

Read the following primary source and answer the questions below.

1. Circle the words "platitudes" and "aphorisms," then define them in the following space.
2. To what do the memo writers attribute Hitler's ability to sway an audience?
3. How would you describe the tone of the memo?
4. Based this memo, do you think the British officials were highly concerned about Hitler in 1937? Explain.

### PAIRING A PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCE

## 'Astonishing Sway'

By the mid-1930s, Adolf Hitler had become the dictator of Germany, outlawed all political parties except the Nazis, and instituted laws stripping Jews of their political rights. The world began to take notice. In the memo below, diplomats at the British embassy in Berlin describe for their government back in London the personal traits they'd observed in Hitler. Read the memo along with the *Upfront* article about Hitler's inflammatory book and fast rise to power. Then answer the questions that follow.

### Description of Adolf Hitler by the British Embassy in Berlin, January 1937

A teetotaler  
is a person  
who does not  
drink alcohol.

Hess and Brückner  
were longtime  
friends of Hitler's.  
In 1937, Hess was  
the deputy leader  
of the Nazi party.  
Brückner was a  
top-level assistant  
to Hitler.

Demagogic  
talent is skill  
in appealing to  
popular desires  
and prejudices  
instead of reason.

Hitler is a man of simple tastes, a vegetarian for health reasons, a non-smoker and **teetotaler**. Possessed of extraordinary vitality, four hours' sleep and twenty hours' work make up his normal working day. He is constantly on the move, usually by aeroplane or fast car. He manages to spend most week-ends at a little chalet in the Bavarian hills, the property of his sister. The profit on the enormous sales of *Mein Kampf* alone has made Hitler a rich man. He dislikes ceremony and is only at his ease among his intimates, **[Rudolf] Hess, [Wilhelm] Brückner**, [and company].

As a speaker, Hitler exercises astonishing sway over a German audience, presumably because public speaking is an unknown art in Germany. His speeches are practically repetitions of a few simple main theses, in the course of which platitudes are uttered with such extraordinary emphasis that an unsophisticated audience mistakes them for newly minted political aphorisms. He has sized up the German audience during his fifteen years of apprenticeship with astonishing accuracy. This and an undeniable political instinct have brought him to the top of the tree. None of his followers approach him in **demagogic** talent. He alone can rouse the crowd to that state of political frenzy which makes all argument futile.

In appearance Hitler is **unprepossessing**, but is said to possess a certain charm of manner. Beyond an unfortunate love affair, in the course of which the object of his choice, a Munich lady of good social standing, rejected [him], Hitler seems to have had little to do with the fair sex.

Hitler's book sold poorly when it was first released in 1925, but sales soared after Hitler became Germany's chancellor in 1933.

To call someone unprepossessing is to say he or she is not particularly attractive.