

How and Why did Hitler come to lead the Nazi Party?

- He was embittered from his early life and was determined to prove himself. Born in Austria in 1889. He rejected school and rebelled to annoy his father. However, he was committed to his artistic talents, his physical talents, particularly in P.E, and the love of his mother (his hated dad died when he was 13). This was all taken away in Vienna in 1907 when his mum died; he failed to get into art school; and his health started to fail as he lived on the streets for 5 years, and he was also rejected from the Austrian Army for failing the medical in 1914. He grew extremely resentful of successful Jewish people while on the streets and he became determined to regain his self-respect as an intelligent and talented man of pure German stock.
- The war gave him the opportunity to regain his self-respect, the skills to do it and later the platform from which to rise. He survived Paschendale and the Somme, won both Iron Crosses, became Lance Corporal and successful in propaganda but he was devastated by the Armistice and blamed Ebert and the Jews. He was given a job at the end of the war to use this talent to spy on political parties. However, he fell out with Bauman and joined the DAP as member number 7, as he agreed with Drexler about Volkisch, nationalism and the TofV.
- He became leader of the Nazis due to his oratory skills and popularity. By 1920 he was head of propaganda of the DAP using the newspaper the Volkischer Beobachter. In Feb 1920 in a beer hall of 2,000 he announced the new name of the party, the NSDAP with the 25 Point Programme. By 1921 he was the leader of the Nazis.

Why did the Nazis gain support between 1920 – 1923?

- Hitler’s oratory skills and propaganda brought support. The Volkischer Beobachter stirred Nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments. Support rose from 6,000 members in 1922, to 55,000 by late 1923. Hitler took ideas for gesticulation and oratory skills from other speakers like Lenin, practised in the mirror, created a unique look with the Nazi flag with its strong Nationalist and populist imagery and colours, and his moustache and focused on populism like German purity, anti-Semitism, anti- TofV and Communism and Dolchstoß under the cult of Führerprinzip.
- He crushed his opposition through violence. The SA, formed in 1921, attacked hecklers and opposition meeting, intimidated rivals and ensured the support of the Freikorps with a brown shirt uniform and employing their former members as leaders, like Ernst Rohm.
- The 25 point programme appealed to all sectors of German society, workers with mock socialism, nationalists with dochtstoss, and the Middle Class and big business fears of Communism and white supremacists with anti-Semitism and talk of Volkisch.

The Munich Putsch (Why did it happen and why did it fail?)

- 1923 was his opportunity to take power. He had Ludendorff’s support, people were angered by the Invasion of the Ruhr, Stresemann calling off passive resistance and the start of hyperinflation.
- He also thought he could rely on the Freikorps, the Army and other right-wing leaders like Von Kahr, Von Lussow, and Seisser in Munich because of Ludendorff and the use of the Freikorps by Stresemann to crush left-wing rebellions in Thuringia and Saxony. They were already planning a rebellion on 8th Nov. 1923 and Hitler thought he could use this.
- Hitler thought he could win. He had 55,000 supporters and his private army the SA. Mussolini won in Italy with his black shirts in 1922 – Hitler thought he could do it too.
- However, Hitler wasn’t supported by Von Kahr, Von Lussow and Seiser. He took over their meeting of 3,000 men at the burgerbraukeller on Nov. 8th and forced them by gunpoint to join the rebellion the next day. However, they took the night to plan resisting the rebellion.
- Hitler marched on Nov. 9th with 3,000 SA, and Ludendorff but met armed police. 16 Nazis and 4 policemen were killed. Hitler dislocated his shoulder and fled. Ludendorff gave himself up but Hitler fled to the house of his now close friend where Helene Hanfstaengl convinced Hitler not to commit suicide. He was arrested on 11 November. The Nazi Party was banned on the same day.

The Rise of Hitler 1920 - 1929

How did Hitler and the Nazis recover support between 1924 and 1929? (The Impact / importance of the Munich Putsch)

- Hitler turned his trial into a stage for spreading his ideas and advertising his oratory prowess. Hitler was put on trial with Ludendorff and 9 others but he was allowed to make long speeches about the evil Jews, bolsheviks and November criminals. This won him so much support (32 seats in the Reichstag) that despite basically committing treason he was only given 5 years in prison and he only served 9 months.
- Whilst in jail he abandoned the idea of a violent coup, reformulated the party to take power politically and collected his ideas together. He wrote his manifesto, Mein Kampf. He introduced the ideas of abolishing the terms of the TofV, gaining Lebensraum (living space) for the German people and uniting all German under one Reich. He also talked of creating a volksgemeinschaft, or people’s community where the strongest race, the ideal pure Germans would dominate the weaker races and that all Jews were to be eliminated. This put him at the centre of Nazi ideology.
- He took back power upon his release as the Nazi’s had gone into decline. The poor leadership of Rosenberg had lead the Nazi’s to break into factions. He persuaded the President of Bavaria to lift the Nazi ban in February 1925, created a HQ in Munich, split the country into Gaue (different areas) to be run by Gauleiter’s under the control of one Führer (Führerprinzip). At the Bamberg Conference in 1926 he won over his rivals Strasser and Goebbels to become the supreme leader. He also re-organised the SA through discipline not violence with Von Salomon as the new leader and created the SS as his bodyguard.
- He gained support of young ex-soldiers and young people with the Hitler Youth and the Student’s League and the Teacher’s League and Women’s League to help with the conversion of the young; urban working class support by appealing to anti-Semitism, point 17 of the 25 point became the confiscation of Jewish land in 1928; and Conservative support by criticising the Dawes and Young Plans and the Locarno Pact. He also trained Nazi speakers in evening classes to spread the message on Mein Kampf. It became a best-seller. Some farmers were won over by the slump in food prices in 1927. Support rose from 27,000 in 1925 to 100,000 by 1928. Despite this the Nazi Party only won 12 seats in the 1928 election.