Germany's problems on the Jews, saying:

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 outdo 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.
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 to run Germany along Nazi lines.

Here’s a summary what’s coming up…

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!

How did Hitler take advantage of the Reichstag Fire (Feb 1933) to weaken his opposition?

1 Hitler calls new elections
- Hitler wanted a majority in the Reichstag, so he could make laws unopposed.
- He called new elections for March 1933.

2 The 48 hour law is passed
- 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.
- This allowed Hitler to send the SA to Communist meetings & disrupt them – he knew when and where the meetings were taking place.
- The Communists wouldn’t be able to continue with their plans.

3 The Reichstag Fire
- In February 1933, a week before the election, the Reichstag building burnt down.
- It is not known who started the fire, but a Communist, called van der Lubbe, was arrested.
- This was a great opportunity for Hitler to tighten the screws on the opposition.

4 Civil rights are suspended
- Hitler persuades Hindenburg to pass a law suspending civil rights – in order to ‘protect’ the people and government.
- This enables the Nazis to imprison 4000 Communists, SDs and other political opponents.
- This means the Communists and SDs are given a bad name, and can’t vote/campaign for votes in the forthcoming election.

5 The election goes ahead
- Hindenburg’s law suspending civil rights allowed the Nazis to tighten the screw on the opposition.
- Without the Reichstag Fire, Hitler would not have had the excuse he needed to do this – he presented himself as Germany’s saviour from an attempted Communist takeover.
How did the Enabling Act (March 1933) remove Hitler’s opposition with the Reichstag?

**What was it?**
- A law which enabled Hitler to pass any law he wanted, without the Reichstag or President having to agree to that law. Such laws could go against the Weimar Constitution, too.

**Why did Hitler need it?**
- In the March 1933 election, despite the Nazis’ best efforts to rig the outcome, they only got 44% of the vote. This was not the majority that Hitler needed in order to have control over law-making. The Enabling Act would make gaining a majority unnecessary.

**How did he get it passed?**
- The Enabling Act was a change to the Weimar Constitution. Changes could only be made by a 2/3 majority vote in the Reichstag.
- The Communists were banned from the Reichstag.
- Hitler got the SA to threaten the remaining deputies into voting for the Enabling Act. Some Social Democrats *still* voted against it!

**COMMON MISTAKES!** Can you work out why these are wrong?

- The Enabling Act was the same as Article 48.

- The Enabling Act was passed by Hindenburg using Article 48. The Enabling Act suspended civil liberties.
Impact

**Effect/Change 1**
The Reichstag no longer had any role in law-making.

Hitler could now make laws without the Reichstag
No longer any need for the Nazis to focus on gaining a majority
Rival political parties silenced, Hitler could rule as a dictator

**Effect/Change 2**
Turned Germany from a multi-party democracy into a one-party dictatorship
Once silenced, rival parties would be made illegal – G would be a one party state
Hitler could alter the constitution as he wished, permanently getting rid of civil liberties and the role of President. He could put his own policies into effect without any opposition.

How did the **Night of Long Knives** *(June 1934)* remove Hitler’s opposition and secure him the support of the German army?

**What was the Night of the Long Knives?**
- It’s when the SS killed the leading members of the SA (not the other way round!), including Rohm.
- This secured Hitler the backing of the German army
- Other, political opponents were murdered too – eg. von Schleicher and Gregor Strasser (a Nazi with strong socialist views)
- Around 400 were killed in total

You need to be able to explain 2 out of a possible 4 reasons why it happened…..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rohm was a threat</th>
<th>The SA were an embarrassment</th>
<th>The SA were pushing their socialist views</th>
<th>Hitler needed the army’s support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohm (leader of SA) wanted to merge the SA and the army.</td>
<td>The SA were thuggish street brawlers.</td>
<td>Rohm and the SA were calling for a ‘second revolution’.</td>
<td>Hitler knew that if he didn’t have the army’s support, the army could overthrow him in a coup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would have put him in charge of more than 3 million men.</td>
<td>They beat up political rivals, such as Communists, and started fights at rival parties’ election meetings.</td>
<td>They wanted the Nazi Party to follow a more socialist agenda – giving the workers more rights.</td>
<td>Hitler also needed the army’s support to fulfil his rearmament and war aims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would have enabled Rohm to challenge Hitler’s authority.</td>
<td>Hitler, as Chancellor, needed to project a more responsible, respectable image.</td>
<td>Hitler wanted to suppress socialism within the party – it threatened the sponsorship the Nazis received from big business.</td>
<td>The army generals hated Rohm and the SA—seeing them as amateurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**HINDENBURGS DEATH:**
In August 1934, President Hindenburg died. Hitler combined the posts of President and Chancellor. He was now Head of State and Commander of the Army. Every soldier had to swear an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler. The army were already used to being disciplined and obedient—to break this oath would be a serious crime.

**4 The NAZI DICTATORSHIP: HOW DID HITLER RUN GERMANY?**
A key element in maintaining the Nazi dictatorship was striking a balance between scaring Germans into not opposing the Nazi state, and giving them positive reasons to support the Nazi state. This was achieved on the one hand by the creation of a police state, and, on the other, by the creation of a propaganda state. These were symbiotic, meaning that they worked together to keep the Nazis in power. If the propaganda didn’t convince Germans that they should be pro-Nazi, then the police state would force them into being pro-Nazi (or, at least, into not actively resisting the Nazis). Meanwhile, the atrocities committed by the police state would be covered up with/justified by propaganda. However, it’s worth bearing in mind that there are limits to what both could achieve. When it came to winning over the hearts and minds of ordinary Germans, neither propaganda nor the police state could be 100% effective, for the simple reason that no one can read another’s mind.

**The Nazi Police State**

The Nazi police state was a structure of organisations and their leaders. The task of the police state was to expose and eliminate all forms of opposition and ‘undesirables’.

There were 4 key components:
- The SS
- The concentration camps
- The Gestapo (secret police)
- Informers/block wardens

**Himmler** (left) was in charge of the police state.
The Nazi Propaganda State

- Opponents of the Nazis were taken to concentration camps for questioning, torture, hard labour and 're-education'.
- Later, concentration camps became the scenes of mass genocide (Holocaust). However, before 1939, people were not sent to CCs for the purpose of being killed.
- The secret police, under the command of Himmler.
  - Tapped telephones, intercepted mail and spied on people.
  - Could strike anywhere at any time against ordinary Germans. It was probably the Gestapo that the opponents of Nazism most feared. BUT, at its peak, there were only 300,000 Gestapo officers for the whole country.
- Every town was divided into units called blocks, which included only a handful of homes. Each block had a block warden;
- Block Wardens wrote reports on the 'political reliability' of their block residents. These reports could determine whether or not someone got a job;
- Anyone who showed signs of 'independent thinking' – eg. telling anti-Nazi jokes, hosting illegal political meetings or not flying the Nazi flag on Nazi celebration days – could be reported to the Gestapo.

CENSORSHIP was also necessary. Anti-Nazi material had to be censored in order for propaganda to work...

Josef Goebbels was the Reich Minister for Propaganda

You should know about 3 of these in detail (see next page...)

- Initially, a private bodyguard for Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It started off as only 500 men.
- Himmler built the SS into an elite force of 50,000 tall, blond, blue-eyed Aryan 'supermen'. Physical standards were strict – until 1936, even a filling in a tooth was enough to keep a man out of the SS.
- The main means of terrorising/intimidating Germans into obedience. Had almost unlimited power to arrest people without trial, search houses and confiscate property. Ran the concentration camps.

In the context of the information provided, the SS was a powerful and intimidating force in Nazi Germany, responsible for many atrocities. The Gestapo was the secret police, responsible for keeping tabs on opposition. The propaganda machine was a central pillar of the Nazi regime, influencing all aspects of life including school subjects, cinema, theatre, books, newspapers, and music, among other elements.
You should know 3 examples of how Goebbels used propaganda & censorship to control the thoughts, beliefs and opinions of the German people…..

**Cinema:** audiences had to watch 45 minute newsreels carrying the Nazi message/glorifying Nazi achievements.

Over 1000 films made during the Third Reich. All film plots had to be approved by Goebbels.

Love stories and thrillers were given pro-Nazi slants—Goebbels knew that propaganda had to be entertaining!

*Hitlerjunge Quex* – a Hitler Youth boy murdered by Communists. *The Eternal Jew* – the story of an ‘evil’ Jew

**Newspapers:** Non-Nazi newspapers and magazines were closed down.

Goebbels set up a press agency to tell editors what the news should be.

**Radio:** All radio stations were placed under the control of the Reich Radio Company.

Cheap, mass produced radios called *The People’s Receiver* were produced. They couldn’t pick up foreign broadcasts. By 1939 70% of German households had a radio.

Loudspeaker pillars were erected in public places to broadcast Hitler’s speeches/propaganda.
Nazi youth policy

After the Final Solution, Nazi youth policy was arguably the darkest aspect of the Third Reich. The young were of particular importance to the Nazis. They were the future of the Third Reich. Hitler and Goebbels knew that young minds were impressionable, and could therefore be shaped to suit the Nazi ideal. The 3 greatest influences on young Germans were their families, their schools and youth movements. The Nazis tried to control all three.

Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens

Boys joined the ‘Young Folk’ at the age of 10. Before that, they could join the ‘Little Fellows’. From 14-18 they became members of the Hitler Youth;

Girls joined the ‘Young Girls’ at the age of 10. From 14-18 they became members of the League of German Maidens.

From 1936, membership of either was compulsory. All other youth organisations were banned.

By 1939, there were 7 million members (82% of all youth......clearly, some children evaded joining).

So, although boys and girls had different roles (according to the Nazis), the circle in the centre shows that the core activities done by the Hitler Youth and the LOGM would have been the same. (By the way, the caption on each poster says Youth serves the Fuhrer. All 10 year olds in the Hitler Youth.)

Starting to get overwhelmed? Take a 20 minute break in a different room. If necessary, calm yourself down by focusing on your breathing. When you go back to it, remember that effective revision happens when you—

Switch subjects every hour or so. Do 4 hours of history over 4 days, not 1 day; Test yourself/get someone else to test you.

Make quick bullet pointed plans for past exam questions.
Nazi Education

How were children indoctrinated at school?

**Teachers**
97% joined the Nazi Teachers' League and swore an oath of loyalty to Hitler. Those who didn’t promote Nazi ideals were sacked.

**Textbooks**
These were re-written to fit the Nazi view of history and racial purity. *Mein Kampf* became a standard text.

**Separate schools for boys and girls**
Girls had a different curriculum including domestic science (cookery and homemaking) and eugenics (how to produce the 'perfect' child by carefully selecting the father!)

**Lessons**
They began and ended with students giving the *Heil Hitler* salute. Nazi themes were woven into every subject. 15% of the timetable was PE.
• The rise of the Nazi Party, the injustices of the TOV, the evils of communism and the Jews

• Lands which had been stolen from G under the TOV, how G was surrounded by hostile neighbours.

• Qs about social and military issues, eg. what % of the population was Jewish, or bombing angles

• Race studies – classifying racial types, the superiority of Aryans
Youth policy (Hitler Youth & education) usually comes up in ‘explain how’ 8 mark questions. For example....

- Explain how education changed in Germany in the years 1933-39.
- Explain how the position of young people changed in Germany in the years 1933–39.

**EXPLAIN HOW EDUCATION CHANGED IN GERMANY FROM 1933-39**

| Change 1 | Curriculum was redesigned to indoctrinate children. |
|———|———|
| Change 2 | Government control over schools was tightened-up. |
| Overall/A* link | The Nazis used education as one of the key ways of controlling young people. |

**EXPLAIN HOW THE POSITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE CHANGED IN GERMANY FROM 1933-39**

| Change 1 | Lost freedom to follow their own ambitions. |
|———|———|
| Change 2 | Young minds were shaped and indoctrinated by Nazis. |
| Overall/A* link | Children could no longer be individuals. |

**NAZI POLICY TOWARDS WOMEN**

What were Nazi policies towards women (appearance, jobs, expectations)?

How did this compare to expectations of women/women’s lives during the Weimar Republic years?

How and why did Nazi policy towards women change from 1937? What impact did Nazi policies have?

How successful were they?

Thinking about what you can already remember will help you learn the ‘new’ stuff more quickly!
You will need to know what life was like for women under the Weimar Republic so that you can explain how the lives of women changed under the Nazi dictatorship.

The Nazis had a much more traditional view of what German women should be like.....

The Nazis believed men and women had different roles. A man’s role was as a worker or soldier. A woman’s place was in the home, having children and caring for her family.

The Nazis were worried by the decline in the birth rate –

- 1900: over 2 million live births per year
- 1933: under 1 million live births per year

Contraception and working women were causing this decline. If Germany was to become a great power again, it needed to increase its population.

The ideal Nazi woman

Aryan, heavy hipped, flat heels, no make-up.

Wears clothes made from home produced substitutes for imported wool, cotton and silk.

Has a large family and is an ideal mother....brings up children as loyal Nazis, encouraging them to worship the Fuhrer and join Hitler Youth.

---

Doesn’t go to work. All women doctors and civil servants were dismissed.

Wears clothes made from home produced substitutes for imported wool, cotton and silk.

Has a large family and is an ideal mother....brings up children as loyal Nazis, encouraging them to worship the Fuhrer and join Hitler Youth.

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Athletic, non-smoking and non-slimming – for maximum fertility.

Takes no interest in politics.

Does all household duties, especially cooking.
How and why did the Nazis change their policies towards women from 1937 onwards?

Germany was rearming. Men were joining the army. Women were needed in armaments factories.
Marriage loans were abolished. Women had to serve a compulsory ‘duty year’ after entering employment.
The Nazis still didn’t give up on their other aim – for women to produce more children!

Successes of policies

- The birth-rate didn’t increase as dramatically as hoped!
- For some women, the pressure to have children became too much. There were some cases of women kidnapping babies.
- Before 1937, despite Nazi propaganda, female employment actually increased, mainly due to the economic recovery. Employers preferred to employ women as they could be paid less.
- After 1937, more women did get jobs, but not as many as hoped. By 1939 there were fewer women working than there had been in Weimar Germany before the Depression.
The Nazis and the Churches

For the Nazis, the Churches were a problem. How could Germans be loyal to both God and their Fuhrer? However, when it came to managing the Churches, Hitler had to tread carefully. Whilst there were some arguments for destroying Churches, there were other arguments against destroying them.

Can you work out which bubbles are which?
How did Hitler deal with the Catholic Church?

- Hitler signed an agreement with the Pope that neither would interfere with the 'business' of the other.

Concordat 1933

Persecution after 1933

- Catholics schools & youth groups were closed down
- Priests were harassed. Outspoken critics of the Nazis were sent to CCs.

The Pope speaks out 1937

- The Pope made a famous statement attacking the Nazi system, titled With Burning Anxiety

How did Hitler deal with the Protestant Church?

- Hitler united all the various Protestant Churches under the name of 'The Reich Church'. It was led by Nazi supporter Bishop Muller.

The Reich Church

The German Christians

- Members of the Reich Church were called German Christians.
- Their slogan: the swastika on our breasts and the cross in our hearts.

Opposition dealt with

- In 1934 Pastor Niemoller set up the Confessio Church to speak out against Nazi policies.
- Niemoller was arrested in 1937 and sent to a CC.

The Nazis never destroyed the Churches....they just weakened them as a source of resistance to Nazi policies.
The Jews were a key target for persecution by the Nazis. By 1945, approximately 6 million Jews had been murdered by the Nazis. However, the Nazis didn’t just persecute Jews; many other minorities, some of which are shown on the left, were also targeted by the Nazis.

Besides which minorities were persecuted, you need to know:

For what reasons were Jews and other minorities persecuted?

How were they persecuted?

What impact did persecution have on the lives of Jews?
For what reasons were Jews and other minorities persecuted?

### Social Darwinism & Master Race theory

- Applied Darwin’s ‘survival of the fittest’ to races of humans
- Aryans were the strongest race. Jews/minorities would naturally die out anyway.
- In order to create an Aryan state, it was necessary to accelerate evolution through selective breeding.

### A burden on the Volk

- Any who couldn’t or wouldn’t work were socially useless – they were not contributing to the Volk.
- Such people weren’t only worthless, but expensive, as it cost to care for them.
- Others (e.g. homosexuals, prostitutes) were asocial and undesirable. They didn’t fit the Nazi ideal.

### Jews were to blame for G’s problems

- Jews fighting in the German army during WW1 had weakened the army, leading to Germany’s defeat
- Greedy Jewish moneylenders had caused both hyperinflation and the Great Depression.
- In this way, Jews were conveniently scapegoated.

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**Exam STUFF!**

**Explain why** Hitler carried out a policy of persecution of the Jews and other minority groups in the years 1933-39. (8 marks)

One reason why there was a policy of persecution was because Hitler believed that Jews were to blame for Germany’s past problems. **For example**, Hitler said that Jewish soldiers had weakened the German army during WW1, leading to Germany’s defeat. Hitler also blamed ‘greedy’ Jewish moneylenders for the hyperinflation of 1923 and the Great Depression. Jews were scapegoated for these problems because Hitler believed that Jews were out to undermine Germany. **Therefore, Hitler persecuted them because** it was convenient – people wanted someone to blame for Germany’s past problems – and because persecuting them would remove the ‘enemy within’ who were ‘sabotaging’ Germany.

Another reason Hitler persecuted the Jews was because of the theory of Social Darwinism. This applied Darwin’s theory of natural selection to races of humans. Hitler saw Aryans as the ‘fittest’ of the species and saw Jews and other minorities as the inferior ‘subhumans’ who would naturally die out in time. Hitler wished to create a pure Aryan state out of Germany. **Therefore, Hitler persecuted minorities because** he thought that sterilising and eventually exterminating Jews, Gypsies and other minorities would give nature a helping hand. This way, Hitler could create an Aryan ‘master race’ more quickly.
How did the Nazis deal with so called ‘burdens on the Volk’ (German community)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propaganda</th>
<th>A propaganda campaign stirred up resentment towards minorities who were a ‘burden’ on the Volk.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sterilisation</td>
<td>In 1933, the Nazis passed a Sterilisation Law. It allowed the Nazis to sterilise people with certain illnesses such as ‘simple-mindedness’ and alcoholism. These terms were interpreted very freely. During the Nazis’ time in power, up to 350,000 men and women were compulsorily sterilised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>By 1936, the ‘work shy’, tramps, beggars, alcoholics, prostitutes, homosexuals and juvenile delinquents were being sent to CCs. In 1938, a round-up netted around 11,000 beggars, tramps and Gypsies, most of whom were sent to Buchenwald CC. Many Germans welcomed this removal of ‘awkward customers’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euthanasia</td>
<td>In 1939 the Nazis secretly began to exterminate the mentally ill in a euthanasia programme. 6000 disabled babies, children and teenagers were murdered by starvation or lethal injections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What measures were taken against Jews?

Propaganda: Anti-Semitic material in every classroom.
Children taught to hate Jews.
1938: Jewish children expelled from German schools.

Economic/Boycott: 1934: SA boycott of Jewish shops and business.
1938: Jews have to register their possessions and businesses, making it easier for the state to confiscate them.

Legislation: 1933: Jews excluded from government jobs.
1934: Jews banned from public spaces such as parks, swimming pools.
1935: Nuremberg Laws.

Violence: 1938: Kristallnacht: Jewish property, shops, homes and businesses destroyed. 100 Jews killed, 20,000 sent to concentration camps.

In particular, you need to know about these two developments.
Note that the picture next to the ‘Nuremberg Laws’ title is of a bench in a German public park. It says ‘for Aryans only’.

**Law for the Protection of German Blood & Honour** banned marriages/sexual relations between Jews and Aryans.

**Reich Citizenship Law** made Jews ‘subjects’ rather than citizens. This meant losing the right to vote.

Jews were no longer regarded as German; they didn’t have ‘German blood’.

Goebbels organised anti-Jewish demonstrations, involving attacks on shops, businesses, property and synagogues....Kristallnacht means *The Night of the Broken Glass*.

It was portrayed as a spontaneous act of revenge by Germans.

100 Jews killed and approx. 20,000 sent to concentration camps as a result. Jews blamed for having provoked the attacks & had to pay for the damage caused.
Explain how the position of Jews in Germany changed in the years 1933–39. (8 marks)

Here is a full mark answer:

One way in which the position of Jews changed was that they were treated as outcasts in society and were not considered to be part of the Volk. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 removed civil rights and citizenship from Jewish people. The Law for the Protection of German Blood & Honour banned marriage between Jews and Aryans as well as sexual relationships between them. This changed the position of Jews because they were now subjects, not citizens. They lost the right to vote and were seen as un-German. In fact, they were termed 'subhuman'.

Another way in which the position of Jews changed was during the Night of the Broken Glass, Kristallnacht, in 1938. There was rioting in Germany. Thousands of Jewish shop windows were smashed and 100 Jews were killed. In the aftermath, 20,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps, and those remaining behind were ordered to pay for the damage. This changed the Jews' position because the German people had begun to turn against them, taken in by Hitler’s anti-Semitic views and propaganda. The Jews were persecuted increasingly during the 1930s.

In conclusion, both factors contributed to changing the position of Jews during the years 1933-39. The Nuremberg Laws showed the legal alienation of the Jews, whilst Kristallnacht was the last push to show that they really were not welcome in Germany.

Common mistakes when answering questions about Nazi policy towards the Jews

1. **Writing about the Final Solution**, eg. death camps, Jews being killed/gassed in concentration camps, the sterilisation of Jews and Jewish prisoners being experimented upon. All of these things happened AFTER 1939, during WW2. Your syllabus only goes up to 1939. Therefore, if you write about events after 1939, you will not gain any marks for it.

2. **Writing about ghettos** – these were not built in Germany (only in countries occupied by the Nazis during WW2). Your syllabus only covers Germany, not the nations it occupied during WW2, because it doesn't cover WW2 either! Ghettos are beyond the period AND beyond Germany!!
You need to know about these three sub-topics….

The Standard of Living

The diagram on the next page shows whether or not Germans were better off under the Nazis. Here are some extra notes to help explain the diagram….

STRENGTH THROUGH JOY (KdF) This organisation was set up to replace trade unions. It promised to improve the leisure time of workers by offering concert and theatre trips, museum visits, holidays and cruises. However, the reality was that few workers could afford the more expensive activities such as cruises.
THE BEAUTY OF LABOUR This was a department of the KdF which aimed to improve working conditions. It organised the building of canteens and sports facilities, and installed better lighting in the workplace. However, it caused a lot of resentment among workers as they found that they had to carry out improvements themselves in their spare time and without pay!

THE VOLKSWAGEN SCHEME In 1938 the Labour Front (see below) organised a scheme which gave workers the opportunity to save up for a car. They paid 5 marks a week into savings fund. The idea was that they would eventually save up enough to purchase a car. However, by the time war broke out in 1939 not a single customer had received a car. None of the money was refunded.

FOOD PRICES! AND CONSUMPTION! The consumption of most foods decreased because food items were in short supply. All basic groceries, except fish, cost more in 1939 than they did in 1933. Therefore, the cost of living increased. Why was food in short supply? Partly because it was government policy to reduce agricultural production, in order to keep prices high for the farmers' benefit (the Nazis had made them an election promise in 1932). Another reason why food was in short supply was because the Nazis were determined to reduce imports. If Germany was going to go to war, it needed to be self sufficient. It couldn’t depend on other nations for food! Thus, consumption of imported foods like tropical fruit, fell.

The standard of living - were Germans better or worse off under the Nazis?

Worse off

- Weekly hours of work rose, from 43 to 47
- Strength Through Joy (KDF) too expensive
- Beauty of Labour involved unpaid overtime
- Consumption of most foods, especially imported foods, fell
- Food prices rose (for farmers’ benefit)
- VW car scam – not a single car delivered
- Trade unions and strikes illegal

Better off

- Weekly wages rose, from 86 to 109 marks
- VW scheme – 5 marks a week will get you a car!
- Strength Through Joy (KDF) improved leisure time
- Beauty of Labour improved working conditions
The Reich Labour Service RAD
It reduced unemployment and prepared men for army life! Compulsory for all men aged 18-25 to serve for 6 months. Pay was very low. Workers also expected to do military drill.

Public Works Schemes DAF (German Labour Front)
Building roads, schools, hospitals. 7000km of autobahns were built. 37 billion marks were being spent on these schemes by 1939.

Rearmament
This greatly reduced unemployment. Conscription expanded the army from 100,000 to 1.4 million. Many worked in arms factories and heavy industry.

Invisible unemployment
Official unemployment figures did not include Jews, women or political opponents who had been dismissed from their jobs/sent to camps.

Q2 always starts with explain how. Some Q2s have the phrase dealt with. Some Q2s have the word changed.