**Rise of Nazi Germany**

**Background:** Today we are beginning a new unit on World War II. A major focus of the unit will be on the Holocaust. Too often students have the impression that the Holocaust was inevitable (was bound to happen). You should recognize that the Holocaust took place because individuals, groups and nations made decisions to act or not to act. After World War I (WWI), a fragile democracy was set up in Germany called the Weimar Republic. This unstable democracy paved a path for the Nazi Party. However, German people did not have to vote for the Nazis in the important 1932 election. This was a choice made by the German citizens.

1. Read “The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazi Party”
2. Be prepared to discuss the following questions. Take notes as necessary.

* Do you think that the Nazis’ rise to power was inevitable based on what you read? Be prepared to explain your thinking.
* Why do you think the democracy of Germany was so fragile?

-Many Germans felt the republic should not have existed

-They felt it was forced upon them by the treaty of Versailles ending WWI

-Many Germans felt loyal to the Kaiser (king – German for Ceasar) who did not sign the Treaty of Versailles and was forced to resign

-Life during the democracy was tough because the debt Germany had to pay ruined the economy (wasn’t paid off until 2010)

* What did the Nazis offer the German people? How could what they proposed solve the problems facing Germany?
* Can you also see the dangers in what the Nazis offered? Be prepared to explain your thinking.
* What personal characteristics did a leader like Hitler offer the German people? How might that appeal to the people?

1. Watch “Weimar Republic and Rise of the Nazi Party”. As you watch, think of the following questions that we will discuss:

* How does Alfred Caro characterize the Weimar Republic in his testimony?
* What information does Frank Shurman share that gives insight into the “insecure situation” facing Germany at the time? 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?

1. Read “Dictators In Europe” from page 751 to 752. Choose a dictator and imagine that you are a newspaper reporter in the 1930s. Write an article that traces the rise of your dictator.
2. The actions of the dictators during the 1930s were violations of treaties their countries had signed. Imagine that you are a prosecuting attorney and create a list of charges being brought against these countries.