

LESSON PLAN: THE RISE OF NAZI RACIAL IDEOLOGY

Grade 6

SS6H3 Explain conflict and change in Europe.

b. Explain the rise of Nazism including pre-existing prejudices, the use of propaganda, and events which resulted in the Holocaust.

OVERVIEW: This lesson helps students to explore the rise of Nazi ideology by learning about racial antisemitism, propaganda and the historical context which created the conditions which led to the Holocaust.

RISE OF NAZISM – HITLER AND THE NAZIS COME TO POWER

Source: Facing History

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/rise-nazi-party-0>

Unit Essential Questions:

What does learning about the choices people made during the Weimar Republic, the rise of the Nazi Party, and the Holocaust teach us about the power and impact of our choices today?

How did the Nazi Party, a small and unpopular political group in 1920, become the most powerful political party in Germany by 1933?

Lesson Plan

- Explain to students that they are now going to learn about the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, and throughout this unit they will observe how the Nazis shaped the values of German society.
- The video [Hitler's Rise to Power, 1918–1933](#) (09:30) provides an overview of the beginning of the Nazi Party in the early years of the Weimar Republic and the party's growth in relation and reaction to key events in Germany in the 1920s. Explain to students that as they watch this video, they will recognize events that they learned about in the previous two class periods about the Weimar Republic, but now they will focus on how those events affected the growth the Nazi Party in Germany.
- Before beginning the video, write the full name of the Nazi Party, in both English and German, on the board:
 - The National Socialist German Workers' Party
 - *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*

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- Students can then see how “Nazi” is an abbreviation of the first word of the party’s name in German. Tell students that they may see and hear a variety of related names for the Nazis in resources throughout this unit, including National Socialists and the initials NSDAP.
- Pass out the handout [Hitler’s Rise to Power, 1918–1933 Viewing Guide](#) and instruct students to respond to the questions with information from the video as they watch. To help students prepare to answer, have them read the questions before watching.
- Show the video [Hitler’s Rise to Power, 1918–1933](#) to the class. You might choose to pause the video so students can add to their notes or, if time permits, consider showing the video twice in a row.
- Debrief the video by reviewing the questions on the viewing guide and discussing the information students recorded, helping them fill in important ideas they may have missed. You might have students debrief in groups of three or four, or you might go over the viewing guide as a whole group.
- As you discuss the video with students, emphasize the choices that individuals, other than Hitler, made during this time period that contributed to the Nazis’ rise to popularity and power. You might ask students to underline on the viewing guide evidence of where individuals and groups made such choices and record a list of these key moments on the board.

Path to Nazi Genocide: Part I (13:18) Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism, 1918–1933

In the aftermath of World War I, Germans struggled to understand their country’s uncertain future. Citizens faced poor economic conditions, skyrocketing unemployment, political instability, and profound social change. While downplaying more extreme goals, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party offered simple solutions to Germany’s problems, exploiting people’s fears, frustrations, and hopes to win broad support.

Source: USHMM Film: Path to Nazi Genocide, Part I – Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism

<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide/chapter-1/aftermath-of-world-war-i-and-the-rise-of-nazism-1918-1933>

Discussion Questions: Part I - Path to Nazi Genocide

<p>In the introduction to the film, the narrator identifies three things that the Nazis used to help them further their military, political and racial goals. As you watch the film, note how each of these plays a role in how the history develops: EDUCATION SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY</p>	
<p>What are some of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles that dramatically impacted Germany after World War I?</p>	

What impact did the defeat in World War I have on everyday life in Germany?	
What uncertainties existed in Germany in the 1920s?	
What parallels to the United States existed in Germany in the 1920s?	
What was the historical context in which Hitler came to power? How did Hitler become Chancellor?	

USHMM Questions

List three ways in which World War I and the Treaty of Versailles led to political instability in Germany.

In his book Mein Kampf ["My Struggle"], what goals does Hitler advocate for Germany?

How did Adolf Hitler become chancellor of Germany in 1933? How did he become the Führer and sole head of government in 1934?

How did conditions in Germany and Europe at the end of World War I contribute to the rise and triumph of Nazism in Germany?

Source: USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia Article: The Nazi Rise to Power

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-rise-to-power>

The Nazi Party was one of a number of right-wing extremist political groups that emerged in Germany following World War I. Beginning with the onset of the Great Depression it rose rapidly from obscurity to political prominence, becoming the largest party in the German parliament in 1932.

Key Facts

The Nazi Party's meteoric rise to power began in 1930, when it attained 107 seats in Germany's parliament, the Reichstag. In July 1932, the Nazi Party became the largest political party in the Reichstag with 230 representatives

In the final years of the Weimar Republic (1930 to 1933), the government ruled by emergency decree because it could not attain a parliamentary majority. Political and economic instability, coupled with voter dissatisfaction with the status quo, benefitted the Nazi Party.

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As a result of the Nazis' mass support, German president Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor on January 30, 1933. His appointment paved the way to the Nazi dictatorship after Hindenburg's death in August 1934.

Critical Thinking Questions

How did the German constitution contribute to the Nazi rise to power?

What pressures and motivations led some officials to arrange for the appointment of Hitler as chancellor?

What do you consider to be the ideal priorities of government officials to uphold, particularly in times of crisis?

How can knowledge of the events in Germany and Europe before the Nazis came to power help citizens today respond to threats of genocide and mass atrocity in the world?