

# History: What was life like in Hitler's Germany?

Year 8 Term 2



## Timeline

9th November 1918	Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates the throne of Germany, and the Weimar Republic is formed.
28th June 1919	The Weimar Government are forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles, which blames Germany for WW1.
1919 and 1920	Attempts to take over the Weimar Government take place on the streets of Germany.
1923	A year of crisis happens in Germany, with hyperinflation, the invasion of the Ruhr and the Munich Putsch.
1924—1929	A time known as 'The Golden Twenties' take place, which are helped by Stresemann's policies.
1933	The Reichstag burns down, and allows Adolf Hitler to pass an Enabling Act which gives him a huge amount of power.

## Key people

Kaiser Wilhelm II	The third Kaiser of Germany, who ruled from 1888 to 1918. He was highly militaristic. He always wore a military uniform and desperately wanted to expand Germany's empire and army. He was forced to abdicate the throne in 1918 following a series of rebellions.
Gustav Stresemann	The Foreign Minister of Germany from 1923 to 1929. Stresemann settled the crisis years of Weimar Germany and created policies which gave Germany funding and support from the USA. This crashed to an end in 1929 when the USA suffered its own economic crisis.
Adolf Hitler	Adolf Hitler was leader of the Nazi Party from 1921, and the leader of Germany between 1933 and 1945. He first attempted to violently take power of Germany from a Beer Hall in 1923, but following his time in prison he decided to use politics to take power instead.



## Trinity TV

For more help, visit Trinity TV and watch the following videos: [History > Year 8 > Term 2 > Weimar Germany](#)

## Key Terms

Kaiser	The head of the German Monarchy, very similar to a King or Queen.
Abdicate	To leave the throne and stop being the monarch.
Treaty of Versailles	An agreement signed after WW1, which blamed and punished Germany for WW1.
Freikorps	Groups of WW1 Soldiers who kept their weapons after the war had ended.
Strike	To refuse to work in order to cause disruption and bring attention to a problem that workers are having. Often shows how important an industry is.
Hyperinflation	When the price of goods (e.g. bread) rise to an unaffordable amount, as the price of wages do not go up.
The Ruhr	A valley in West Germany which was very industrial. Tonnes of steel and coal were produced in The Ruhr.
Putsch	To revolt or try to cause a revolution. Sometimes known as an uprising or rebellion.
Dadaism	A chaotic, nonsensical, and wacky style of art which represented the chaos and upheaval of WW1 and Weimar Germany.
Carnival	A party in a large dance hall which became popular in Weimar Germany.
Reichstag	The building in which the German government is housed.
Enabling Act	A law passed by Hitler which allowed him to end democratic voting and freedoms of the press and politics.
Führer	Germany had previously been governed by two people, a Chancellor and President. Hitler declared he was both and called himself the Führer.

## How did WW1 impact Germany?

### Abdication of the Kaiser

- Kaiser Wilhelm II had an English mother and German father. His Grandmother was Queen Victoria I.
- Although he believed passionately in Germany's army, he failed to succeed as a leader during WW1. He struggled to make decisions or relate to the soldiers. In 1919 he abdicated the throne.

### Politics in Weimar Germany

- Following Kaiser Wilhelm II's abdication, a new government was formed in Weimar. They gave the vote to everyone over the age of 20, and allowed freedoms in speech, press, and politics.
- The Weimar Government faced significant opposition, especially due to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

### The Economy in Weimar Germany

- WW1 placed Germany in 150 billion marks of debt. Germany also had to pay \$6.6 billion in reparations to countries affected by WW1. By 1923, Germany faced an economic crisis where hyperinflation made money worthless.
- These economic issues were solved in the short-term by Stresemann, but by 1929 unemployment was high again and some ordinary Germans turned to the Nazi Party for change.

### Society in Weimar Germany

- Following WW1 and the crisis years of 1918—1923, many Germans began to let loose and express themselves freely. New styles of art such as Dada Art, and new music such as Jazz became popular.
- Women had the vote and people were politically free.
- Many thought the tough years of 1914—1923 were behind them, and for many the 1920s in Germany were a time of fun and freedom.

### Summary

- WW1 and the abdication of the Kaiser sent Germany down a path of crisis until 1923.
- Although the policies of Stresemann relieved the economic pressure on Germany, it did not last.
- Weimar Germany was a 'Golden Era' but the economic crash of 1929 led Germany into its darkest period in history, the rise of Hitler.