



LESSON PLAN: Weimar Republic and Rise of the Nazi Party

- 1** Begin this lesson by having students think about the word “democracy.” Using a web format, chart student responses to the sentence stem “Democracy is...” on the board or on chart paper.
- 2** Introduce the class to **Alfred Caro (bio)** and **Frank Shurman (bio)**; have students watch their clips of testimony; and follow with a discussion using the questions below.
 - In his testimony, how does Alfred Caro characterize the Weimar Republic?
 - What example does Frank Shurman share to illustrate the “insecure situation” that Germany was facing in the early 1920s? How does Frank indicate that Hitler took advantage of the situation?
 - Based on what you heard from Alfred and Frank, how confident do you think the German people were with the status of the government?
- 3** Distribute **The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazi Party** handout. After reading the text together, have a discussion using some or all of the following questions:
 - Do you think that the Nazis’ rise to power was inevitable based on what you read? Support your answer with examples from the text.
 - According to the text, why was the democracy of Germany so fragile? How does information in the text compare to what Alfred Caro and Frank Shurman shared in their testimonies?
 - Considering what was taking place in Germany at the time (e.g., unemployment), how might the German people have viewed what the Nazis were offering as positive steps toward solving the problems the country was facing? Identify one specific point from the Nazi Party’s platform that could have been perceived as solving the problems facing Germany, and explain why it might have been appealing.
 - Can you also see the dangers in what the Nazis offered? Identify a specific point in the Nazi Party’s platform that is particularly dangerous in your opinion, and explain why you chose that particular point.
 - What are the characteristics of a democracy?
 - Do you think that democracy, in general, is fragile? Explain your thinking.
 - How does democracy benefit the individual?
 - How does democracy benefit society?

- How can a democracy be affected by individuals and society?
- What are some ways that a democracy protects itself so as to avoid becoming a totalitarian state?

4. Show students the **maps of Europe before and after 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles** and have them identify how the borders of Europe changed after 1919. Have students refer back to the text and summarize the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles in addition to the change in borders.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 60-90 MINUTES