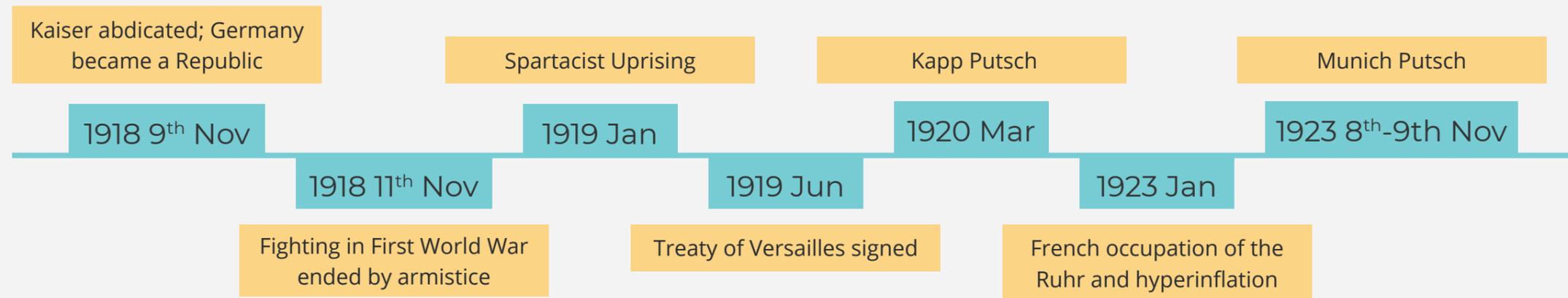


Key Question 1: What challenges were faced by the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923?

Timeline of events



FACT : In 1919 £1 was worth 35 German marks; by November 1923 it was worth 1,680,000,000,000 German marks!

Important concept

The **Weimar Republic** was the German government after the Kaiser had abdicated in November 1918 -

- It was democratically elected by a system of proportional representation (e.g. 10% of the vote = 10% of the seats).
- The President was elected for 7 years and selected a Chancellor to form the government.
- The Chancellor was the political leader most likely to get laws passed by the Reichstag.
- The Reichstag was made up of regularly elected representatives.
- Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution gave the President the power to make laws without consulting the Reichstag in an emergency.

IMPORTANT EVENTS : 1919-1920

1. Spartacists 1919:
 - led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg
 - aimed to make Germany a communist country like Russia
 - formed the German Communist Party (KPD).
 - called a general strike and took control of important buildings in Berlin
 - the Reichswehr (Army) and Freikorps (demobilised soldiers) ended the rebellion
 - Spartacist leaders were captured and executed
 - 3,000 people died in the uprising.
2. Kapp Putsch 1920:
 - the Berlin Freikorps refused to be disbanded after the Spartacist uprising
 - aimed to create right-wing government with Wolfgang Kapp as Chancellor
 - the Reichswehr (Army) in Berlin supported Kapp
 - the Weimar government moved out of Berlin
 - President Ebert called on workers to go on strike so the Putsch collapsed.

IMPORTANT EVENT : The Treaty of Versailles

- LAND:** Germany lost
- 13 per cent of its land
 - 6 million citizens
 - Alsace-Lorraine to France
 - Polish Corridor to Poland
 - Saarland to League of Nations control.
- MILITARY :** limited to
- 100,000 soldiers
 - no tanks, heavy guns, aircraft or submarines
 - ships of less than 10,000 tons
 - no troops in the Rhineland.
- FINANCE:** agreed to pay money as reparations of £6600 million
- FORBIDDEN:**
- uniting with Austria
 - joining the League of Nations.
- BLAME :** Article 231 (of 440)

Key words

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Kaiser | emperor |
| Abdication | when a monarch leaves the throne |
| Republic | a country without a King or a Queen |
| Armistice | an agreement to end war |
| President | runs the country |
| Chancellor | in charge of the government |
| Reichstag | German parliament, makes laws |
| Article 48 | president can ignore the Reichstag in an emergency |
| Constitution | rules about how a country is governed |
| Coalition | political parties working together in a government |

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IMPORTANT EVENTS : 1919-1920

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IMPORTANT EVENTS : 1923

1. Hyperinflation
 - By 1923 German currency was worthless.
 - Food prices rose which was good for farmers but people had to barter or poach for food.
 - Savers and pensioners lost all their money.
 - Businesses could not afford to pay their workers.
 - Extreme political groups like the Nazis blamed the government.
2. Munich Putsch 1923
 - Hitler and 600 Nazis forced Von Kahr (Bavarian chief minister) to support their takeover of the government in Berlin.
 - Von Kahr told the police who attacked and arrested the Nazis
 - 16 Nazis and 4 policemen were killed.
 - Hitler was put on trial and the Nazi Party was banned.

Reasons for important events

1. Why people opposed the Weimar Republic:
 - left wing opponents wanted Germany to become Communist
 - right wing opponents wanted a strong leader (fuhrer)
 - proportional representation meant Germany had coalition governments which some people thought were too weak.
2. Why people hated the Treaty of Versailles
Some believed that:
 - Germany was not the only country to blame for the war
 - Germany had not lost the war and the leaders of the Republic had betrayed Germany ("the stab in the back")
 - Germany was being forced to pay more than it could afford
 - The Allies wanted to humiliate Germany.
3. Why hyperinflation happened
 - The German government had to print more money to make reparation payments to France, Belgium and the UK.
 - The French needed the money to pay their American debts.
 - The French invaded the Ruhr in 1923 to take their payments directly from German factories and mines.
 - German workers refused to work.