Crisis and Power

Trace how economic shocks and political choices shaped the Weimar Republic.

TOT.C.4.2 "Explain how events during the Weimar Republic led to the rise of Nazism (e.g., Ruhr Crisis, hyperinflation, Great Depression, Dawes Plan, failures of the Weimar Republic)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline crises and policy responses, circle their effects on people's lives or trust in government, and draw arrows between causes and effects that helped Nazi support grow.

How a Republic Lost Ground

1. In 1923, French and Belgian troops occupied Germany's Ruhr industrial region after Germany fell behind on World War I reparations. The Weimar government urged workers there to stop working in protest but continued paying them. To cover costs, it printed more money while production fell. Prices soared so quickly that wages could lose value before families spent them. People carrying stacks of banknotes could still struggle to buy bread. Hyperinflation wiped out many savings, especially those of the middle class. Although the crisis eased later that year, many Germans blamed the republic for failing to protect their livelihoods.

2. The Dawes Plan of 1924 reorganized Germany's reparations payments and helped bring in loans from the United States. Factories expanded, and daily life became more stable for many people. Yet much of this recovery depended on money borrowed from abroad. Weimar leaders also struggled to build lasting governing coalitions because parties disagreed sharply. These divisions did not mean Nazis were destined to take power. In the 1928 national election, the Nazi Party won only a small share of votes. Still, the republic's unstable politics and reliance on foreign loans left it exposed to another economic shock.

3. After the 1929 U.S. stock market crash, American lenders called in loans, and the Great Depression hit Germany hard. Businesses failed, unemployment rose, and coalition governments could not agree on effective responses. Nazi leaders promised jobs, national strength, and an end to political conflict; they also falsely blamed Jews and other groups for Germany's troubles. As hardship deepened, Nazi votes increased sharply, though the party never won a majority in a free national election. Conservative politicians believed they could control Hitler and persuaded President Paul von Hindenburg to appoint him chancellor in January 1933. Economic crisis and political misjudgment opened that door.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the government's response to the Ruhr occupation contribute to Germans losing trust in the republic?

2. How did the Dawes Plan help Germany recover while also leaving it vulnerable?

3. Why did the Great Depression make Nazi promises more appealing to some voters?

4. How did political choices help Hitler become chancellor even though the Nazis never won a majority in a free national election?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 100 word museum caption that connects at least three events or conditions from the passage in a chain of causes that helped the Nazis gain power. Include one sentence explaining why that outcome was not inevitable.

Crisis and Power

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline crises and policy responses, circle their effects on people's lives or trust in government, and draw arrows between causes and effects that helped Nazi support grow. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the government's response to the Ruhr occupation contribute to Germans losing trust in the republic?	**The government paid striking workers by printing more money while production fell. Hyperinflation destroyed savings, leading many Germans to blame the republic for failing to protect them.**
2	How did the Dawes Plan help Germany recover while also leaving it vulnerable?	**It reorganized reparations and brought in U.S. loans that supported recovery, but Germany became dependent on borrowed money that could be withdrawn.**
3	Why did the Great Depression make Nazi promises more appealing to some voters?	**As businesses failed and unemployment rose, divided coalition governments struggled to respond. Nazi promises of jobs, strength, and an end to political conflict attracted more votes.**
4	How did political choices help Hitler become chancellor even though the Nazis never won a majority in a free national election?	**Conservative politicians thought they could control Hitler and persuaded President Hindenburg to appoint him chancellor.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When Germany fell behind on reparations, French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr. The government's response helped fuel hyperinflation, destroying savings and trust in the republic. The Dawes Plan brought loans and a brief recovery, but dependence on American money left Germany vulnerable. During the Great Depression, lenders called in loans and unemployment rose. Divided coalition governments struggled to respond, while Nazis promised jobs and strength and gained votes. Their rise was not inevitable: in 1928, they had little support, and they never won a majority in a free national election. Conservative politicians then helped Hitler become chancellor.

Accept different causal chains if they accurately connect at least three passage events or conditions to increased Nazi support or Hitler's appointment. The caption must also explain why Nazi rule was not inevitable.