Lesson Three:

1. Read through the information below about the consequences of the Beer Hall Putsch and answer the following questions:
   a. What did Hitler do immediately after the Beer Hall Putsch?
   b. What was he put on trial for?
   c. How long was he sentenced for?
   d. What did he write whilst he was in prison?
   e. What were the three main consequences of the Munich Putsch for the Nazis?

2. Read Interpretation A (below). What does it suggest was the most important consequence of the Munich Putsch for the Nazis? Write an explanation that uses a quotation from the interpretation.

3. Read Source B (below). What does it suggest was the most important consequence of the Munich Putsch for the Nazis? Write an explanation that uses a quotation from the interpretation.

4. There was a great deal of interest across Germany in the events surrounding the Munich Putsch. Why did this make his trial a good opportunity for Hitler to spread the Nazi’s message?

5. What does Source B suggest was the overall aim of the Nazis before and after the Munich Putsch? Explain your answer using a quotation from the source.

6. In what ways could the Munich Putsch be seen as a propaganda victory for the Nazis?

7. Which of the three main consequences of the Munich Putsch do you think would be the most important in helping the Nazis gain power in the future, and why?

The Consequences of the Beer Hall Putsch

Hitler’s Trial and Imprisonment

Hitler fled to the nearby house of a friend, Ernst Hanfstaengl (1887-1975), where he was reportedly talked out of committing suicide. He hid in Hanfstaengl’s attic for two days but was arrested on November 11, 1923. Accused of high treason, Hitler was tried on February 26, 1924, and sentenced to five years in the Landsberg prison. Hitler’s popularity increased during his trial, as his defense speeches were printed in the newspapers. He served less than a year of his sentence, obtaining a pardon and early release on December 20, 1924.

Landsberg was a relatively comfortable prison, intended for inmates who were considered misguided rather than dangerous. Hitler was allowed to receive visitors as well as fan mail from admirers. Assisted by his deputy Rudolf Hess (1894-1987), Hitler produced the first volume of his political autobiography, “Mein Kampf” (“My Struggle”), in Landsberg. The book, first published in 1925, was dedicated to his early mentor Dietrich Eckart.
Aftermath

The Beer Hall Putsch had several significant consequences. First, it led to a split between Hitler and Ludendorff; the general considered Hitler a coward for sneaking away after the police had begun to fire. Second, Hitler decided that armed revolution was not the way to obtain power in Weimar Germany. After the failure of the putsch, he and the Nazi Party worked to manipulate the political system rather than plan another violent seizure of power.

Third, the putsch brought the Nazi Party to national attention in Germany. The deaths of the 16 party members were also a propaganda victory for the Nazis. The men became martyrs, remembered in the foreword to “Mein Kampf” and entombed in two “temples of honor” in downtown Munich. Hitler held an elaborate march every year on the anniversary of the putsch, retracing the route from the Bürgerbräukeller to the spot where the shots had been fired in 1923. A flag that had been stained with blood from the putsch became a symbol of Nazi ideology. Hitler used this so-called “Blutfahne,” or blood flag, to consecrate all new Nazi banners and flags.

Taken from History.com

Interpretation A

“The failed coup turned out to be quite a boon for Adolf Hitler. His trial brought him more attention and publicity than ever before. With a crowd of thousands- including press from around the world- watching the proceedings, Hitler made the most of this opportunity by going on the offensive.

Taking every chance to turn the subject away from the putsch itself, Hitler frequently made speeches about Germany’s postwar plight. He blamed the Jews, Marxism, and France for all of the country’s problems, repeatedly returning to his theme of hypernationalism. The conservative-leaning judges did nothing to stop Hitler or keep the focus on the attempted coup. The prosecutors, who had been threatened by Hitler’s student followers, shrank from challenging the defendant.”

(From History.com)

Interpretation B

“When I resume active work, it will be necessary to pursue a new policy. Instead of working to achieve power by an armed coup, we will have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag. If outvoting them takes longer than outshooting them, at least the result will be guaranteed by their own constitution. Sooner or later we shall have a majority, and after that- Germany!”

(from a letter, written by Hitler in 1924, whilst in prison after the Munich Putsch)