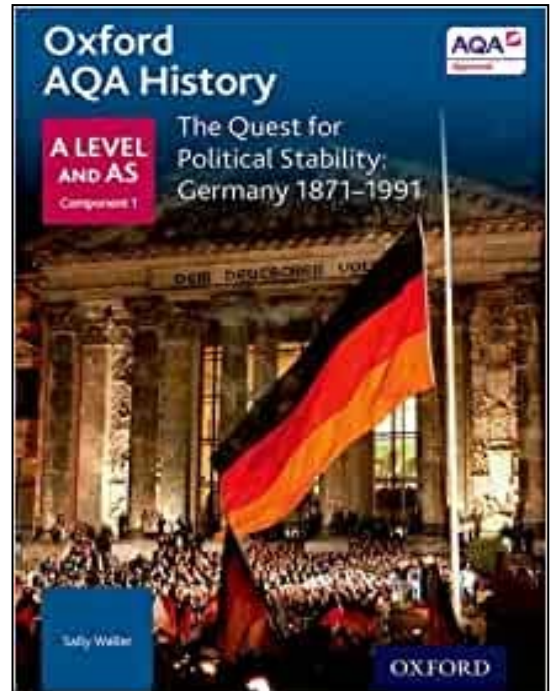
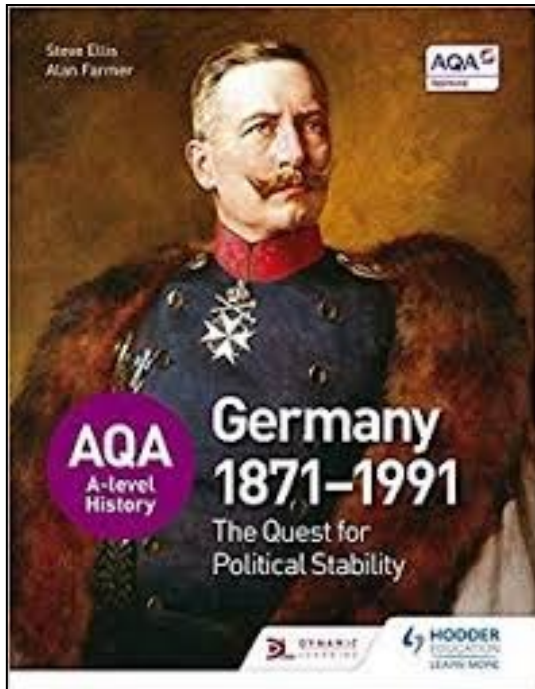


Barrow Hall College

AQA A-Level History



Germany Work Booklet

Unit 3: War, Revolution & Democracy 1914 - 1923

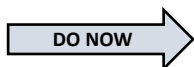
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Class:

Teacher:

How to use your Germany Workbook

Use the icons in your work booklet to guide you.



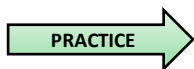
This is an activity for you to be getting on with independently as the lesson begins.



This is information you are being introduced to for the first time, make sure to read this as carefully as possible and highlight any key words or phrases.



These terms or phrases are key to understanding the topic we are studying make sure you know their meanings and that you feel comfortable using them.



This is your chance to work with the new information you are learning about, these short tasks will help develop your understanding of the topic of the lesson.



These short knowledge quizzes provide you with the opportunity to consolidate the key facts and figures from the lesson in one convenient place for revision.



At the conclusion of the lesson you will use this space to consider the enquiry question from the lesson and practice extended writing in your exercise book.



Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



DO NOW

Source A Wilhelm II's Proclamation of 6 August 1914.

To the German People

Ever since the foundation of our empire it has been the greatest endeavour for me and for my forefathers over the last 43 years to preserve peace in the world and to continue our powerful development in peace. But our enemies envy the success of our work. All the open and secret hostility from east and west and from beyond the sea we have endured conscious of our responsibility and power. But now these enemies want to humiliate us. They wish us to look on with folded arms as they prepare a malicious attack: they do not tolerate our standing side by side in determined loyalty with our allies who fight for their reputations as empire and with their humiliation we will lose our power and honour as well. Therefore the sword must now decide. In the midst of peace the enemy attacks us. Forward. To arms. Every moment of wavering, every hesitation is treason against the Fatherland. The existence or destruction of our re-created empire is now at stake, the very existence of German power and customs. We will resist to the last breath of air of man and horse. And we will win this fight even against a world of enemies. Germany has never lost when it has been united. Forward with God who will be with us as He was with our fathers.

How did Wilhelm justify the war (Source A)?

NEW INFO

The war, 1914–16

What problems did Germany face in the period 1914–16?

In 1914 all the political parties in Germany promised their support for the war. SPD leaders, who tended towards pacifism, could not ignore the fact that most of their supporters wanted to defend the Fatherland against perceived Allied aggression and the fear of Russia – regarded as a despotic bastion of reaction and the arch-enemy of all progressive forces. On 4 August 1914 Wilhelm, addressing the *Reichstag*, insisted that Germany had done all it could to avoid war and now drew its sword with a clear conscience. 'I know no parties any more, only Germans', he declared. All the party leaders agreed to a political truce for the duration of the war. The *Reichstag* passed **war credits** and then adjourned, leaving the conduct of the war to the government.

KEY TERMS

Complete the table below, explaining what each key phrase means

Key Term	Definition
War Credits	



Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



PRACTICE 1

How supportive were the Reichstag of the declaration of war?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



NEW INFO

Allied and Central Power strength

Germany's failure to achieve a quick victory in 1914 resulted in a war of attrition for which the country was militarily and economically unprepared and strategically ill-suited. This did not mean that defeat was inevitable. Germany had Europe's finest army and the world's second largest navy. The Central Powers – initially just Germany and Austria – had the advantage of interior lines of communication. Using their railway systems, they could move men from one front to another. Although the Allies (France, Russia and Britain) had more men, Russian forces were poorly equipped and led. Economically, Germany was Europe's strongest industrial power, producing two-thirds of the continent's steel and half its coal in 1914. As a result of the German advance in 1914, France lost its main industrial area. In October 1914 the Ottoman Empire joined the war on the Central Powers' side. Bulgaria did so in 1915.

However, on balance, the Allies were stronger. The Russian army was the largest in Europe, while Britain possessed the world's strongest navy. Britain and France could call on their large empires for support. The Allied naval blockade, begun in 1914, ensured that Germany was unable to acquire a range of goods it desperately needed. The Allies, meanwhile, were able to continue to trade worldwide. German overseas possessions, with the exception of East Africa, were quickly gobbled up. In 1915, Italy joined the war on the Allied side.



Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



PRACTICE 1

What advantages did the Central Powers have in the early stages of the War?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

What advantages did the Allied Powers have in the early stages of the War?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



NEW INFO

The domestic impact of the war

Despite the failure to secure a quick victory, dissident views were few in 1914–15. Germans remained united against the perceived threat posed by 'barbaric' Russia. Lulled into a false sense of security by official propaganda, most Germans remained confident of victory. Until mid-1916 Bethmann-Hollweg faced little opposition from the public or the *Reichstag*. He did his best to keep the SPD loyal. This meant keeping secret his expansionist war aims: he knew that the SPD opposed 'wars of conquest'.

Military rule

As the war progressed, Germany's military leaders were able to interfere in political and economic affairs, with only a limited degree of accountability. Army leaders justified intervention on the grounds of military necessity. Wilhelm II exerted little control over political and military affairs. His self-confidence seemed to desert him with the onset of war. Despite being supreme warlord he was kept in the dark about military developments and his advice was rarely sought. He thus became little more than a figurehead.

Mobilisation

The German government tried to ensure that all its citizens contributed to the war effort. The War Ministry decided which men should be conscripted and which exempted. In total, some 13 million men were called up to serve in the armed forces – 20 per cent of the population. Substitute workers, particularly young women, helped Germany cope with its labour shortage in agriculture and industry.

The economic front

Faced with the consequences of the British blockade, the German government tried to organise its economic production. Although economically strong, Germany was far from self-sufficient. It lacked cotton, rubber, nitrates, petroleum, copper, nickel and tin. It was also dependent on imported fertilisers, fats and oils – all essential if Germany's population was to be adequately fed. As early as August 1914 Germany established a War Raw Materials Department. This soon exercised vast power – directing labour, controlling the railways, introducing rationing and price controls, and allocating resources to industries competing for scarce raw materials. Scientists tried to produce substitute materials for goods of which Germany was short.

In the short term the measures taken to regulate Germany's war economy were reasonably successful. However, two crucial economic weaknesses threatened to erode Germany's capacity to continue the war:

- Germany had a huge financial deficit pre-1914 and once war started it soared. Bethmann-Hollweg's government, rather than raise taxes, simply printed money. This fuelled **inflation**.
- The blockade, a series of poor harvests, problems of transportation, shortage of chemicals for fertilisers, and mass conscription led to a serious decline in grain production. In January 1915 bread rationing started, to be followed by the rationing of virtually every foodstuff.

KEY TERMS

Complete the table below, explaining what each key phrase means

Key Term	Definition
Inflation	



Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



PRACTICE 1

How did the early stages of the War affect Germany politically?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

How did the early stages of the War affect Germany's economy?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 1: What problems did Germany face in the period 1914-16?

LO: To know the impact of WWI on Germany's government.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of the political changes it caused.



CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

What did Reichstag pass on 4 August 1914?	Who were the Central Powers?	Who opposed a war of conquest?	What did Wilhelm become to the army?	How many men were called into the army?
What did Germany lack?	What did Germany import?	What did Bethmann-Hollweg do instead of raising taxes?	What did this fuel?	What started in January 1915?

APPLY

In what ways did the early years of the First World War impact Germany?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can explain how the First World War effected Germany in the years 1914-1916.	Identify and explain the effects of the First World War on Germany	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the impact the early years of the First World War had on Germany.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the early years of the First World affected Germany as.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Perhaps the most significant impact of the early years of the First World War ...</i>



Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?

LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.



NEW INFO

Hindenburg and Ludendorff

Bethmann-Hollweg, keen to shore up his own position by winning popular support, decided to ditch General Falkenhayn, Chief of the Army Supreme Command. In August 1916 Field Marshal Paul Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff, two officers who had won important victories against the Russians on the Eastern Front, were appointed joint Chiefs of the Army Supreme Command. Far from strengthening his position, Bethmann-Hollweg soon found that his and Wilhelm's authority had been decisively weakened, since neither of them enjoyed the popular backing of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. By the simple expedient of threatening resignation, the two generals exerted a powerful influence over events – political, economic and military. Their 'rule' is often described as 'the silent dictatorship'.

Hindenburg and Ludendorff tried to mobilise German resources more thoroughly than before.

- The Hindenburg Programme tried to increase arms production by placing contracts directly with heavy industry.
- Ludendorff ordered a systematic economic exploitation of the enemy areas occupied by German troops.
- The Auxiliary Service Act (December 1916) enabled the government to control the labour of all males aged between 17 and 60.
- A Supreme War Office was set up and given wide powers over industry and labour.



Wilhelm (centre) studying maps alongside Hindenburg (left) and Ludendorff (right) in 1917. Why do you think this photograph was taken?

These measures resulted in a huge increase in munitions production. Nevertheless, Germany suffered serious shortages of coal and transport over the winter of 1916–17. Ironically, autocratic Germany failed to achieve the same degree of mobilisation as democratic Britain. The war did not result in a state-controlled German economy: industries were not nationalised and the property rights of landowners were left relatively untouched.



Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?

LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.



PRACTICE 1

How did the later stages of the War affect Germany politically?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

How did the later stages of the War affect Germany's economy and industry?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?

LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.



NEW INFO

Germany defeated, 1917–18

What problems did Germany face in 1917–18?

By 1917 Hindenburg and Ludendorff, fearing that Germany was likely to be defeated, believed that they had no option but to take greater risks. It could be that this risk-taking actually brought about the defeat that Germany's 'silent dictators' were trying to avert. The introduction of unrestricted submarine warfare, for example, brought the USA into the war against Germany in April 1917. Meanwhile, as events deteriorated militarily, the domestic situation worsened.

German civilian morale

On the domestic front the impact of war slowly but remorselessly affected the lives of ordinary Germans, weakening morale. A disastrous food and fuel crisis over the winter of 1917–18 made life, for most, truly miserable. Civilian deaths from starvation and hypothermia increased from 121,000 in 1916 to 293,000 in 1918. Many workers resented being forced to work even longer hours as a result of the Auxiliary Service Act. The result was that social discontent grew markedly. Considerable anger was harboured against industrialists who were making vast profits from the war. In 1917 the 'left' organised an increasing number of strikes. The 'right' blamed Jews and socialists for all Germany's problems.

PRACTICE

How did the later stages of the War affect German civilians morale?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?

LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.



NEW INFO

The July 1917 crisis

As popular disillusionment with the conduct of the war increased, so did dissent in the *Reichstag*. Socialists, with National Liberal support, succeeded in establishing a *Reichstag* committee to consider constitutional reform. Bethmann-Hollweg, hoping to maintain unity, persuaded Wilhelm to promise reform of the Prussian franchise system, to the consternation of conservatives.

Another issue dividing Germans on the left and right was the issue of war aims. Parties on the right sought territorial acquisitions, ensuring German dominance over Europe, and hoped to extract large reparation payments from the defeated enemy in the event of German victory. Parties on the left, however, believed that Germany was fighting a purely defensive war, not one of conquest. The SPD maintained that any peace settlement should be based upon reconciliation with no annexations of territory.

Bethmann-Hollweg, anxious to preserve unity, did his best to avoid debate on the issue of Germany's war aims. However, by 1917 it was impossible to overlook the widening gulf between those who sought a 'peace without victory' and those who believed that only a 'victorious peace' would legitimate the sacrifices already made. In June 1917 left-wing parties made it clear that they would vote against war credits if Bethmann-Hollweg did not support 'peace without victory'. He refused, thus losing the support of the *Reichstag*.

Ludendorff refused to work any longer with a man who supported political change and who had lost control of the *Reichstag*. Bethmann-Hollweg was thus forced to resign in July. His resignation was not a victory for the *Reichstag*. *Reichstag* deputies did not appoint his successor or use the crisis to force negotiations for peace. The July crisis simply gave the Supreme Command an opportunity to assert its superiority. George Michaelis, an insignificant Prussian administrator who had impressed Ludendorff during a brief interview, became the new chancellor.

On 19 July the *Reichstag* passed a peace resolution by 212 votes to 126.

'The Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and permanent reconciliation of peoples. Forced territorial acquisition and political, economic and financial oppressions are irreconcilable with such a peace.'

The resolution, supported by the SPD and Centre Party deputies, had no influence on Germany's military leaders who remained committed to winning a victorious peace.

Michaelis and Hertling

On 1 November 1917 Michaelis was dismissed for his inept handling of a small naval mutiny. Significantly, the *Reichstag* played a key role in his dismissal but not in his replacement. Wilhelm, without consulting Hindenburg and Ludendorff, chose Count Hertling, an elderly Bavarian aristocrat, as Michaelis's successor. Hertling disliked parliamentary government, but appreciated the need for consulting the parties. He promised to support the peace resolution and to reform the Prussian franchise. Ludendorff, busy with preparations for the 1918 offensive, hoped that Hertling's conciliatory measures could keep the home front quiet long enough for Germany to win the war.



Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?



LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.

PRACTICE 1

What was the result of the July 1917 crisis?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

What happened to the German chancellorship in the later stages of the war?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?



LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.

NEW INFO

The right

Radical nationalists, alarmed by the peace resolution, founded the Fatherland Party in September 1917. Led by Tirpitz, and heavily subsidised by industrialists, the party demanded annexations east and west, and supported military rule. It soon claimed it had over one million members. (It probably had fewer than 500,000.)

The left

By 1917 German socialists were seriously divided. Most SPD deputies, unwilling to damage the war effort, were prepared to work with the other parties. However, a number of radical socialists opposed collaboration with the capitalist German state. In April 1917, 42 SPD deputies formed a new party, the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD). The USPD was committed to a speedy end to the war and a peace without annexations. The remaining 68 SPD deputies reconstituted themselves as the Majority Socialist Party with Friedrich Ebert as chairman.

The USPD was loosely associated with two other groups, the Spartacus League and the **Revolutionary Shop Stewards**. The League, founded by a small group of socialist intellectuals and led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, had no mass following. The Revolutionary Shop Stewards, by contrast, had considerable grass roots influence. The League and the Shop Stewards believed that working people must use the war to destroy capitalism and inaugurate world revolution.

Strike action

In January 1918, 400,000 Berlin workers went on strike. The strike spread quickly to other cities. The strikers' demands, influenced by the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, were political as well as economic; they included democratic government and 'peace without victory'. The authorities acted firmly, placing large plants under military control, prohibiting public meetings and arresting a number of socialist leaders. Significantly, Majority Socialists and most official trade union leaders opposed the strike. The Shop Stewards quickly backed down and called off the strike.

PRACTICE

How did the political left and right challenge Germany in the later stages of the war.

Left	Right



Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?



LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.

NEW INFO

The situation in Germany in 1918

By mid-1918 German agricultural production was 40–60 per cent below pre-war levels. Official food rations reflected the fall in output. Germans were allowed only about 20 per cent of their pre-war consumption of meat, 13 per cent of eggs, 21 per cent of butter, 41 per cent of vegetable fats and about 47 per cent of flour. There were dramatic price rises in virtually every commodity. Germans were also having to work longer. More than 60 per cent of large and medium-sized factories in the Berlin armaments industry, whose workers worked nine hours a day before the war, now worked 10–12 hours a day. In more than half the factories the workers had to work regularly on Sundays as well. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that discontent was growing. There were increasing numbers of strikes. The Russian revolutions of 1917 provided some Germans with a socialist model, helping to focus discontent on a level higher than concern for mere material things.

The German 1918 spring offensive

Germany's main advantage in early 1918 was that it no longer had to fight a two-front war. Russia's acceptance of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) meant that Germany could now concentrate its military might on the Western Front. But Germany's allies were a source of concern and huge US forces would soon help the Allies. The German High Command therefore launched a great offensive in March 1918, its troops smashing through Allied lines. Further German offensives followed and by June German forces were within 60 kilometres of Paris. However, the German army did not possess sufficient manpower to exploit the breakthrough and the advance ground to a halt. In late July, the Allies successfully counter-attacked. On 8 August British forces broke through the German lines at Amiens. Morale in the German army began to crumble and there were large numbers of desertions. The Allied advance continued through early September, ensuring that Germany lost all the gains made in the spring.

PRACTICE

Explain the situation in Germany in 1918.



Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?



LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.

NEW INFO

The collapse of Germany's allies

On 30 September 1918 Bulgaria surrendered. Turkey agreed to an armistice on 30 October. In October 1918 the Italians smashed the Austrians at Vittorio Veneto. Later that month Czech leaders took over Prague, Serb and Croat leaders proclaimed the establishment of a Yugoslav state, and Hungary asserted its independence. The Austrian government signed an armistice on 3 November.

Germany defeated

By the autumn of 1918 Germany's situation was desperate. German troops were being pushed back towards the Rhine while 300,000 US troops a month were arriving in Europe. On 29 September Ludendorff informed Wilhelm and Hertling that the war was lost. Consequently Hertling should approach US President Wilson and ask for an armistice and a peace based on the **Fourteen Points**.

On 30 September, Wilhelm accepted Hertling's resignation and issued a proclamation establishing parliamentary government. Hindenburg and Ludendorff thus abdicated their power, leaving the *Reichstag* in control. In this way, they hoped that Germany might obtain better peace terms. The Allies, they believed, were more likely to be sympathetic to a democratic regime. Moreover, the new government (and not the army leaders) would be blamed for Germany's defeat.

PRACTICE

Explain how the First World War came to an end for Germany.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 2: What political problems did Germany face in 1917-18?

LO: To know the key problems Germany faced at the end of the War.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent of these problems in Germany.



📍 Key Knowledge Check 📍

Who were appointed Chiefs of the Army Supreme Command?	What happened to Bethmann-Hollweg and Wilhelm's authority?	What enabled control over the labour of men between 17 and 60?	What brought the USA into the war?	How many civilians died from starvation and hypothermia?
What did the left do in 1917?	What did the right do?	When did Bethmann-Hollweg resign?	Who was the USPD loosely associated?	Who were its leaders?



In what ways did the later years of the First World War impact Germany?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can explain how the First World War effected Germany in the years 1917-1918.	Identify and explain the effects of the First World War on Germany	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the impact the later years of the First World War had on Germany.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the later years of the First World affected Germany as.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Perhaps the most significant impact of the later years of the First World War ...</i>



Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?



LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.



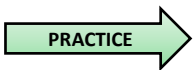
Financing the War

To finance the war, the government of the Kaiserreich decided against imposing new taxes or raising money by increasing taxation of the wealthy. Instead it issued **treasury bills** and (as authorised by the Reichstag) borrowed heavily from anyone prepared to provide 'war loans' on the understanding that they would receive repayment, with interest, after the war. To ensure a constant supply of money, the government put more into circulation, abandoning the link between paper money and gold reserves that had existed before the war. The expectation was that victory would more than enable the government to pay back what it had borrowed.

The circulation of paper money increased from 2000 million Marks-worth in 1913 to 45,000 million in 1919. At the same time, the amount of money owed by the government (the National Debt) grew from 5000 million to 144,000 million Marks in the same period. Since the war years saw a fall in productivity (at an annual average rate of 4 per cent per year), the value of the currency fell and in 1919 it was worth less than 20 per cent of its pre-war value.

The conflict was expensive for all participants. Germany's federal structure left its central government with limited means of raising money through taxation, and tax reform was postponed as a potential menace to national unity. The government raised additional funds through the sale of government bonds (effectively promissory notes). These proved quite popular, but were still not enough to bring in money at the rate at which the government was spending it. The government printed extra paper money, which meant that a gap opened between what the paper money suggested people had to spend and what the country's gold reserves said they really had to spend. This set inflation in motion.

Under normal circumstances, this might have been manageable, but neither domestic nor international circumstances were normal. For one thing, Germany had the war reparations to pay.



Explain how financing the First World War caused problems for Germany.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

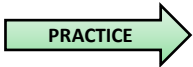
LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.



The impact of Britain's Naval Blockade

The politics of wartime inevitably mean particular requirements. These wartime requirements meant full employment and the economy accordingly benefited. However, the **blockade** by the British Royal Navy badly disrupted German exports of manufactured goods, on which so much depended. The 18 Dreadnought-class battleships that Admiral von Tirpitz had been so determined to build for the Imperial German Navy stayed in Kiel harbour and only left port to confront the British Navy once, when in 1916 they fought the inconclusive Battle of Jutland (*Skagerrakschlacht*).

The response to the British blockade was the use by the German Imperial Navy of submarine warfare. There was great debate about this policy in Germany. Nearly eight million tons of British merchant shipping were sunk by German submarines during the war. The USA, still neutral, suffered the sinking of many ships, including the passenger liner *Lusitania* in 1915. The 1917 decision to remove all target restrictions for U-boats brought the USA into the war in April 1917, just as the opponents of the policy, including Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, had feared.



What impact did Britain's naval blockade have on Germany?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.



NEW INFO

Total War

The Imperial General Staff had anticipated a fairly short war and consequently the German political leadership had done so as well. Initially, as German troops swept through Belgium and attacked France, the assumptions seemed correct. However, when the conflict became bogged down in static trench warfare on the Western Front, the lack of German planning for a long conflict became apparent. **Total war**, the dominant military idea, required the involvement of the entire population in the war effort, meaning that priority was given to supplying the military even when the civilian population suffered.

As early as August 1914 Germany established a War Raw Materials Department. This soon exercised vast power – directing labour, controlling the railways, introducing rationing and price controls, and allocating resources to industries competing for scarce raw materials. Scientists tried to produce substitute materials for goods of which Germany was short.

In the short term the measures taken to regulate Germany's war economy were reasonably successful. However, two crucial economic weaknesses threatened to erode Germany's capacity to continue the war:

- Germany had a huge financial deficit pre-1914 and once war started it soared. Bethmann-Hollweg's government, rather than raise taxes, simply printed money. This fuelled **inflation**.
- The blockade, a series of poor harvests, problems of transportation, shortage of chemicals for fertilisers, and mass conscription led to a serious decline in grain production. In January 1915 bread rationing started, to be followed by the rationing of virtually every foodstuff.

Contemporary sources describe the winter of 1916–17 as especially harsh. It was known as 'the turnip winter' because this vegetable, usually reserved as fodder for animals, had to substitute for many for bread and potatoes, after the poor potato harvest. The British blockade of the North Sea ports, through which most food imports had to pass, had been very effective: Germany's heavy reliance on imported food was exposed as a major weakness.

The historian G.J. Meyer notes that: 'according to a report from a prominent Berlin physician, eighty thousand children had died of starvation in 1916' (*A World Undone*, Random House, 2006).

The situation was made even worse by the switching of almost all factory production to the output of military items. This meant that there were shortages of clothes because most garment factories now produced uniforms. Also, many miners had been conscripted into the army, leading to shortages of coal owing to the mines being understaffed. Those food supplies that were available to the civilian population were focused mainly on bread and potatoes, and it became ever harder to buy meat. Dairy products, such as milk, cheese and eggs, dropped to about 20% of peacetime levels.

A few **profiteers** found opportunities to make money by exploiting the situation. **Black-marketeers** profited by illegally supplying goods at high prices. The wealthy used their money to buy scarce items despite shortages. In rural areas the opportunities for growing food and keeping chickens for your own needs meant that the worst of the shortages were kept at bay. But for the majority of Germans these were grim times, with shortages, hunger and endless queuing. As the war dragged on, these miseries became worse. Diseases of malnourishment appeared. It was not so much that malnourishment and hunger killed, but that bodies weakened by an inadequate diet were much more vulnerable to disease. It has been calculated that nearly half a million more civilians died in Germany during the First World War than would have been the case in peacetime.



Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.



PRACTICE

**Explain the impact of
Total War on
Germany's economy.**



Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.

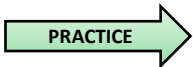


Post-war economic problems and policies

The economy of the defeated Germany suffered in many ways. Both the war and then the peace had a disturbing effect on the workforce. Millions of Germans were on the move from late November 1918. Some of these were only soldiers returning to Germany from years of fighting. The rapid demobilisation of millions of soldiers was disruptive, as were the continuing exploits of the various *Freikorps* paramilitary bands throughout the country. Others were the women workers in factories who had been summarily dismissed. As manufacturing concerns attempted to return to peacetime production, many members of the workforce, mainly women, were made redundant and replaced by ex-soldiers. In large manufacturing operations such as Krupp of Essen in the Ruhr valley, this change was rapid and not always welcomed by employees. By the end of November 52 000 workers had left Krupp's Essen factory, many of them female.

Krupp had been a main supplier of equipment and munitions for the German army. It took some time for them, and other manufacturers, to switch back from wartime manufacturing demands to peacetime production. At the same time, the unsettled environment, dislocated transport networks and interrupted export trade combined sharply to decrease industrial output.

The British Royal Navy did not lift the blockade of the North Sea coast until the Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919 so rationing endured in many areas. Food shortages continued, especially during the grim winter of 1918–19. It is no surprise that, at this stage, industrialists were prepared to give their support to the Social Democratic government in exchange for guarantees on private capital and private property.



What problems faced Germany following the end of the First World War?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 3: How did the First World War effect the Germany economy?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's economy.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the economic problem's that Germany faced.



Key Knowledge Check

How much did paper money increase by between 1913-19?	What did increased paper money lead to?	Who blockaded Germany?	How many tons of British merchant shipping were sunk by Germany?	What US passenger liner was sunk in 1915?
What was the winter of 1916-7 known as?	Which food product dropped to 20% of peacetime levels	How many extra civilians died in Germany because of the war?	Who were the Frikorps?	How many people left Krupp's factory?



In what ways did the First World War impact the German economy?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can explain how the First World War effected the German economy.	Identify and explain the effects of the First World War on Germany	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the impact the First World War had on Germany.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the First World affected German's economy as.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Perhaps the most significant impact of the First World War ...</i>



Lesson 4: How did the First World War effect German society?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's society.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the social problems that Germany faced.



NEW INFO

<p>The advent of war brought a spirit of unity and patriotism that cut across the bitter class divisions that had existed before 1914.</p>	<p>Working men marched to war in the hope of better times ahead in August 1914.</p>	<p>Despite the failure to secure a quick victory, dissident views were few in 1914-15. Germans remained united against the perceived threat posed by 'barbaric' Russia. Lulled into a false sense of security by official propaganda, most Germans remained confident of victory.</p>
<p>The blockade, a series of poor harvests, problems of transportation, shortage of chemicals for fertilisers, and mass conscription led to a serious decline in grain production. In January 1915 bread rationing started, to be followed by the rationing of virtually every foodstuff.</p>	<p>Conscription into the army at 18 years (from 1916) or into other war work for every fit man between the ages of 17 and 60 years made times tough, but working men's wages generally held up, whereas middle-class professionals increasingly lost out.</p>	<p>With so many men departing to fight after conscription, families suffered during the war. Working and absent parents left children neglected, whilst education was interrupted as teachers went to the front line. With husbands and fathers in uniform, wives and sons were relied upon to earn money and fill their places in factories and on farms.</p>
<p>From 1916 onwards, many women found jobs in factories which represented a major social change from pre-war imperial Germany. Before the war, middle- and upper-class women in particular were expected to remain at home, look after their children and husbands, being tied to house cleaning, attending church and maintaining an unquestioned loyalty to the Kaiser. Now many were out and about in the world of work.</p>	<p>The impact of war slowly but remorselessly affected the lives of ordinary Germans, weakening morale. A disastrous food and fuel crisis over the winter of 1917-18 made life, for most, truly miserable. Civilian deaths from starvation and hypothermia increased from 121,000 in 1916 to 293,000 in 1918.</p>	<p>In January 1918, 400,000 Berlin workers went on strike. The strike spread quickly to other cities. The strikers' demands, influenced by the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, were political as well as economic; they included democratic government and 'peace without victory'. The authorities acted firmly, placing large plants under military control, prohibiting public meetings and arresting a number of socialist leaders.</p>
<p>By mid-1918 German agricultural production was 40-60% below pre-war levels. Official food rations reflected the fall in output. Germans were allowed only about 20% of their pre-war consumption of meat, 13% of eggs, 21% of butter, 41% of vegetable fats and about 47% of flour. There were dramatic price rises in virtually every commodity.</p>	<p>Germans were having to work longer hours by mid-1918. More than 60% of large and medium-sized factories in the Berlin armaments industry, whose workers worked nine hours a day before the war, now worked 10-12 hours a day. In more than half the factories the workers had to work regularly on Sundays as well. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that discontent was growing.</p>	<p>Around a million or so German soldiers were killed in the First World War. Near its end of the summer of 1918, many soldiers returned home badly injured. It became a common sight, especially in the cities, to see wounded ex-soldiers begging at street corners. A further consequence of mounting wartime German casualties was the increasing number of widows and of women supporting disabled²⁴ men.</p>



Lesson 4: How did the First World War effect German society?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's society.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the social problems that Germany faced.



PRACTICE 1

Describe the mood of German society as the First World War began in 1914.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

What impact did conscription and the ongoing war effort have on German society?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 4: How did the First World War effect German society?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's society.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the social problems that Germany faced.



PRACTICE 3

What impact did the war have on the lives of German women?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 4

What impact did the war have on the lives of German workers?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 4: How did the First World War effect German society?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's society.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the social problems that Germany faced.



PRACTICE 5

What impact did the war have on German agriculture and farmers?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 6

What impact did the war have on the lives of German soldiers?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 4: How did the First World War effect German society?

LO: To know the key impacts of the First World War on Germany's society.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the social problems that Germany faced.



Key Knowledge Check

How much did paper money increase by between 1913-19?	What did increased paper money lead to?	Who blockaded Germany?	How many tons of British merchant shipping were sunk by Germany?	What US passenger liner was sunk in 1915?
What was the winter of 1916-7 known as?	Which food product dropped to 20% of peacetime levels?	How many extra civilians died in Germany because of the war?	Who were the Freikorps?	How many people left Krupp's factory?



In what ways did the First World War impact German society?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can explain how the First World War effected German society.	Identify and explain the effects of the First World War on German society.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the impact the First World War had on German society.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the First World affected German's society as.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Perhaps the most significant impact of the First World War ...</i>



Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

PRE-READ

Political change and breakdown by 1918

August 1916 witnessed a political turning point when the Kaiser appointed **Paul von Hindenburg** as the army chief of staff, with **Erich von Ludendorff** as his deputy. By surrendering the supreme command (entrusted to the Kaiser under the constitution) to Hindenburg – and allowing him superiority over the Chancellor – it has been suggested that Wilhelm II abdicated responsibility and allowed a military dictatorship to emerge.

Complete political breakdown came about as the result of:

- Increasing popular disturbances, strikes and clamours for peace. There were calls for a reform of the German constitution and of the government of Prussia and the *Länder*. These escalated after the ‘**turnip winter**’ of 1916 to 1917 and the Russian revolutions of 1917, which saw the overthrow of the Tsar (March) and the establishment of a Marxist (Communist) government by the Bolsheviks (October).
- A split in the Social Democratic Party in April 1917, whereby a breakaway minority formed the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) with a commitment to end the war.
- The first direct Reichstag intervention in the war, with the passage of the ‘peace resolution’ of July 1917. This was proposed by Matthias Erzberger, a politician on the left of the Zentrum, and called for an end to war, without annexations. It was passed by 212 votes to 126. The SPD, USPD and Zentrum were in favour; the Conservatives were against.
- The replacement of Bethmann-Hollweg (accused of being unable to control the Reichstag) by George Michaelis, an insignificant Prussian administrator, in July 1917. Michaelis got round the peace resolution by accepting it ‘as I interpret it’ – thus persuading the Reichstag to vote for new war credits – but he only lasted until November 1917.
- The establishment of the **Fatherland Party** (Vaterlandspartei) under the leadership of Wolfgang Kapp and Admiral Tirpitz and supported by donations from industry in September 1917. This attracted conservatives, right-wing liberals, middle classes, and the Army High Command. By 1918 this party had grown to 1.2 million members.
- The appointment of Count von Hertling – an elderly and half-blind Bavarian aristocrat – to succeed Michaelis in November 1917. He promised to reform the Prussian three-stage franchise and seek the peace resolution, but the Supreme Command still made the key decisions. After the failure of the ‘Spring Offensive’, a final attempt to break through the trench-lines on the Western Front in March 1918, Ludendorff abandoned his objections to a parliamentary democracy and suggested that the Chancellor seek an **armistice** (ceasefire) based on Wilson’s ‘**fourteen points**’.

DO NOW

Summarise the political situation in Germany by 1918 in less than 20 words.



Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

NEW INFO

In October 1918 events moved swiftly through a two-stage 'revolution' that destroyed the old imperial regime.

The revolution from above

The first stage was initiated by the Kaiser:

- 30 September: the Kaiser accepted Hertling's resignation and proclaimed a parliamentary government.
- 1 October: the Kaiser asked **Prince Max von Baden** – a moderate conservative – to form a government with ministers chosen from the Reichstag rather than appointed by the Kaiser. Max created a cabinet with representatives from the majority parties, including prominent members of the SPD.
- 3 October: Max asked President Wilson of the USA for an armistice and peace based on Wilson's fourteen points.
- 24 October: Wilson replied to the effect that, because the German government was based on an 'autocratic dictatorship', nothing but total surrender and a change of regime would be acceptable to the Allies. This increased calls from the SPD, USPD and Zentrum for the abdication of the Kaiser.
- 26 October: Ludendorff was forced to resign after he unilaterally tried to order army generals to resist surrender. Max reassured Wilson that the military authorities had been placed under the control of the German government.
- 28 October: Germany became a parliamentary monarchy with the agreement of the Bundesrat and Emperor:
 - The Chancellor and Minister (secretaries of state) were to be responsible to the Reichstag as well as the Bundesrat.
 - The Kaiser's powers over the army and navy were curtailed and all military appointments were to have the counter-signature of the Minister of War.
 - The Prussian three-class voting system was abolished and parliamentary reforms introduced in a number of the *Länder*.

These constitutional changes took place in Germany at the same time as the British broke through the last German defence system, the Hindenburg line (6 October), and the need for an armistice became more urgent.

PRACTICE 1

On the next page, create a **flow diagram** showing the **key features** of the '**Revolution from above**' and how Germany **changed** into a **parliamentary monarchy** by the end of October 1918.

30 September:
the Kaiser
accepted
Hertling's...

1 October:
the Kaiser
asked
Prince...

3 October:
Max asked
President
Wilson...

24 October:
Wilson
replied that
because the
German...

This
increased
calls from the
SPD....



They agreed
that the
Chancellor
and Minister
were...

28 October:
Germany
became a...

Max
reassured
Wilson
that...

26 October:
Ludendorff
was forced
to...



Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

PRACTICE 1



Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



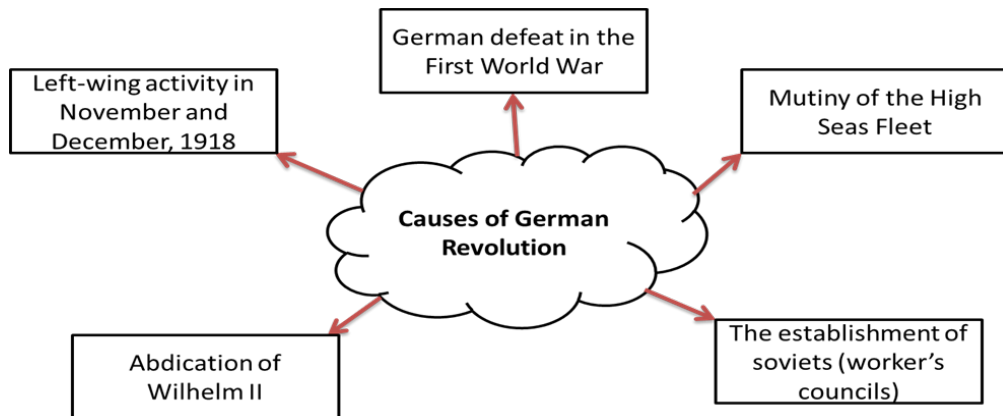
LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

NEW INFO

Watch the **video clip** about the German '**Revolution from below**'.

Make notes as to why **Germans revolted** between **October and November 1918** as a diagram like below:





Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

NEW INFO

The revolutionary situation

However, by late October a revolutionary situation existed in Germany. Four years of privation had eroded the old relationship between ruler and subject. The shock of looming military defeat, after years of optimistic propaganda, radicalised popular attitudes. Germans were only too ready to blame Wilhelm for their country's misfortunes. Once the public became aware that US President Wilson regarded Wilhelm as an obstacle to peace, pressure for his abdication grew rapidly. Many south Germans blamed Prussia for Germany's misfortunes. Some Bavarians pressed for independence.

The Kiel mutiny and revolution

On 29 October rumours that the German High Seas Fleet was going to be sent out on a last do-or-die mission against the Royal Navy led to a mutiny among the sailors at Wilhelmshaven. The mutiny rapidly spread to Kiel and other ports. On 4 November dockworkers and soldiers in Kiel joined the mutinous sailors and set up workers' and soldiers' councils, on the 1917 Russian soviet model. Although Independent Socialists were in close touch with some mutineers, this was more a spontaneous protest movement than a politically-led mutiny. The sailors' councils were not disloyal to the government. On the contrary, they asked for representatives to come and listen to their grievances. The government sent a Majority Socialist who promised better conditions and reassured the sailors that there would be no 'suicide offensive'.

However, news of the Kiel mutiny fanned the flames of discontent across Germany. By 8 November workers' and soldiers' councils had been established in most major cities. The councils demanded peace and assumed control of local food supplies and services. In Bavaria the Wittelsbach dynasty was deposed and an independent socialist republic was proclaimed by Kurt Eisner. There was little resistance.

PRACTICE

What are the key takeaways from the Kiel Mutiny?

Key Takeaways





Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.



Divisions among the revolutionaries

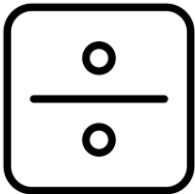
The left-wing revolutionary wave which swept Germany in November 1918 was not a united force. Socialist forces were bitterly divided. Majority Socialists upheld democracy and wanted moderate reforms. They totally rejected Bolshevik-style communism. By contrast, Spartacists and shop stewards (see page 83), intoxicated by events in Russia, believed that Germany should follow a similar road. They campaigned for a socialist republic, based on the workers' and soldiers' councils, which would smash the institutions of imperial Germany. The USPD was between the two extremes. It demanded radical social and economic change to complement political reform. Its influence was curtailed by internal factional squabbles.

Extreme left-wing socialists tried to drive forward the workers' revolution by organising strikes and demonstrations by workers. The situation appeared menacing to many Germans, alarmed by what they perceived as 'Russian solutions' being put forward for German problems. However, many of the councils were controlled by moderate socialists who were anxious to maintain law and order and ensure the functioning of local services at a time of crisis. In most cases the councils co-existed uneasily with pre-revolutionary bodies.



Explain how the revolutionaries were divided in their aims.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.



Wilhelm II's abdication

On 7 November, Majority Socialist leaders threatened to withdraw support from the government unless Wilhelm abdicated and socialists were given greater representation in the cabinet. When Prince Max failed to persuade Wilhelm to abdicate, the Majority Socialist ministers Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Bauer resigned and the Party agreed to call a general strike. Majority Socialist leaders took this step reluctantly. Their hand was forced by the Revolutionary Shop Stewards who had already called a strike for 9 November in protest against the arrest of some of their leaders.

Thus on 9 November most workers went on strike. A deputation of socialists, headed by Ebert and Scheidemann, called on Prince Max. They informed him that the local garrison in Berlin was on their side and that a new democratic government must be formed at once. Prince Max hesitated no longer. At noon he announced Wilhelm's abdication. By now even Hindenburg and General Groener, Ludendorff's successor, realised that the *Kaiser* must go. Abandoned by his generals, Wilhelm accepted the reality of the situation and fled to the Netherlands. Later on 9 November, Prince Max resigned and announced the formation of a new government, to be led by Ebert.



Explain the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the events surrounded it.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

NEW INFO

The German Republic

Ebert issued his first proclamation on 9 November, signing himself 'Imperial Chancellor', a title chosen to emphasise continuity between his government and that of Prince Max. This device conferred some semblance of legitimacy on the new government and helped to rally the officer corps and the civil service behind it. So did the fact that Ebert's government confirmed the old officials in power. Ebert declared that the goal of the government was to bring peace. He hoped to stabilise the political situation sufficiently to enable elections to take place as soon as possible for a National Assembly. This body would then draw up a new constitution. His main worry was that the extreme left would gain the upper hand. He was determined to prevent the descent into civil strife.

Ebert was under no illusions about his government's weak position. Its authority did not extend with certainty beyond Berlin, and it was not even accepted in all parts of the capital. Furthermore he knew that the Revolutionary Shop Stewards were planning to set up a provisional government, based on the workers' and soldiers' councils. To forestall this, Ebert decided to offer the USPD seats in the government.

The USPD was deeply divided. While moderates favoured acceptance, the left opposed collaboration with Ebert and demanded that the workers' and soldiers' councils should assume full power. By 21 votes to 19 the Independents finally decided to accept Ebert's offer. As a sop to their left wing they insisted on a number of concessions: only socialists must be included in the government; the government must declare that all power resided in the councils; and elections to the National Assembly must be delayed until the revolution was consolidated.

Reluctantly Ebert accepted the conditions. Therefore, on 10 November, a new government, the Council of Peoples' Commissars was formed. It consisted of three SPD members and three USPD members: Ebert and Hugo Haase acted as co-chairmen.

The workers' and soldiers' councils

On 10 November elections to form workers' and soldiers' councils were held in all the factories and garrisons in Berlin. At a mass meeting of the councils, the delegates approved the new government by a huge majority. An executive committee was elected to manage the affairs of the Berlin councils. This committee, which consisted of seven Majority Socialists, seven Independents and fourteen soldiers (many of whom were not socialists), began negotiations with the government to define the precise relationship between the two bodies.

PRACTICE

Summarise the political situation in Germany following the war.



Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

LO: To be able to evaluate the significance of these events in terms of revolution.

NEW INFO

The armistice

The change in government did not change the Allied attitude to Germany. In November 1918 German troops still controlled most of Belgium and huge swathes of Eastern Europe. Allied leaders feared that Germany intended to use the armistice as a breathing space before resuming the war. The armistice terms were therefore designed to remove Germany's ability to fight:

- German troops had to withdraw beyond the Rhine.
- Germany had to surrender its U-boats, much of its surface fleet and its air force.
- Germany had to repudiate the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
- The blockade of Germany would continue until a final peace treaty had been signed.

The armistice terms were hugely resented in Germany. Nevertheless, the political situation made continuation of the war impossible. On 11 November the socialist government agreed to the terms and the First World War ended.

Germany had suffered 6,193,058 military casualties in the war, 2,044,900 of whom had died. A further 624,000 civilian deaths could be attributed to the war. Few families escaped the trauma of a death or a casualty.

PRACTICE

Explain what the terms of the armistice meant for Germany.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 5: Why was there a revolution in Germany in 1918?



LO: To know the key events of 1918 in Germany.

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CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

Who established the Fatherland Party?	Who did the Kaiser ask to form a Government in Oct 1918?	Who did Wilson regard as an obstacle for peace?	What area of Germany did southern Germans blame for German problems?	What was proclaimed in Bavaria?
What extreme left wing socialists call for?	When was the Council of Peoples' Commissars formed?	What were the armistice terms designed to remove?	Behind what river did German troops have to withdrawal to?	What did Germany have to repudiate?

APPLY

Why was there a German revolution?

Choose two factors you think were the **most important** in causing the **German revolution** in 1918.

Write two summary **PEEE paragraphs** using the **success criteria** below to help you:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate why there was a German revolution in 1918	Identify and explain one main cause of the German revolution	Give precise historical details to back up your point	Evaluate why this caused the German revolution and link to a second factor
Sentence starters	<i>One of the most important factors that caused the German revolution in November 1918 was due to... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, on...November 1918...</i>	<i>As a result, this caused the German revolution because...</i> <i>Furthermore, a second important factor that caused...</i>



Lesson 6: How successful was Ebert in 1918-19?



LO: To know key features of Ebert's early chancellorship.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful Ebert's chancellorship was in 1919.



Key word:

Democratisation of the army = left-wing socialists believed that the army was a right-wing force which might be used against them. They thus proposed that army officers should be elected by the men and the regular army replaced by people's militia



Starter:

You are a **soldier** returning from the front line in **November 1918**.

You have been told about the events of the revolution between October and November.

What grievances do you have against Ebert and why?



Lesson 6: How successful was Ebert in 1918-19?



LO: To know key features of Ebert's early chancellorship.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful Ebert's chancellorship was in 1919.



The situation in November 1918

Relations between the Majority Socialists and Independents remained tense. A key issue was the authority of the workers' and soldiers' councils. Ebert viewed the councils with suspicion as a possible rival to parliamentary government. He therefore did his utmost to speed up the calling of the National Assembly.

The Independents were not opposed to this: most believed in parliamentary democracy. But whereas the Majority Socialists maintained that the revolution was over, the Independents believed that the gains of the revolution must be consolidated before the assembly met. They believed that the councils, the embodiment of the revolutionary will of the people, should supervise the implementation of a crash programme of socialism – the nationalisation of key industries, the breaking-up of the great landed estates and the **democratisation of the army**, the civil service and the judiciary.

As the weeks passed Ebert's position grew stronger. Permanent officials cooperated willingly enough with him, regarding him as Prince Max's legitimate successor. They would not work with the executive committee of the councils.



How did the situation in November 1918 strengthen Ebert's position?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



Lesson 6: How successful was Ebert in 1918-19?

LO: To know key features of Ebert's early chancellorship.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful Ebert's chancellorship was in 1919.



NEW INFO

The Ebert–Groener pact

On 10 November General Groener telephoned Ebert. Groener agreed that the army would support the government in return for Ebert's promise to resist Bolshevism and to preserve the officers' authority against the councils. Ebert's critics, both at the time and since, have claimed that this 'pact' was proof that he betrayed the revolution. However, Ebert never made any secret of his distaste of Bolshevik revolution. His understanding with Groener was a reasonable precaution to protect his government against violence from the extreme left.

The Stinnes–Legien agreement

On 15 November the Stinnes–Legien agreement strengthened Ebert's position. (Hugo Stinnes was an industrialist and Carl Legien a trade union leader.) The trade unions agreed not to interfere with private ownership. In return, employers guaranteed full legal recognition to trade unions, agreed to workers' councils (which were to be introduced into all large factories) which would help to regulate wages and working conditions, and accepted an eight-hour working day. This agreement, quickly endorsed by the government, did much to satisfy workers' grievances.

The all-German Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils

The Congress met in Berlin from 16 to 21 December. Over 300 of the 500 delegates supported the Majority Socialists and only 90 the Independent Socialists. Delegates passed resolutions demanding the nationalisation of key industries and the democratisation of the army.

Nevertheless, most delegates wanted Germany to be a parliamentary democracy. On 19 December Congress approved by a huge majority the government decision to hold elections to the National Assembly on 19 January. In the meantime, it agreed that power should be vested in Ebert's government.

PRACTICE

What did the Ebert-Groener pact agree and how did it strengthen Ebert's position?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 6: How successful was Ebert in 1918-19?

LO: To know key features of Ebert's early chancellorship.

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PRACTICE 1

What did the Stinnes-Legien pact agree and how did it strengthen Ebert's position?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

What did the Worker's Congress agree and how did it strengthen Ebert's position?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





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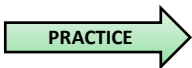
The resignation of the Independent Socialists

On 23 December a force of sailors, which had come from Kiel to defend the government, was ordered to evacuate its quarters in the former royal palace. The disgruntled sailors barricaded themselves in the palace. Faced with a direct challenge to its authority, the government ordered a regular army division to attack the palace. Failing to dislodge the sailors, the troops withdrew. Violence quickly spread to other parts of Berlin. Fortunately for Ebert the sailors agreed to leave the building once the question of their back pay – the real cause of the action – was settled.

The Independents were incensed by Ebert's action, undertaken without their knowledge. On 29 December the three Independent ministers resigned. While Ebert now had a freer hand in the government, he also faced growing opposition from the streets.

Conclusion: Ebert's behaviour in November 1918

- By **retaining the personnel** that had served the **Second Reich** and signing both the **Ebert-Groener Pact** and the **Stinnes-Legien Agreement**, Ebert laid himself open to accusations by the **Spartacists** and **members of the USPD**.
- He was seen as **compromising his socialist principles** and **befriending elites** who had **supported the Kaiser's regime**.
- However, **Ebert had very little choice** but to win the support of these groups in order to **ensure the smooth running of the country** and **address disorder and economic dislocation**.



How did Ebert handle this situation and what impact did it have on his position?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 6: How successful was Ebert in 1918-19?

LO: To know key features of Ebert's early chancellorship.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful Ebert's chancellorship was in 1919.



Key Knowledge Check

What was a key issue between the socialists?	What did socialists call for?	Who was deemed Prince Max's legitimate successor?	When did Groener support Ebert?	What did the Stinnes-Legien agreement result in?
When were the elections to the National Assembly to take place?	Where did a force of sailors come from on 23 rd December?	Why did the Sailors leave the Royal palace?	Who accused Ebert of compromising his socialist principles?	Why did Ebert make compromises?



How successful was Ebert in consolidating his power by December 1918?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the success of Ebert in consolidating his power.	Identify and explain the effects of the First World War on German society.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate Ebert's success.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent Ebert was / was not successful as.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Perhaps the most significant aspect of Ebert's success was...</i>

Lesson 7: How successful was the Spartacist uprising?

LO: To know key features of the Spartacist uprising.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful the Spartacist uprising was.



NEW INFO

The Spartacist rising

On 1 January 1919, the Spartacists broke with the Independent Socialists and founded the German Communist Party. Led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the communists declared that the National Assembly would be an organ of counter-revolution and called instead for government by workers' and soldiers' councils. On 6 January a revolutionary committee of 53 communists and shop stewards was set up. It issued a proclamation deposing Ebert and announcing the establishment of a revolutionary government. At the same time armed communists occupied newspaper offices and various public buildings in Berlin. The Spartacists hoped for a revolution on similar lines to that in Russia.

KEY PROFILE

Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919) was a Polish socialist. She fled to Germany in 1898, married a German socialist in order to remain, and then split with him immediately. She argued the socialist cause convincingly, became known as 'Red Rosa', and was imprisoned for opposition to the war in 1914. She helped found the Spartacist League in 1916 and returned to Berlin following her release in November 1918. She gave support to the Spartacist rising, was captured and shot, and her body was dumped in a canal.



Fig. 2 Rosa Luxemburg

Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919) was elected as an SPD member of the Reichstag in 1912. He was the only deputy to refuse war credits in 1914 and he co-founded the Spartacus group with Rosa Luxemburg in 1916. He helped found the German Communist Party (KPD) at the end of 1918 and supported a Spartacist rising in January 1919. The rising was crushed and Liebknecht was murdered by the right-wing Freikorps (see Chapter 8).



Fig. 3 Karl Liebknecht



Lesson 7: How successful was the Spartacist uprising?



LO: To know key features of the Spartacist uprising.

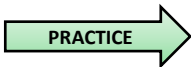
LO: To be able to evaluate how successful the Spartacist uprising was.



Faced with this challenge, Ebert’s government first tried to negotiate with the Spartacist leaders, to no effect. It thus had little option but to turn to the army. Groener, in addition to using regular units, recruited hundreds of right-wing ex-soldiers, organised into *Freikorps* units. The *Freikorps* were only too willing to suppress the communist activity. By 15 January the Spartacist revolt was crushed after savage street fighting. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were shot while in police custody.

Freikorps

The *Freikorps* or Free Corps were armed groups, formed mainly of nationalist and anti-communist ex-soldiers, which came into existence after the dissolution of the Imperial army. Many initially fought in the east in efforts to defend Germany’s borders from communists, Poles and other national groups. They were also used by the army against communist risings in Germany. The *Freikorps* were formally disbanded in 1920 but some units continued to exist in secret. Many *Freikorps* members joined right-wing paramilitary organisations.



How did Ebert handle this situation and who were the Freikorps?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 7: How successful was the Spartacist uprising?

LO: To know key features of the Spartacist uprising.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful the Spartacist uprising was.



NEW INFO

Further bloodshed

In February 1919 widespread strikes were organised by communists and in some towns there was sporadic street fighting. In March, the communists called for a general strike. Again Berlin became the scene of fighting; again the *Freikorps* were sent in. By mid-March 1919 order had been restored at the cost of over one thousand dead.

Bavaria

The elections to the Bavarian parliament in mid-January 1919 resulted in an overwhelming defeat for Eisner's Independents: they won only three seats. On the way to opening the first session of the new parliament in February, Eisner was murdered by a right-wing fanatic. Disorder broke out and the new coalition government, led by Majority Socialists, fled from Munich, leaving the city in the hands of Independents and Communists. On 9 April, the Communists, brushing aside the Independents, set up a soviet republic in Bavaria. The coalition government called on a local *Freikorps* unit for help. The army and *Freikorps* restored order in Munich after days of savage fighting. Hundreds of communists were shot.

PRACTICE

What role did the Freikorps play in the years following the end of the war?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



Wassermänner in den Straßen bei Reichshausplatz.



Lesson 7: How successful was the Spartacist uprising?

LO: To know key features of the Spartacist uprising.

LO: To be able to evaluate how successful the Spartacist uprising was.



CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

When was the German Communist Party formed?	When was a revolutionary committee of 53 communists and shop steward set up?	What was the nickname of Rosa Luxemburg?	Who was the only deputy to refuse war credits in 1914?	Who murdered Liebknecht?
Who did Ebert turn to deal with the Spartacists?	Where was Liebknecht and Luxemburg shot?	Who fought in the East against communists, Poles and other nationalists?	What did the communists call for in March 1919?	On the 9 th April what did the communists set up in Bavaria?

APPLY

How successful was the Spartacist uprising?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the success of the Spartacist uprising.	Identify and explain key features of the Spartacist uprising	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the success of the uprising.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the Spartacist uprising was / was not.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, the Spartacist uprising was / was not...</i>



NEW INFO

The 1918 Revolution

In October 1918 events moved swiftly through a two-stage 'revolution' that destroyed the old imperial regime.

The revolution from above

The first stage was initiated by the Kaiser:

- 30 September: the Kaiser accepted Hertling's resignation and proclaimed a parliamentary government.
- 1 October: the Kaiser asked **Prince Max von Baden** – a moderate conservative – to form a government with ministers chosen from the Reichstag rather than appointed by the Kaiser. Max created a cabinet with representatives from the majority parties, including prominent members of the SPD.
- 3 October: Max asked President Wilson of the USA for an armistice and peace based on Wilson's fourteen points.
- 24 October: Wilson replied to the effect that, because the German government was based on an 'autocratic dictatorship', nothing but total surrender and a change of regime would be acceptable to the Allies. This increased calls from the SPD, USPD and Zentrum for the abdication of the Kaiser.
- 26 October: Ludendorff was forced to resign after he unilaterally tried to order army generals to resist surrender. Max reassured Wilson that the military authorities had been placed under the control of the German government.
- 28 October: Germany became a parliamentary monarchy with the agreement of the Bundesrat and Emperor:
 - The Chancellor and Minister (secretaries of state) were to be responsible to the Reichstag as well as the Bundesrat.
 - The Kaiser's powers over the army and navy were curtailed and all military appointments were to have the counter-signature of the Minister of War.
 - The Prussian three-class voting system was abolished and parliamentary reforms introduced in a number of the *Länder*.

These constitutional changes took place in Germany at the same time as the British broke through the last German defence system, the Hindenburg line (6 October), and the need for an armistice became more urgent.



NEW INFO

The revolution from below

The second stage of the revolution, the result of appalling living conditions and the news of imminent defeat, came from the people:

- 29/30 October: crews on two of the naval vessels moored at Wilhelmshaven mutinied, when ordered (on 24 October) to make a suicidal attack against the British ships blockading the North Sea ports. Sailors raised the Communist red flag, and when naval commanders tried to restore order, the mutiny spread.
- Karl Liebknecht, of the left-wing 'Spartacus League' (the 'Spartacists'), called on soldiers, workers and other sailors to join a communist revolution and began plans for a rising in the capital, Berlin.
- 3 November: the High Seas Fleet at Kiel mutinied; eight sailors were shot dead and others injured.
- 4 November: Kiel was held by c40,000 rebellious sailors, soldiers and workers.
- 6 November onwards: elected councils of workers, sailors and soldiers, modelled after the 'soviets' set up in Russia in 1917, were established in several major cities, establishing military and civil control.
- 7 November: King Ludwig III of Bavaria fled and an independent socialist republic was proclaimed.
- 8 November: the **Revolutionary Shop Stewards** in Berlin appealed for a general strike the next day. The Spartacists, the SPD and the unions supported the call.
- 9 November: workers' and soldiers' councils were formed in Berlin, the police headquarters was occupied, and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators converged on the city centre. Philipp Scheidemann, an SPD leader, proclaimed a republic from a Reichstag window. Two hours later, Karl Liebknecht proclaimed a 'Workers' Republic' from a balcony of the Royal Palace in the centre of Berlin. (Both did so before the Kaiser had been persuaded to abdicate.)
- Prince Max announced Wilhelm's abdication and transferred his political authority to the SPD leader, **Friedrich Ebert** – to create a sense of legitimacy. The Kaiser, furious but powerless, formally abdicated and left for Holland.



Lesson 8: Was there really a German revolution in 1918-19?



LO: To know the key political events of 1918-1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate to what extent these events can be described as revolutionary.



Bullet point the key events of the 'revolution' below.

Revolution from Above	Revolution from Below

Lesson 8: Was there really a German revolution in 1918-19?

LO: To know the key political events of 1918-1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate to what extent these events can be described as revolutionary.



NEW INFO

Was there really a German revolution in 1918–19?

By the spring of 1919 a degree of stability had returned to Germany. The German revolution had run its course and the Weimar Republic had been established (see below). Serious doubts remain about the nature and extent of the supposedly revolutionary changes. Indeed, it is possible to argue that there was no real revolution at all.

Undoubtedly there existed the potential for revolutionary upheaval in November 1918. The effects of war and the shock of defeat shook the faith of large numbers of Germans in the old order. The *Kaiserreich* did not survive Germany's defeat. The *Kaiser* and the other German princes were deposed and parliamentary democracy was introduced. These were important changes. However, in the event, the revolution did not go much further than the October 1918 reforms. Society was left almost untouched by events. The civil service, judiciary and army all remained essentially intact. While improved working conditions were implemented, there was no major change in the structure of big business and land ownership.

Divisions on the left played into the hands of the forces of conservatism. It may be that the threat from the extreme left was over-exaggerated by contemporaries. While the Spartacists were vocal in propagandising their revolutionary creed, their actual base of support was minimal. They were thus easily defeated by a small number of soldiers and *Freikorps*. Indeed, the increasing dependence of the moderate left on the elites of imperial Germany in early 1919 strongly suggests that the forces of counter-revolution were already beginning to assert a dominant influence.

PRACTICE 1

What evidence is there to support each side of the argument?

Revolution	No Revolution

Lesson 8: Was there really a German revolution in 1918-19?

LO: To know the key political events of 1918-1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate to what extent these events can be described as revolutionary.



📍 Key Knowledge Check 📍

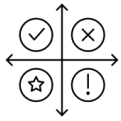
Who called for the abdication of the Kaiser?	Who was forced to resign for resisting the surrender?	When did the British break through the Hindenburg line?	Who mutinied at Kiel on the 3 rd November 1918?	Who fled Bavaria on the 7 th November?
From what 2 Berlin buildings were workers republics proclaimed	By the Spring of 1919 what had returned to Germany?	Who remained essentially intact?	Who easily defeated the threat from the left?	What did not survive the defeat in the war?



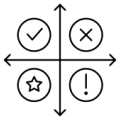
Was there really a German revolution in 1918-19?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the validity of the German Revolution in 1918.	Identify and explain key features of the 'revolution'	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the validity of the events as a revolution.
Sentence starters	<i>To a large extent the events of 1918/19 in Germany were / were not.... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it is more accurate to suggest that...</i>



Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

DO NOW 

Friedrich Ebert (1871–1925)

Ebert was the son of a tailor. He became a saddler and entered politics through his trade union activities. In 1905 he was elected secretary to the SPD's central committee. His hard work behind the scenes was partly responsible for the SPD's success in the 1912 elections. Ebert himself was elected to the *Reichstag* in 1912. On the death of August Bebel in 1913, he was elected joint leader of the SPD alongside the more radical Haase. During the war, he worked with other left-wing parties, hoping to push the *Kaiser's* administration towards an acceptance of parliamentary democracy. As well as a democrat, Ebert was a patriotic German who lost two sons during the war. By 1918–19 he was effectively leader of Germany.

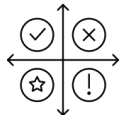
Ebert was not a great orator or charismatic leader. His skills lay in other directions. He was a calm, patient and subtle negotiator – more concerned with improving the lot of the working class by evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.

Radical critics at the time and since have accused Ebert of betraying the interests of workers and of ensuring the failure of the revolution by allying with the forces of conservatism. In the eyes of the left, the new Germany looked remarkably like the old. The *Kaiser* was gone but the imperial institutions, run by men with imperial mentalities remained. The structure of German society was hardly affected by the revolution. The old elites – industrial barons, great landowners, civil servants and army officers – retained their power. In truth, however, radical socialism had limited support and little to offer Germany in 1918–19. Nationalisation of industry or massive land redistribution would have led to economic chaos. Any attempt to extend the power of the workers' councils might well have resulted in civil war.

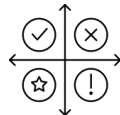
Ebert had no wish to preside over chaos. Like most SPD leaders, he was suspicious of the extreme left. Given the left-wing threat, he had little option but to rely on the forces of reaction. In the context of 1918–19, Ebert had a sensible set of goals – to end the war, to maintain law and order and (most importantly) to establish parliamentary democracy. In the event, he achieved most of his goals – at least in the short term.

10 key facts about Ebert





Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

NEW INFO

The 1919 constitution

What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?

Having survived the threat from the left in 1918–19, Ebert’s government was able to push ahead with plans to establish a new constitution. It was hoped that this constitution would establish full parliamentary democracy in Germany.

The 1919 elections

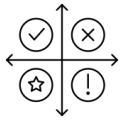
The elections for the National Assembly took place on 19 January 1919. Most political parties took the opportunity to re-form themselves. New names did not hide the fact that there was considerable continuity in the structure of the party system. The Nationalist Party (DNVP) was essentially an amalgamation of the old Conservative parties. The liberals remained divided between left (the Democrats) and right (the People’s Party).

Party	Percentage of votes	Number of seats
SPD	38	165
Centre	19.7	91
DDP	18.5	75
DNVP	10.3	44
USPD	7.6	22
DVP	4.4	19

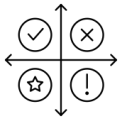
Figure 1 The results of the first National Assembly.

Party name	Leaders	Political stance
Social Democratic Party SPD	Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, Hermann Müller	Largest socialist party, pro-Weimar
Centre Party	Matthias Erzberger, Heinrich Brüning	Catholic, pro-Weimar
German Democratic Party DDP	Walther Rathenau	Pro-Weimar, left-wing liberal
German Nationalist People’s Party DNVP	Karl Helfferich, Alfred Hugenberg	Conservative, monarchist, anti-Weimar, racist
Independent Social Democratic Party USPD	Hugo Hasse	More left-wing than the SPD
German People’s Party DVP	Gustav Stresemann	Became pro-Weimar under Stresemann, right-wing liberal
German Communist Party KPD	Ernst Thälmann	Communist party, founded 1919, anti-Weimar
National Socialist Party NSDAP	Adolf Hitler	Extreme right-wing, racist, anti-Weimar

Figure 2 The main German parties and their political stance 1912–29.



Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

NEW INFO

The results were a success for the forces of parliamentary democracy. Over 80 per cent of the electorate (including women) turned out to vote. The SPD won 165 seats (38 per cent of the vote) and the USPD 22. The Centre won 91 seats, the Democrats 75, the Nationalists 44 and the People's Party 19.

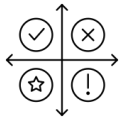
On 6 February 1919 the National Assembly met at the small town of Weimar: Berlin was considered unsafe given the unsettled conditions in the capital. On 10 February Ebert was elected first president of the Republic by 277 votes to 51. Given that no party had a clear majority, he asked the SPD to form a government. The SPD found allies in the Centre and Democrat parties – the so-called 'Weimar Coalition'. Over 75 per cent of the electorate had voted for these three parties, all of which were committed to the new republic. The election, a clear repudiation of the extreme right and left, seemed a promising start to a new chapter in German history. The new government was headed by Scheidemann and consisted of six Social Democrats, three Centrists and three Democrats.

PRACTICE 1

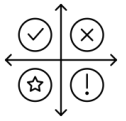
What are the key takeaways from the first Weimar elections?

Key Takeaways





Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

NEW INFO

The Weimar constitution

The Assembly's main task was to draw up a new constitution. Largely the work of Hugo Preuss (a legal expert, scholar and liberal), the Weimar constitution attempted a careful balance of political forces, building on the traditions of German politics.

- Germany was to be a republic, its sovereignty based on the people.
- It remained a federal rather than a unitary state. The *Reich* was to comprise eighteen states (or *Länder*).
- The central government would control direct taxation, foreign affairs, the armed forces and communications.
- The states retained their powers over education, police and the churches.

At national level Germany was to be governed by a president, a *Reichstag* and a *Reichsrat*. *Reichstag* deputies were to be elected every four years by all men and women over the age of twenty. A system of **proportional representation** was introduced, ensuring that all German views would be represented in the *Reichstag*. The chancellor and his ministers had to possess the *Reichstag's* confidence and were obliged to resign when they forfeited it. The *Reichstag* was to initiate and approve legislation.

The *Reichsrat* was to be composed of delegates from the German states. Each state was represented according to its population, except that no state was allowed to have more than two-fifths of the seats: this was designed to prevent Prussian preponderance. The *Reichsrat* could veto *Reichstag* legislation: its veto, in turn, could be over-ridden by a two-thirds vote of the *Reichstag*.

The president, directly elected by the people for seven years, was supreme commander of the armed forces, convened and dissolved the *Reichstag*, could block new laws by calling a referendum, and appointed the chancellor and the *Reich* government.

The Weimar constitution passed a bill of rights which guaranteed German people personal liberty, equality before the law, freedom of movement, expression and conscience, and freedom to belong to a trade union.

On 31 July 1919 the new constitution was passed by 262 votes to 75. Only the USPD and the right were in opposition. The adoption of the black, red and gold revolutionary flag of 1848 enraged right-wing nationalists.

KEY TERMS

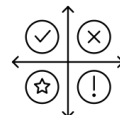
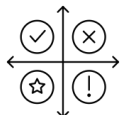
Complete the table below, explaining what each key phrase means

Key Term	Definition
Länder	
Proportional Representation	

Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?

LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.



NEW INFO

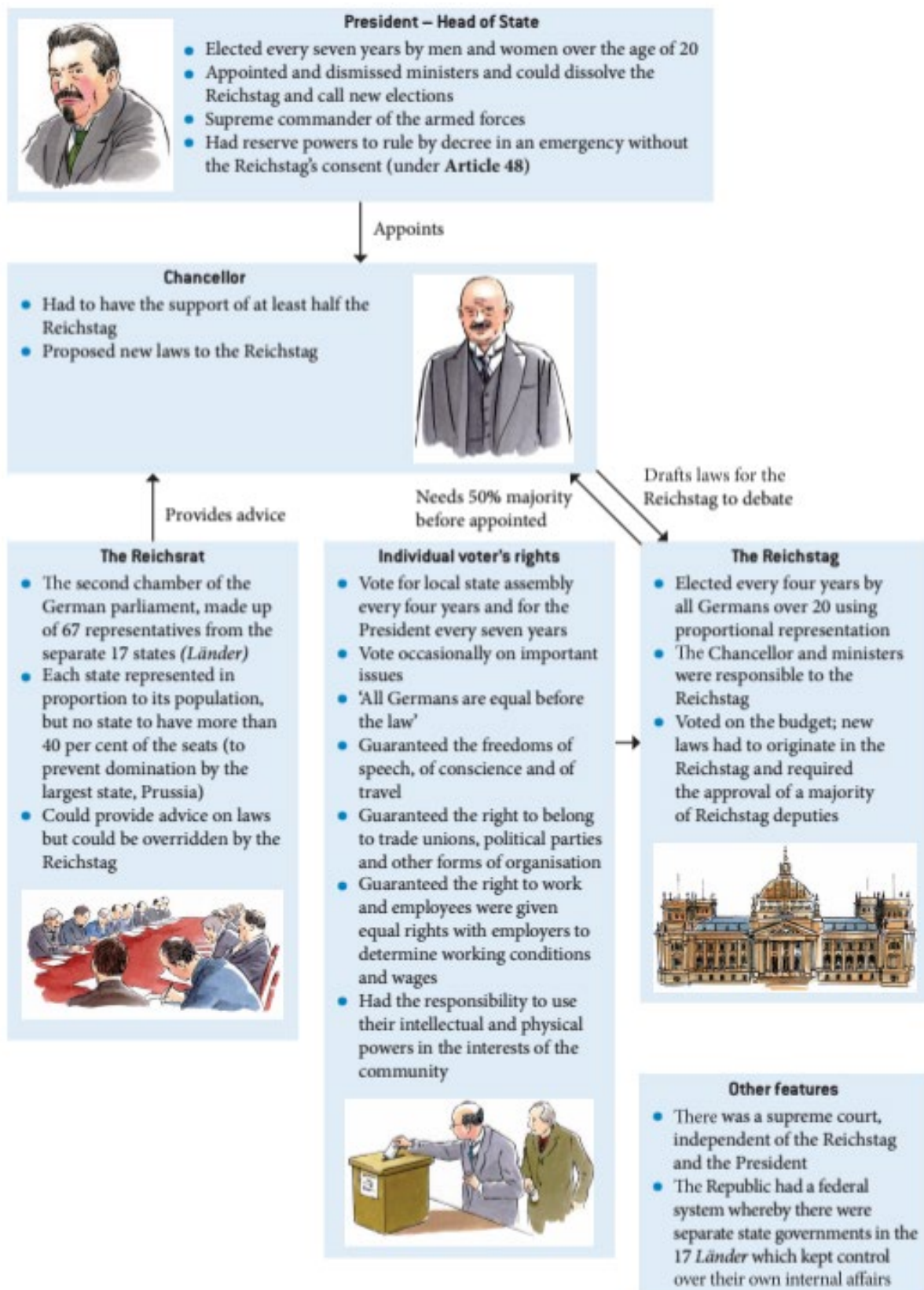
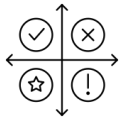
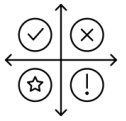


Fig. 8 The Weimar constitution



Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

NEW INFO

The weaknesses of the constitution

For historians looking for structural reasons to explain the Republic's eventual collapse, it is easy to claim that the 1919 constitution was a major source of weakness. The introduction of proportional representation is often seen as a major problem for the fledgling Republic. This system of voting encouraged the formation of new parties, usually representing particular interests. The fact that there were so many parties ensured no political party was ever likely to win an overall majority in the *Reichstag*. This led to coalition governments, which came and went with spectacular frequency. Such instability meant there was weak government.

The creation of a presidency, intended to act as a political counterbalance to the *Reichstag*, created a somewhat ambiguous system. Was the ultimate source of authority in the Republic vested in the *Reichstag* or the presidency? The situation was further exacerbated by the powers conferred on the president by Article 48. This provided the president with the authority to suspend civil rights and to take whatever action was required to restore law and order by the issue of presidential decrees. Although the intention was to create the means by which government could continue to function in a temporary crisis, Article 48 gave the president considerable potential power.

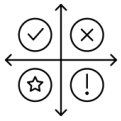
The strengths of the constitution

Arguably there was nothing structurally wrong with the 1919 constitution. It reflected both a broad spectrum of political opinion and successful constitutional practice at the time. It was thoroughly democratic and guaranteed a wide range of civil liberties. It also tried to build on Germany's traditional practices. In recognising an element of regional authority (for example, over the police) and regional influence, such as representation of the *Länder* in the *Reichsrat*, the constitution reflected pre- 1914 practice.

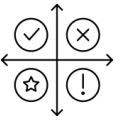
Although there had been no proportional representation system before 1919, there had been a spate of political parties. Parties in pre-1914 Germany had usually represented sectional – usually class – interests. None of those parties ever won overall majorities in the *Reichstag*. Parties were used to forming coalitions. This was the way German politics operated. Proportional representation ensured that a wide variety of interests were represented in the *Reichstag*. The abundance of small parties did not necessarily mean weak government. The fundamental problem was the main parties' difficulty in creating coalitions and agreeing policies.

Presidential powers were strictly limited. Article 48 allowed the government sufficient flexibility to overcome the serious problems facing the Republic between 1919 and 1923.

Arguably, by providing an essentially liberal democratic framework, the 1919 constitution represented a major improvement upon the far more authoritarian 1871 constitution. Unfortunately, the Weimar Constitution could not control the conditions and circumstances in which it had to operate. No constitution could have provided for all the possible consequences arising from the immense problems Germany faced following its defeat in 1918.



Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



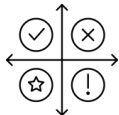
LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.

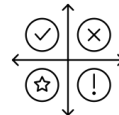


Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the new Weimar constitution below.

Strengths	Weaknesses



Lesson 9: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?



LO: To know key features of the Weimar constitution.

LO: To be able to evaluate how effective this constitution was.



Key Knowledge Check

What was Ebert?	What were Ebert's goals?	What was it hoped the constitution would establish?	What were the three new parties in the Reichstag?	How many seats did the SPD win in the first elections?
What was the election result that made Ebert President?	How many states was in the new Reich?	What voting system was to be used?	What was no state allowed to control in the Reichstag?	How many years was the president elected?



What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution.	Identify and explain key features of the Weimar constitution.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the success of the Weimar constitution.
Sentence starters	<i>On one hand it could be argued that... this is because... However, on the other hand....</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it could be argued that the Weimar Constitution was / was not...</i>



Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

NEW INFO

The aims of the 'Big Three'

In January 1919 Allied leaders assembled in Paris to make peace with the defeated Central Powers. The main decisions were taken by the 'Big Three': Woodrow Wilson (the US president), David Lloyd George (the British prime minister) and Georges Clemenceau (the French premier). The peacemakers faced huge problems. The map of Europe as it had existed in 1914 had been swept away. There was political and economic chaos across much of central and eastern Europe and the possibility that Bolshevism might spread westwards from Russia.

Woodrow Wilson

Woodrow Wilson has traditionally been portrayed as an idealist, as he had a strong religious background. Initially, he had been an academic, but he was drawn into politics when he had campaigned against corruption. At first he had opposed the USA's entry into the war. Once he declared war against Germany in April 1917 he drew up the Fourteen Points in the hope of creating a more just world. His main aims were:

- To reduce armaments
- To apply the principle of **self-determination**
- To create a **League of Nations** in order to maintain international peace

Georges Clemenceau

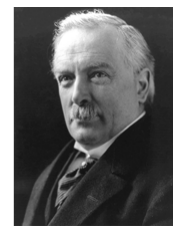
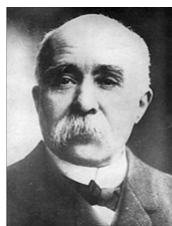
Georges Clemenceau was an uncompromising French nationalist. Germany had invaded France twice in his lifetime and he was deeply influenced by the devastation from the war in northern France. He was motivated by revenge and he was determined to gain financial compensation and to satisfy France's security concerns. His main aims were:

- To annex the Rhineland and to create a **buffer state**
- To impose major disarmament on Germany
- To impose heavy **reparations** on Germany in order to weaken it and to get recompense for the damage of the war to finance rebuilding

David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George was a pragmatist. He was keen to uphold British national interests and initially he played on the idea of revenge. However, he recognised that there would have to be compromise. In particular, he saw the need to restrain Clemenceau's revenge. His main aims were:

- To guarantee British military security – especially to secure naval supremacy
- To keep communism at bay
- To limit French demands because he feared that excessively weakening Germany would have serious economic consequences for the European economy








Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

Leader	What did they want?	Why did they want it?
 Georges Clemenceau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
 David Lloyd George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
 Woodrow Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____



Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

NEW INFO

The Terms of the Treaty

Scheidemann's government lodged its objections at considerable length to the terms – to little effect. On 19 June the German cabinet rejected the Treaty and Scheidemann resigned. The new government, led by Bauer, knew that rejection of the Treaty was not really an option. Germany was in no state to fight a new war, a war which might result in Germany being dismembered. Accordingly the *Reichstag* sanctioned the signing of the Treaty. This took place on 28 June 1919 in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles – the same place in which the German Empire had been proclaimed in 1871.

The territorial terms

- Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine to France, Memel to Lithuania, Eupen and Malmédy to Belgium, and West Prussia and Posen to Poland.
- Danzig was to be a free port under League of Nations control.
- Germany lost North Schleswig to Denmark after a **plebiscite** in 1920.
- Germany lost parts of Upper Silesia to Poland after a plebiscite in 1922.
- The Rhineland was to become a demilitarised zone to act as a buffer between France and Germany. It was to be occupied by the Allies for fifteen years.
- The Saar was placed under League of Nations control. Its coalfields were to be controlled by France.
- Union with Austria was forbidden.
- Germany lost all its colonies.

The military terms

Germany was to have no tanks or military aircraft and its army was limited to 100,000 men. It was to have no large battleships and no submarines. Most of its fleet was to be surrendered to the Allies. (The German crews, in a last act of defiance, scuttled their ships at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys in June 1919.)

Reparations and War Guilt

By Article 231 Germany and its allies had to accept full responsibility for causing the war. This War Guilt clause provided a moral base for the Allied demands for Germany to pay reparations. The main difficulty was deciding how much Germany could and should pay, and how this money should be divided among the Allies. No single issue caused more acrimony. Wilson wanted a reparations settlement based on Germany's ability to pay. However, the British and French publics wanted to extract huge payments which would help the Allied countries to meet the cost of war and also weaken Germany financially for years to come. A Reparations Commission was eventually set up to determine the amount Germany should pay.



Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

**What were the terms
of the Treaty of
Versailles?**



Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

NEW INFO

The *Diktat*

No other political issue produced such total agreement within Weimar Germany as the rejection and condemnation of the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty's terms were seen as unfair and were simply described as a *Diktat*. Germany's main complaints were as follows:

- Many Germans viewed the following areas as 'German', but they were excluded from the new German state and placed under foreign rule: Austria, Danzig, Posen and West Prussia, Memel, Upper Silesia, Sudetenland and Saar.
- Similarly, the loss of Germany's colonies was not in line with the fifth of Wilson's Fourteen Points, which had called for an 'impartial adjustment of all colonial claims'. Instead, they were passed on to the care of the Allies as mandates.
- Germany found it impossible to accept the War Guilt Clause (Article 231), which was the Allies' justification for demanding the payment of reparations. Most Germans argued that Germany could not be held solely responsible for the outbreak of the war. They were convinced that the war of 1914 had been fought for defensive reasons because their country had been threatened by 'encirclement' from the Allies in 1914.
- Germans considered the Allied demand for extensive reparations totally unreasonable. Worryingly, the actual size of the reparations payment was not stated in the Treaty of Versailles – it was left to be decided at a later date by the IARC. From a German viewpoint this amounted to their being forced to sign a 'blank cheque'.
- The imposition of the disarmament clauses was seen as grossly unfair, as Britain and France remained highly armed and made no future commitments to disarm. It seemed as if Germany had been **unilaterally disarmed**, whereas Wilson had spoke in favour of universal disarmament.
- Germany's treatment by the Allies was viewed as undignified and unworthy of a great power. For example, Germany was excluded from the League of Nations but, as part of the treaty, was forced to accept the rules of its Covenant. This simply hardened the views of those Germans who saw the League as a tool of the Allies rather than as a genuine international organisation.

PRACTICE

Explain why some Germans were far from happy with the Treaty.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

NEW INFO

The impact of the Treaty of Versailles

The economic consequences of reparations were undoubtedly a genuine concern. The English economist John Maynard Keynes feared in 1919 that the reparations would fundamentally weaken the economy of Germany with consequences for the whole of Europe. However, Germany's economic potential was still considerable. It had potentially by far the strongest economy in Europe and still had extensive industry and resources.

It is not really possible to maintain that the treaty had weakened Germany politically. In some respects, Germany in 1919 was in a stronger position than in 1914. The great empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Turkey had gone, creating a power vacuum in central and Eastern Europe that could not be filled, at least in the short-term, by a weak and isolated Soviet Russia or by any other state. In such a situation, cautious diplomacy might have led to the establishment of German power and influence at the heart of Europe. However, on another level, the treaty might be considered more to blame because, in the minds of many Germans, it was regarded as the real cause of the country's problems and they really believed that it was totally unfair. In the war German public opinion had been strongly shaped by nationalist propaganda and then deeply shocked by the defeat. Both the Armistice and Versailles were closely linked to the 'stab in the back' myth that the German army had not really lost the First World War in 1918. It may have been a myth, but it was a very powerful one.

As a result, although the war had been pursued by Imperial Germany, it was the new democracy of Weimar that was forced to take the responsibility and the blame for the First World War. Therefore, Weimar democracy was deeply weakened by Versailles, which fuelled the propaganda of the republic's opponents over the years. Even for sympathetic democrats like Hugo Preuss, Versailles only served to disillusion many into thinking that the gains of the revolution were undone. In this way, the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the internal political and economic difficulties that emerged in Germany after 1919.

PRACTICE

Explain the key takeaways of the Treaty of Versailles

Key Takeaways





Lesson 10 What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?



LO: To know key features the Treaty of Versailles.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the Treaty on Versailles on Germany.

CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

Name one aim of Wilson	Name one aim of Clemenceau	Name one aim of Lloyd George	What room at Versailles was the treaty signed?	What did the German do at Scapa Flow?
Why did Germans feel the war began?	What did Germans view the non agreements of reparations as?	Who feared the damage caused by reparations?	What did some Germans believe?	Who was forced to deal with the consequences of the ToV?

APPLY

What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic.	Identify and explain key features of the Treaty of Versailles.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the impact of the Treaty of Versailles.
Sentence starters	<i>To a larger extent, the main impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic was...</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it could be argued that the main impact of the Treaty of Versailles was...</i>



Lesson 11: What problems did the Weimar Republic face in 1919?



LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.

DO NOW

Source C Hugo Preuss, a German democrat and the man largely responsible for drawing up the Weimar constitution, writing in 1923.

.... everyone still expected a peace settlement in accordance with Wilson's 14 Points which all the belligerent countries had bindingly accepted as the basis for the peace. This would have left the new Germany with the political and economic chance to survive and gradually pull itself up again, instead of turning it into the pariah among European nations by malevolently draining its national life-blood. The criminal madness of the Versailles Diktat was a shameless blow in the face to such hopes based on international law and political common sense. The Reich constitution was born with this curse upon it. That it did not collapse immediately under the strain is striking proof of the intrinsic vitality of its basic principles; but its implementation and evolution were inevitably fatefully restricted and lamed thereby.

- 1 According to Source C, what was wrong with the Treaty of Versailles?
- 2 What did Hugo Preuss mean when he wrote that Versailles had turned Germany 'into the pariah among European nations by malevolently draining its national life-blood'?
- 3 Was Preuss's criticism of Versailles fair?

Lesson 11: What problems did the Weimar Republic face in 1919?



LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.

NEW INFO

Economic and financial problems

The Weimar government was burdened with a terrible financial and economic legacy. Between 1913 and 1919 Germany's national debt had risen from 5,000 million marks to 144,000 million marks. Rather than increase taxation, the German government had financed the war through short-term loans and by printing money. Between 1914 and 1919 the value of the mark against the dollar had fallen from 4.20 marks to 14.00 marks and the price of basic goods had increased three- to four-fold. The situation only grew worse with the coming of peace. By early 1920 a dollar was worth 100 marks. Narrowing the massive gap between government income and expenditure, thereby bringing about the control of inflation, could only be achieved by increasing taxation and/or by cutting expenditure. Neither of these options was politically attractive.

Germany also faced severe economic problems. As a result of the First World War, Germany lost most of its merchant shipping, much of its fishing fleet and all its property in Allied territories. The Allied blockade, which did not end until the signing of the Versailles Treaty, had worsened an already dire food supply situation. By the terms of Versailles, Germany lost:

- nearly 15 per cent of its arable land
- 75 per cent of its iron ore
- 68 per cent of its zinc ore
- a quarter of its coal production.

Not surprisingly German manufacturing output was 30 per cent lower in 1919 than in 1914. The country moreover had a large trade deficit and faced the difficulties of re-adjusting a war economy to the requirements of peace. Its economic and financial problems would not be helped by the enormous reparation payments demanded by the Allies in 1921 (see pages 90–2).

PRACTICE

Which economic problems did the new Weimar government face?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 11: What problems did the Weimar Republic face in 1919?



LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.



The threat from the left

After the revolution of 1918–19 socialist politics remained in a state of confusion. The SPD was committed to parliamentary democracy. The KPD, by contrast, took its lead from Bolshevik Russia and pressed for proletarian revolution. The USPD, caught in the middle, pressed for the creation of a socialist society but within a democratic framework. In December 1920 the USPD came to an end. Its members either joined the KPD or the SPD. By 1920 the KPD was thus a mass party with some 400,000 members. It wanted to overthrow the Weimar Republic, establish a one-party socialist state which would then restructure Germany’s social and economic fabric. The threat from the KPD, which frightened many Germans, was probably exaggerated. Unable to win the mass support of the working classes, the Communists proved incapable of mounting a unified attack on the Republic. The repression they had endured at the hands of the *Freikorps* in 1919 removed some of their ablest and most dedicated supporters. There was little hope of reconciliation between the KPD and the SPD. The suppression of the Spartacists by Ebert’s government in 1919 was neither forgotten nor forgiven by the extreme left.



How were the Weimar government challenged by the left?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.

NEW INFO

The threat from the right

Ebert's willingness to compromise with the old order in 1919 did not endear him to those who regretted its passing. Right-wing political forces totally rejected the Weimar system and its democratic principles. They demanded strong government, vied with each other to attack the Versailles settlement, and had considerable success in propagating the notion that the German army had been 'stabbed in the back' in 1918 by the 'November Criminals'.

The right was divided between conservatives and radicals. Conservatives, many of whom wished to restore the monarchy, tended to join the Nationalist Party (DNVP). This was a coalition of nationalist forces which included the old imperial conservative parties but also embraced such groups as the Fatherland Party (see page 75) and the Pan-German League (see page 36). It remained the party of landowners and employers but it also had the support of many middle-class Germans. Conservatives continued to exert influence in a number of key institutions – the army, civil service, the judiciary and the education system, all of which were preserved in much their old form. Large numbers of army officers, bureaucrats, judges and professors were lukewarm or indeed actively hostile to the new Republic.

After 1918 there were numerous radical right-wing – or *volkisch* – groups, which had little sympathy with the conservatives. These groups, nationalistic, anti-democratic, anti-socialist and anti-Jewish, wanted to smash the Republic. Ex-soldiers, many of whom had belonged to *Freikorps* units, were particularly attracted to the radical right. Extreme right-wing groups were particularly active in Bavaria (see page 84). In September 1919 an obscure corporal joined one such right-wing group, the German Workers' Party, in Munich. The obscure corporal was Adolf Hitler.

The 'stab in the back' myth

In November 1919 Hindenburg gave evidence to a committee of the *Reichstag* studying Versailles. According to Hindenburg, the shameful Treaty was signed because of the anti-patriotic sentiments of a group of left-wing politicians, the so-called 'November Criminals' who had founded the Republic – men like Ebert and Matthias Erzberger. They were the same men responsible for the 'stab in the back' of the armed forces that led to military collapse in 1918.

The war, Hindenburg and nationalists argued, had been lost not because of military defeat but as a result of the betrayal of unpatriotic forces within Germany – pacifists, socialists, democrats and Jews. This distorted interpretation of the events of 1918–19 was universally accepted by right-wing parties. It absolved military leaders from responsibility for their own failings in 1918 and it played on popular resentment of the humiliating Treaty of Versailles. It acted as a powerful stick with which to beat the new leaders of Germany.

Lesson 11: What problems did the Weimar Republic face in 1919?

LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.



PRACTICE 1

What was the 'stab in the back myth' and why was it an issue?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

How was the new Weimar government challenged from the right?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



Lesson 11: What problems did the Weimar Republic face in 1919?



LO: To know the key issues facing Germany in 1919.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of these problems on Germany.



Key Knowledge Check

How much had the National debt risen from between 1913-19?	By 1920 how many marks was a dollar worth?	By what % was German manufacturing lower than in 1919 compared to 1914?	What political party ended in 1920?	How many members did the KPD have in 1920?
What was there little hope of between the KPD and SPD?	What did the Right Wing call Ebert's government?	Which two groups joined the DNVP?	Who were the Freikorps attracted to?	Who did Hindenburg blame for losing the war?



What was the biggest issue faced by the Weimar Republic in 1919?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the different problems faced by the Weimar Republic.	Identify and explain key problems faced by the Weimar Republic.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the problems faced by the Weimar Republic.
Sentence starters	<i>On one hand it could be argued that... this is because... However, on the other hand....</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it could be argued that the biggest problem faced by the Weimar Constitution was.</i>



Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.



4 Troubled years, 1919–23

The creation of a broadly based democratic coalition did not result in a period of stability and consolidation for the new Republic. The years between 1919 and 1923 were years of almost continuous crisis. This section will examine the nature of the problems faced by Weimar politicians.

The threat from the right and left in 1920

Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?

The new constitution came into effect on 14 August 1919. One week later the National Assembly left Weimar and returned to Berlin which was now regarded as safe. The most pressing task of the new *Reichstag* was to try to resolve Germany's awesome financial problems. The Minister of Finance, Matthias Erzberger, set about trying to cut government expenses by reducing the army and increasing taxation, particularly on the wealthy classes. His measures were attacked by the right-wing press. Erzberger, hated by the right for signing the armistice in 1918, was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in January 1920. Assassination was just one of the methods used by the extreme right in its battle with the Weimar government.



Why did the right wing hate Matthias Erzberger?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.



The Kapp Putsch

The need to reduce the size of the army created great unease within the ranks of the army and the *Freikorps*. Dr Wolfgang Kapp, a former Prussian civil servant and a founder member of the Fatherland Party (see page 75) and Captain Waldemar Pabst, who had ordered the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, plotted to overthrow the government. They had the support of General von Luttwitz, who commanded troops in Berlin and who was considered to be 'the father of the *Freikorps*'. When the government ordered the disbanding of Captain Ehrhardt's Marine Brigade, Kapp and Luttwitz determined to exploit the situation. Ehrhardt's 5,000 *Freikorps* troops marched into Berlin in March 1920.

President Ebert and Gustav Bauer's cabinet prudently moved to Stuttgart. Kapp installed himself in the vacant chancellery and declared that the Weimar government was overthrown. Despite requests from Ebert and Bauer to put down the putsch, the regular army did nothing to support Germany's legitimate government. But nor did it support Kapp. General von Seeckt, the senior officer in the Defence Ministry, declared:

'Troops do not fire on troops ... When Reichswehr fires on Reichswehr then all comradeship within the officers corps will have vanished.'

Despite the army's neutral stance, the putsch quickly collapsed. It is usually claimed that this resulted from a general strike, called by the SPD and supported by the Communists. However, President Ebert opposed a general strike, fearing that it would plunge Germany into civil war and the Communists initially refused to support the SPD-initiated strike. The strike only really got going when the putsch was on its last legs.

In reality, the putsch collapsed because *Reichswehr* leaders, placing unity of the army above everything else, did not back Kapp and the vast majority of the government bureaucrats refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of Kapp's government or obey his orders. After four days, when it was clear that they exerted no real authority, Kapp and Luttwitz fled the country and Ehrhardt's troops left Berlin. In some respects, the quick collapse of the Kapp Putsch was a major success for the Republic. But the fact that it had occurred at all highlighted the threat from the right.



Complete the table below, explaining what each key phrase means

Key Term	Definition
Reichswehr	



Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.

PRACTICE

Explain the key takeaways of the Kapp Putsch

Key Takeaways





Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.

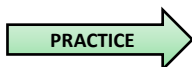


The influence of the *Reichswehr*

The army leadership had revealed its dubious loyalty to the Republic in March 1920. Yet amazingly Seeckt, who had not lifted a finger against Kapp, was appointed Chief of the Army Command at the end of the month. Seeckt accepted the need to co-operate with the Republic: he feared civil war and wanted stability. But from 1920 to 1926, under Seeckt's influence, the army was turned, according to Scheidemann, into a 'state within a state'. It appeared to have a privileged position which placed it in effect beyond direct democratic accountability. The army was supposedly non-political. But this was not the case. Most of its officers were conservative reactionaries. Given the small size of the German army after 1919, officers were able to pick recruits for military service. Many were men who had served in the *Freikorps*. The result was that the *Reichswehr* would act to crush communist revolt. But there was no guarantee that it would put down a right-wing putsch.

The situation in Bavaria

While Kapp was in Berlin, and the government paralysed, there was unrest in Munich. The local army commander General von Mohl demanded that he be given full emergency powers. Johannes Hoffman, Bavaria's SPD minister-president resigned in protest. He was replaced by conservative Gustav von Kahr. Kahr's government provided a safe haven in Bavaria for right-wing extremists.



Explain the influence of the *Reichswehr* and the situation in Bavaria.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.

NEW INFO

The Nazi Party

Adolf Hitler, who joined the German Workers' Party in September 1919, ensured that the Party was more successful than other right-wing groups in Bavaria. Resigning from the army, he threw himself into politics, soon proving himself a brilliant speaker in the Munich beer halls. In February 1920 he announced a **25 Point Programme**, a mix of nationalism and socialism, to a 2,000-strong audience at the Hofbrauhaus beer cellar. The German Workers' Party now adopted a new name – the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP). In 1921 Hitler became Party leader. By 1922 the Party, helped by Bavarian army officers who provided recruits and money, was the biggest and best organised right-wing group in Bavaria, with its own newspaper – the *Völkischer Beobachter* (*Völkisch Observer*). Attracting support from all types of people, especially ex-soldiers and young idealists, it seemed to be a party of action. In 1921 Hitler created the SA (*Sturm-Abteilung* or storm troopers) – a paramilitary organisation which defended Nazi speakers and attacked left-wing groups. By mid-1923 the Party had some 55,000 members.

KEY PROFILE

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) was born in Branau, Austria, the son of a customs official. After leaving school, he moved to Vienna where, having twice failed to gain admittance to the Academy of Arts, he lived as a vagrant. He moved to Bavaria and volunteered for military service in 1914. In the war he was twice wounded, temporarily blinded, and given an Iron Cross for bravery. In 1919 he joined the army's political department in Munich as an intelligence agent. He was sent to observe and monitor the right-wing German Workers' Party (DAP), but ended up joining them. He re-founded this group as the NSDAP and became its chairman in July 1921. He led an unsuccessful putsch in Munich in November 1923, and during his 9 months' imprisonment he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

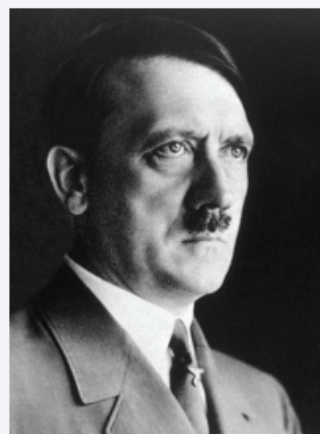


Fig. 7 Adolf Hitler

On his release in 1924 he re-launched his party, imposed his authority on it (despite challenges from party leaders in northern Germany), and eventually transformed it into a mass organisation. He wooed the middle classes to reunite the right around himself and was eventually appointed Chancellor in January 1933. He acquired unlimited powers by means of the Enabling Act of March 1933 and suppressed all political opposition. After the death of President Hindenburg in 1934, he styled himself Führer of the German Reich.



Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.

PRACTICE

**Who were the
Nazi Party?**



Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.

NEW INFO

Unrest in the Ruhr

In the Ruhr industrial area, the Communists, making use of the general strike, tried to seize power in March 1920. Some 50,000 people formed a Red Army and took control of the Ruhr. After attempts at negotiation failed, the government sent military units to crush the revolt. Over a thousand workers lost their lives in the bloodshed that followed. The brutal suppression of the Ruhr workers in April had a sobering effect on the labour movement. There were no more general strikes during the whole period of the Weimar Republic.

Unequal justice

Those responsible for the Ruhr uprising were severely punished. However, those who supported the Kapp Putsch were let off virtually scot-free. In August 1920 there was a general amnesty for *Freikorps* officers who were then welcomed into the armed forces. Kapp returned to Germany in 1922 to face trial but died before proceedings began. Luttwitz was granted early retirement. The judiciary, like the army, remained a conservative force, which doubted the legitimacy and principles of the new republic.

PRACTICE

How did events come to an end and in what ways are they surprising?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 12: Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?



LO: To know key features of the Kapp Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the importance of different factors behind the Putsch's failure.



Key Knowledge Check

What did Matthias Erzberger start to do?	Who led the Kapp Putsch?	How many Freikorps troops marched into Berlin?	What did the regular army do in the Kapp Putsch?	Why did the Putsch fail?
What did the Reichswehr hold in the 1920s?	Who was minister president of Bavaria?	What was the name of the Nazi newspaper?	How many party members did the Nazis have by 1923?	How many Red Army members took control of the Ruhr?



Why did the Kapp Putsch fail?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can explain why the Kapp Putsch failed.	Identify and explain key features of the Kapp Putsch.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the factors that led to the Putsch's failure
Sentence starters	<i>On one hand it could be argued that... this is because... However, on the other hand....</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it could be argued that the biggest factor in the failure of the Kapp Putsch.</i>



L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



The 1920 elections

The Weimar coalition fell apart in the wake of the unrest in 1920. In elections in June 1920, the SPD share of the vote fell by 43 per cent. The DDP dropped by 55 per cent. The KPD fielded candidates for the first time but obtained only 1.7 per cent of the votes. The USPD, however, more than doubled its share so that it was only three points behind the SPD. On the right, votes for the DVP trebled and the DNVP improved its showing by almost 50 per cent.

Before the election, the main Weimar coalition parties – SPD, Centre and DDP – had commanded 78 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly. Now those parties had only 45 per cent of the *Reichstag* seats. Centre Party politician Konstantin Fehrenbach eventually agreed to form a minority government that included the Centre, the DDP and the DVP – but not the SPD. Fehrenbach proved unequal to the weighty problems that faced Germany.

Chancellor	Date	Partners
Friedrich Ebert (SPD)	November 1918–February 1919	Coalition of socialists
Philipp Scheidemann (SPD)	February 1919–June 1919	SPD, Centre, DDP
Gustav Bauer (SPD)	June 1919–March 1920	SPD, Centre, DDP (from October)
Hermann Müller (SPD)	March 1920–June 1920	SPD, Centre, DDP
Konstantin Fehrenbach (Centre)	June 1920–May 1921	DDP, Centre, DVP
Joseph Wirth (Centre)	May 1921–October 1921	SPD, DDP, Centre
Joseph Wirth (Centre)	October 1921–November 1922	SPD, DDP, Centre
Wilhelm Cuno (non-aligned)	November 1922–August 1923	DDP, Centre, DVP

Figure 5 The chancellors and the coalitions of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923.



Explain the key takeaways of the 1920 elections

Key Takeaways





L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



The problem of reparations

In May 1921 the Allies set reparations at 138 billion gold marks. They declared that unless the German government made a back payment of 12 billion gold marks in reparations, the Ruhr industrial area would be occupied. One billion was to be paid by the end of the month. Finding it impossible to meet these terms, Fehrenbach resigned in May. He was replaced by a minority government led by Joseph Wirth, also from the Centre Party. Despite bitter opposition from nationalists, Wirth agreed to accept the demands for reparations under the policy that became known as fulfilment. By seeking to fulfil the reparation terms, Wirth and his Minister of Reconstruction Walther Rathenau sought to demonstrate that the Treaty obligations were impossible. They hoped that this would lead to a revision of the Allied demands. Opposed to reparation payments, the right mounted a massive hate campaign against the Wirth government and its fulfilment policy.



Why did reparation payments create a problem for Germany in the years 1920-1922?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.

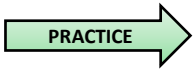


The problem of inflation

German finances, according to historian V. Berghahn (1973) remained in ‘an unholy mess’. Rather than reducing government spending and increasing taxation – both of which would have been highly unpopular – Weimar governments continued to print more money, believing that this would enable Germany to overcome the problems of demobilisation while also reducing the real value of its internal debt. The result was that the inflationary trend continued – with a vengeance.

Not all historians are convinced that the inflationary policy was a mistake. Economic historian Holtfrerich, for example, has claimed that in the years from 1919 to 1922, Weimar’s inflationary economic policy amounted to a ‘rational strategy’ which was in Germany’s national interest. By printing money, the Republic was able to maintain economic growth and increase production. The mark’s devaluation against all other currencies meant that German goods were cheap abroad while foreign goods were expensive in Germany. The result was that Germany recovered some of its lost markets overseas. The high demand for German goods also meant that there was little unemployment. Indeed, the German economy compared very favourably with other European countries between 1919 and 1922. Britain, for example, had an unemployment rate of nearly 17 per cent in 1921. In the same year Germany had only 1.8 per cent unemployed and rising wage levels. This industrial activity acted as a major stimulus for investment and large sums of money, especially from the USA, poured into Germany. Holtfrerich argued that the inflationary policy was not only economically beneficial but was politically unavoidable for the survival of the Republic. Any kind of retrenchment policy in the first years of the Republic would have had dire economic and social consequences which would have decisively destabilised the new democracy.

But Holtfrerich’s claims are not totally convincing. Arguably, the so-called ‘good inflation’ up to 1923 simply led to the ‘bad inflation’ of 1923 (see pages 101–2) with all its accompanying problems. Thus, Germany was living on borrowed time. The Allied demands for reparations added to Germany’s financial problems. The Weimar governments found it more convenient to print even more money than to raise taxes or cut spending.



Explain how inflation became a problem for Germany.



L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



The problem of Upper Silesia

Events in Upper Silesia in the spring of 1921 increased the sense of crisis. The Polish government refused to accept the result of a plebiscite in March 1921, in which 60 per cent of the population voted for Germany. Instead, the Polish government supported Polish insurgents who laid claim to the bulk of the province. The German government responded by arming paramilitary units, determined to ensure that the vote be respected and Upper Silesia be returned to Germany.

The Allies managed to put an end to the fighting and accepted a report by the League of Nations which suggested that four-fifths of Upper Silesia should be given to Poland, including certain industrial areas that had voted overwhelmingly for Germany.



Explain why there was a dispute over Upper Silesia

In what ways were these events unfair to Germany?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



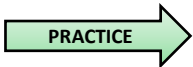
Political extremism

In March 1921 the army and police suppressed a Communist revolt in Saxony. Right-wing groups were also prepared to use violence, assassinating men they considered traitors. (Erzberger, for example, was assassinated in August 1921.) Many of the assassinations were committed by ex-*Freikorps* members who formed murder squads to carry on the fight against the left. Judges usually condoned their crimes. Between 1919 and 1922 there were 376 political assassinations – 22 by the left and 354 by the right. Ten left-wingers were sentenced to death. Not a single right-wing assassin received the death sentence. Of the 354 right-wing murders, 326 went unpunished.

Political instability

Wirth felt obliged to resign in October 1921 when the *Reichstag* majority insisted that the government should step down in protest at the flagrant disregard of the right of self-determination in Upper Silesia. It was a futile gesture since no government could be formed without the Centre Party and Wirth soon returned to office.

The outstanding figure in the second Wirth cabinet was the new foreign secretary Walther Rathenau, an enthusiastic advocate of the policy of fulfilment. In 1922 he signed the Treaty of Rapallo with the Bolshevik government in Russia. The Treaty restored diplomatic relations between the two countries – the two ‘outcast’ nations in Europe. The Treaty satisfied the need of the Bolshevik state for foreign aid and capital investment. Germany was able to use Russia, which was inaccessible to the Allied Control Commission, to secretly develop new military weapons and techniques.



Explain the political problems that faced Germany in the early 1920s.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

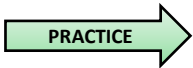
LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



Growing anti-Semitism

Six weeks after signing the Treaty of Rapallo, Rathenau, a Jew, was gunned down by a right-wing extremist. Rathenau's murder was the most alarming sign of the mounting tide of anti-Semitism. The fact that a number of leading figures on the left were Jewish was taken as clear evidence among right-wing Germans that the Jews were responsible for Germany's defeat in 1918. The right blamed the Jews for subverting loyal German workers with their Judeo-Marxist ideology (Marx was Jewish) and for accepting the humiliating peace. Right-wing politicians and newspaper editors claimed that many Jews had avoided service in the war, fattening themselves with war profits. They were also blamed for inflation, the black market and fulfilment politics.

Some 100,000 orthodox Jewish immigrants from the east, escaping persecution in Poland and Russia, did not help matters. With their strange dress and alien habits, and speaking only Hebrew and Yiddish, they were seen as foreign invaders and a threat to the German race, culture and identity.



Explain how growing Anti-Semitism was causing problems in Germany.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





L13 - What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



The financial crisis, 1922–23

In July 1922 the German government asked for permission to suspend reparation payments. The Allies refused. By December Germany's national debt had reached 469,000 million marks. Meanwhile inflation increased at a frightening pace, providing fresh ammunition for right- and left-wing extremists. Tension between capital and labour mounted when industrialist Hugo Stinnes suggested that German workers should work an extra two hours per day without additional pay for at least ten years in order to overcome the present problems. His suggestion was anathema to most Germans. Instead the government tried to cut back expenditure to balance the budget.

The SPD, which had united with the rump of the USPD (the remainder of the USPD had joined the KPD), now refused to support Wirth's government. Wirth resigned in November 1922 and was replaced by Wilhelm Cuno. Cuno's government crucially lacked the support of the SPD.



Explain how Germany faced financial crisis by 1922.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 13: What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?



LO: To know key problems facing Weimar Germany between 1920-22.

LO: To be able to evaluate the extent to which these problems caused issues.



Key Knowledge Check

What was the total % of seats held by the SPD, Centre and DDP in 1920?	In May 1921 what did the allies set reparations at?	Who led the new minority government?	What policy did he follow?	What did Weimar governments continue to print more of?
What % of Germany was unemployed in 1921?	What did the Polish Government refuse to accept in March 1921?	How much of Upper Silesia was returned to Poland?	How many right wing murders took place between 1919 to 1922?	How many left wing murders took place between 1919 to 1922?



What were the main problems facing Germany between 1920 and 1922?

Success Criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the problems facing Germany between 1920-22.	Identify and explain key problems facing Germany between 1920-22.	Give a precise historical example of the impact they had.	Evaluate the problems Germany faced.
Sentence starters	<i>On one hand it could be argued that... this is because... However, on the other hand....</i>	<i>For example, An example of this was</i>	<i>Ultimately, it could be the biggest problem facing Germany in the early 1920s was.</i>



Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



NEW INFO

Long-term causes: 1914-18

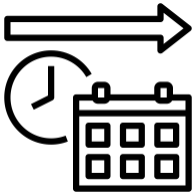
To finance the war, the government of the Kaiserreich decided against imposing new taxes or raising money by increasing taxation of the wealthy. Instead it issued **treasury bills** and (as authorised by the Reichstag) borrowed heavily from anyone prepared to provide 'war loans' on the understanding that they would receive repayment, with interest, after the war. To ensure a constant supply of money, the government put more into circulation, abandoning the link between paper money and gold reserves that had existed before the war. The expectation was that victory would more than enable the government to pay back what it had borrowed.

The circulation of paper money increased from 2000 million Marks-worth in 1913 to 45,000 million in 1919. At the same time, the amount of money owed by the government (the National Debt) grew from 5000 million to 144,000 million Marks in the same period. Since the war years saw a fall in productivity (at an annual average rate of 4 per cent per year), the value of the currency fell and in 1919 it was worth less than 20 per cent of its prewar value. The price of basic foodstuffs and consumer goods tripled or more during this inflationary period, and prices of goods in short supply rose even more rapidly on the **Black Market**.

PRACTICE

What were the long term causes of hyperinflation?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?



LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



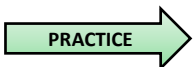
Medium-term causes: 1919-22

Defeat in the war in 1918 ended Germany's hopes of repaying its debts from annexations and reparations. Instead, following the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, land and colonies were lost, the reparations taken from Russia after March 1918 ceased, and the coal mines of the Saar were passed to the French, to be run for their benefit for 15 years. Germany had to supply free coal to France, Belgium and Italy and 90 per cent of its merchant fleet was surrendered to the Allies. Worse still, in 1921 Germany was presented with a reparations bill for £6.6 billion, payable in goods and gold marks.

Despite the defeat, government borrowing continued. The new government dared not devalue the currency (which would have made the paper money in circulation worth less and so reduced the value of savings) for fear of the political repercussions. In any case, Germany needed capital to rebuild industry, re-start trade, maintain pay for civil servants, meet the post-war demands for pensions and welfare benefits, and pay compensation to those who had lost land under the Treaty of Versailles.

It has been suggested that allowing some post-war inflation was economically wise. It stimulated economic activity and, compared with Britain, unemployment rates were quite low. By 1921 there was only 1.8 per cent unemployment in Germany compared with nearly 17 per cent in Great Britain. This, in turn, encouraged investment, especially from the USA, and the economy grew rapidly between 1920 and 1922. However, there were danger signs by 1920. Prices doubled between 1918 and 1919 and quadrupled between 1919 and 1920, reaching a point 14 times higher than they had been in 1913.

The 1920 coalition was dominated by the Zentrum, which was supported by many of the powerful German industrialists. These elites were able to benefit from inflation by taking short-term loans from Germany's central bank to expand their businesses. They could subsequently repay these with inflated currency. They were also able to make seemingly generous wage agreements that could be paid with worthless money. Furthermore, inflation had the effect of lessening the government's burden of debt (although the reparations themselves were not affected because these were paid in gold marks or goods). Indeed, it is often suggested that the German politicians had a vested interest in allowing inflation to continue unchecked. There was the hope that it might convince the Allies that their demands for reparations were too great. Also, for the right-wing elites, it became almost a patriotic 'duty' to avoid taxes and to speculate against the Mark as a means of showing their objection to the 'unreasonable' Allied demands. This fuelled inflation.



In what ways were inflation policies potentially a good idea for Germany.



Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



NEW INFO

Medium-term: Reparations and hyperinflation

The Treaty of Versailles had made it clear that Germany would have to pay reparations. Interim payments were demanded while a commission worked to determine the scale of damage caused by Germany. By the time the commission reached its decision in May 1921, the Allies estimated that they had received 2.6 billion gold marks' worth of goods (made up of almost the entire German merchant fleet, 5000 railway locomotives, and over 100,000 each of railway wagons, horses, cattle and agricultural machines). France also had the value of the Saarland coalfields, worth a further 2.5 billion Marks. However, the Germans claimed to have already made payments of around 37 billion Marks.

Reparations

Historians differ in their opinions of the reparations bill. Some consider it crippling; others that it was actually quite manageable (only 2 per cent of Germany's national output). However, there were other important economic problems:

- In order to acquire currency with which to pay the 'cash' demands of the reparations, Germany needed to export goods. However, Germany's traditional western European trading partners were anxious to rebuild their own economies and did not want to buy German goods.
- The western European nations were in debt to the USA. The receipt of reparations did not help to stimulate the European economies (and consequently European trade with Germany) but tended to go straight to the USA.
- Reparations came at a time when Germany was already facing large payments for the interest on loans raised during the war, for pensions, and for social welfare payments.

While Walther Rathenau was the Minister of Reconstruction in 1921, he tried to cooperate with the Allies, hoping that a willingness to meet demands would win sympathy. He fully expected that, once it became clear that reparation demands were beyond Germany's capabilities, the Allies would revise them. This policy of '**fulfilment**' encouraged politicians to leave the economy alone. If Germany showed that it could manage the payments, the whole purpose of the 'fulfilment' policy would disappear. Germany paid its first reparations instalment (£50 million) at the end of May 1921. However, by January 1923 the Germans had fallen behind and the French accused them of deliberately defaulting on their coal and timber deliveries to France. Thus, in accordance with the terms laid down by the Allies, on 11 January French and Belgian troops marched into the Ruhr.

Failure to pay reparations

In January 1922 Germany tried to negotiate a reparations extension and further loan. In November 1922 it asked for a four-year non-payment period and a loan of 500 million gold marks. The French were very suspicious of this request, particularly since the Germans had just negotiated the **Treaty of Rapallo** with Russia, which contained provisions for economic cooperation between the two countries. A conference in Paris in January 1923 failed to settle the dispute.



Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



PRACTICE 1

How did the enforced reparation payments contribute to hyperinflation?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.



PRACTICE 2

How did the German government try to deal with the reparation payments?

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



NEW INFO

The occupation of the Ruhr

When Germany failed to deliver reparation payments to the Allies in January 1923, French premier Poincare determined to act. French and Belgian troops numbering 60,000 occupied the Ruhr valley, the industrial heart of Germany. Too weak to take military action, Cuno's government ordered the suspension of reparations and supported a policy of 'passive resistance'. It urged workers in the Ruhr to go on strike and to refuse to co-operate with the French–Belgian invaders, in return for the continued payment of their wages by the German government.

The French–Belgian invasion initially helped to unite Germans in a common cause. Even the Communists joined in the struggle against the invaders. In retaliation, the French seized the Ruhr coalmines and railways and began the confiscation of German assets. As the crisis deepened, there were a number of attacks on the invaders. The French responded by executing Germans held responsible for the attacks.

The cost of passive resistance to Germany was huge – possibly more than twice the annual charge of reparations which it declared itself unable to pay. Prepared to pay out millions of marks to those who lost revenue as a result of the policy, the government was also unable to collect taxes from the Ruhr. Moreover, the French prevented the delivery of coal to the rest of Germany, thus forcing its import. In this situation German finances fell into total disarray. The government simply issued vast quantities of paper banknotes – with the result that the mark collapsed to meaningless levels. In December 1922 the exchange rate had stood at 8,000 marks to the dollar. By November 1923 it had reached 4.2 billion. Some 200 factories worked full time to produce bank notes. By the autumn of 1923 it cost more to print a note than the note was worth. The German currency in effect became worthless. Workers were paid by the day. In cafes a cup of coffee increased in price as people drank it. In 1919 a loaf of bread had cost one mark; by late 1923 a loaf cost 100 billion marks.

PRACTICE

Explain the key takeaways of the occupation of the Ruhr

Key Takeaways





Lesson 14: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



NEW INFO

Gustav Stresemann

By August 1923 Cuno's government was replaced by a new government led by Gustav Stresemann, the leader of the People's Party (DVP). It was clear to Stresemann that Germany teetered on the verge of complete collapse. It was equally clear that inflation had to be brought back under control, the German currency stabilised and the occupation of the Ruhr ended. Consequently, in September Stresemann called off passive resistance in the Ruhr, promised to resume reparation payments, and set in motion plans to introduce a new currency. However, Germany's economic woes could not be rectified overnight. Worse still, from the government's point of view, economic suffering resulted in political action.

Bavaria vs Berlin

When Stresemann's government ordered an end to passive resistance, the Bavarian government, led by Kahr (see page 96), declared a state of emergency. Berlin then invoked paragraph 48 to give *Reichswehr* minister Otto Gessler full executive powers. A struggle for power now developed between the government in Munich and the government in Berlin. When Gessler demanded that the local army commander General von Lossow be dismissed, Kahr increased the stakes by appointing him commander-in-chief of an independent Bavarian contingent. Kahr now contemplated setting up a national dictatorship.

Communist action

As the economic crisis deepened, Communist support increased. In October Heinrich Brandler, the KPD leader, acting on orders from Moscow, planned to organise a general strike in Saxony and Thuringia that would spark a German revolution. Ebert acted firmly and the Communist insurgency was suppressed almost before it began. Nevertheless, there were three days of bloody fighting in Hamburg before the army and police crushed a workers' revolt.

PRACTICE

How did the situation come to an end?



Lesson 15: Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to explain the causes of hyperinflation in Germany.



CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

How much paper money was in circulation by 1919?	By 1919 what was the currency worth compared to 1914?	Who invested heavily in Germany between 1919-22?	By how much had prices increased from 1913-1920?	What did the allies claim they had received by May 1921?
What did the Germans claim they had paid?	When did Germany make its first reparations instalment?	Who was in charge when the French entered the Ruhr?	How much was a loaf of bread in 1923?	What did Kahr declare in Berlin ?

APPLY

Why did Germany suffer hyperinflation?

Answer the lesson question as **two PEEE paragraphs**. Use the **success criteria** below to help you.

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the causes of the Great Inflation in 1923	Identify and explain one main cause of hyperinflation	Give precise historical details to back up your point	Evaluate why this caused hyperinflation link to a second factor
Sentence starters	<i>One of the most important factors that caused hyperinflation was the...term cause of... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, in 19...</i>	<i>As a result, this caused hyperinflation to occur in 1923 because...</i> <i>Furthermore, a second important factor that caused hyperinflation was...</i>



Lesson 15: How disastrous was the inflation?



LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the hyperinflation crisis on Germany.

NEW INFO

The effects of hyperinflation

Some Germans lost but others benefited from the effects of hyperinflation. There were winners and losers in every social class. Levels of indebtedness and savings were crucial to a person's fortune or misfortune.

The real winners from inflation were those Germans who were able to pay off their debts, mortgages and loans with inflated and worthless money. This worked to the advantage of such groups as landowners, businessmen and homeowners (including many members of the middle class). Those who recognised the situation for what it was, made massive gains by buying more real estate from the naïve and desperate. This was particularly true of big business which exploited the cheap credit to create large business conglomerations. Hugo Stinnes, for example, controlled a fifth of German industry by the end of 1923. In some respects the German state was the biggest financial beneficiary: the hyperinflation relieved it of the crippling burden of debt.

The losers as a results of Germany's hyperinflation were the savers, particularly those who had purchased war bonds which became worthless. Those living on fixed incomes or welfare support – not least the retired and sick – also suffered. Most grants and pensions lost value in real terms since the increases generally did not keep pace with inflation.

The mass of the population was probably between the extremes of profit and loss. German farmers coped reasonably well since food remained in demand and farmers were less dependent on the money economy for the provision of the necessities of life. The wages and salaries of employees are the most difficult to interpret. While workers' real wages had probably increased between 1918 and 1922, in 1923 trade unions were unable to negotiate wage settlements which kept pace with the rate of inflation. Thus there was probably a decline in living standards. However, given the amount of money in circulation there was relatively little unemployment.

Traditionally the hyperinflation has been portrayed as an economic catastrophe with damaging social consequences which paved the way later on for the collapse of the Republic and the rise of Hitler. This may be going too far. But many Germans undoubtedly suffered in 1923. The Republic was totally discredited in the eyes of millions who had patriotically brought war bonds and who now felt betrayed. The republicans it seemed had first stabbed the country in the back and then robbed the little man of his savings. Moreover, when another economic crisis developed after 1929 many Germans had little confidence in Weimar's ability to deal with the situation.

KEY TERMS

Complete the table below, explaining what each key phrase means

Key Term	Definition
Hyperinflation	



Lesson 15: How disastrous was the inflation?

LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the hyperinflation crisis on Germany.



PRACTICE

**What were the
effects of
hyperinflation?**



Lesson 15: How disastrous was the inflation?



LO: To know key features of the hyperinflation crisis.

LO: To be able to evaluate the impact of the hyperinflation crisis on Germany.



Key Knowledge Check

What was crucial to a persons experience of hyperinflation?	Who took advantage of hyperinflation?	How did they make massive gains?	Who controlled a fifth of German industry by 1923?	Who were the losers of hyperinflation?
What lost in real terms?	How did German farmers cope?	What was there relatively little of?	How did the republicans look?	What effect did this have in 1929?



What were the effects of hyperinflation?

Answer the lesson question as **two PEEE paragraphs**. Use the **success criteria** below to help you.

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the effects of hyperinflation.	Identify and explain one main effect of hyperinflation	Give precise historical details to back up your point	Evaluate the effects of hyperinflation.
Sentence starters	<i>One of the most important effects of hyperinflation was the...term cause of... This was because...</i>	<i>For example, Another example of...</i>	<i>As a result of hyperinflation... Furthermore, another effect of hyperinflation was...</i>



Lesson 16: Was the Munich Putsch a complete failure?



LO: To know key features of the Munich Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the factors that contributed to the Putsch's failure.

NEW INFO

The Munich Putsch

In November 1923 Hitler attempted to seize power. Within the NSDAP he had built up excitement to such a degree that he had to do something to maintain his credibility. What he did made sense. In September 1923 he was instrumental in forming a Battle League of right-wing groups. War hero General Ludendorff gave his support. The Battle League's plan was to win control of Bavaria and then to march on Berlin, much as Italian Fascist Benito Mussolini had seized power by marching on Rome in 1922. Preparations were reasonably thorough and Kahr had indicated that he might support a putsch. When, at the last minute, he backed down, Hitler decided to go ahead anyway.

On 8 November Kahr was addressing a large meeting at the Burgerbraukellar in Munich. Some 600 SA men surrounded the beer cellar and Hitler burst in, brandishing a revolver. Announcing that the National Revolution had begun, he 'persuaded' Kahr, Lossow and the police chief Hans von Seisser to support him. The people in the beer cellar roared their approval. But the putsch soon began to go wrong. Kahr, Lussow and Seisser, set free at Ludendorff's insistence, promptly informed the Berlin government of the situation. The Weimar government immediately ordered the Bavarian authorities to crush the putsch.

Benito Mussolini

In October 1922 Benito Mussolini, leader of the right-wing Fascist Party in Italy, had threatened to lead his black-shirted followers in a 'March on Rome'. Rather than ordering the Italian army to crush the fascists, Italian King Victor Emmanuel accepted that Mussolini should become Italian premier. The 'March' actually occurred after Mussolini had been appointed Prime Minister.

PRACTICE

How did Mussolini's success influence Hitler?



Lesson 16: Was the Munich Putsch a complete failure?



LO: To know key features of the Munich Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the factors that contributed to the Putsch's failure.

NEW INFO

On 9 November Hitler led some 3,000 men into Munich, hoping for a show of mass support. Instead, as the Nazi column neared the town centre, armed police opened fire and sixteen marchers died. Hitler, lucky to survive, escaped the scene. Refusing to flee to Austria, he was quickly arrested.

In early 1924 Hitler and Ludendorff were tried for treason. The trial made Hitler a national figure. Claiming that he had only acted as a patriotic German, Hitler turned the trial into a propaganda victory. The sympathy of the judges ensured that sentences were light. Ludendorff was acquitted. Hitler, who was found guilty, was sentenced to five years imprisonment. He served less than a year of his sentence in relative comfort in Landsberg prison where he whiled away the time writing the first volume of *Mein Kampf*. The light sentences given to Hitler and Ludendorff were very much in line with the way right-wing terrorists were treated by the German courts.

Kahr remained in office as *Reich* Commissar for Bavaria, and Lossow remained in command of local *Reichswehr* units. Neither was ever punished for their violations of the constitution. However, both men quietly resigned in February 1924.

PRACTICE

Explain the key takeaways of the Munich Putsch.

Key Takeaways





Lesson 16: Was the Munich Putsch a complete failure?



LO: To know key features of the Munich Putsch.

LO: To be able to evaluate the factors that contributed to the Putsch's failure.

CONSOLIDATE

Key Knowledge Check

When did Hitler attempt to seize power?	What did Hitler help form in Sept 1923?	What did Kahr indicate?	How many SA men surrounded the beer cellar?	Who let Kahr, Lussow and Seisser go?
How many men marched on Munich?	How many were killed?	What did the trial make Hitler?	Where was Hitler imprisoned?	When did Kahr and Lossow resign?

APPLY

Was the Munich Putsch a complete a failure?

Answer the lesson question as **two PEEE paragraphs**. Use the **success criteria** below to help you.

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A
I can evaluate the success of the Munich Putsch.	Identify and explain the main features of the Munich Putsch.	Give precise historical details to back up your point	Evaluate the success of the Munich Putsch.
Sentence starters	<i>On one hand it could be argued that...</i> <i>However, on the other hand it could be argued...</i>	<i>For example,</i> <i>Another example of...</i>	<i>To a larger extent...</i> <i>Overall....</i>



Lesson 17: Why did the Republic survive the crisis of 1923?



LO: To know key features of the political situation in 1923.

LO: To be able to evaluate the contribution of Gustav Stresemann as Chancellor.

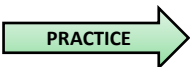


Stresemann’s achievements

It is important to recognise that, during the summer of 1923, things had just been allowed to slide under Chancellor Cuno. Nevertheless, the appointment of Gustav Sttesemann as chancellor in August 1923 resulted in the emergence of a politician who was actually prepared to take difficult political decisions. Stresemann led a broad coalition of DVP, DDP, ZP and SPD and aimed to resolve Germany’s economic plight and also tackle the problem of its weakness internationally.

Within a few weeks Stresemann introduced a series of crucial initiatives:

- First, in September, he called off ‘passive resistance’ in the Ruhr and promised to resume payments of reparations. He needed to conciliate the French in order to evoke some international sympathy for Germany’s economic position.
- Under the guidance of Finance Minister Hans Luther the government’s expenditure was sharply cut in order to reduce the deficit. Over 700,000 public employees were sacked.
- The leading financial expert Hjalmar Schacht was appointed to oversee the introduction of a new German currency. In December 1923 the trillions of old German marks were replaced and a new stable currency, the *Rentenmark*, was established.
- Stresemann evoked some sympathy from the Allies for Germany by the ‘miracle of the *Rentenmark*’ and his conciliatory policy. He therefore asked the Allies to hold an international conference to consider Germany’s economic plight and, as a result, the Dawes Committee was established.
- The extremists of the left and the right were defeated.



Explain how Stresemann’s leadership helped the Republic survive.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 17: Why did the Republic survive the crisis of 1923?



LO: To know key features of the political situation in 1923.

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The survival of Weimar

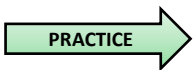
Although Stresemann’s resolute action in tackling the problems might help to explain why the years of crisis came to an end, on its own it does not help us to understand why the Weimar Republic was able to come through. The republic’s survival in 1923 was in marked contrast to its collapse ten years later when challenged by the Nazis.

Why, then, did the republic not collapse during the crisis-ridden months before Stresemann’s emergence on the political scene? The following factors provide clues to an answer:

- Popular anger was directed more towards the French and the Allies than towards the Weimar Republic itself.
- Despite the effects of inflation, workers did not suffer to the same extent as they did during the mass unemployment of the 1930s.
- Some business people did very well out of the inflation, which made them tolerant of the republic.

If these suggestions about public attitudes towards the republic are correct, then it seems that, although there was distress and disillusionment in 1923, hostility to the Weimar Republic had not yet reached unbearable levels – as it was to do ten years later/

Moreover, in 1923 there was no obvious political alternative to Weimar. The extreme left had not really recovered from its divisions and suppression in the years 1918-21 and in its isolated position it did not enjoy enough support to overthrow Weimar. The extreme right, too, was not yet strong enough. It was similarly divided and had no clear plans. The failure of the Kapp putsch served as a clear warning of the dangers of taking hasty action and was possibly the reason why the army made no move in 1923.



What other factors led to the Republics survival.

In the outline of the icon write key words to remind you.





Lesson 17: Why did the Republic survive the crisis of 1923?



LO: To know key features of the political situation in 1923.

LO: To be able to evaluate the contribution of Gustav Stresemann as Chancellor.



Key Knowledge Check

Who was appointed Chancellor in August 1923?	What was his aim?	How many public employees did he sack?	What currency did he establish?	What committee was established because of Stresemann's actions?
What was directed more towards the French and her allies?	What did not happen to workers in 1923?	What did some business do during hyperinflation?	In 1923 why did the Republic survive?	What did the failure of Kapp serve as?



Why did the Weimar Republic survive the crisis of 1923?

Success criteria:

Learning Outcome	Grade C	Grade B	Grade A*
I can evaluate why the Weimar Republic was able to survive the crisis in 1923	Explain and evaluate why Stresemann helped the republic to survive	Explain and evaluate why other factors helped the republic to survive	Come to an overall conclusion as to why Weimar survived in 1923
Sentence starters	<i>One reason why the Weimar Republic was able to survive the crisis of 1923 was due to Stresemann's achievements. This was because... For example, in 1923 he... As a result, Weimar Germany was able to survive because...</i>	<i>On the other hand, it was also due to...as to why the Weimar Republic was able to survive the crisis of 1923. This was because... For example,... Therefore, the Weimar Republic was able to survive because...</i>	<i>To a larger extent, the Weimar Republic was able to survive the crisis in 1923 mainly due to... This was because... However, one must also consider that...</i>