

Hyperinflation: A Supplemental Lesson for *Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler*

Pre-Directions

1. Make enough copies of pages 15 and 16 in the Teacher's Resource Book for *Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler* for everyone to have a copy in your class.
2. Remind students of the reading in Part 2 regarding Reparations and Hyperinflation.
3. Point out charts #1, #2, #3, and #4 with your students paying particular attention to the household spending chart. It might be a good idea to make a transparency of the charts so that you can emphasize pertinent information to your students in your opening remarks regarding the unit.
4. Set up a scenario for them to make economic decisions regarding their lives through this time of hyperinflation.
5. Give out something that your students can use as counters. (I always use food like popcorn or pretzels because it interests them, but you could use toothpicks, pencils, or anything like that. Tell them not to eat their counters!)

Scenario Directions

1. Use the information listed to allocate your funds (counters).
2. Complete the 1914 part of the scenario only.
Are they working class, middle class, or well off?
Can this family survive with these funds available to them? Why or why not?
What kinds of decisions are the family making in spending their money?
What items are important to them as evidenced by their spending habits?
What kind of picture do you see - can you describe this family and their interests?
3. Complete the 1921 part of the scenario. (This could be done as a homework assignment, a group project or presentation or as class discussion.)
Are they working class, middle class, or well off?
Can this family survive with these funds available to them? Why or why not?
What kinds of decisions are the family making in spending their money?
How are they making allocating funds? What priorities are apparent?
What items are important to them as evidenced by their spending habits?
What kind of picture do you see - can you describe this family and their interests?
These facts are applicable for both the 1914 and the 1921 scenarios
Your family consumes 3 loaves of bread a week
Your family consumes 10 pounds of sausage and 5 pounds of beef a week
Your family consumes 4 pounds of butter and 1 pound of sugar a week

Scenario Example: 1914

Imagine that you are a German living in Berlin in 1914. Allocate your funds (counters) to accommodate the following facts below. You make 150 marks a month to provide for a wife and two children.

Rent is 30 marks a month and your heating bill is usually 12 marks a month.

Clothing expenses usually amount to 24 marks a month.

Incidentals (doctors, dentists, schools, etc.) total 12 marks a month

Food expenses usually total 40 marks a month.

1914 Prices

Wheat bread costs 1 mark and rye bread costs $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mark

Sausage is $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mark a pound, while beef is 1 mark a pound

Butter is 4 pounds per mark and sugar is 5 pounds per mark.

Scenario Example: 1921

Imagine you are the same German living in Berlin in 1921. Allocate your funds (counters) to accommodate the following facts below. You make 1,000 marks a month to provide for a wife and two children.

Rent is 175 marks a month and your heating bill is usually 200 marks a month.

Clothing expenses usually amount to 150 marks a month.

Incidentals (doctors, dentists, schools, etc.) total 100 marks a month

Food expenses total 600 marks a month.

1921 Prices

Wheat bread costs 700 marks and rye bread costs 150 marks.

Sausage is 450 marks a pound, while beef is 800 marks a pound.

Butter is 600 marks a pound and sugar is 950 marks a pound.

This lesson plan was developed by Gloria Freels McElroy.