

37 Essential Questions and Answers... Weimar Germany

QUESTION	ANSWER
1. Why did Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicate (give up his throne) on 9 th November 1918?	He abdicated and ran away to Holland because he had no support. Conditions were poor and people were starving. The sailors at Kiel had mutinied (refused to obey orders) and this had spread to other soldiers and the people in general. The workers had gone on strike.
2. Who took over governing Germany after the Kaiser?	Friedrich Ebert of the Social Democratic Party was in charge of the new government.
3. Why was this new government known as the 'November Criminals'?	They signed the armistice (ceasefire) on 11 th November 1918. This ended WW1 but it meant that Germany had then lost the war and people felt that their new government had 'given in' and even 'stabbed Germany in the back'.
4. Who were the Spartacists?	The Spartacists (or Spartacus League) were communists. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht led a revolt in January 1919. They took over public buildings and organised a general strike.
5. What happened to the Spartacists?	The Spartacist Uprising was put down by the Free Corps (Freikorps). These were ex-army soldiers. 1000s of communists were killed and Luxemburg and Liebknecht were shot. The communists hated the Weimar Republic after this event.
6. Why was Germany called the Weimar Republic?	The new government, led by Ebert after a general election in January 1919, was unsafe in Berlin so they moved to the town of Weimar.
7. Give examples of Communist revolts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 1919: they organised strikes and riots in Berlin. Defeated by the Free Corps. • April 1919: they turned Bavaria (a state of Germany) into a Soviet Republic. They took from the rich and shared it among the workers. The army and the Free Corps crushed the revolt and killed the leaders.
8. What was the Treaty of Versailles?	It was the peace settlement signed after World War One had ended in 1918. It was signed on 28 th June 1919.
9. What did Germany hate about the Treaty of Versailles?	They were angry that they were blamed for the war and had to pay reparations (£6.6 billion). They also lost all their colonies and 70,000 Km ² of land. They also felt vulnerable at having their armed forces cut and the Rhineland demilitarised.
10. Why did Germany sign the Treaty of Versailles?	Germany had no choice. If they didn't sign, then the allies would invade Germany. But the German people still hated their new government for this humiliation.
11. What was the Weimar Constitution?	It was a set of rules saying how Weimar Germany should be run. It was published in August 1919.
12. What was proportional representation?	It was a system of voting where the number of seats for each party in the Reichstag was based on the number of votes won in elections.
13. What were the weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The president could use Article (law) 48 to get rid of democracy and rule by himself. • Proportional representation allowed extremist parties, like the Nazis and Communists, a say in government. • Proportional representation meant that no political party had a majority in parliament so the country was run by coalitions.
14. What is a putsch?	It is an armed uprising i.e. people try to fight and take over from the government using violence/weapons.
15. What happened in the Kapp Putsch?	The Free Corps, led by Wolfgang Kapp, tried to seize power by force in Berlin, 13 March 1920. Kapp was supported by Berlin's army and police. The government fled to Dresden but they asked the workers to

	go on strike. This meant that there was no transport, water, gas or coal in Berlin. So, the putsch ended and Kapp ran away to Sweden.
16. Why did French and Belgian soldiers invade the Ruhr in Germany, 9 January 1923?	Germany couldn't afford to pay the 2 nd instalment of reparations but the French didn't believe them. They invaded the Ruhr region because it was a rich, industrial area and they would be able to take what they were owed directly from the mines and factories.
17. What did the German government do when the Ruhr was invaded?	They ordered the Germans to use passive resistance (go on strike). The mines and factories stopped production. The French killed 132 Germans.
18. What happened as a result of the Ruhr invasion?	Germany was so poor that the government printed more money. This led to hyperinflation.
19. What was hyperinflation?	Hyperinflation was when money became worthless because the government had printed more money. People collected their wages in wheelbarrows but would still struggle to buy clothes and food. Savings became worthless. People blamed the government for their problems.
20. What positions did Gustav Stresemann hold in the Weimar government?	He was Chancellor briefly in 1923. He was also the Foreign Minister, 1923-29.
21. What was the Rentenmark?	It was a new currency (money) introduced by Stresemann to solve the problem of hyperinflation. He got rid of the worthless money. He also stopped passive resistance and said Germany would start paying reparations again.
22. What was the Dawes Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was in 1924. It was when Germany borrowed 800 million gold marks from the USA. Germany could now build factories which created jobs and goods to improve the German economy. • It also allowed Germany to pay reparations in affordable chunks, depending on how rich Germany was at the time. French and Belgian soldiers left the Ruhr in 1925 as a result.
23. What was the Young Plan?	This was in 1929 and it was an agreement to extend the deadline for reparations payments for another 59 years.
24. What was the Locarno Pact?	An agreement between Germany and France, in 1925, never to change the borders between the 2 countries. Other countries began to trust Germany again.
25. What was the League of Nations and when was Germany allowed to join?	It was an organisation set up after the Treaty of Versailles to try to keep world peace. Germany was allowed to join in 1926. This showed that countries were beginning to trust Germany again.
26. What was the Kellogg-Briand Pact?	This was in 1928 when Germany and 60 other countries agreed not to go to war with each other.
27. Which of Stresemann's actions helped Germany recover economically?	Introducing the Rentenmark and also the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan.
28. Which of Stresemann's actions helped improve Germany's relations with other countries?	The Locarno Pact, joining the League of Nations and also the Kellogg-Briand Pact.
29. How did all Stresemann's actions impact on Germany?	Weimar Republic was more stable. Extremist parties, like the Communists and Nazis, were less popular. There was a massive cultural revival: new artists and writers. Berlin was full of cafes and clubs and renowned throughout Europe.
30. What weaknesses remained in Germany?	Germany relied heavily on loans from America. Also, extremist parties, like the Nazis, still existed in Germany.

<p>31. What changes did Hitler make to the German Workers Party after he became their leader?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He changed the name to National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi Party). • He drew up their ideas in 1920. This was called the Twenty-Five Point Programme. • He set up a private army in 1921 called the SA/Stormtroopers/Brownshirts. They protected Nazi speakers at rallies and beat up opponents, such as the Communists.
<p>32. What ideas were in the Twenty-Five point Programme?</p>	<p>The Nazis wanted to: abolish the Treaty of Versailles, create a strong central government and unite all Germans (only people of German blood) to form a greater Germany.</p> <p>They also believed that the workers should get a share of the profits of industry, there should be good old age pensions and the government should help the middle classes.</p>
<p>33. When (and briefly) what was the Munich Putsch?</p>	<p>It was the Nazi attempt to take power, starting in the city of Munich, in November 1923.</p>
<p>34. Describe what happened in the Munich Putsch.</p>	<p>Hitler and 600 Stormtroopers entered a beer hall in Munich and held the leader of the Bavarian government, Kahr, at gunpoint. The next day they started marching to the city centre in Munich but were fired at by the police and army. 16 Nazis and 3 policemen were killed. The putsch failed and Hitler and Ludendorff were arrested. Hitler had overestimated the support he would get and the police and army had stayed loyal to the government.</p>
<p>35. What were the results of the Munich Putsch?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitler was put on trial and found guilty of treason but only served 9 months of a 5 year sentence. • Hitler became well known throughout Germany because of the publicity he got from his trial. • In prison Hitler wrote Mein Kampf (My Struggle). This became a best selling book and spread Hitler's ideas throughout Germany. • The Nazis decided to abandon ideas of seizing power and focus on winning votes in the Reichstag.
<p>36. What happened to the Nazi Party, 1924-29?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They reformed after their ban in 1924. 2. Nazi organisations/clubs/offices were set up all over Germany. 3. The membership of the Nazi Party increased: 1925 = 27,000 members, 1928 = over 100,000 members.
<p>37. Why did the Nazis not gain many votes 1924-29?</p>	<p>People were happy (the Stresemann years) and so they did not vote for extremist parties like the Nazis.</p> <p>The Nazis' seats in the Reichstag dropped: 1924 = 32 seats but in 1928 = 12 seats.</p>