



**A BACKGROUND TO RUSSIA COURSE  
– THE NATURE OF DICTATORSHIP  
1917-53**

# CONTEXT

Apart from studying Russia briefly at GCSE during the Cold War, it is unlikely that you will have studied this country much before now.

Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a culturally rich with an obedient population to both the Russian Orthodox Church and the autocratic leader of the country – the Tsar.

At A Level we will be studying the last Tsar, Nicholas II and how the revolutions of 1917 came about, concluding in the establishment of the world's first communist state.

As with any major change in history there were both long and short term causes.

We will consider the shorter term causes in class next year, but to really understand Russia's circumstances at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is really helpful to know what was going on in the 50 years before.

You can investigate this in preparation for starting the A level course.

# EXPECTATIONS – GET AHEAD



- Reading around the subject – wider reading is always helpful. You will also be set pre-reading to help you to come to lessons prepared.
- Participation – discussion is an important part of A level History – it helps to consolidate and deepen your understanding of the issues you are studying
- Consolidation – note-taking, reading through notes, revision of key terms and individuals will all help you to be successful.

# FACTS ABOUT RUSSIA TRUE OR FALSE?



The Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood

# TRUE OR FALSE?

Trans-Siberian Railway  
is the longest railway in  
the world.

# TRUE

Trans-Siberian Railway is the longest railway in the world.

The 9200 km (or 5700 mile) railway departs from Moscow (in European Russia) and crosses into Asia. It then makes its way to the Pacific Ocean port of Vladivostok where it reaches the end of its incredible journey. The entire journey takes 152 hours and 27min to complete.

# TRUE OR FALSE?

Russia was the most advanced military power in the world by the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

# FALSE

Russia was the most advanced military power in the world by the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Russia would suffer a humiliating defeat against Britain, France and Ottoman Turkish in the Crimean War in 1856



# TRUE OR FALSE?

Russia covers 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the total land of our planet and neighbors more countries than any other country on earth.

# TRUE

Russia covers 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the total land of our planet and neighbors more countries than any other country on earth.

# TRUE OR FALSE?

One quarter of Russia is covered by trees, and its forests contain 22 percent of all the trees on earth.

# TRUE

One quarter of Russia is covered by trees, and its forests contain 22 percent of all the trees on earth.

# TRUE OR FALSE?

Russia was a world leader  
in terms of industrial  
development in the 19<sup>th</sup>  
century.

# FALSE

Russia was a world leader in terms of industrial development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Russia significantly lagged behind its European neighbours. While Germany, Britain and France had all experienced an industrial revolution, over 90% of Russia's population were peasants living in the countryside.

# TRUE OR FALSE?

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century  
51 million Russian  
inhabitants were peasant  
'serfs'

# TRUE

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century  
51 million Russian  
inhabitants were peasant  
serfs



# TRUE OF FALSE?

Russia was the first  
country to conquer  
space

# TRUE

Russia was the first  
country to conquer  
space

Russia launched the first satellite in space in 1957 and was the first country to orbit the earth with living creatures – two dogs, Belka and Strelka in 1960!

# TRUE OR FALSE?

The main religion in  
Russia is Islam

**FALSE**

The main religion in Russia is  
Islam

The main religion is Orthodox  
Christianity (75%)

# TRUE OR FALSE?

The Russian Royal Family embraced the idea of democracy

# FALSE

The Russian Royal family embraced the idea of democracy

The Tsar's clung on to their autocratic power until it was eventually taken from them

# TRUE OF FALSE?

Russia was made up of  
around 170 different  
nationalities by the late  
19<sup>th</sup> century

# TRUE

Russia was made up of  
around 170 different  
nationalities by the late  
19<sup>th</sup> century



# WHAT WAS RUSSIA LIKE?



- According to Churchill:  
'Russia was a riddle, wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.'  
The west knew very little about it.  
This documentary gives an insight into Russia.  
You can just watch the first 3 minutes or watch the whole thing!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEmUlf2uAk>

# **TASK 1: RESEARCH: WHAT WAS RUSSIA LIKE BY THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY?**

**SPEND 2  
LESSONS  
ON THIS**

Carry out research to identify characteristics of Russia during the nineteenth century. Find facts and descriptions of Russia at this time to create an overview of the nature of the country.

Topic 1: Economy 19th Century

Topic 2: Geography 19th Century

Topic 3: Politics 19th Century

Topic 4: Society/Culture 19th Century

Create either a presentation, academic poster or written table / mind map