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# Adolf Hitler

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Adolf Hitler was the fourth child of a customs official and a farmer's daughter. He was born on April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, Austria, a small town across the river from Germany.

During high school, he did poorly in school and did not seek higher education. He said that he wanted to be an artist.

In 1907, Hitler moved to Vienna, Austria, where he planned to attend art school. However, he was not accepted into art school. Hitler remained in Vienna anyway.

In 1914, as World War I was beginning, Hitler moved to Germany and joined the German army. Army records show that he took on dangerous assignments in the army and was awarded medals for bravery.

As we know, Germany was defeated in World War I. Hitler, like many other Germans, was angry about the defeat and about the conditions imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. The Versailles Treaty said that Germany must pay reparations, or payments for the costs of the war, to other countries.

Hitler began to attend meetings of a group that agreed with his views - the German Workers Party - which eventually became the Nazi Party.

Soon, Hitler worked his way up to a leadership role in the party. He made speeches in which he promised the people what they wanted - jobs, a better economy, and a country that would once again become great. At first, he was not an especially good speaker, but he got better with practice. Soon, he knew how to get people to listen to him. He developed a loud, dramatic speaking style. Larger and larger crowds came to hear him attack the injustices against the German people. At that time, some people saw the Nazi swastika as a symbol of hope for their future. To them, the Nazi Party was the one way of getting back the respect that Germany had once had.

When the German economy declined even further during the depression of the 1930s, Hitler attracted even more people with his promises of jobs and financial security. His party became the largest political party in Germany, and by 1933, Hitler had become chancellor of Germany.

Once he was in charge, Hitler quickly began to take control of more and more aspects of German life. He placed his people in key government positions. He gained control of the police and the military.

He outlawed meetings by groups who were not sympathetic to the Nazi cause. He outlawed newspapers and other publications that could have criticized the Nazis.



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He had his enemies arrested or killed.

He also began his long-term plans - building concentration camps, imprisoning and killing Jews, and preparing for war.

Soon, Hitler's country was involved in another war, World War II.

At the end of the war, when he knew that Germany was about to be defeated, Hitler committed suicide. He had never been able to restore German pride in the nation as he had once hoped to do. Instead, the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II became his legacy.

Adolf Hitler

## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Adolf Hitler was born in Germany.
  - A. true
  - B. false
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Hitler wanted to be an art student.
  - A. true
  - B. false
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. At the time when the Nazi Party was growing, before World War II, nearly all Germans were afraid of Hitler.
  - A. false
  - B. true
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Hitler was killed in battle during World War II.
  - A. false
  - B. true
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Hitler was able to rise to power because he had much popular support.
  - A. true
  - B. false
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Hitler became \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. leader of the Nazi Party
  - B. chancellor of Germany
  - C. both A and B
  - D. neither A nor B

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Hitler's rise to power happened \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. after World War II
  - B. between the two world wars
  - C. in 1889
  - D. before World War I
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Hitler and many other Germans were angry about \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. the threat of another war
  - B. the terms of the Versailles Treaty
  - C. the slow growth of the Nazi Party
  - D. all of the above

☐ Many people still wonder why Hitler did the terrible things that he did, and how he became so powerful. There are many unanswered questions about his life. Write a list of questions that you would like to ask about Adolf Hitler.

☐ At the time Hitler was rising to power, he was a popular leader in his country, and yet he eventually was responsible for some of the most horrible violence in history. Do you think a leader like Hitler could ever win popular support again? Why or why not?

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