

History Makers

Benito Mussolini 1883–1945

Because Mussolini was of modest height, he usually chose a location for his speeches where he towered above the crowds—often a balcony high above a public square. He then roused audiences with his emotional speeches and theatrical gestures and body movements.

Vowing to lead Italy “back to her ways of ancient greatness,” Mussolini peppered his speeches with aggressive words such as *war* and *power*.

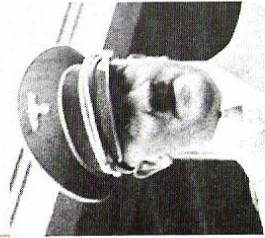


Adolf Hitler 1889–1945

Like Mussolini, Hitler could manipulate huge audiences with his fiery oratory. Making speeches was crucial to Hitler. He believed: “All great world-shaking events have

been brought about . . . by the spoken word!”

Because he appeared awkward and unimposing, Hitler rehearsed his speeches. Usually he began a speech in a normal voice. Suddenly, he spoke louder as his anger grew. His voice rose to a screech, and his hands flailed the air. Then he would stop, smooth his hair, and look quite calm.



ADOLF HITLER

Führer and Reich Chancellor

BEST KNOWN FOR: Murdering 11 million people, including 6 million Jews • Causing World War II, during which more than 50 million were killed • Overseeing creation of concentration and extermination camps

BORN: April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, Austria

FAMILY: Father, Alois, a customs officer, was 23 years older than his third wife and second cousin Klara, Hitler’s mother; met Eva Braun in 1930 but didn’t marry her until the day before he committed suicide

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Medium build, slender, tiny mustache, black hair, piercing dark eyes

EDUCATION: Didn’t graduate high school; sought admission to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts but was twice rejected

FIRST JOBS: Painting and selling postcards in Vienna; fighting in the German infantry in World War I

NICKNAMES: Wolff, Der Fuehrer

LEAST KNOWN FOR: His vegetarianism • Bathing several times a day • Regularly sleeping until noon • Bohemianism in his youth

FAVORITE PETS: Fuchsl, a small white terrier who joined him in the trenches in World War I; Blondi, German Shepherd who was his companion during World War II

QUOTE: “It is untrue that I, or anyone else in Germany, wanted the war in 1939. It was desired and instigated solely by those international state-men who were either of Jewish descent or worked for Jewish interests.”

DEATH: On April 30, 1945, with Russian troops just blocks from his bunker in Berlin, simultaneously shot himself in the head and bit an ampoule of cyanide. Eva Braun also committed suicide.