You will sit unit this as part of Section A/ Paper 1 of the GCSE History exams.
You will have about 55 min. to answer 6 questions.
There are 44 marks available for this unit.
You will have a bullet point essay question. This will be 15% of your marks for this section.
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Kaiser Wilhelm II didn’t believe in democracy and disliked working with the Reichstag.

- He preferred to place his trust in the army, and often relied on military advisors to help him make important decisions.
- Kaiser Wilhelm disliked Democracy
- The Prussian army played an important role in Germany’s unification in 1871. Wilhelm II was strongly influenced by its prestige and power, and adopted a system of militarism — this meant strengthening Germany’s military (e.g. its army and navy) and using it to increase Germany’s influence.
- Wilhelm II wanted to make Germany a world power. He also believed in Germany’s traditional class system, where the upper classes held the most power.

Germany experienced Economic and Social change

- Germany’s economy expanded massively between 1890 and 1914.
- Production of iron and coal doubled, and by 1914 Germany produced two-thirds of Europe’s steel. It was also successful in new industries like chemical manufacturing.
In the early 20th century, Germany’s economy was modernised and the working classes grew.

- As a result of industrialisation, new jobs were created and the population in Germany’s cities grew. The working classes expanded and the upper classes had less economic power.
- The working classes played a larger part in German society, but their working conditions were poor. They had a growing sense of identity and wanted better representation.
- This contributed to a rise in socialism — a political ideology promoting equality, and public ownership of industry.

**Social problems Increased and Germans wanted Reforms**

- The growing population in cities and towns created new social problems. The working classes wanted better working and living conditions, and new and growing industries needed more regulation.

- Initially, the government didn’t want to pass reforms because it was afraid of encouraging socialist ideas. This meant that groups promising change became more popular.
- In 1887, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had just 11 seats in the Reichstag, but by 1903 it had 81.
- Trade unions (organisations set up by employees to defend their rights) became more popular too — by 1914, membership stood at around 3.3 million.
- The SPD had very different political views to the Kaiser. It wanted to improve conditions for the working classes and disagreed with the privileges held by elites like the military and the monarchy.
• The **German aristocracy** and Kaiser Wilhelm worried that the SPD wanted a revolution to overthrow the monarchy and destroy the German class system.
• Even though the SPD and trade unions promised to work with the government to introduce reforms, the **Kaiser still saw them as a threat**. He didn’t want to give more power to the German public.

**German Politics became more Unstable**

• **German politics had become more radical.** The upper classes feared the growth of the working classes and thought rapid industrialisation threatened their wealth and social status. As the SPD’s popularity increased, **extreme nationalist** groups also grew.
• This made it **harder for the Kaiser to govern Germany**. He was under pressure to introduce socialist reforms, but knew that doing so would risk angering his supporters.
• To make matters worse, the popularity of the SPD made it more difficult for the government to get legislation passed in the Reichstag.

**Wilhelm tried to Divert Attention away from Socialism**

• The Kaiser tried to reduce discontent among the working classes by introducing some limited social reforms, e.g. in 1891 the Workers’ Protection Act was introduced to improve safety in the workplace.
• In 1897, the Kaiser adopted a foreign policy called ‘**Weltpolitik**’ — this focused on expanding Germany’s territory and boosting the size of Germany’s army and navy.
• The Kaiser hoped this would **distract attention from socialism** and increase support for the monarchy and the military. It would also help to make Germany a world power.

**The Navy Laws made people feel Patriotic**

• In 1898, the first Navy Law was passed. Its eventual aim was to build up Germany’s navy to rival Great Britain’s. It increased Germany’s fleet to include 19 **battleships**.
• In 1900, the **Reichstag** passed another Navy Law, which put a 17 year navy expansion programme into place.
• The government used **propaganda** to promote the Navy Laws and inspire **patriotism** among the German people. The laws were popular, and socialist opposition to them was seen as **unpatriotic**. In the elections of 1907, the SPD lost 36 seats in the Reichstag.

**Impact of WW1**

**World War I had a Devastating Impact on Germany**

• Towards the end of the war, people in Germany were undergoing severe hardship. The Allies had set up naval blockades which prevented imports of food and essential goods — by 1918, many people faced starvation.
• Public opinion had turned against Kaiser Wilhelm II and there were calls for a **democracy**. Germany’s people were war-weary — they were tired of fighting and wanted an end to the war.
There was widespread unrest:

- In November 1918, some members of the **German navy rebelled** and refused to board their ships.
- In Hanover, German troops refused to control rioters.
- A Jewish communist called Kurt Eisner encouraged a general uprising, which sparked mass **strikes** in Munich.

**Social Unrest turned into Revolution**

- By November 1918, the situation in Germany was almost a civil war. A huge public protest was held in Berlin, and members of the SPD (Social Democratic Party) called for the Kaiser’s **resignation**.
- Kaiser Wilhelm **abdicated** (resigned) on 9th November 1918. On the same day, two different socialist parties — the Social Democratic Party and the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) — declared Germany a **republic**. A republic is a country ruled without a monarch — power is held by the people via elected representatives.
- On November 10th, all the state leaders that had been appointed by the monarchy left their posts. New revolutionary state governments took over instead. The monarchy had been abolished and Germany had the chance to become a democracy. Germany was made up of 18 states, and each had its own government.
- The national government decided national affairs, and state governments dealt with more local affairs.
- On 11th November 1918, a ceasefire to end the First World War was agreed. The Allies (Britain, France and the USA) signed an **armistice** (truce) with Germany.
- The new republic was under pressure to sign. The government didn’t think Germany could continue fighting — its **people were starving** and **military morale was low**.
- The armistice wasn’t supported by some right-wing Germans, **who saw the truce as a betrayal**. They believed Germany could still win the war.

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**The Weimar Republic**

- **President**
  - Elected **every 7 years**.
  - Chooses the **Chancellor** and is **head of the army**.
  - Can **dissolve** the Reichstag, call new elections and **suspend** the constitution.

- **Reichstag**
  - The new German **Parliament**.
  - Members are elected **every 4 years** using **proportional representation**.

- **Reichsrat**
  - Second (less powerful) house of parliament.
  - Consists of members from each **local region**.
  - Can **delay measures** passed by the Reichstag.

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The Weimar Republic was formed

- The Council of People’s Representatives organised elections in January 1919 to create a new parliament. Germany was now a democracy — the people would say how the country was run.
- In February 1919, the members of the new Reichstag met at Weimar to create a new **constitution** for Germany.

This was the beginning of a new period of Germany’s history that historians call the Weimar Republic.

- The new constitution was designed to be **as fair as possible**. Even very small political parties were given seats in the Reichstag if they got 0.4% of the vote or above.
- The constitution **allowed women to vote for the first time**, and lowered the voting age to 20 — more Germans could vote and the German public had greater power.

…but the Constitution had Weaknesses

- Proportional representation meant that even **parties with a very small number of votes were guaranteed to get into the Reichstag**. This meant it was difficult to make decisions because there were so many parties, and they all had different points of view.
- When a decision couldn’t be reached, the **President could suspend the constitution** and pass laws without the Reichstag’s consent.
- This power was only supposed to be used in an **emergency**, but became a useful way of **getting around disagreements** that took place in the Reichstag. This meant it undermined the new democracy.

The Treaty of Versailles

- Article 231 of the treaty said Germany **had to take the blame for the war** — the War-Guilt Clause.
- Germany’s armed forces were reduced to **100,000 men**. They weren’t allowed any armoured vehicles, aircraft or submarines, and could only have six warships.
- Germany was forced to pay **£6600 million in reparations** — payments for the damage caused by German forces in the war. The amount was decided in 1921 but was changed later.
- **Germany lost its empire** — areas around the world that used to belong to Germany were now called mandates. They were put under the control of countries on the winning side of the war by the League of Nations — an organisation which aimed to settle international disputes peacefully.
- The German military was banned from the Rhineland — an area of Germany on its western border with France. This left Germany open to attack from the west.

The Treaty of Versailles caused resentment towards the Weimar Republic

- Germans called the treaty a ‘**Diktat**’ (a treaty forced upon Germany), and many blamed Ebert for accepting its terms.
- Some Germans believed the armistice was a mistake and that Germany could have won the war. They felt ‘**stabbed in the back**’ by the Weimar politicians, who brought the Treaty of Versailles upon Germany unnecessarily.
• The Treaty of Versailles played an important part in the failure of the Weimar Republic. It harmed the Republic’s popularity, and created economic and political unrest that hindered the government for years.

The Years of Unrest

There was Widespread Discontent in Germany.

• By 1919, thousands of Germans were poor and starving, and an influenza epidemic had killed thousands.
• Many Germans denied they had lost the war and blamed the ‘November Criminals’ who had agreed to the armistice and the Treaty of Versailles.
• Others who were blamed for losing the war included communists and Jews.
• The government was seen as weak and ineffective — the Treaty of Versailles made living conditions worse.
• The government faced threats from left-wing and right-wing political groups:

The Extreme Left

• In January 1919, communists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg tried to take over Berlin.
• They took control of important buildings like newspaper headquarters, and 50,000 workers went on strike in support of the left-wing revolution. This became known as the Spartacist Revolt.
• The government asked for help from the right-wing Freikorps (ex-German soldiers) to stop the rebellion. Over 100 workers were killed. The Freikorps’ use of violence caused a split on the Left between the Social Democratic Party and the communists.

The Extreme Right

• In March 1920, some of the Freikorsps themselves took part in the Kapp Putsch (‘Putsch’ means revolt) — led by Wolfgang Kapp. They wanted to create a new right-wing government.
• The Freikorps marched into Berlin to overthrow the Weimar regime. But German workers opposed the putsch and staged a general strike. Berlin was paralysed and Kapp was forced to give up.
• Even after the putsch failed, threats to the government remained. In 1922, some former Freikorps members assassinated Walter Rathenau — he’d been Foreign Minister and was Jewish.
By 1923, Germany could no longer meet the reparations payments set out by the Treaty of Versailles.

France and Belgium decided to take Germany’s resources instead, so they occupied the Ruhr — the richest industrial part of Germany. This gave them access to Germany’s iron and coal reserves. The occupation led to fury in Germany, and caused a huge strike in the Ruhr.

German industry was devastated again. Germany tried to solve her debt problem by printing more money, but this plunged the economy into hyperinflation.

In 1918, an egg cost ¼ of a Mark. By November 1923, it cost 80 million Marks. In 1923 Germany Couldn’t Pay its Reparations.

Hyperinflation happens when production can’t keep up with the amount of money in circulation, so the money keeps losing its value.

By 1923, even basic necessities were hard to get hold of. The German people were undergoing immense hardship, which they’d now come to associate with the rise of the Weimar Republic.

Germany’s currency became worthless. Nobody wanted to trade with Germany, so shortages of food and goods got worse.

Bank savings also became worthless. The hardest hit were the middle classes.

Table shows the cost of a loaf of bread from 1918 to 1923

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Adolf Hitler became the Voice of the German Workers’ Party. Hitler began his political career in the German Workers’ Party.

Hitler joined the German Workers’ Party in January 1919, when he was still in the German army.

He became known for his talent as a passionate and skilled speaker, and crowds gathered to hear him talk.

In 1920, the party was re-branded as the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (the Nazi Party).

In July 1921, Hitler became its leader.

The party had around 60 members in 1919. By the end of 1920, it had around 2000.

As the Nazi Party grew in popularity, it established an identity that appealed to as many people as possible:

In February 1920, the Nazi Party promoted its policies in the ‘Twenty-Five Point Programme’. The Programme stressed German superiority and promoted anti-Semitism (prejudice against Jews).

The party wanted to raise pensions and improve health and education — but only for Germans. It also rejected the Treaty of Versailles. Promoting German greatness gave the party a nationwide appeal.
• In 1921, Hitler founded his own party militia called the SA (‘storm troopers’). The SA were political thugs — they carried out violent anti-Semitic attacks and intimidated rival political groups.
• Many people were scared of them, but some Germans admired them. The militia also gave many ex-soldiers a job and a purpose.

The Impact of the Depression

In October 1929, the Wall Street stock market in America crashed.

• It sparked an international economic crisis (the Great Depression) and meant the USA couldn’t afford to prop up the German economy any longer.
• Germany’s economic recovery between 1924 and 1929 was built on unstable foundations. The biggest problem was that it was dependent on loans from the USA, which had been agreed in the Dawes Plan.
• After the Wall Street Crash, the USA couldn’t afford to lend Germany money anymore. It also wanted some old loans to be repaid.

Germany’s economy collapsed without US aid.

• Industrial production declined — factories closed and banks went out of business.
• There was mass unemployment. In October 1929 1.6 million people were out of work, and by February 1932 there were over 6 million.
• The government also cut unemployment benefits — it couldn’t afford to support the large numbers of Germans out of work. This made many Germans angry with the government.
• By 1932, many parts of society were discontent with the Weimar government. Its failure to deal with unemployment meant it lost some backing from the working classes who’d been a key part of its support.
Who voted for the Nazis?

- The Nazis promised a more prosperous and less humiliating future, which was very popular among the German people — by 1930, membership had grown to over 300,000. After the onset of the Depression, the Nazi Party’s popularity soared. Hitler’s promise to make Germany great again appealed to the growing ranks of unemployed and young people who wanted a brighter future.
- Some people also supported the Nazis’ anti-communist and anti-Jewish views. Communists and Jews were useful scapegoats for Germany’s economic problems and gave Germans someone to blame.
- Some wealthy businessmen who had lost out in the Great Depression turned to the Nazi Party.
- They approved of the Nazis’ anti-communist stance and wanted the economic prosperity Hitler had promised.

Nazi Party organisation

- Hitler’s private army, the SA, gave the party a military feel, which made it seem organised and disciplined.
- His authority over the SA and his undisputed role as head of the Nazi Party made the Nazis seemed strong in comparison to the Weimar government.
- Propaganda was very efficient. It often focused on regional issues and targeted specific groups. This made individuals feel valued by the Nazi Party and stole votes from smaller parties.

Hitler’s Personality attracted Support

- Interviews with Germans who lived through this period suggest that Hitler’s personality was an important factor in the Nazis’ popularity.
- Hitler was patriotic and energetic, and was able to effectively get across his enthusiasm to his supporters. His speeches brought hope to those who listened.
- In the 1932 election campaigns, Hitler was depicted as Germany’s saviour. He stood up to the Weimar government and opposed communism.
- He came across as a strong leader, which created a sharp contrast with the politicians of the Weimar governments. Hitler’s authority over the SA and his undisputed role as head of the Nazi Party attracted support — many Germans had now lost faith in democracy.

Hitler’s Rise to Power

- Hitler Gained Power with the aid of a Political Deal
- By April 1932, conditions had worsened. The country was desperate for a strong government.
- President Hindenburg had to stand for re-election because his term of office had run out. He was a national hero, but Hitler decided to run against him. Despite claiming he’d win easily, Hindenburg didn’t win a majority in the first election. In the second ballot he won 53%, beating Hitler’s 36.8%. 

• **In July 1932, the Nazis won 230 seats** in the elections for the Reichstag — more than any other party. Hitler demanded to be made Chancellor, but Hindenburg didn’t trust Hitler and refused to appoint him.
• Then in the election of November 1932, the Nazis seemed to be losing popularity — they lost 34 seats.
• But Hitler struck a deal with another politician, **Franz von Papen** — if Papen would persuade Hindenburg to make Hitler Chancellor, Hitler would make Papen Vice-Chancellor.
• Hindenburg agreed to Papen’s suggestion, thinking that he could control Hitler. But Hitler used his new powers to call another election in March 1933, hoping to make the Nazis even stronger in the Reichstag.

The Nazis used Dirty Tricks to Win in 1933

• They **controlled the news media**, and opposition meetings were banned.
• They used the **SA to terrorise opponents**.
• When a **fire broke out in the Reichstag building**, Hitler blamed the communists. He used the fire to claim that communists were a threat to the country and to whip up anti-communist feelings. Hitler was even given emergency powers to deal with the supposed communist threat — he used these powers to intimidate communist voters.
• **The Nazis won 288 seats but didn’t have an overall majority.** So Hitler simply made the Communist Party (who had 81 seats) illegal.
• This gave him enough support in Parliament to bring in the **Enabling Act**, passed with threats and bargaining in March 1933. This let him govern for four years without Parliament.
• **Trade unions were banned** in May 1933. Then in July 1933, all political parties, apart from the Nazi party, were banned. Germany had become a one-party state.

The Nazis Consolidate Power

The SA was a Threat to Hitler

• The SA had helped Hitler come to power, but Hitler now saw it as a threat.
• Its members were very loyal to **Ernst Röhm**, the SA’s leader. Hitler was worried that Röhm was becoming too powerful — by 1934 the SA had more members than the German army. The SA was also **unpopular** with the leaders of the German army and with some ordinary Germans.

Night of the Long Knives

• Ernst Röhm was the biggest threat to Hitler, but Hitler was also worried about other members of the Nazi Party who disagreed with his views.
• On the 29th-30th June 1934, **Hitler sent men to arrest or kill Röhm** and other leaders of the SA. Hitler also used this opportunity to remove some of his political opponents. Altogether, several hundred people were killed or imprisoned.
• Hitler claimed that those who had been killed had been plotting to overthrow the government, so he declared their murders legal.
• The ‘**Night of the Long Knives’** — Hitler removes his enemies
• Most Germans wouldn’t have known exactly what had happened on the ‘Night of the Long Knives’ until a few days later, when Hitler declared the events legal.
• Even then, there was little outcry. It’s likely that some people believed Hitler’s claims that the violence was necessary to protect the country.
• **Others were too scared to speak out.**
• This became known as the ‘Night of the Long Knives’, and was a triumph for Hitler.
• It stamped out all potential opposition within the Nazi Party and sent a powerful message to the party about Hitler’s ruthlessness and brutality. It also showed that Hitler was now free to act above the law.

**Hitler took full control of the government**

• In August 1934, Hindenburg died. Hitler used the opportunity to **combine the posts of Chancellor and President, and also made himself Commander-in-Chief of the army.**
• He called himself Der Führer (the leader) — this was the beginning of the dictatorship.
• At this point, Germany was reorganised into a number of provinces. Each province was called a Gau (plural: Gaue), with a Gauleiter (a loyal Nazi) in charge of each.
• Above them were the Reichsleiters, who advised Hitler, e.g. Goebbels who was in charge of propaganda, and Himmler who was chief of the German police.
• At the top and in absolute control was the Führer — Hitler.
• Every aspect of life was carefully controlled, and only loyal Nazis could be successful.

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**The Nazi State**

**Germany became a Police State**

• The Nazis wanted complete control over the machinery of government and people’s lives. Hitler’s **Enabling Act of 1933** allowed the government to read people’s mail, listen in on their phone calls, and search their homes without notice.
• The **Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich** (1934) gave the Nazis total power over local governments.
• There were laws to sack civil servants who didn’t support the Nazis and accept their rules. The Nazis also made changes to the justice system. Judges didn’t have to be ‘fair’ and unbiased. Instead, they were expected to make rulings that were in line with Nazi Party policy.
• The **Sicherheitsdienst** (SD) was the Nazi intelligence service. It was initially run by Reinhard Heydrich — he aimed to bring every German under continual supervision.

**People could be Terrorised into Conforming**

• The government was also prepared to use terror and even violence against the German people.
• The **SS (Schutzstaffel)** began as a bodyguard for Hitler. It expanded massively under the leadership of Himmler during the 1930s. Its members were totally loyal to Hitler, and feared for their cruelty.
• Himmler was also in charge of the secret police — **the Gestapo.** The Gestapo’s job was to protect the German public, but their methods included harsh interrogations and imprisonment without trial.
• Local wardens were employed to make sure Germans were loyal to the Nazis. Members of the public were encouraged to report disloyalty. Many were arrested by the Gestapo as a result.
• After 1933, **concentration camps** were created across Germany and its territories to hold political prisoners and anybody else considered dangerous to the Nazis. Some of these were later turned into death camps.

**Not everyone lived in Constant Terror**

• Most Germans were prepared to go along with the new regime. Some people accepted the new rules out of fear.
• Others went along with them because they believed in their aims, even if they didn’t approve of the Nazis’ brutal methods.

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**Nazi Propaganda**

**Propaganda aims to Control how people Think**

• Propaganda means spreading information that influences how people think and behave.
• It gives only certain points of view and often leaves out important facts.
• The Nazis used powerful propaganda to get the support of the German people. Dr Joseph Goebbels was in overall charge of the Nazis’ ‘propaganda machine’.

**What did the Nazis use propaganda for?**

• Nazi propaganda was used to unite the German people and convince them that the **Nazis would make Germany strong**.
• Germans were encouraged to hate the countries that signed the Treaty of Versailles.
• The Nazis said Germany should fight to get back the territory ‘stolen’ by the treaty.
• Goebbels created the **Hitler Myth**, which made Hitler seem like a god and the saviour of Germany. This was the ‘cult of the Führer’. A popular slogan was ‘**One people, one empire, one leader**’.
• Many Germans devoted their lives to Hitler.
• The Nazis’ propaganda also said that Jews and communists were the biggest cause of Germany’s problems. One Nazi paper claimed that Jews murdered children for the Passover Feast.
• The Nazis encouraged a return to traditional **German values and a revival of traditional German culture**.

**Nazis used the Media as a tool of Propaganda**

• The Nazis wanted to surround people with their propaganda. They used **censorship** to prevent Germans from seeing or hearing anything that gave a different message.
• They sold cheap radios and controlled broadcasts.
• By 1939 approximately 70% of households had a radio, which gave the Nazis a voice in most people’s homes.
• In 1933, only 3% of German daily newspapers were controlled by the Nazis. By 1944, this had risen to 82%. This meant the Nazis could decide what was published in the papers.
• The Nazis also produced hundreds of films. Many films showed the strengths of the Nazis and Hitler, and the weakness of their opponents.
Another method of spreading propaganda was through posters showing the evil of Germany’s enemies and the power of Hitler. Propaganda also let Germans know what was expected of them.

**Nazi propaganda could involve Spectacular Displays**

- The Nazis used public rallies to spread their propaganda. The annual Nuremberg Rallies focused on speeches by leading Nazis, like Hitler and Goebbels. The 1934 **Nuremberg Rally** was recorded by Riefenstahl in her film ‘Triumph of the Will’.
- One million people attended the 1936 rally. There were displays of lights and flags to greet the arrival of Hitler. These made him look more powerful.
- Sporting events like the 1936 **Berlin Olympics** were used to show off German wealth and power. But the success of non-Aryan athletes like African-American Jesse Owens (who won four gold medals) undermined Hitler’s message.
- Nazi power was also shown through art and architecture, and grand new buildings appeared in Nuremberg and Berlin.

**Impact of Propaganda**

- Surprisingly, it’s quite difficult to tell how effective Nazi propaganda was.
- Some historians say Nazi propaganda was better at reinforcing people’s existing attitudes than making them believe something different.
- Many Germans felt angry and humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles, so Hitler’s promises to reverse the treaty and make Germany great again were very popular.
- After the political weakness of the Weimar Republic, people found the image of Hitler as a strong leader appealing. So the ‘Hitler Myth’ was very effective and made Hitler an extremely popular leader.
- Anti-Jewish and anti-communist attitudes already existed in Germany before the Nazis came to power.
- The Weimar Republic was seen as too liberal by many — they thought standards in Germany had slipped. These people liked the promise of a return to traditional German values.
- The Depression had left many German people in poverty. This made them easier to persuade, and the Nazis’ promises of help extremely popular.

### Nazi Social Policies

**Hitler wanted to Reduce the Church’s Power**

- In the 1930s, most Germans were Christians and the Church was very influential. During the Weimar Republic, the state and the Church had worked closely together and the Church was involved in national matters like education.
- Some prominent Nazis were anti-Christian and Nazi ideology disagreed with the role the Church had traditionally had in society.
- Hitler thought religion should comply with the state and wanted churches to promote Nazi ideals. He was also worried that some members of the Church might publicly oppose Nazi policies.
- The Nazi Party was careful to maintain support from the Catholic and Protestant Churches during its rise to power because they were so popular. However, as Hitler consolidated his totalitarian state, his control over churches increased.
The Catholic Church was Persecuted

- In July 1933, an agreement called the Concordat was signed between the Pope and the Nazi government. Hitler promised not to interfere with the Catholic Church if the Church agreed to stay out of German politics.
- The Catholic Church was now banned from speaking out against the Nazi Party, but Hitler soon broke his side of the deal. Comment and Analysis The Concordat reassured Christians that Hitler was consolidating ties with the Catholic Church, but he was actually restricting its power.
- The Nazi Party started to restrict the Catholic Church’s role in education.
- In 1936 all crucifixes were removed from schools. By 1939 Catholic education had been destroyed.
- The Nazis began arresting priests in 1935 and put them on trial.
- Catholic newspapers were suppressed and the Catholic Youth group was disbanded.
- In 1937, the Pope spoke out against Hitler in a letter to Catholic Churches in Germany. The view of the Church had changed, but many German Catholics were too scared to speak out against the Nazi Party. They tried to protect their religion by avoiding confrontation with the Nazis.

Women were expected to raise Large Families

- The Nazis didn’t want women to have too much freedom. They believed the role of women was to provide children and support their families at home.
- Women were banned from being lawyers in 1936, and the Nazis did their best to stop them following other professions.
- The League of German Maidens spread the Nazi idea that it was an honour to produce large families for Germany. Nazis gave awards to women for doing this and encouraged more women to marry by offering financial aid to married couples.
- Women were expected to dress plainly and were discouraged from wearing make-up and smoking. At school, girls studied subjects like cookery. It was stressed that they should choose ‘Aryan’ husbands.

Youth Movements helped produce Committed Nazis

- Hitler knew that loyalty from young people was essential if the Nazis were to remain strong.
- Youth movements were a way of teaching children Nazi ideas — so they would be loyal to the Nazi Party when they grew up.

Hitler Youth

- The Hitler Youth was founded in 1926. Boys aged fourteen and over were recruited to the movement. It became compulsory in 1936 and lasted until 1945.
- Boys wore military-style uniforms and took part in physical exercise preparing for war. High-achieving boys might be sent to Hitler Schools to be trained as loyal Nazi leaders.
- They also went on camping trips and held sports competitions. Some of those who took part said the organisation was fun, made them feel valued and encouraged a sense of responsibility.
League for Girls

- The League of German Maidens was the female branch of the Hitler Youth, aimed at girls aged between fourteen and eighteen.
- Girls were trained in **domestic skills like sewing and cooking**.
- Sometimes they took part in physical activities like camping and hiking. This gave girls new opportunities that were normally reserved for boys.

Education across Germany was ‘Nazified’

- Education in schools meant learning Nazi **propaganda**. Most teachers joined the Nazi Teachers’ Association and were trained in Nazi methods. Children had to report teachers who did not use them.
- Subjects were rewritten to fit in with Nazi ideas. **Children were taught to be anti-Semitic (prejudiced against Jews)** — for example, Biology courses stated that Jews were biologically inferior to ‘Aryans’. History courses explained that the First World War was lost because of Jews and communists.
- Physical education became more important for boys to prepare them for joining the army. They sometimes even played games with live ammunition.
- In universities, students **burned anti-Nazi and Jewish books**, and Jewish lecturers were sacked. Jewish teachers were also dismissed from public schools.

Nazi Economic Policies

Public Works

- Hitler started a huge programme of public works, which helped to reduce unemployment — e.g. from 1933 jobs were created as a result of the construction of **autobahns** (motorways).
- All men between 18 and 25 could be recruited into the **National Labour Service** and given jobs. Industrial output increased and unemployment fell.
- Hitler also brought in **military conscription** and encouraged German industry to manufacture more ships, aircraft, tanks and weapons for the military. This **rearmament** meant further falls in unemployment.
- **Trade unions** were banned, and workers had to join the Nazis’ Labour Front instead. The Labour Front acted like one big trade union, but it was controlled by the Nazis. Workers couldn’t go on strike or campaign for better conditions, and wages were relatively low.

Economic Success

- The Nazis made efforts to maintain the support of German workers. They wanted workers to feel important and believe that they were an essential part of the people.
- During the **Depression**, one third of all workers had been unemployed. Many Germans had been desperate, so life under the Nazis did feel genuinely better for them.
- The Nazis introduced the Volkswagen (the ‘people’s car’) as a luxury people could aspire to own.
- They also introduced ‘**Strength through Joy**’ — a scheme which provided workers with cheap holidays and leisure activities.
• The ‘Beauty of Labour’ scheme encouraged factory owners to improve conditions for workers. ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ means a community of people working hard towards the same aims.
• Many in the middle classes also felt better off, e.g. small-business owners were able to advance more in society than previously.
• But even though many people felt better off, workers and small-business owners had lost out in some ways
  • The cost of living rose by about 25% — but wages didn’t go up.
  • Workers didn’t have the right to strike or resign.
  • Small businesses had to pay high taxes.

The Nazi Economy had to Prepare for War

• Hitler transformed the German economy to prepare the country for war.
• A Four-Year Plan was started in 1936, concentrating on war preparations. The Nazis needed to quickly build up industries making weapons and chemicals, and increase Germany’s agricultural output.
• Hermann Göring was put in charge of the economy. He aimed to make Germany self-sufficient — this meant producing enough goods to not need imports from other countries.
• Many workers were retrained to do jobs that would help the war effort, such as producing weapons and working in chemical plants.
• But Hitler knew that ultimately Germany would need to conquer new territories and capture their resources to become genuinely self-sufficient.

The Outbreak of War forced Changes in the Economy

• When war broke out in 1939, the German economy wasn’t ready. More changes were needed.
• A quarter of the workforce was already working in war industries, especially weapons production. Two years later this had become three-quarters.
• A lot of German workers were conscripted into the army, so the Nazis had to use foreign workers to keep the economy going. This included civilians from occupied territories, prisoners of war and slave labourers
• Eventually, in 1942, after several years of fighting, Hitler put Albert Speer in charge of the war economy.
• Speer focused the economy completely on the war effort.
• He improved efficiency and greatly increased weapons production.
• Germany also used raw materials from occupied lands to support its production.

Daily Life in Germany was Affected by the War Germans had to make sacrifices to help the war effort:

• Wages were less than they had been before the Nazis took control and working hours increased.
• Rationing affected people’s quality of life. Food and clothes rationing began in 1939, but while Germany was winning the war, most goods could still be bought easily.
• More women and children had to work, especially after 1941 when German forces suffered some heavy defeats in Russia. By 1944, 50% of the German workforce were women (up from 37% in 1939).
• Rationing meant that some people ate better than they had before the war, though it soon became impossible to eat meat every day.
Later in the war, things became harder for ordinary Germans. By 1942, German civilians were living on rations of bread, vegetables and potatoes — these rations decreased as the war progressed (and were much less than British rations).

**The Nazis Oppressed people they Didn’t Like**

- Most Nazis believed that Germans were members of a superior ancient race called the ‘Aryans’. Hitler thought people who were not pure Aryans (e.g. Jews) did not belong in Germany, and had no part to play in the new German Empire.
- He wanted to 'cleanse' the German people by removing any groups he thought ‘inferior’. Jews were especially targeted, but action was also taken against other groups:
  - Hitler always claimed the **Jews were responsible for many of Germany’s problems**.
  - Many Romani (gypsies) and Slavs (an ethnic group from central and eastern Europe) were sent to concentration camps. The Nazis believed that they were racially inferior.
  - **The Nazis practised eugenics policies** — they wanted to create a strong race by removing all genetic ‘defects’ from its gene pool. Many people with mental and physical disabilities were murdered or sterilised. Many people of mixed race were also sterilised against their will.
  - **Homosexual** people were sent to concentration camps in their thousands. In 1936 Himmler, Head of the SS, began the Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion.

**Nazis Changed the Law to Discriminate against Jews**

- In 1933, the SA organised a national boycott of Jewish businesses, which resulted in Nazi-led violence against Jews. The violence wasn't popular with the German people, so the Nazis decided to use the legal system to persecute Jews instead.
- Over time, the number of jobs that Jews were banned from gradually increased.
- The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 were based on the idea that Jews and Germans were biologically different.

They removed many legal rights from Jews and encouraged ‘Aryan’ Germans to see them as inferior.

- **The Nuremberg Laws stopped Jews being German citizens.**
  - They banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany.
  - They also banned sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews. Some Jews were given passports enabling them to leave Germany but preventing them from returning. The Nazis' racial policies aimed to isolate Jews from the rest of society. ‘Aryan’ Germans were even encouraged to break off friendships with Jews and avoid any contact with Jewish people.
- Jews were later forced to close or sell their businesses, and they were banned from all employment.
- By 1938, all Jewish children had been banned from attending German schools and Jews were no longer allowed in many public places, including theatres and exhibitions.
The Holocaust

The Final Solution

• Large numbers of German Jews had been sent to concentration camps since the Nazis came to power. After the conquest of countries in western Europe, many more Jews had been deported to camps.
• **When Germany invaded Poland and the Soviet Union, even more Jews fell under Nazi control.**
  - The Nazis planned to deport them to a Jewish reservation in German-occupied Poland — but the idea was dropped because the area couldn’t possibly hold all of Europe’s Jews.
• **Instead Jews were to be killed. This was described as the ‘final solution to the Jewish question.’**
  - As a temporary measure, the Nazis created ghettos — small areas of towns and cities where Jews were to be gathered together, away from the rest of the population.
  - Conditions in the ghettos were terrible. Many people died of disease or starved. Some were used for slave labour, e.g. in weapons factories.
  - After the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, **Einsatzgruppen** followed the German army. These were units of SS soldiers whose job was to murder ‘enemies’ of the Nazi state in occupied eastern Europe. They were a key part of the final solution and killed in huge numbers, especially in Poland and the Soviet Union.

Death Camps were built to Kill People on an Industrial Scale

• **To slaughter** on the scale the Nazis required, death camps were built in Eastern Europe. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, was in overall charge of this operation.
  - The camps included gas chambers to carry out the mass murder, and crematoria to burn the bodies.
• **The plan was to kill around 11 million people** — all of the Jews living in Nazi-controlled territory.
  - People were transported to the camps from all over Nazi-occupied Europe. They could take luggage and even paid for their own train tickets — the Nazis wanted to hide their intentions to prevent panic.
  - Mainly Jewish people were killed, but other groups were targeted as well, for example **Slavs (e.g. Russians and Poles), Romani, black people, homosexuals, disabled people and communists.**

It’s Hard to understand How this Mass Murder happened

• The world only discovered the horror of the **death camps** as the Allies advanced in 1945. Some historians claim there’s evidence leaders like Churchill were told about the camps — but didn’t believe the facts.
  - By the end of the war, the Nazis had killed approximately **6 million Jews** and countless other people.
  - Before the war ended, orders went out to destroy the camps — but there wasn’t time.
  - After the war, people around the world found it hard to believe that this inhuman, cold-blooded extermination had taken place, and that so many soldiers were involved.
It has been argued that they might have gone along with the Nazi leadership for various reasons:

• The Nazi guards felt they had to ‘do their duty’ and obey orders. They might have feared their leaders, or just felt that obeying orders was the right thing to do.
• Jews may not have been regarded as fully human — so killing them didn’t matter to guards.