

Journey of Knowledge- Consequences of WW1 (The Interwar Years) - Part 1 – 1920's

Context and Introduction to Unit: In the first half of this unit, you will learn about the consequences of the First World War and the impacts the fallout of the war had to Britain, USA, Russia/USSR and Germany. You will learn about how and why the Treaty of Versailles negatively impacted the people of Germany and link this to the wider global context – specifically economic achievements in the USA and social unrest in Britain.

Prior knowledge (KS2/KS3) – understanding Democracy and Conflict, social change in Britain during the Industrial Revolution, protests of Women's Suffrage

The Bigger Picture:

Personal development opportunities: Studying changes in government: changes in political ideologies; social demands causing political change; power of the people

Career links: Member of Parliament; civil servant; journalist; researcher; lawyer; museum curator

CORE KNOWLEDGE

- In 1917, Russia removed Tsar Nicholas II due to widespread anger over poverty, food shortages, and his poor leadership throughout WW1. In October, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, seized power promising peace, land, and equality through communism. Communism meant government control of land, industry, and resources to create a classless society.
After signing a peace treaty with Germany to exit WW1, the Bolsheviks won a brutal civil war and established a one-party dictatorship. In 1922, the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was created. Although communism aimed to share wealth equally, in practice the Soviet Union became a tightly controlled state under Lenin, with no political opposition allowed.
- Germany lost World War One in 1918 due to military defeat, shortages, and unrest at home. Facing collapse, a new democratic government signed an armistice. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed, placing full blame for the war on Germany. It imposed harsh terms: £6.6 billion in reparations, loss of territory, and strict limits on the German military.
The treaty was deeply unpopular. Germans were shocked by the war guilt clause (Article 231), which blamed them alone for the war. Many called the treaty a "Diktat" — a dictated peace forced on them without negotiation. This resentment weakened the new Weimar Republic and fuelled political instability.
- The Treaty of Versailles had severe consequences for Germany. The economy suffered badly, especially after 1923 when hyperinflation made money almost worthless. People lost savings, unemployment rose, and living conditions worsened. The middle class, in particular, was hit hard. Although the economy recovered slightly between 1924–1929 with US loans, the Wall Street Crash of 1929 ended this progress. Germany fell into depression, and unemployment soared. Many Germans lost faith in democracy and turned to extremist parties like the Nazis, who promised to overturn the Treaty, restore German pride, and solve the economic crisis.
- After WW1, the USA experienced rapid economic growth. Mass production and new technology (like cars and radios) helped create a consumer boom. People bought goods on credit and invested in the stock market. Wages rose and many enjoyed a higher standard of living. This era became known as the "Roaring Twenties." Culturally, the decade saw major changes — jazz music, cinema, and "flappers" challenged traditional values. However, not everyone benefited: farmers, immigrants, and African Americans often remained poor. Prohibition, which banned alcohol from 1920, led to illegal drinking and gang violence. The boom ended with the Wall Street Crash in 1929, triggering the Great Depression.
- Britain's coal industry declined after WW1, with mine owners cutting pay and increasing hours. In May 1926, around 1.5 million workers across industries joined a General Strike in support of the miners. The government, expecting trouble, used volunteers and the army to keep essential services running.
The strike lasted nine days and ended without achieving any of the miners' goals. The miners continued to strike alone for months but were eventually forced back to worse conditions. The General Strike led to new laws limiting trade union power and revealed deep divisions between workers, employers, and the government

Journey of Knowledge- Consequences of WW1 (The Interwar Years) - Part 2 – 1930's

Context and Introduction to Unit: In the second half of this unit, you will learn about the consequences of the Wall Street Crash and following Great Depression and the consequences for USA, Britain and Germany. Specifically, you will look at how these countries were affected Politically, Economically and Socially and assess how this affected the global climate for the Interwar period.

Prior knowledge (KS2/KS3) – understanding Democracy and Conflict, social change in Britain during the Industrial Revolution, protests of Women's Suffrage

The Bigger Picture:

Personal development opportunities: Studying changes in government: changes in political ideologies; social demands causing political change; power of the people

Career links: Member of Parliament; civil servant; journalist; researcher; lawyer; museum curator

CORE KNOWLEDGE

- By the 1930s, Stalin had become dictator of the USSR after Lenin's death. He created a totalitarian state where the Communist Party controlled all areas of life, including the economy, education, and media. Stalin launched Five-Year Plans to modernise industry, focusing on coal, steel, and electricity. Millions were forced to work under harsh conditions, and failure to meet targets often led to punishment. Stalin also forced collectivisation, combining farms into large state-run units. Many peasants, especially kulaks, resisted. The result was violence, mass arrests, and famine — most notably the Holodomor in Ukraine, where millions died. Stalin ruled through fear. During the Great Terror, he purged anyone seen as a threat, including army leaders, party members, and ordinary citizens. Despite the brutality, many believed Stalin was building a strong, modern country. Propaganda and censorship helped protect his image
- After the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the US economy collapsed. By 1933, around 13 million Americans were unemployed. Many lost homes and lived in makeshift camps known as Hooverville's. Farmers were also badly hit — low prices and drought in the Midwest caused the Dust Bowl, forcing thousands to abandon their land. President Hoover's refusal to intervene made him unpopular. In 1933, FDR became president and launched the New Deal — a set of programs to create jobs, support the unemployed, and regulate banks. It didn't fully end the Depression but helped restore confidence and changed the role of government by increasing support for ordinary Americans.
- Britain's export industries collapsed in the early 1930s, causing mass unemployment in areas like South Wales, the North East, and Scotland. By 1932, almost 3 million were jobless. Poverty and hunger were widespread, and hunger marches like the Jarrow March highlighted public anger, though they achieved little at the time. However, the South and Midlands saw growth in newer industries like car and appliance production. Regional inequalities widened. The Depression exposed how badly some areas needed government investment and laid the groundwork for future welfare reforms.
- Germany's economy crashed after 1929 because it relied on American loans. Banks failed, businesses collapsed, and by 1932, unemployment hit 6 million. The Weimar Government seemed weak and unable to fix the crisis, leading many Germans to lose faith in democracy. The Nazis gained support by promising jobs, strong leadership, and to overturn the Treaty of Versailles. Political violence grew between rival parties, and fears of civil war increased. In 1933, Hitler became Chancellor, and democracy collapsed soon after. The Depression played a key role in the rise of Nazism and the end of the Weimar Republic.

Journey of Knowledge- Life in Nazi Germany

Context and Introduction to Unit: In this unit, you will study how life changed for Germans under Nazi rule, focusing on Hitler's rise, the use of propaganda and fear, and the impact on culture, women, and young people. You'll also explore resistance to the regime and develop skills to understand how public opinion was controlled, preparing you for further study of the Holocaust. **Prior knowledge (KS2/KS3) – Previous studies of the English Civil War and Communism in Russia give you essential background on power structures, the rise of dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. Your studies of the Interwar Years gave knowledge on the cultural impacts of the 1920's and 1930's for German people.**

The Bigger Picture:

Personal development opportunities: Studying changes in government: changes in political ideologies; social manipulation; critical awareness

Career links: Member of Parliament; civil servant; journalist; researcher; lawyer; museum curator

CORE KNOWLEDGE

- Hitler became Chancellor in 1933 by winning the support of powerful political leaders (who believed they could control him) and many ordinary Germans - he promised to fix Germany's problems such as unemployment and national humiliation after the First World War. Hitler was a powerful speaker and used propaganda to create a strong personal image. The Nazis quickly destroyed democracy through key political movements - The Reichstag Fire allowed them to pass emergency laws that restricted freedoms. The Enabling Act gave Hitler the power to make laws without the parliament. The Night of the Long Knives was a violent purge of Hitler's rivals.
- The SS began as Hitler's bodyguard but grew in power under Himmler. They controlled the police and ran concentration camps (not same for Holocaust – make distinction) and enforced Nazi racial policies. The Gestapo were the secret police and responsible for spying on citizens (phone tapping, encouraging people to inform on one another). They arrested opponents without a fair trial and could send them to labour camps or prison – increasing fear for ordinary Germans. Repression became state-organised and systematic through the Gestapo and SS, not just street violence.
- The Nazis controlled what people saw, heard, and read through powerful propaganda. Joseph Goebbels led efforts to use newspapers, films, radio, posters, and schools to promote Nazi ideas. Propaganda made Hitler look like a hero and encouraged people to support Nazi goals, including racist beliefs. It also censored any opposing views to keep control over public opinion.
- The Nazis changed German culture by promoting art and music that showed their ideals, such as strength and racial purity. They banned and ridiculed modern art they called "degenerate" because it did not fit Nazi ideas. Writers, artists, and musicians who did not agree with the Nazis were silenced, forced to leave, or arrested. Culture became a tool for controlling what people thought.
- The Nazis reduced unemployment with public works (e.g., Autobahn) and rearmament, creating factory and industry jobs. Industry was geared towards self-sufficiency for war, supported by big companies like Volkswagen. Workers lost rights—unions were banned, strikes illegal, and the German Labour Front controlled them with propaganda and incentives. "Aryan" Germans received benefits, while Jews were excluded from jobs and their businesses closed from 1933.
- The Nazis believed women's main job was to have children and support their families. They encouraged women to leave jobs and focus on motherhood, offering rewards and incentives (money and medals) for having many "racially pure" children. However, when the war started, many women had to work in factories because so many men were fighting. The Nazis tried to control women's lives by pushing traditional roles (Kinder, Küche, Kirche)
- The Nazis controlled schools and youth groups to shape young people's beliefs. School lessons were changed to teach Nazi ideas about race, history, and fitness. Boys joined the Hitler Youth to prepare for military service, while girls joined the League of German Girls to learn about motherhood and loyalty. The aim was to make sure young people grew up supporting the Nazi regime.
- Although the Nazis used fear and violence to stop opposition, some people resisted. The White Rose (Sophie Scholl and her brother) as well as Edelweiss Prates showed resistance from German Youth. The July Plot was a failed attempt by army officers to kill Hitler and end the Nazi regime. Other resistance included secret groups and small acts of defiance, but opposition was limited and dangerous.

Journey of Knowledge- The Holocaust

Context and Introduction to Unit: This unit explores the lives of Jewish people in Europe, their inclusion in society, and the rise of Nazi anti-Semitism. Students study the shift from ghettos and labour camps to systematic extermination, including the Einsatzgruppen and the Final Solution. They analyse the roles of perpetrators, bystanders, and governments, including Britain, and consolidate learning with an end-of-topic assessment.

Prior knowledge (KS2) – Basic knowledge of WWII and the Nazis as extremists in Germany (KS3) - Year 9, Term 1: Study the Treaty of Versailles, economic hardship, and social impacts on Germany. Students learn how the Nazis exploited these struggles, Hitler's

The Bigger Picture:

Personal development opportunities: Studying changes in government: changes in political ideologies; social manipulation; critical awareness

Career links: Member of Parliament; civil servant; journalist; researcher; lawyer; museum curator

CORE KNOWLEDGE

- Jewish people had lived across Europe for over 2,000 years, working in many jobs and holding diverse beliefs, both religious and secular. They contributed to their communities, but treatment varied, often influenced by historical prejudice dating back to Roman times. In Germany before 1933, anti-Semitism existed mainly in right-wing groups, especially after WWI, but was not official government policy.
- Anti-Semitism is prejudice or hatred against Jewish people. In Nazi Germany, it escalated through laws like the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, based on beliefs that Jews were racially inferior. After Kristallnacht, Jews faced bans, lost jobs, homes, and businesses, and many emigrated. Those who remained endured increasing persecution, isolation, and fear, laying the groundwork for the Holocaust.
- During WWII, the German army quickly conquered much of Western and Northern Europe, including countries with large Jewish populations, such as Poland, which had over 2 million Jews. The Nazis saw these populations as a threat and forced Jews into ghettos, sealed areas of towns and cities that varied in size and were isolated from the rest of the population.
- At first, the Nazis used ghettos, forced labour, and mass shootings by the Einsatzgruppen to persecute Jews, but these methods were slow and inefficient. The Final Solution, organised at the Wannsee Conference in 1942 by Reinhard Heydrich, planned the systematic extermination of Europe's Jews. Nazis used euphemisms like "Final Solution" and "Special Treatment" to hide their brutality. Killing had already begun, but Wannsee organised it on a continental scale.
- The Einsatzgruppen carried out the "Holocaust by bullets," murdering around 1.2 million Jews. In concentration camps like Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor, Jews were transported in poor conditions, selected for forced labour or killed, tattooed with numbers, and lived in harsh conditions. Those unfit to work were sent to gas chambers, stripped of valuables, and bodies were burned.
- Perpetrators, Bystanders, Witnesses, Victims: Perpetrators (Nazi leaders, officers, ordinary Germans) carried out the crimes. Bystanders allowed events to continue. Witnesses (survivors, journalists, diplomats) recorded events and held perpetrators accountable. Victims (Jews, Roma, disabled, homosexuals) had no responsibility. Historians debate how much ordinary Germans had a moral choice under the Nazis.
- Before WWII, Britain accepted some Jewish refugees, including children through the Kindertransport (1938–1939). During the war, the government knew about the Holocaust but focused on winning the war first. Historians debate whether Britain did all it could or acted too slowly, prioritising the war over immediate rescue.

Journey of Knowledge- The Second World War

Context and Introduction to Unit: This unit explores the Second World War (1939–1945), which began when Germany invaded Poland. Appeasement had allowed Hitler to expand unchecked. Germany conquered Europe until events like Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain turned the tide. In 1941, Operation Barbarossa and Japan's expansion widened the war. D-Day in 1944 and atomic bombs in 1945 ended it.

Prior knowledge (KS2)- General Knowledge of Second World War – understanding of General chronology and key figures. (KS3) Term 1 Year 9: Students study the Treaty of Versailles and its economic and social impacts on Germany. They learn how the Nazis exploited these struggles to gain support, leading to Hitler's rise to power and preparations for war.

The Bigger Picture:

Personal development opportunities: Studying changes in government: changes in political ideologies; social manipulation; critical awareness

Career links: Member of Parliament; civil servant; journalist; researcher; lawyer; museum curator

CORE KNOWLEDGE

- When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, he followed an aggressive foreign policy aimed at expanding Germany's territory. Other European countries, still recovering from the Great Depression and the trauma of the First World War, were unwilling to confront him. This led to the policy of appeasement, where Britain and France allowed Hitler to take more land in hopes of avoiding another war. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain became closely associated with this policy after the Munich Agreement, in which he allowed Hitler to take the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia in return for a promise of peace. However, Hitler soon broke this promise by invading Poland in September 1939, triggering the start of the Second World War.
- Britain sent 400,000 soldiers to France as the British Expeditionary Force, but German Blitzkrieg tactics forced the Allies back to Dunkirk. Under Winston Churchill, an evacuation began using navy ships and over 850 small civilian boats. Most soldiers were rescued by the Royal Navy.
- The Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940 was one of the most important moments in British history. After the fall of France, Britain stood alone against Hitler's powerful military forces. Hitler planned to invade Britain under Operation Sealion, but first needed to destroy the Royal Air Force (RAF). The Luftwaffe launched massive air attacks on British airfields and cities, but the RAF, helped by radar, skilled pilots, and the advantage of fighting over home territory, successfully fought them off. The German invasion was cancelled, marking Hitler's first major defeat and proving that Nazi Germany could be stopped.
- On D-Day, 6 June 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord, the largest land, sea, and air invasion in history. Around 156,000 British, American, and Canadian troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. Using clever deception tactics, they surprised German forces. D-Day was a major turning point, showing Allied strength and the heavy human cost of liberation.
- On 22 June 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. This was the largest military invasion in history and was driven by Nazi beliefs in Lebensraum ("living space" in the East) and deep anti-Communism. At first, Germany's Blitzkrieg tactics brought rapid success as Soviet forces were taken by surprise. However, the German army was unprepared for the harsh Russian winter, the determined Soviet resistance, and the vast distances involved. Supply lines broke down, equipment froze, and morale dropped. The invasion turned into a disaster for Germany and became a major turning point in the Second World War.
- Japan sought to expand in Asia for resources like oil and rubber. It invaded China in 1937 and later French Indochina. Economic sanctions by the USA, Britain, and the Netherlands, including an oil embargo, threatened Japan. On 7 December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, bringing the USA into the war. Japan quickly captured territories like the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, and Indonesia, using surprise attacks and well-trained troops. The Allies responded with island-hopping, capturing key islands to move closer to Japan in the Pacific.
- In August 1945, President Truman ordered atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August) to avoid a full-scale invasion of Japan. Tens of thousands of civilians died instantly, and many more suffered long-term effects like radiation sickness, burns, and cancer. Supporters argue the bombings ended the war quickly, saved lives, and showed the USA's power, while critics highlight the targeting of civilians, ethical concerns, and evidence that Japan may have surrendered without the bombs. Alternatives such as continued blockades, firebombing, or demonstrating the weapon on an unpopulated area could have pressured Japan without mass deaths.