



# United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Washington, D.C.

## Introduction and Instructions

The factors that led to the rise of the Nazi Party and eventual appointment of its leader, Adolf Hitler, as Chancellor of Germany, are long and complex. The period in Germany between the two World Wars, known as the Weimar Republic, was tumultuous and marked by cross-party conflict that pitted various factions against each other. Out of this chaos, the Nazis and the far-right seized power and plunged the world into another war. In the end, millions of Jews and others who resisted fascism were murdered in concentration camps and brutal warfare. In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



How did Hitler become Chancellor of Germany? Read more to find out.

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



Learn about what the Holocaust was and the events that led up to it.

WATCH: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/euro-hist/human-rights/v/the-holocaust>

### 1. What were two events that helped set the stage for the rise of the far-right and the Nazi Party?

Answer: The Great Depression and Germany's defeat and national humiliation after World War I.

### 2. Why did President Paul von Hindenburg appoint Adolf Hitler chancellor of Germany?

Answer: There are a variety of acceptable answers, including: 1. they hoped to bring Hitler and the Nazi Party under the control of mainstream conservative and centrist parties; 2. conservatives hoped to use Hitler's popularity to become more authoritarian themselves and perhaps bring back the monarchy; and 3. prevent the Communist Party from entering the government.

### 3. Who did the Nazis blame for all of Germany's problems?

Answer: Peoples they deemed "racially inferior", such as Jews and Gypsies, communists, Marxists, social democrats, and against those the Nazis held responsible for signing both the armistice of November 1918 and the Versailles treaty after World War I.

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### 4. How did the Nazi party gain more power? What tactics did they use?

Answer: In 1923, Hitler and the Nazi Party attempted a coup to overthrow the government. During his ensuing imprisonment, Hitler wrote his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, which gave him a lot of publicity and contributed to his rising popularity. Hitler and other Nazi speakers carefully tailored their speeches to each audience. To combat the communists and socialists, Nazi militias violently attacked critics and those who opposed them.

### 5. Which groups collaborated with Hitler and the Nazi Party?

Answer: Mainstream conservative parties and nationalist parties who hoped to co-opt the Nazi Party and control it under their wings.

### 6. Name the force that acted as Hitler's personal body guard and eventually controlled the concentration camps.

Answer: *Schutzstaffel* or "SS", also known as the *Einsatzgruppen*

### 7. By 1935, how were the rights of Jews restricted in Germany?

Answer: Jews were excluded from state and civil service, organizations, professions, and other aspects of public life. German law restricted the number of Jewish students at German schools and universities. Further legislation sharply curtailed "Jewish activity" in the medical and legal professions. At the national level, the Nazi government revoked the licenses of Jewish tax consultants; imposed a 1.5 percent quota on admission of "non-Aryans" to public schools and universities; fired Jewish civilian workers from the army; and, in early 1934, forbade Jewish actors to perform on the stage or screen.

### 8. What was Kristallnacht? What does this word mean in English and why was it called this?

Answer: Also known as "The Night of Broken Glass," it was a pogrom, or targeted attack, against Jews. In addition to targeting individuals, Jewish-owned businesses and properties were vandalized and destroyed.

### 9. What were the Nuremberg Laws?

Answer: Laws that institutionalized many of the racial theories prevalent in Nazi ideology. They excluded German Jews from Reich citizenship and prohibited them from marrying persons of "German or German-related blood." Jews were disenfranchised (that is, they had no formal expectation to the right to vote) and could not hold public office.

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### 10. What was the “Final Solution”?

Answer: It was the mass murder of Europe’s Jews, began after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

### 11. What were the “killing centers” and what happened there?

Answer: These were concentration camps specifically set up to murder as many Jews and other groups as possible.

### 12. How did the Jews resist?

Answer: Organized armed resistance was the most forceful form of Jewish opposition to Nazi policies in German-occupied Europe. An example of this is the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa; ŻOB) during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943.

### 13. Who liberated the camps?

Answer: Soviet, American, and British forces.

### 14. Where did many of the Jewish displaced persons end up immigrating?

Answer: Many Holocaust survivors moved westward to territories liberated by the western Allies. Many Jews also illegally attempted to flee to Palestine, then controlled by the British.

### 15. About how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?

Answer: Over six million

### 16. What other major groups were also persecuted during the Holocaust?

Answer: Among them were Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma (Gypsies), Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others), Soviet prisoners of war, intellectuals, people with disabilities, and homosexuals.

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## **WHAT DO YOU THINK?** *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. Why do you think so many countries were reluctant to take in Jewish refugees during the rise of Hitler?

Answers will vary.

2. The phrase “never again” is often used by Jewish people to memorialize their struggle during the Holocaust and as a reminder to ensure that racist and xenophobic nationalism never takes hold again. Would you be able to recognize this kind of nationalism if it existed in your own country? What are some of the signs and lessons we can learn from studying the rise of the Nazi Party?

Answers will vary.

3. Why is it important to capture the stories of those who survived the Holocaust?

Answers will vary.