**Weimar and Nazi Germany 20 mark Question arguments**

2

**Argument: Why was Hitler able to become leader of Germany?**

**Exemplar question:** How far do you agree with interpretation 2 about reasons for the growth in support of the Nazi Party in the years 1929-1932? Use both interpretations and your own knowledge of the historical context. (20)

**Interpretation 2.**

Interpretation 2: From Hitler 1889–1936 by I Kershaw, published in 1998.

There was nothing inevitable about Hitler becoming Chancellor of Germany in January 1933. Five years earlier the Nazis had been a small party in German politics with little support. Events such as the Wall Street Crash, which led to depression in Germany, brought increased support for the Nazis in the years 1929–32. Chance events, such as the depression and unemployment, played a much larger role than any actions of the Nazi leader himself in bringing Hitler to power.

**This interpretation suggests** that the Nazis gained support as a result of events which were outside their control, such as the depression. They were lucky

**Interpretation 1.**

Interpretation 1: From Weimar and Nazi Germany by J Hite and C Hinton, published in 2000.

Hitler himself was central to the success of the Nazis in the years 1929–32. He provided charismatic leadership with his powerful message to build a new Germany. He was a powerful speaker with his timing, expression and the content of his speeches impressing listeners. He was able to identify with their emotions and gave people hope. Along with Goebbels, he realised the importance of propaganda. He used propaganda to target the specific grievances of many Germans.

**This interpretation suggests** that Hitler was the main reason for the popularity of the Nazi party. It was Hitler’s skills as an orator (speaker) and the work of Goebbels, in charge of propaganda, which gained the Nazis their support

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| Arguments to support Interpretation two – it was chance factors which helped the Nazis – factors outside their control | Arguments to challenge interpretation two – it was the appeal of Hitler and the Nazis which led people to vote for them |
| * The Weimar government signed the Treaty of Versailles which made it unpopular from the very start – the stab in the back.
* During the 1920s the French had invaded the Ruhr and there had been hyperinflation, with many people losing all their savings. They did not trust the Weimar Government and wanted an alternative
* People were scared of the Communists and saw the Nazi party as the only party who could stop the Communists
* Unemployment had reached 6 million by 1933
* There was a depression in the countryside with farmers going out of business – 18 000 farms went bankrupt in 1932
* The German people were fed up with the politicians who were fighting amongst themselves but not dealing with the problems Germany was facing, such as the unemployment
* There was a break down of law and order in Germany with pitched battles in the street between the Communists and the fascists (left wing and right wing). It seemed that the Government was not in control.
 | * The Nazis provided soup kitchens to feed the unemployed – they stepped in where the government failed to respond
* Hitler and the Nazis promised to protect the Germans from the Communists. They had the support of self-employed Germans in particular who feared a Communist takeover
* The SA was seen by many Germans as being disciplined and bringing order in a time of chaos
* The Nazis used posters to target different audiences. They often had a clear, simple message e.g. ‘bread and work’.
* Rallies on a huge scale were used by the Nazis; giving the impression of being organised and disciplined.
* Hitler would speak at the rallies and all around Germany. He flew from place to place and was seen by millions of Germans – this was something new in politics
* The Nazis had their own newspapers e.g. Der Sturmer which was used to appeal to certain types of readers
* Many church goers supported the Nazis as they promised to make the family more important
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Other information:

Consider the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. Those factors which pushed people away from the Weimar Government – the policies of the Weimar and the pull factors – those policies which pulled people towards the Nazi party

Remember to use terms such as ‘economic’, ‘political’ and ‘social’ when discussing the reasons for the popularity of the Nazis