

<p>OCR – AS GCE European and World History Period Studies F 962</p>	<p>Unit 1 Europe and the World: Germany, 1919–63</p>	<p>ESSAY</p>
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<p>Examiner’s Specific Advice</p> <p>The best answers will focus on a number of possible reasons why Hitler came to power in 1933, have arguments arranged into structured paragraphs, and use knowledge to support explanations. Above all, they will offer comparative assessments of different factors ranging from the personal – for instance Hitler’s oratorical skills – to the global. They will discuss the relative importance of events both national and international, such as the weakness of the Weimar system or the Depression. Less effective essays are likely to supply more general comments without relevant supporting details. They will probably consider one or two issues rather than several, and will fail to use their historical knowledge effectively.</p>	
<p>Exemplar Question</p> <p>Assess the reasons why Hitler came to power in 1933.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[50 marks]</p>	<p>Click Here for a Chronology Relating to this Topic</p>
<p>Examiner’s Exemplar Plan and Essay 1</p> <p>Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Hitler and Nazis • Depression • Weimar Government • Communists • Conclusion <p>Hitler came to power in January 1933 when President Hindenburg appointed him Chancellor. There are many reasons why Hitler came to power including his own abilities and propaganda and the well-organised Nazi party (1).</p> <p>Hitler was a great public speaker and was able to win over huge crowds with his emotional speeches. He talked about the true spirit of the German people, the humiliation of Versailles, about</p>	<p>(1) This is a fair start. You show you know the details of how Hitler became Chancellor and indicate that there are a number of reasons, even if the focus is on Hitler and the Nazi party.</p> <p>(2) Give more explanation of the kind of things that Hitler promised and, crucially, why they struck a chord with</p>

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<p><u>work and bread</u> (2), about the weakness of democracy and the need for a strong leader. He also claimed that Jews and socialists were to blame for Germany's troubles.</p> <p>Hitler also used propaganda to great effect during the elections after 1928. He had a propaganda expert – Dr Goebbels – to help him. He used poster campaigns with simple messages such as 'Our last hope – Hitler', newspapers that attacked other parties, Jews and communists, and military-style marches with flags and uniforms. In one campaign he pioneered the use of the aeroplane to appear in several different cities in Germany in one day. This campaign was called 'Hitler over Germany'. Such propaganda techniques helped Hitler to win support (3).</p> <p>The Nazi party was also well organised by 1928 with over 100,000 members and branches across Germany. Its private army, the SA, not only provided an impressive display of uniforms and flags on marches and at meetings, but also disrupted rival party meetings and <u>used violence against communists and socialists</u> (4).</p> <p>The Depression helped the Nazis because high unemployment meant that those affected blamed the existing Weimar government for their troubles and looked to alternative parties like the Nazis to provide them with work and get the country back on its feet (5).</p> <p>The Weimar government was not liked by the German people and was unable to solve the problems caused by the Depression. People associated it with the humiliating Treaty of Versailles and defeat in the First World War (6). The system of proportional representation meant there were lots of parties in the Reichstag. None had a majority and so coalition governments were formed. The coalition government in Germany broke up in 1930 over what to do about the Depression and then when no party could get a majority the Chancellor had to use emergency powers under <u>article 48 to govern</u> (7).</p> <p>Another reason Hitler won support was that people thought he would deal with the threat of communism. Many people in Germany feared that there would be a communist revolution as there had been in Russia in 1917 and as the Spartacists had attempted in 1919. During the depression support for the Communist party increased – especially in the big cities. The government did nothing to stop them, but Hitler used his SA to disrupt their marches and meetings and used them to beat up communists. Many people, and some powerful industrialists, thought that Hitler would provide the kind of strong government that would get rid of the communists (8).</p> <p>So there were lots of reasons why Hitler came to power in 1933. The depression was important as unemployment and</p>	<p>the German people (and which groups of German people).</p> <p>(3) This paragraph contains useful information about propaganda, but its link to winning support for Hitler is asserted rather than explained.</p> <p>(4) Again this paragraph contains useful information, but is really just description. It needs to be linked more directly to the question.</p> <p>(5) A missed opportunity here – you make a good point about how the Depression helped the Nazis but do not provide much in the way of supporting evidence or explanation.</p> <p>(6) This paragraph starts with a reasonable point but then, after the (6), loses its way and drifts into description.</p> <p>(7) Article 48 of the constitution enabled the President to declare a state of emergency and rule by decree. Explain how this helped Hitler.</p> <p>(8) In many ways this is the most effective paragraph of the essay. There is a clear link to the question</p>
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economic problems made the government look weak. In any case many Germans did not like democracy and wanted a strong leader who would defeat the communists and get rid of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler seemed the solution to many. Hitler was not only an able speaker and leader, he also had a well-organised party and propaganda machine to support him. He was able to take advantage of the problems caused by the depression to win support and so come to power (9).

Examiner's Assessment

This essay is well organised, focused on Hitler's rise to power, factually accurate and clearly written. It merits a Level II mark of 16 out of 24 (AO1a).

Although this essay contains elements of Level II (slight – relative assessment/linkage of reasons), III (explanation) and IV (description), it has been put into Level III and given 16 marks (AO1b). It also tries to link the reasons together in the conclusion (a feature, if more developed, of Level II).

However, the answer ignores some key points (for example, the decision surrounding the actual appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933), is often descriptive rather than explanatory, and does not, in the body of the essay, effectively link reasons together or assess their relative significance. Essentially we have here a multi-causal answer with much description.

The overall mark of 32 out of 50 is likely to achieve a Grade C.

Examiner's Exemplar Plan and Essay 2

Plan

- Variety of reasons for Hitler's rise to power: Depression, WWI and Versailles, the weaknesses of Weimar democracy, fear of communism, the appeal of Hitler and the Nazis, the political intrigue of certain politicians. All interlinked, although Depression marked the key turning point in Hitler's fortunes
 - Short term/Key: Depression: economic and social effects; reaction of Weimar governments; move to political extremes, disillusion with democracy
 - Long term: WW1/Versailles/Weimar democracy – defeat and humiliation after WW1, coalition government
 - Contributory: One alternative = communism – nature/growth of appeal, fears of many, exploitation by Nazis
 - Direct: Hitler and Nazis – appeal, propaganda, organisation, actions
 - Immediate cause – political intrigues in winter 1932–33
- (10)

and supporting explanation and detail (although some details on communist electoral support may have driven the point home).

(9) This is quite an effective conclusion, which ties together the paragraphs included in the essay.

(10) Your initial task is to decide what the question is about and what the key words in the title mean. Every question set should indicate the content area (here Hitler's rise to power), the focus (reasons for his coming to power) and the key instruction 'Assess the reasons why', i.e. what is their relative significance? How are they linked? Your plan indicates that you have understood this requirement.

Appointed Chancellor in January 1933, Hitler was able to gain effective dictatorial control over Germany through a combination of election (5 March 1933), intimidation, exercise of emergency powers and the passage of the Enabling Law (March 1933) (11). These events mark his coming to power and are explained by a combination of long-term (such as the legacy of the First World War, the weaknesses and failings of the Weimar Republic) and short-term reasons (the effects of the Depression, Nazi electoral success and the actions of key politicians) as well as the strengths of Hitler and the Nazi Party. Of these reasons the Depression marks the key turning point in the fortunes of Hitler and the Nazi Party (12).

Without the onset of the depression it is arguable that the Nazis would have remained a minority party of the extreme right with little chance of major electoral success (13). In the elections of 1924 and 1928 the Nazis won 14 and 12 seats respectively in the Reichstag. However, as the Depression began to bite, Nazi electoral fortunes were transformed, winning 107 seats in 1930 and 230 in 1932, becoming the largest party in the Reichstag. The economic and social effects of the Depression (60% drop in foreign trade, 6 million unemployed) undermined the relative political stability Germany had achieved in the later 1920s (14). Faith in the ability of Weimar democracy, never strong, was fatally fractured as cooperation between democratic parties broke down over what to do about the depression. The Grand coalition broke up in 1930 and no lasting government was able to replace it or deal with the severe problems the Depression produced. As problems mounted and democratic parties squabbled, people began to turn to alternatives – the communist recipe proved attractive to many workers, whilst the extreme nationalism and vague promises of the Nazis won support on the right.

The Depression brought to the fore the weaknesses that the Weimar system of government had had from the start. Democracy, a condition of peace at the end of the war, was from the start associated with the defeat and humiliation of Germany and the signing of the hated Treaty of Versailles. Germans were not used to democracy and whilst there were established political parties like the Social Democrats and the Centre Party, the new system, with election by proportional representation, allowed new and extreme parties (like the Nazis and the Communists) to gain representation and made it impossible for a government to be formed without a coalition. The instability of the Weimar system is reflected in the fact that the average lifespan of a Weimar government was just eight months (15).

The Depression and the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic

(11) This is an effective opening, indicating you know the scope of the question.

(12) The opening paragraph must be focused on the question. Here you give a clear indication of your line of argument.

(13) A good opening to a paragraph, which highlights the key role you clearly believe the Depression played in Hitler's coming to power.

(14) There is good use of detail here to drive the explanations home.

(15) This is a less effective paragraph. It starts well enough with a key point, but then drifts to a description of the Weimar system and fails to connect back effectively with the question. How does the weakness of the Weimar system help explain Hitler's coming to power?

provided the necessary conditions for the rise of political extremism in Germany. However, they alone do not explain the rise of Hitler to power (16). After all, the only party to consistently increase its proportion of the vote in the four elections between 1928 and 1932 was not the Nazi Party (whose proportion of the vote fell in November 1932) but the communist party. The rise in support for the Nazi Party had much to do with Hitler, Nazi Party organisation and the programme and propaganda it put forward.

There is no doubt about the personal impact Hitler made. The impact of his speech-making is well documented. He had the ability to tap into people's hopes and fears and play on their emotions, tailoring his speeches (as Goebbels tailored Nazi propaganda) to his audience. To the unemployed he promised work and bread, to big business and the middle classes he promised the destruction of communism, he praised farmers as the backbone of the nation, to all he promised a German revival, strong government and the overturning of Versailles. For all, he provided scapegoats for Germany's problems in the Jews, Communists and democratic politicians (17). Anti-communism was a powerful weapon in Hitler's electoral success. Words and deeds (fighting in the streets, disruption of meetings) convinced many that he was the only one who could prevent a possible communist revolution. Hitler was also a shrewd political operator, charming industrialists and winning support from media moguls like the nationalist Hugenburg.

By 1928 the Nazi Party was a well-organised and national party with over 100,000 members. It had its own private army, the SA, to provide the disciplined, uniformed, flag-bearing men for publicity marches and to take the fight (literally) to rival parties and communists. It had a propaganda genius in Goebbels, whose carefully orchestrated campaigns (posters, marches, stage-managed meetings, newspapers and so on) did much to keep Hitler and the Nazis in the limelight and projected an image of determination, action and hope that appealed to a nation disillusioned with democracy and facing economic and social despair (18).

And yet, what finally brought Hitler to power was not success with the electorate, but the intrigues at the top of the political system (19). Winning the election in July 1930 did not bring him the Chancellorship; electoral decline in the election of November seemed to suggest the Nazi bolt was shot. However, it was at this point Hitler was to achieve political power. The political rivalry between Schleicher and von Papen and the 'backstairs intrigues' during the winter of 1932–33 resulted in von Papen convincing the aged President Hindenburg (who, although a nationalist and no lover of democracy, hated Hitler) that Hitler should be made Chancellor in a coalition government. Von Papen's

(16) These two sentences form the linchpin of your argument. You are suggesting that what has been explained so far are necessary conditions for explaining Hitler's rise, but not sufficient. 'Necessary but not sufficient' is a useful analytical tool to keep in mind when providing explanations of events.

(17) Here, you have not simply said what Hitler promised, but have linked it to its appeal to specific audiences.

(18) Again, here you have not only listed propaganda methods but have also tried to link what is said directly to the question.

(19) A good linking sentence, which highlights the significance of the point to be made in this paragraph.

miscalculation that he could control Hitler was fateful. Once Chancellor, Hitler called another election, used the excuse of the Reichstag Fire to declare an emergency and then stifle opposition, and thence to use his party's dominance in the resulting Reichstag to pass the Enabling Law giving him dictatorial authority.

A combination of factors, then, explains Hitler's coming to power. The impact of defeat and humiliation in the First World War, the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic, the impact of the Depression provided necessary conditions for the rise in Nazi support, Hitler's abilities and leadership, Nazi Party organisation and propaganda enabled Hitler to exploit the situation, but the immediate cause was the political judgements by von Papen and Hindenburg which led to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933 (20).

Examiner's Assessment

You have organised the ideas clearly, and used facts accurately from a range of appropriate areas. The quality of English is very sound. The answer merits 23 marks out of 24 (AO1a).

Your argument is reasoned, analytical and judgemental, and from beginning to end you have given the impression of being in full command. The answer merits 25 marks out of 26 (AO1b).

This essay deserves a high Grade A and has been awarded 48 marks out of 50.

(20) All essays should have an argument running through them, as this does. The conclusion, therefore, need not be too long – candidates rarely have a lot of time at the end – but it should try to draw together the main arguments explored, and provide a judgement.

Click here for a Mark Scheme that accompanies the exemplar answers provided above

Click here for further sample Questions to test your skills

Mark Scheme

Examiners use Mark Schemes to determine how best to categorise a candidate's essay and to ensure that the performances of thousands of candidates is marked to a high degree of consistency. Few essays fall neatly into the mark levels indicated below: some answers will be particularly well argued but offer little supporting detail; others may be factually full but poorly organised or contain few judgements. Examiners therefore seek to find the 'best fit' when applying the mark scheme. Each essay has a final mark based on two Assessment Objectives (AO1a and AO1b) worth 24 + 26 = 50 marks. As the standard of the two essays lies between Level 1 and

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Level IV, only the descriptors and marks for these levels have been tabulated below.

	AO1a Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV
Assessment Objectives	Recall, select and use historical knowledge appropriately, and communicate knowledge and understanding clearly and effectively
Level IA 21–24 marks	Uses a wide range of accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate and confident use of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and coherent; communicates accurately and legibly.
Level IB 18–20 marks	Uses accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate use of a range of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and mostly coherent; writes accurately and legibly.
Level II 16–17 marks	Uses mostly accurate, detailed and relevant evidence, which demonstrates a competent command of the topic. Generally accurate use of historical terminology. Answer is structured and mostly coherent; writing is legible and communication is generally clear.
Level III 14–15 marks	Uses accurate and relevant evidence, which demonstrates some command of the topic but there may be some inaccuracy. Answer includes relevant historical terminology but this may not be extensive or always accurately used. Most of the answer is organised and structured; the answer is mostly legible and clearly communicated.
Level IV 12–13 marks	There is deployment of relevant knowledge but level/accuracy of detail will vary; there may be some evidence that is tangential or irrelevant. Some unclear and/or under-developed and/or disorganised sections; mostly satisfactory level of communication.

	AO1b Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation and analysis, arriving at substantiated judgements of key concepts and of the relationships between key features of the period studied
Level IA 24–26 marks	<p>Clear and accurate understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear and accurate understanding of issues in their historical context. Answer is consistently and relevantly analytical with developed and substantiated explanations, some of which may be unexpected.</p> <p>The argument evaluates a range of relevant factors and reaches clearly substantiated judgements about relative importance and/or links.</p>
Level IB 22–23 marks	<p>Clear and accurate understanding of most key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Answer is mostly consistently and relevantly analytical with mostly developed and substantiated explanations.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Substantiated judgements about relative importance of and/or links between factors will be made but quality of explanation in support may not be consistently high.</p>
Level II 19–21 marks	<p>Mostly clear and accurate understanding of many key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of most relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Much of the answer is relevantly analytical and substantiated with detailed evidence but there may be some description.</p> <p>The analysis of factors and/or issues provides some judgements about relative importance and/or linkages.</p>
Level III 16–18 marks	<p>Some uneven understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and of concepts relevant to their historical context.</p> <p>Answers may be a mixture of analysis and explanation but also simple description of relevant material and narrative of relevant events OR answers may provide more consistent analysis but the quality will be uneven and its support often general or thin.</p> <p>Answer considers a number of factors but with very little evaluation of importance or linkages between factors/issues.</p> <p>Points made about importance or about developments in the context of the period will often be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p>
Level IV 13–15 marks	<p>Understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and the topic is variable but in general is satisfactory.</p> <p>Limited and patchy understanding of a few relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Answer may be largely descriptive/narratives of events and links between this and analytical comments will typically be weak or unexplained OR answers will mix passages of descriptive material with occasional explained analysis.</p> <p>Limited points made about importance/links or about developments in the context of the period will be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p>

Further sample questions

- (1) How successful were Weimar governments in solving the problems facing Germany in the period 1919–28?
- (2) 'The Weimar Republic was doomed to fail from the start.' How far do you agree with this judgement? Explain your answer.
- (3) To what extent was fear of communism the **main** reason for Hitler's rise to power by 1933?
- (4) Assess the reasons why there was so little opposition to Hitler between 1933 and 1939.
- (5) How successful were Hitler's economic policies in the period 1933 to 1945?
- (6) 'Most Germans accepted the Nazi regime because the benefits outweighed the disadvantages.' How far do you agree with this judgement on Hitler's Germany after 1933?
- (7) 'The **main** reason for the rise of the Nazi party to power in 1933 was Hitler himself.' How far do you agree with this view?
- (8) To what extent were terror and persecution **more important** than propaganda and indoctrination in Nazi control of Germany from 1933 to 1939?

Chronology: Key Events in *Germany, 1919–45*

- 1919 The Spartacist Revolt (1). Creation of Weimar Republic. Treaty of Versailles.
- 1920 The Kapp Putsch (2). The German Workers' Party becomes the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis) under Hitler.
- 1921 Reparations fixed at £6,600 million (3).
- 1922 Germany defaults on its reparation instalment.
- 1923 Invasion of the Ruhr. Hyperinflation. Stresemann becomes Chancellor. Munich Putsch (4).
- 1924 Dawes Plan (reduces reparation instalments, coupled with a massive foreign loan to Germany). Hitler writes *Mein Kampf* whilst in prison.
- 1925 The Locarno Pact (Germany accepts its western frontiers as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles).
- 1926 Germany joins the League of Nations.
- 1928 Election: Nazis win just 12 seats (under 3% of vote) (5), Communists 54 (11% of vote).
- 1929 Young Plan. Death of Stresemann. Wall Street Crash.
- 1930 Break-up of the 'Grand Coalition'. Election: Nazi breakthrough – 107 seats (18% of vote), Communists 77 (13% of vote).
- 1932 Election (July): Nazis become largest party with 230 seats (37% of vote), Communists 89 (14% of vote). Election (November): Nazis 196 seats (33% of vote), Communists 100 (17% of vote).
- 1933 January: Hitler appointed chancellor.
February: Reichstag Fire.
March: Election – Nazis win 288 seats (44% of vote). Enabling Law (6).

- (1) The Spartacist Revolt is the most famous of a number of communist risings in the period 1919–23. Like others, it was put down by the army and the Freikorps (nationalist ex-soldiers). Such risings made communism appear a very real threat to many Germans.

- (2) Wolfgang Kapp led this right-wing attempt to seize power in March 1920. Right-wing nationalists resented the Treaty of Versailles and the democratic politicians they blamed for signing it. In particular they resented the division of Germany by the Polish Corridor. In this case the army did not intervene (indicating the right-wing sympathies of much of the establishment) and the putsch was defeated by the action of the trade unions, who organised a general strike.
- (3) Reparations were to remain a major cause of resentment in Germany, despite the renegotiation of the terms of payment in the Dawes and Young Plans. Hitler and the Nazis, like other right-wing parties, used the reparations issue to help secure support in their election campaign of 1930.
- (4) This was the botched attempt by Hitler to seize power in Munich prior to a 'march on Berlin' (Mussolini had gained power with a 'march on Rome' the previous year). Hitler's trial for treason gave him national prominence. Hitler decided after the failure that the Nazis must 'hold their noses' and seek to gain power through the ballot box.
- (5) The 1928 election was a disappointment for the Nazis who had, by then, set up a national organisation. The ray of hope for them was the support they secured in poor rural areas in northern Germany.
- (6) The Enabling Law gave Hitler and his cabinet the power to enact laws without the Reichstag's permission for four years. It effectively marked the end of parliamentary government (which in practice had not really existed since 1930 as chancellors had governed through the emergency powers granted under Article 48 of the constitution). It effectively ended the Weimar Republic.

Teaching Activities

Try the following with your students:

- (1) Using the two exemplar essays, discuss the importance and purpose of essay planning in successfully answering an AS essay question.
- (2) Compare the introductions and/or conclusions of the two exemplar essays. Which is the more effective and why?
- (3) Both essays refer to a number of reasons: The impact of the First World War and Versailles; the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic; the impact of the Depression; fear of communism; Hitler's abilities and leadership; Nazi propaganda, organisation and actions; the 'backstairs intrigue' of key Weimar politicians in 1932–33. You may identify other factors. Discuss the relative merits of each factor – perhaps using a mark out of 10 as a rough guide. Use the discussion to introduce relevant analytical language about the reasons (long term, short term, contributory, direct, indirect, etc.)
- (4) Using the same reasons, build up a spider diagram to show the links between the reasons – this can be done by the students in groups or pairs on an A3 sheet for example, or using cards with the reasons on.
- (5) How would the approach to the essay in the two exemplars need to change if the question was: 'The main reason for Hitler's rise to power lay in his speeches and propaganda. How far do you agree with this judgement?'

Resources

- G. A. Craig, *Germany 1866–1945* (OUP, 1981)
R. Henig, *The Weimar Republic* (Routledge, 1998)
J. Hite and C. Hinton, *Weimar and Nazi Germany* (John Murray, 1998)
A. Kitson, *Germany 1858–1990: Hope, Terror and Revival* (OUP, 2001)
F. McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany* (CUP, 1999)
A. J. Nicholls, *Weimar and the Rise of Hitler* (Macmillan, 1992)
W. Simpson, *Hitler and Germany* (CUP, 1991)
D. G. Williamson, *The Third Reich* (Longman, 1982)
G. Layton, *Germany: The Third Reich 1933–45* (Hodder Murray, 2005)

Weblinks

- www.schoolhistory.co.uk
www.schoolshistory.org.uk
www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk

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www.historytoday.com

www.thecorner.org

www.colby.edu/personal/rmscheck