

World War Two

ACTIVITIES PACKAGE: ***THE RISE OF HITLER***



LEARNING GOALS:

- ▶ To understand the conditions in post-war Germany.
- ▶ To understand the early life of Hitler.
- ▶ To understand the steps Hitler took to gain power.



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Following World War One Germany experienced significant change. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles created much anger and the Depression of the 1930s gave rise to extreme change in the form of Hitler. This package details post-war Germany and the rise of Hitler.



Activity 1: Germany

Using your text, or the internet, explain the conditions in Germany following WW I.

Problem	Description of Effect on Germany
Treaty of Versailles	
Economic Problems: Inflation	
Depression and Unemployment	
Political Instability	

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Activity 2: Hitler's Youth

Read the article below entitled, "Hitler and the Nazi Party," then answer the questions on the following pages.

What of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party? Who was he and who were they? How could a "funny little man" with an eighth grade education carry his party from its small beginnings in a Munich beer cellar to its dominant position in world politics in fourteen years? Was Hitler peculiar or was it his success that was unusual?

Adolf Hitler was born in Austria on April 20, 1889. He was the fourth of six children. The first three children died in a diphtheria epidemic in 1888. A fifth child died of measles at age six. Only Adolf and Paula, born in 1896 survived. Hitler's stepfather, a custom's official, died when Adolf was fourteen. Hitler's first years in school were very successful and he got all A's, but at age eleven he entered a technical school where his grades became so poor that he left school at sixteen.



Back row centre (BBC)

Hitler received unusual attention from his mother, perhaps to compensate for the loss of the first three children. She always encouraged him, even spoiled him. Hitler's mother died of cancer in 1907. Hitler disagreed with Dr. Block, the Jewish doctor, over the treatment of his mother, and blamed the doctors for his mother's death.

Hitler lived in Vienna from 1907—1913. In 1909 he applied for admission to the Academy of Art in Vienna and was rejected twice for lack of talent. He made a living by selling small paintings. Although he was eligible for military service in Austria, he managed to avoid it for four years.

In 1913 Hitler moved to Munich, Germany. Now twenty-four, he joined the German Army and took part in heavy fighting in France in World War I. In October 1916, he was wounded in the leg and sent back to Germany. After returning to the front lines in March 1917, he was the victim of a gas attack by the British in October 1918. Temporarily blinded, he was recovering in the hospital when the news reached him of the armistice.

Hitler had entered the military service as a quiet, reserved soldier. His commanding officer felt that Hitler had no capacity for leadership. He never rose above the rank of lance-corporal, although there were heavy losses in his units. Nonetheless, Hitler had demonstrated bravery and was decorated with the Iron Cross, which was most unusual for someone of such low rank.

The war had been the greatest experience in Hitler's life. He loved the comradeship, discipline and excitement of army life. From these experiences emerged the central ideas he was to pursue later: his belief in the inequality of races and individuals, the heroic virtues of war and the insistence that the German Army was never defeated in World War I.



In 1919 Adolf Hitler was thirty years old. He was out of work: actually he had never really worked. He returned to chaotic Munich, where he found many ex-servicemen's associations set up in opposition to those who "lost the war": profiteers, politicians, the German Navy and Jews who were blamed as those who "stabbed the army in the back." Hitler took a course in political instruction, which was given to soldiers and

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became an instruction officer himself. The quiet soldier of the recent war who felt speechless in a small group was changing character.

In September 1919, Hitler was asked by the army to investigate the German Workers Party. The party had been organized in March 1918 and had tried to join workers and nationalists. Hitler met with a few party members in Munich beer cellar, the Sterneckenbrau. Invited back, he joined the group as party member seven. Hitler believed he could aid in the party's growth.



In 1920, Hitler transformed the party to the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazis). The twenty-five point program of the party was announced on February 25, 1920. It seemed an obscure event, but future events proved it to be very significant.

By 1922 Hitler had become a well-known figure around Munich and in the state of Bavaria. He often hired a dozen beer halls and dashed from one to another to his speeches, he always hammered away at his basic themes: hatred of the Jews and Communists, the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, and the fact that the German Army had been sold out by pacifists and Jews.



One of his bitterest critics, Otto Strasser, wrote: *"Hitler responds to the vibration of the human heart with the delicacy of a seismograph... Adolf Hitler enters a hall. He sniffs the air. For a minute he gropes, feels his way, senses the atmosphere. Suddenly he bursts forth, his words go like an arrow to their target... he touches each private wound on the raw, liberating the mass unconscious, expressing the innermost aspiration, telling it what it most wants to hear."*

On November 8, 1923, Hitler and his followers attempted a Putsch (takeover of the government) in Munich. In the two-day struggle sixteen Nazis were killed. Hitler fled, but was captured on November 11. The Nazis movement was apparently over.

After a trial of twenty-four days, Hitler was given the minimum sentence of five years in jail. He was sent to Landsberg Prison near Munich. Prison life for Hitler was hardly a sobering experience. He grew fat, entertained visitors, and dictated a book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). Published in 1925, the book sold over 9000 copies that year.

Freed from prison in December 1924, Hitler found his party in shambles. The unsuccessful Putsch had taught him that the Nazis must gain power legally. All of Hitler's oratorical prowess was needed to rebuild the party and to recruit new memberships.

Who would want to join the Nazis? At this time Nazism united the disillusioned of every class: the army officer who could not find his role in civilian life, the ruined capitalist, the unemployed worker, the unemployed clerk, the university student who had flunked his examinations, and the incompetent lawyer or blundering doctor. All of these people could exchange their shabby clothes for the smart uniforms of the Nazi and seek new hope in Hitler's promises.

Hitler and the Nazis appealed to the common German person. He capitalized on the common struggles people faced and blamed it on common enemies, namely, the Jews and those who imposed the Treaty of Versailles on Germany. Historians disagree over the source of Hitler's anti-Semitism.

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The Nazis proclaimed that the salvation of the world depended on the German race; it was the symbol of all creative genius. The counter race was the Jews, and it was the Nazi duty to destroy the counter race. Hitler had explained it clearly in a Munich speech on July 28, 1932:

“The Jew has never founded any civilization, though he has destroyed hundreds. He possesses nothing of his own creation to which he can point, everything he has stolen. Foreign people, foreign workers build his temples; it is foreigners who shed their blood for him. He has not art of his own; bit by bit he has stolen it all from other peoples. He does not even know how to preserve the precious things others have created.”

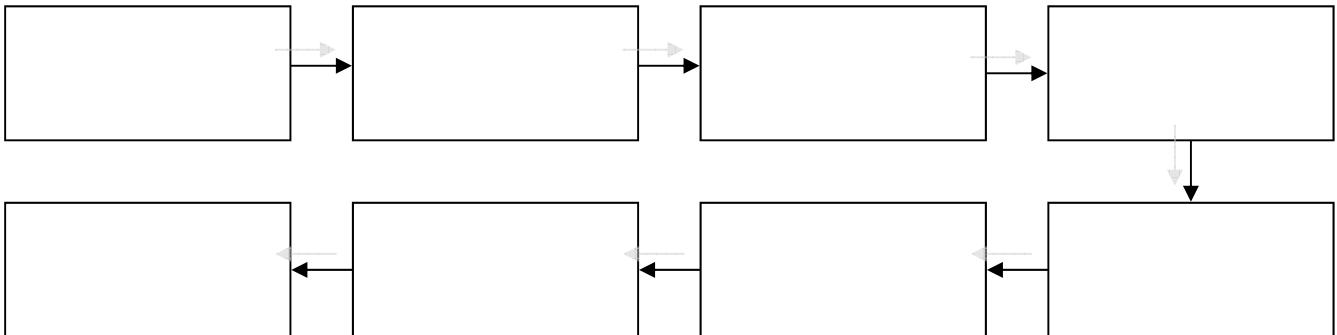
The Nazis operated as a state within a state. Hitler’s storm troopers (SA) policed Nazi meetings and often broke up opposition party meetings. The Nazis did everything possible to attract attention; they used slogans, posters and rallies. Party membership grew from 17 000 members in 1926 to upward 60 000 members in 1928.

Despite the activity and dynamism of the party, the political instability of 1924—1929 hurt the Nazis. Nazi representation in the German Parliament, the Reichstag, gradually declined. From 1924 to 1928 their representation in parliament dropped from 32 to 12. The party seemed on the way to permanent obscurity. Only a major calamity for the Weimar Republic (Germany) could ever make the Nazis a factor in the German political scene.

Answer each of the following questions.

Source Unknown.

- 1) Create a flow chart that details the early events in Hitler's life.



- 2) What was Hitler rejected from? What kind of effect did this have upon him?

- 3) What sort of experiences did Hitler encounter during the war? How did the war impact his life?

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4) Who did Hitler blame for the armistice?

5) What was Hitler's response to his investigation of the German Workers Party?

6) What was Hitler's message and how did he spread it? Explain how he grabbed the attention of the audience.



7) How did Hitler and his followers first attempt to gain power? How did he use his time in prison?

8) Identify 5 factors (in order) which you think contributed to Hitler's development as a dictator.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | |

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Activity 3: The Rise of Evil

Follow along with the lecture, "The Rise of Evil," and take the appropriate summary notes.

1) Hitler Becomes Chancellor



Hitler's Ideology

2) The Reichstag Fire



Hitler's System of Government

3) The Enabling Act

6) Oath of Loyalty to Hitler



4) The Night of Long Knives

5) The Death of President Hindenburg



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Activity 4: Hitler's Germany

Using your text, or the internet,
answer the following questions.

Answer each of the following questions.

- 1) Germany drastically changed under Hitler's rule. As soon as he gained power the transformation of Germany began. On the mindmap below identify the changes that took place in Germany once Hitler came to power (1933—1938).



**Hitler Comes
to Power**

- 2) Hitler had already begun to clamp down on the rights and freedoms of Jews before the start of the war. Write summary paragraphs on the following key events.
- 1st sentence introduces the author's main theme
 - The body of the paragraph includes the main points the author uses
 - The concluding sentence sums up the main idea of the author without introducing new information

Nuremberg Laws _____



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Kristallnacht _____



The S.S. St. Louis Incident _____



3) Could events such as Kristallnacht ever happen in our country? Explain.



Who's in the picture?