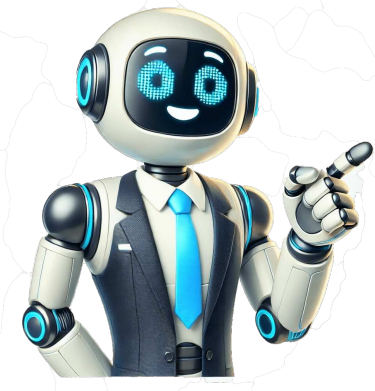


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## Adolf hitler

Hitler's rise to power led to an absolute dictatorship once he secured presidential assent for new elections. The Reichstag fire served as an excuse for a decree overriding freedom guarantees and an intensified campaign of violence. At the subsequent election, the Nazis polled 43.9% of the votes. On March 21, the Reichstag assembled in the Potsdam Garrison Church to demonstrate unity between National Socialism and conservative Germany, represented by Hindenburg. Two days later, the Enabling Bill giving full powers to Hitler was passed, with Nazi, Nationalist, and Centre party deputies voting in favor (March 23). Less than three months later, all non-Nazi parties, organizations, and labor unions ceased to exist. The disappearance of the Catholic Centre Party led to a German Concordat with the Vatican in July. Hitler had no desire for radical revolution; instead, he aimed to secure conservative support and maintain army backing. However, Ernst Röhm, head of the SA, was a proponent of continuing revolution and distrusted by the army. Hitler initially attempted to secure Röhm's support through persuasion but eventually decided to eliminate him. On June 29, 1934, Hitler executed Röhm and his lieutenant Edmund Heines without trial, along with Gregor Strasser and Kurt von Schleicher. The army leaders approved of Hitler's actions, and when Hindenburg died on August 2, they merged the chancellorship and presidency, granting Hitler supreme command of the armed forces. The regime gained popularity due to economic recovery and reduced unemployment. A plebiscite showed support from 90% of voters. Despite being responsible for broad policy lines and terrorizing the state, Hitler left detailed administration to his subordinates, allowing them to exercise arbitrary power in their spheres. Hitler's primary focus was foreign policy, seeking the reunion of German peoples and expansion eastward, primarily targeting Poland, Ukraine, and other areas. Hitler aimed to rebuild Germany's dominance by taking on its Slavic neighbors, establishing a Teutonic master race with fascist Italy as its ally. Britain was seen as a potential partner if it abandoned its balancing act in Europe and focused on global interests. France, however, remained a natural foe that needed to be subdued for German expansion eastward to proceed. To remove post-WWI restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler used propaganda to allay other powers' concerns, posing as a champion against Bolshevism and a man of peace seeking equal treatment under the treaty. He pulled out of international gatherings like the Disarmament Conference and League of Nations, and offered nonaggression pacts with Poland. Despite one major miscalculation in Austria's attempted revolt (July 1934), Hitler skillfully navigated diplomacy to win concessions, such as the Saarland plebiscite in January 1935. The introduction of conscription that same year provoked restrained protests from Britain, France, and Italy but led to a naval treaty recognizing Germany's right to build up its navy. Hitler's greatest gamble was marching into the demilitarized Rhineland in March 1936, an act he took against military advice. This move solidified his alliance with fascist Italy and paved the way for the Rome-Berlin axis announced in October 1936, followed by the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan a year later. By November 1937, Hitler had outlined plans for future conquests starting with Austria and Czechoslovakia at a secret meeting with military leaders. In January 1938, he dismissed those who were not fully committed to Nazi ideology, including key figures in his government. The following month, Hitler forced Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg to sign an agreement that effectively paved the way for further expansion into Eastern Europe. Hitler's Annexation of Austria and the Rise of Nazi Power Austrian Nazis infiltrated the Vienna government, prompting Chancellor Schuschnigg to resist with a plebiscite on Austrian independence. Hitler responded by invading Austria with German troops, followed by an annexation (Anschluss) in 1938. The Italian dictator Mussolini supported Hitler's move, while Britain and France failed to resist. Hitler proceeded to dismantle Czechoslovakia, exploiting the Sudetenland Germans' demands, and eventually occupied the entire country. In September 1939, he invaded Poland, triggering a guarantee from Britain and France. However, Hitler formed an alliance with Italy (Pact of Steel) and signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union on August 23, just before invading Poland. Despite his foreign policy successes, Hitler's aggressive tactics led to the outbreak of World War II, drawing in major powers like Britain and France. Hitler's strategy was marked by opportunism and clever timing, allowing him to capitalize on the weaknesses of democratic leaders. The start of World War II marked a pivotal moment in history, accompanied by the devastating Holocaust that claimed six million Jewish lives and millions more. Hitler's early life was marked by illegitimacy, as his father, Alois bore the mother's name Schicklgruber before adopting the surname Hitler in 1876. Adolf never used any other surname throughout his life. His childhood was spent mostly in Linz, Upper Austria, where he developed a lifelong affinity for the city and wished to be buried there. Despite his father's adequate pension and savings, Hitler struggled academically, failing to advance beyond secondary education. He pursued an artistic career, twice failing to gain entry into Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts. Instead, he drifted between municipal hostels, living a lonely and isolated life, fueled by hatred for cosmopolitanism and Vienna's multinational character. In 1913, Hitler moved to Munich, where he petitioned to join the Austrian military, later being classified unfit due to inadequate physical vigor. However, with the outbreak of World War I, he requested permission from Bavarian King Louis III to serve, and was eventually deployed in October 1914 to Belgium. He participated in the First Battle of Ypres, serving throughout the war, including being wounded in 1916 and gassed near Ypres in 1918. His bravery earned him the Iron Cross, Second Class, and the rare Iron Cross, First Class, for a corporal. After the war, Hitler became increasingly disillusioned with civilian life, finding solace in the discipline and camaraderie of military life. He eventually rose to power as Chancellor of Germany in 1933, marking the end of parliamentary democracy. In the years leading up to World War II, Hitler re-armed and re-built the German army through conscription (1935), moved troops into the demilitarized Rhineland (1936), and attempted to unite Germany and Austria with the "Anschluss" (1938). Later that year, he demanded the Sudetenland, a German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia. Hitler's Rise to Power and Perception in Europe Hitler's passionate speeches about expanding German territory concerned foreign observers, who wondered if he was a 'passionate lunatic' or an eccentric fanatic. The significance of a source's reliability is crucial when analyzing historical events, as seen in the context of appeasement leading up to World War II. This lesson plan encourages students to critically evaluate primary sources from the British Embassy in Berlin, contrasting them with earlier accounts and considering the factors that make a reliable source. The provided transcripts facilitate individual or paired work, allowing students to report their findings back to the group. This lesson serves as an introduction to exploring appeasement and the decisions made by the British Government before the war's outbreak in 1939, potentially leading to a wider inquiry into these topics. Sources:
\* Hitler caught between British and Russian military might (INF 2/31)
\* Report by Mr Law, a British businessman working in Germany (FO371/20733, 1937)
\* Report on a conversation with Count Bernstorff (FO371/20733, 1937)
\* Drawing by Richard Ziegler titled "Unhappy-looking uniformed Hitler," 1944-1945 (INF 3/1298)
\* Short description of Hitler prepared by the British Embassy in Berlin (January 1937) (FO 408/67)
External links:
\* Quiz yourself on Adolf Hitler
\* Pre-war Nazi Germany and the Beginnings of the Holocaust
\* Illustrated timeline of events from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
\* BBC history of Nazi Germany
Connections to curriculum:
\* Key stage 3: Challenges for Britain, Europe, and the wider world (1901-present)
\* Key stage 4: AQA GCSE History: Germany, 1890-1945; Edexcel GCSE History: c1900-present; OCR GCSE History: War and British Society
Hitler's Rise to Power Adolf Hitler joined an anti-Semitic, nationalist party that would eventually become the Nazi Party. He enlisted in the German Army during WWI and became a corporal, earning medals for bravery. However, his future seemed uncertain after being blinded by mustard gas in 1918. In 1919, he attended a meeting of the German Workers' party where he found common ground with its ideology but disagreed with its organization. He gave a passionate speech that showcased his oratory skills and quickly rose through the ranks. By 1921, Hitler was leading the re-named National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi). The party gained popularity due to terrible economic conditions and rapid inflation. Hitler staged the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 but failed, although he was given a light sentence. While imprisoned, he wrote 'Mein Kampf', outlining his political ideas. After his release from jail, Hitler reorganized his party and it gained significant followers after the world depression hit Germany. By 1930, the Nazis were polling around 6.5 million votes. In 1932's presidential elections, Hitler came second but was appointed Chancellor in 1933 due to popular support. Hitler consolidated his power by appointing Nazis to government and gaining emergency powers. He prepared for war by rearming Germany, using propaganda, and creating enemies like the Jews. Initially, Hitler's actions were ignored by neighboring countries, which believed appeasement was the best approach. However, after invading the Rhineland in 1936 and annexing Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia, he moved on to invade Poland in September 1939, starting World War II. In April 1940, Denmark and Norway were also taken, and France followed soon after. Hitler then turned his attention to the East, forming alliances with Russia and Italy before invading Poland. Russia under Operation Barbarossa proved one of Hitler's greatest mistakes. The German army faced difficulties due to Russia's "scorched earth" policy, which slowed their advance and left them struggling without a reliable supply line in the harsh Russian winter. In 1943, Germany began its long retreat, while the Western Allies pushed forward, ultimately forcing Germany to withdraw almost entirely. As Hitler's behavior became increasingly erratic and out-of-touch, he responded to an unsuccessful assassination attempt by intensifying the atmosphere of suspicion and terror. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide with his longtime partner Eva Braun, reportedly marrying her at the last minute. Germany soon surrendered following this event. Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) served as dictator of Nazi Germany from 1933. He initially gained popularity by making promises to improve Germany's economy and status in Europe but took these policies too far, ultimately leading to World War II (1939-45). Germany lost the war, and Hitler committed suicide in April 1945. Early Life Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, Austria. His father, Alois Schicklgruber, later changed their family name to Hitler. After his death in 1903, Hitler neglected his studies, spending most of his time reading history and western novels or "moping around the house with delusions of becoming an artist or architect." The family moved to Linz in 1905, where Hitler attempted to enter the Academy of Fine Arts but failed twice. He then tried the School for Architecture but was blocked due to a lack of qualifications. Following his mother's death in December 1907, Hitler spent five years in Vienna, making few friends and little money by painting posters and postcards. His political awakening came in Vienna, where he admired anti-Semitic and nationalist mayor Karl Lueger and learned the potential of propaganda and mass movements. In 1913, Hitler moved to Germany to avoid compulsory military service in Austria and took up residence in Munich. He indulged in few pleasures, including chocolate cake & walking his Asalan dog, Blondi. When World War I began in 1914, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian army, serving as a messenger in France and impressing his superiors with the Iron Cross Second Class medal. He was badly wounded in the thigh by shrapnel in the Battle of the Somme but returned to fight in 1917, reaching the rank of lance corporal. His superiors couldn't find any leadership qualities in him, but he did receive the Iron Cross First Class and later became an instructor in Munich. Despite feeling betrayed by the armistice in 1918, Hitler stayed in the army and began lecturing on the dangers of communism. He eventually decided to take action to reshape Germany and free it from its enemies. The Nazi Party was founded in 1920 as the German Workers Party, but it wasn't socialist or interested in workers. The name change helped the party appeal to a wider audience. Hitler became leader of the party thanks to his public speaking skills, taking over from Anton Drexler in 1921. He attempted to seize power in November 1923, but the coup failed due to lack of support from other right-wing politicians, the police, and the army. Hitler was put on trial for treason and found guilty, spending a year in prison. During his incarceration, he wrote Mein Kampf, outlining his thoughts on statecraft and how he would change Germany if he were its leader. In 1925, Hitler rented a villa near Berchtesgaden, which he later bought and extended, calling it the Berghof. Hitler lived at the Berghof with a widowed half-sister and her two daughters. There were rumors of a romantic relationship between Hitler and one of the daughters, Geli, but domestic staff denied this. Geli committed suicide in 1931, leaving Hitler devastated. He started a lifelong relationship with Eva Braun in 1932. Braun was submissive and had limited intellect, aspiring to be only a mistress. At the Berghof, Hitler would often put aside his argumentative nature and temper, indulging in classical music and architecture. He enjoyed simple things like wearing plain suits and confided in architect Albert Speer about rebuilding Berlin. Hitler's rise to power was marked by a combination of strategic maneuvering, charismatic leadership, and effective propaganda. Initially, his ascent was slow, with the Nazi Party winning only 12 seats in the Reichstag in 1928. However, Hitler's popularity grew steadily over the next few years, driven by promises of job creation, rearmament, and territorial expansion. As the economic crisis of the Great Depression deepened, millions of Germans found themselves struggling to make ends meet. Hitler's message of hope and renewal resonated with many, who saw him as a leader who could restore their country's honor and greatness. The Nazi Party's appeal was not limited to specific demographics, but rather tapped into traditional German values such as family, self-sufficiency, and tradition. Hitler himself became the face of this new politics, cultivating a cult-like persona through his speeches, public appearances, and propaganda efforts. He presented himself as the savior of Germany, promising to reverse the humiliations of the Treaty of Versailles and restore German greatness. The Nazi Party's identification of "enemies" such as Communists and Jewish people further fueled Hitler's popularity among those who felt threatened by external forces. The appointment of Hitler as chancellor in 1933 marked a significant turning point in his rise to power. With President Paul von Hindenburg, he formed a coalition government, but ultimately sought more control over the state. As Hitler consolidated his authority, the Nazi Party's influence expanded, and Germany became increasingly isolated from the international community. The Nazi Party's rise to power was marked by a combination of strategic intimidation and manipulation, which ultimately led to the establishment of a dictatorship in Germany. The SA and SS paramilitary groups played a crucial role in intimidating political rivals and closing down meetings, while the Reichstag fire in 1933 provided an opportunity for Hitler to tap into people's fears of communism. By joining forces with other right-wing parties, the Nazis secured a majority of seats in the March 1933 elections. Hitler then set about dismantling democratic institutions, banning opposition parties, and consolidating control over the police, press, and media. The Enabling Act, passed through intimidation, allowed Hitler to bypass parliament and assume dictatorial powers. When President Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler merged the positions of president and chancellor, declaring himself Germany's leader. The Night of the Long Knives purge saw Hitler eliminate his rival Ernst Röhm, further consolidating his position. Hitler's vision for a 'pure' Aryan German race led him to implement the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which stripped Jews of their citizenship and rights. The Kristallnacht pogrom in 1938 marked the beginning of a systematic persecution of Jews, Romani people, Communists, and those with disabilities. The Nazis ultimately implemented the 'Final Solution', the Holocaust, resulting in the extermination of millions of European Jews in purpose-built death camps like Auschwitz. Hitler dismantled the Treaty of Versailles restrictions on Germany, using a combination of deception, intimidation, and diplomacy to convince Britain and France to adopt an appeasement policy. He regained control over the Saar region, remilitarized the Rhineland, rearmned Germany, annexed Austria, and took over the Czech Sudetenland. Hitler centralized power in his hands, assuming command of all German forces. His occupation of Czechoslovakia followed in March 1939, and he threatened Poland, but Britain and France stood firm. The Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 did not deter Hitler from invading Poland on September 3, 1939, marking the beginning of World War II. Hitler's military strategy often suffered due to his lack of strategic experience, despite having a remarkable memory for facts. His interference in war operations proved costly for Germany and its people. The initial years of the war were marked by significant victories, including the occupation of Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, and France. However, things began to unravel from 1942. Operation Barbarossa's failure was largely due to Hitler's overriding of his generals' advice, particularly regarding Moscow. The entry of the United States into the war following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 ultimately sealed Germany's fate. The North Africa campaign's deterioration and Hitler's dismissive attitude towards his generals further weakened the German position. The D-Day landings in June 1944 provided a second front, squeezing Germany between Allied forces. Despite this, Hitler continued to micromanage military operations, refusing to delegate tasks or analyze situations thoroughly. Hitler's policy of "survival at any cost" led to more suffering and ultimately contributed to Germany's downfall. Hitler's increasingly erratic behavior was largely responsible for the country's defeat, according to historian Dear (421). In 1944, a group of generals, led by Claus von Stauffenberg, attempted to assassinate Hitler in his command bunker on July 20th. Although the bomb injured Hitler, he miraculously survived and became even more convinced that fate was on his side. Following the failed assassination attempt, Hitler ordered a ruthless purge of anyone suspected of being involved in the plot. This included Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, one of Germany's most celebrated commanders. By 1945, Germany's surrender was imminent. In April of that year, Eva Braun joined Hitler in his Berlin bunker, where she eventually took her own life by poisoning on April 30th. Hitler shot himself through the mouth shortly after. Their bodies were burned using petrol as instructed by Hitler's valet. Hitler's rise to power began in 1933 when he became the dictator of Nazi Germany. He made populist promises such as improving the economy and Germany's status in Europe, but his policies ultimately led to the outbreak of World War II (1939-1945) and Germany's defeat. Adolf Hitler was born on April 20th, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, Austria. His father, Alois Schicklgruber, changed their family name to Hitler after marrying Adolf's mother, Klara Pölzl. Alois was a dominant figure who frequently beat Adolf for misbehavior, while Klara spoiled her son. After Alois' death in 1903, Adolf neglected his studies and spent most of his time reading historical novels and stories about cowboys or daydreaming about becoming an artist or architect. The family moved to Linz in 1905, where Adolf visited Vienna the following year and attempted to enter the city's art academy but failed the exam. In 1908, Adolf Hitler attempted to enroll in an architecture school but was rejected due to lack of qualifications. After his mother's death in 1907, he moved to Vienna where he struggled financially and socially. He survived by painting posters and postcards, and had some financial support from a family inheritance. During this time, Hitler developed political views and admired the anti-Semitic mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger. In 1913, he moved to Munich, Germany to avoid military service in Austria. When World War I broke out in 1914, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian army and served as a messenger in France. He was wounded but returned to combat and eventually became an instructor at Munich. After the war, Hitler joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP) and quickly rose through the ranks due to his charisma and oratory skills. In 1921, he took over as leader of the party after Anton Drexler's departure. Hitler attempted a coup d'état in 1923 but failed, was arrested, and spent a year in prison writing Mein Kampf, his memoir and manifesto. Upon release, Hitler continued to build his political following and eventually purchased a villa near Berchtesgaden which he renamed the Berghof. Les nazis ont obtenu un succès relativement modeste dans leur première campagne électorale, obtenant seulement 196 sièges au parlement allemand. Cependant, leur popularité a continué à grandir et à toucher toutes les couches de la société et toutes les régions d'Allemagne. La croissance de la popularité d'Hitler et des nazis était due à plusieurs facteurs. Hitler a promis de restaurer la grandeur de l'Allemagne en réarmant le pays, en éliminant les syndicats et en investissant dans des grands projets gouvernementaux. Il a également promis du travail et du pain aux millions d'Allemands touchés par la crise économique. Dans ses discours charismatiques, Hitler a promis de renverser les contraintes imposées par le traité de Versailles et de restaurer l'honneur de l'Allemagne en récupérant les territoires perdus après la Première Guerre mondiale. La défaite de l'Allemagne était en grande partie due à la conduite irrationnelle et désordonnée d'Hitler (Dear, 421). Les généraux allemands étaient fatigués de sa direction de la guerre et un groupe d'entre eux, mené par Claus von Stauffenberg, lança le complot pour assassiner Hitler en 1944. La bombe explosa en juillet, mais Hitler survécut miraculeusement. Cela renforça sa croyance que la providence était de son côté et il ordonna une purge sanglante contre tous ceux liés au complot. Le maréchal Erwin Rommel fut l'une des victimes. En 1945, la capitulation de l'Allemagne était imminente. Eva Braun rejoignit Hitler dans son bunker berlinois en avril et il était désormais fragile physiquement. Il était hypocondriaque et insomniaque et avait peur d'être assassiné à nouveau. Son médecin personnel lui administrait des injections régulières, dont certaines étaient des concoctions bizarres. Le 29 avril, Hitler et Braun se marièrent et le 30 avril, alors que l'Armée rouge approchait de Berlin, ils se suicidèrent tous les deux. Les corps d'Hitler et de Braun furent brûlés par son valet conformément aux instructions. L'Allemagne se rendit une semaine plus tard.

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