How did Hitler consolidate power?

LO: To examine the significance of the Reichstag Fire and Enabling Act
Who are these people?

Chancellor Heinrich Bruning

Kurt von Schleicher
Who are these people!? 

Franz Von Papen  

Paul von Hindenberg
What problems did Hitler face?

Despite being made chancellor in January 1933, Hitler’s position was by no means secure.

Click on Hindenburg, the Nazi flag or the Reichstag to find out more.

LO: To examine the significance of the Reichstag Fire and Enabling Act
When Hitler came to power, his authority was limited by parliament and President Hindenburg. The SA were also getting very powerful. Hitler was determined to eliminate these obstacles.

Over the next few slides you will see how he overcame each problem, and established complete political control over Germany.

LO: To examine the significance of the Reichstag Fire and Enabling Act
The Reichstag Fire

• On 27th February 1933, the Reichstag building was destroyed by fire.

• A young Dutch communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was caught on site. He confessed, was put on trial and executed. He was beheaded!

• Hitler declared that the fire was part of a communist conspiracy and persuaded Hindenburg to pass the ‘Reichstag Fire Decree’ giving Hitler Article 48 powers.
How did the Reichstag Fire help Hitler?

Hitler used the Reichstag fire to convince everyone that there was a real threat of a communist revolution. Hitler used the confusion and unease that people felt to consolidate his position.

1. **Emergency powers**: Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to pass the ‘Law for the Protection of People and State’ on 28\textsuperscript{th} Feb. This ended freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of the press.

2. **Election success**: Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to call fresh elections for the 5\textsuperscript{th} March. He used his new powers to make life difficult for non-Nazi candidates. Hitler increased his share of the vote and thereby gave his party more power in parliament.
Although the Nazis didn’t have a majority, the Nationalist Party joined forces with them. He also used emergency powers to prevent Communists from taking their seats. The 53 seats added to the Nazis’ meant Hitler now controlled over half of the total seats – the Reichstag would do as Hitler wanted.
LO: To examine the significance of the Reichstag Fire and Enabling Act
The Enabling Act

When the Reichstag met again after the election, Hitler proposed a new law:

**The Enabling Act**: This gave Hitler the right to make laws for 4 years without the consent of the Reichstag.

The Act was passed by **444 votes to 94**.

The **only** thing stopping Hitler from becoming a dictator was President Hindenburg.
The Enabling Act

Why was the Enabling Act passed so easily?
Click on the carrot or the stick.
What did Hitler do next?

- **Banned Trade Unions** – Hitler also made strikes illegal. If communists could control the trade unions, they could use strikes to cripple Hitler’s government.

- **Banned Political Parties** – In July 1933, Hitler decreed a new law called ‘Law Against the Establishment of Parties.’ Article 1 removed all opposition to the NSDAP.

- **Abolished Local Government** – In Jan 1934, Hitler abolished the Lander parliaments and each region would be ruled by a governor appointed by him.
1. In your own words summarise the events surrounding the Reichstag fire.

2. “The Reichstag fire was not started by the Nazis but was used by them to consolidate their power by introducing the Enabling Act”. Do you agree with this statement?

3. “Hindenburg was an old man who failed to appreciate the threat posed by making Hitler Chancellor. He proved this by granting Hitler the Enabling Act”. Do you agree with this statement?

Hitler's Rise to Power:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CFWH4Fhkak