

AQA A-level History – UNIT 2N – Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia 1917-53

A STARTING POINT

Reading List: you are not expected to buy these books but if you can get hold a copy (try the local Library), you may find them useful setting the scene. Not all films are expected to be watched.

Books (Non-Fiction)

- Russian History: A very short introduction - *Geoffrey Hosking*
 - Discusses all aspects of Russian history; from the struggle by the state to control society to the transformation of the nation into a multi-ethnic empire, Russia's relations with the West, and the post-Soviet era.
- Stalin: A Biography - *Robert Service*
 - A full assessment of Stalin from his early years in Georgia, his youthful activism, his relationship with Lenin, his family, and his party members.
- The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction – *S.A Smith*
 - Looking at the main events and developments in Soviet Russia between 1917 – 1936.

Books (Fiction)

- The Road of Bones – *Anne Fine*
 - Based on life in Russia under Stalin, a fable about the nature of totalitarianism. It reveals how power corrupts and how quickly the oppressed can become the oppressors.
- Natasha's Will - *Joan Lingard*
 - A dangerous journey into exile during the Russian Revolution. When Natasha's grandfather is arrested in St Petersburg in 1917, her aristocratic family are forced to flee for their lives.
- Animal Farm - *George Orwell*
 - A well-known short story detailing the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Films (Remember these are made for drama purposes!)

- The Romanovs: An Imperial Family
 - A Russian film with subtitles, set in 1917 focussing on the last days of Tsar Nicholas II and the rest of the Romanov family.
- Enemy at the Gates
 - Set in 1942, in the Battle of Stalingrad, the main character becomes the poster boy for the Red Army due to his sniper skills.
- Goodbye Lenin
 - *Although not set within the time parameter of the topic, this comedy focuses on a young man who must protect his fragile Mother who has come out of a long coma from a fatal shock that Communism has ended.*
- The Death of Stalin
 - Comedy set after Stalin's death in 1953, it follows the power struggle for the next Soviet leader.

Key Pre-Knowledge Tasks

TASK 1: Fact File of Russia

Research the situation in modern day Russia including the following facts:

- Population
- Capital
- Flag
- Currency
- Border countries
- Border continents
- President
- Land area
- Ethnic make-up
- Religions
- Languages

TASK 2: Russian Map work

Find an 'A4 size' map of Russia. Locate and mark the following:

- St Petersburg
- Moscow
- Novgorod
- Arctic Ocean
- Siberian Plane and Peninsula
- Ural Mountains

TASK 3: Find the definitions for the following key words

Key Word	Definition
Serfdom	
Bourgeoisie	
Proletariat	
Nobility	
Zemstva	
Abdication	
Autocracy	
Russification	
Tsar	

Bureaucracy	
Duma	
Divine Right	
Cossacks	
Agricultural	
Liberalism	
Revolution	
Intelligentsia	
Emancipation	
Capitalism	
Bolshevik	
Menshevik	
CHEKA	
Communism	
Politburo	
Collectivisation	
Gulag	
Totalitarian	

TASK 4: 1905-1917: The downfall of the Romanovs

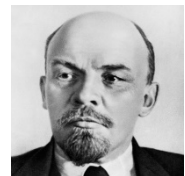
1. Read the following:
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/rising-discontent-in-russia/>
2. Complete the following table:

	Nicholas II	Rasputin
Hypothesis	<i>Nicholas II was responsible for his own downfall.</i>	<i>Rasputin was one of the 'most evil' men in history.</i>
Role/position (s) held <i>List as many as you can find</i>		
Why were they significant in Russian history?		
What do you think? <i>Agree or disagree with the hypothesis?</i>		

TASK 5: 1917-1924: The Bolshevik early years

Consider the questions below:

1. Why was Lenin so popular in 1917?
2. Name three events that happened between 1917 and 1924.
3. Did Lenin remain popular?



TASK 6: 1924-1934: Stalin comes to power

Create a fact file on Joseph Stalin.

Include: his early life, political beliefs before 1917, role in 1917 revolution, role in Bolshevik party.



TASK 7: Source-work skills

Using source A below, complete the table (you will need to create a version of this) to show ‘how valuable is this source in explaining the revolution of October 1917?’

A-LEVEL SOURCE ANALYSIS: YEAR ONE

No introduction needed!

<p>The question:</p> <p>The command words will be the same every time; how valuable is the source?</p> <p>What are the content words? What historical ‘event’ is this questioning asking you to focus on?</p>	<p>The value of a source, its...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance • Worth • Usefulness • Reliability
---	--

Overwhelmed by scary words and complex sentence structures? Read the text through once from start to finish.

Challenging vocabulary	Contextual knowledge	Argument/Content	Provenance	Tone/Emphasis
<p>Write down any words you don't understand here. Use a dictionary to find a definition for each word.</p>	<p>What do you already know which relates to the text? What can you learn from the text that you didn't know before?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Remember to link this throughout, questioning the sources' value.</i></p>	<p><i>Reason or set of reasons given in support of an idea.</i></p> <p>Linked to the ‘event’ the question is focusing on...</p> <p>What is it useful for telling/ not telling us?</p>	<p><i>Use the blurbs!</i></p> <p>Nature (what type of source is it)?</p> <p>Origin (who, when...)?</p> <p>Purpose (why was it produced)?</p>	<p><i>Special importance, value, or prominence given to something.</i></p> <p>Tone: positive/negative, for/ against...</p> <p>Emphasis:</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Examine are being particularly ‘hot’ in this!</i></p>

*Remember, for the A-level question (year one), a conclusion is needed assessing the MVS; which is the most valuable **and** why?*

Comparison of the sources...

Source A

From a letter by Lenin to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, September 1917.

The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the soviets, can and must take over state power. The majority of revolutionary elements in the two chief cities is large enough to gain power. Why must the Bolsheviks assume power at this very moment? Because the imminent surrender of Petrograd will reduce our chances a hundred times. The people are tired of the indecision and hesitancy of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. The present task is an armed uprising. It would be naive to wait until the Bolsheviks achieve a ‘formal’ majority in government. No revolution ever waits for that. History would not forgive us. The international situation is in our favour. By seizing power at once we shall win absolutely.