

**A-Level History**  
**Unit 2N – Russia in Revolution**  
**Bridging the gap – Year 11 to A-Level**



**Contents:**

Page 1	Introduction and map of Russia
Page 2	Glossary and Key Terms
Page 3 + 4	Geographical Problems and Political Problems of 19 <sup>th</sup> + 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Russia
Pages 5 – 10	Tsar Alexander II + Tsar Alexander III
Page 11	Video Questions
Pages 12 – 14	Key Event before 1917 – The 1905 ‘Revolution’
Pages 15 + 16	Animal Farm Questions
Page 17	Additional <u>Optional</u> Prep Work – Read, Watch, Listen, Research.

Welcome to A-Level History! Over the next two years you will study two units, one is on Stuart Britain, and this unit (AQA Unit 2N) is on Russian History.

A famous joke from Soviet Russia was 'Russia's future is certain; it is its past that is unpredictable'. As different rulers have taken charge of Russia, they often re-write History to suit their needs. Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is full of controversy, revolution and fascinating stories; however, it is a complicated topic to study. What students struggle the most with is familiarity with a country they often know very little about.

To really excel when studying Russian history, you must know the context of Russia. That means you understand the history, not just remember the facts. Being able to take a quote, and then get into the Russian mindset, and then using that historical context - thinking about what has happened before this quote and what follows it to truly understand the quote - that is what helps you to get top marks.

The good news is that the GCSEs you studied were designed to feed into the A-Level, lots of the techniques and skills you were taught at GCSE will help you at A-Level.

Just as it was at GCSE, the biggest difference that you can make to your final grade is through your work outside the classroom. Independent study and reading will boost your knowledge and help you to understand and succeed at A-Level History. As you read more you develop your vocabulary, your ability to express yourself in answers and your thinking skills. All of this is excellent preparation for exams, and further education.

We have a unique opportunity this year, often we cannot teach everything we would like to about Russian history. Most students must go from very little knowledge on Russia, to knowledge needed to flourish in an A-Level exam in two years. This means lots of background knowledge that could help just cannot fit into this timespan. All the activities and information in this pack allow us a fantastic chance to get to grips with Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and understand the course better, before it even starts!

**Below is a simple map of Russia, find the following places and label them on your map:**

St Petersburg, Siberia, Kronstadt, Murmansk, Vladivostok, Ural Mountains, Trans-Siberia railway (plot the path of the railway)



Below are some key words and their definitions – you will need to know these so take time to learn them.

Keyword	Definition	Keyword	Definition
<b>Tsar</b>	An emperor of Russia before 1917	<b>Soviet</b>	An elected council
<b>Autocracy</b>	When one person rules and has no limits to their power	<b>Proletariat</b>	Word used to refer to the working-class people
<b>Divine right</b>	This refers to the belief that a monarch is appointed by God and only answerable to God	<b>Communism</b>	A belief in society without different social classes, where all property and business is owned by the community and shared equally
<b>Okhrana</b>	The secret police force for the Russian Empire	<b>Slav</b>	Group of people in eastern, southern eastern and central Europe. (Russians, Serbs, Croats, Slavonians, Czechs etc)
<b>Bolshevik</b>	Russian political party – believed in Communism	<b>Plan-Slavism</b>	A belief that Slav races should be united – and look to Russia as the supreme Slav country for leadership
<b>Zemstva</b>	Elected councils responsible for local districts	<b>Cossacks</b>	People of Ukraine and Southern Russia, known for their military skill, who formed military units and were very loyal to the Tsar
<b>Constitution</b>	The set of laws by which a country is governed	<b>Kronstadt naval base</b>	The headquarters of the Russian Baltic Fleet
<b>Orthodox Church</b>	Eastern Orthodox Church with Moscow as its spiritual capital	<b>Serf</b>	Member of a low social class (commonly farm workers)

# Russia In Revolution - The Background 1881-1914

Read through this webpage first, then read the information below and use this to complete this task

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z6rjy9q/revision/1>

## Russian Geography

- 8 million sq miles: 2 x size Europe and 1/6<sup>th</sup> world surface
- Mainly rural – 11:1 village to town ratio
- Natural resources: timber, coal, oil, gold, precious minerals/metals
- Most of Russia inhospitable
- North and East had many barren lands
- Beyond the Ural Mountains, Russia was a wild place with frontier settlements.
- Transport and communication across the empire poor and difficult
- ¾ population lived within European Russia (west of Urals) – this is on less than ¼ of the country's total land mass!

## Nationalities

- 130 million population - Less than ½ population of the empire were Russian
- Nationalities: Romanian, Polish, Finns, Jews, Georgians etc.
- Religions: Slav/Orthodox (state religion), Muslim, Catholic, Jewish
- Each had own customs, culture, language and sometimes religion
- Many resented Russian control (Tsar's often introduced policies which discriminated against nationalities)

## Towns and cities

- St Petersburg capital
- The Tsar and his Ministers ruled the country from there. (pop. 500,000 = at that time this was about the same as Liverpool's, London was 3.5 million!)
- Towns were mainly small market centres or admin centres

## Agriculture

- Only 25% of Russia was really good farmland.
- Most of this was in the South and West of the country, especially in the Ukraine, the "Bread basket" of Russia.
- The rest of Russia was either desert, arctic tundra, or taiga (woods).
- 85% or 4 out of 5 Russians were peasants. They had a hard life and there was often starvation and disease.

## Peasants

- Peasants had been emancipated (freed) in 1861 – no long had to live on mirs (communes).
- Hoped by freeing them they would become either entrepreneurial private farmers or become mobile workers who would go to work in cities.
- Did not work as hoped; entrepreneurial class did not emerge and most continued strip method of farming on their allotted strip using wooden tools, and lived primitive lifestyles. Still had to ask village elders for permission to leave.
- They were generally illiterate, deeply religious, superstitious and hostile to change
- If peasants protested (for example during times of famine), the Tsar would use his feared Cossack soldiers against them.

## Middle Class and Intelligentsia

- Based in towns and cities
- Almost non-existent class – had grown during time of Alexander II thanks to university and education reforms. Generally, more educated - Doctors, lawyers, teachers

## Nobility

- Made up 10% of population yet owned 75% of Russia's wealth
- Held positions in government, army, provincial governors or administration
- Not obliged to obey Tsar but generally did
- Landowners so controlled the mirs (peasant councils)

**TASK: For each category, identify why this would make Russia difficult to rule effectively:**

As you can see the size and geography of Russia made it extremely hard for the rulers (the Tsar's). However, an even bigger problem than Geography may have been the way Russia was being ruled. Below is Russia's political system for most of her History. At the top is the Tsar, the leader of Russia and her empire. The Tsar's lived in fabulous wealth compared to everyone else in Russia.

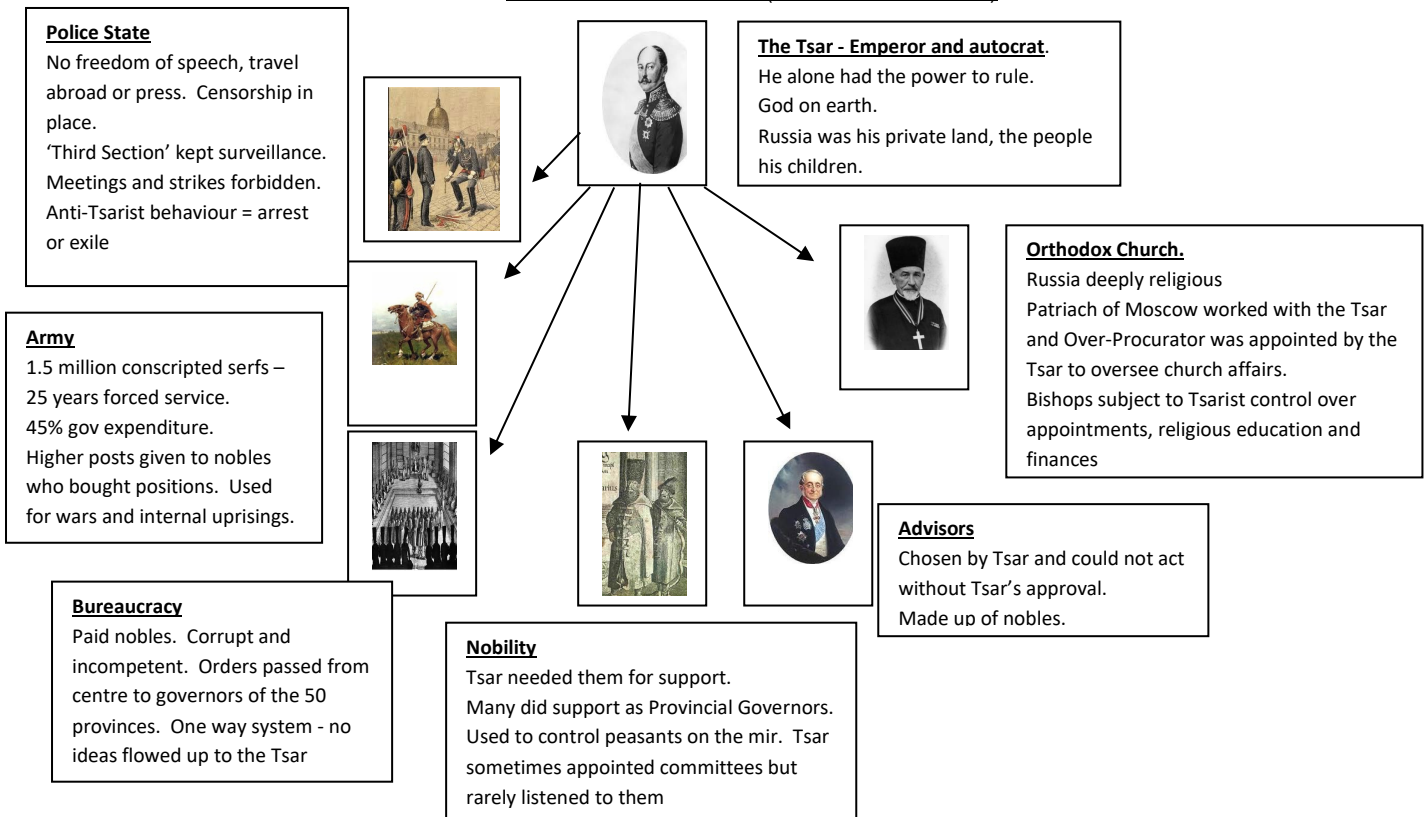
To truly understand the problems with how Russia was ruled, try to picture the gap between the peasants (80% of Russia) and the Tsars and the equally rich Nobility (10%) bear in mind these facts. Whilst millions of peasants were serfs (not much better than slaves) and often died in millions during famines, the Romanov royal family owned about 70% of Russia's land, putting them in control about one-tenth of the world's total land! The Romanovs were worth between \$200 and 300 billion by today's standards (that's \$100 billion more than Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates combined!) Tsar Nicholas's annual salary was about \$20 million, the world-famous Faberge eggs that he bought as gifts for his wife ran into the tens of millions and contained thousands of diamonds per sculpture.

This wasn't just the royal family though, the nobility who supported the Tsar were just as rich. Before we look at the system of government that rules Russia - Look at this guided tour of one of their palaces – This is Prince Yusupov's palace – he was the 2<sup>nd</sup> richest family in Russia. At one point his family may have been richer than the royal family. His family owned over 50 palaces, and stories go that, Prince Yusopov was often late for dinner as he couldn't remember which dining room dinner was being served in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArHOUVfSD90>

## How was Russia governed before 1917?

### AUTOCRACY IN ACTION (TOP-DOWN SYSTEM)



**TASK: Now looking at the government structure, and the difference in wealth seen in the video, explain why this would also make Russia difficult to rule effectively:**

**Task 1:** Below there is information on Tsar Alexander II. Read the information on Tsar Alexander II.

**Task 2:** As you read the information on the Tsar, on the left of each paragraph give a summary title for the paragraph and on the right of each paragraph pick out two key points.

**Task 3:** After you have read the information on Alexander II, fill out the 'report card' for Alexander II on page 4

Heading for each  
paragraph

### Alexander II – 'The Liberator'

Two key points  
from each  
paragraph

Alexander became Tsar at age 36, following the death of his father in February 1855, at the height of the Crimean War. The war had revealed Russia's glaring backwardness in comparison with more advanced nations like England and France. It was under the impact of this widespread urge that the tsar embarked upon a series of reforms designed to modernise Russia into line with the more advanced Western countries. Russia was mostly made up of serfs and the lower class of society, yet they were ruled by the top of society who made up very little of the population. This caused anger and frustration among many.

One of the first things Alexander II did was help improve communications in Russia. Russia at the time had only one railway line of importance which linked the two capitals St Petersburg and Moscow. By the time he died, there were more than 20,000km more of railway line. The new railway construction meant that economic life improved and the movement of grain improved across Russia.

Another huge step towards modernisation that Alexander made was the abolition of serfdom. This was opposed by many land-owning elites who did not believe in freeing those who worked for them. However, Alexander signed the Emancipation Act in 1861 which consequently freed tens of millions of serfs. Some were given allotments of land, however, the ultimate object of creating a new social class failed and was not achieved by Alexander.

Alexander was also known for the changes he made to the judicial system. This included better trained independent judges, trial by jury and Justices of the Peace who took over powers which were previously held by the rich and powerful.

Alexander also brought in a new form of local government – Zemstva – town and district councils which had some power to manage their own affairs. The councils were elected but the vote was heavily weighted in favour of nobles/rich and powerful.

He reformed education, with primary and secondary schools open to a wider section of the population and gave greater independence to the universities.

Alexander was known for the reforms he made and the freedoms he tried to give many Russian people and how many people he liberated. However, he still faced opposition – many felt his reforms did not go far enough and he often faced criticism and unrest. This mounted to a peak height where he was assassinated in 1881.

## Alexander II 'The Liberator'

Brief background on what Alexander II did in his time as Tsar and why he got his nickname:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Strengths as Tsar:

Weaknesses as Tsar:

Overall rating as Tsar and explanation: /10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Task 1:** Below there is information on Tsar Alexander III. Read the information on Tsar Alexander II.

**Task 2:** As you read the information on the Tsar, on the left of each paragraph give a summary title for the paragraph and on the right of each paragraph pick out two key points.

**Task 3:** After you have read the information on Alexander III, fill out the 'report card' for Alexander II on page 4

Heading for each  
paragraph

Alexander III – 'The Peacemaker'

Two key points  
from each  
paragraph

Alexander III represented the very image of an autocrat. He was 6ft 4inches tall, broad shouldered and extremely strong. His favourite trick was to unbend horseshoes to amuse his children. When he came to the throne, he made it clear he wanted to rule by autocracy without anyone telling him different. In April 1881, in The Manifesto on Unshakeable Autocracy, he announced that the Tsar would 'rule with faith in the strength and truth of autocratic power'.

He gave the impression of immense power and in this sense fulfilled the role of the autocrat perfectly.

Unfortunately, he was limited in intellect and advised by a divided collection of ministers. During his time as Tsar, Russia never entered a major war and therefore seen as the 'Peacemaker'.

Alexander III rejected his father's (Alexander II) reforms and thought they were pushing Russia on the wrong road and were acting as a revolution. Alexander III thought these decisions made by his father were the reason for his assassination. He exclaimed that would not grant Russia a constitution for anything on earth.

Alexander III set out to undo all his father's hard work in freeing the people of Russia. In 1881 in The Statute of State Security he stopped gatherings of more than 12 people, allowed the government to prosecute anyone for political crimes, introduced emergency police rule, set up courts outside the legal system and closed schools, universities and newspapers.

In 1890, the independence of the Zemstva was reduced and control was established through the government. The number of people eligible to vote was cut drastically (for example, in Moscow and St Petersburg only 0.7% of the population could vote.

Justices of the Peace were abolished and replaced by Land Captains. These were members of the gentry chosen to control the Peasants and were deeply resented.

However, progress was made in the economy. Railway expansion was encouraged as it promoted economic stimulus and tariff protection was introduced to help several industries grow. Witte was appointed finance minister in 1892 and helped create an industrial boom. He created this by nearly doubling the amount of railway tracks, negotiated huge loans with other countries, raised

## Alexander III 'The Peacemaker'

Brief background on what Alexander III did in his time as Tsar and why he got his nickname:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Strengths as Tsar:

Weaknesses as Tsar:

Overall rating as Tsar and explanation: /10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## KEY EVENT BEFORE 1917 – THE 1905 ‘REVOLUTION’

A key question that needs to be considered when we study the February Revolution is not just why it happened, but also why did it happen WHEN it happened. A big part of understanding why the revolution happened in 1917 we need to think about why it did not happen in 1905.

### RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-06

#### Events

##### War on Sea

- ❑ Dec 1904 – Russia’s Port Arthur surrendered
  - ❑ Tsu-shima (May 1905). ½ Russian Navy was completely annihilated and 12,600 men were lost
- The Japanese were largely unscathed by the clash



War on Land: Mukden Feb 1905: major battle. After three weeks of intensive fighting, 85,000 Russians and 41,000 Japanese were dead or wounded. Russians were forced to pull back.

##### Consequences: - How did it contribute to attempted revolution of 1905?

- Series of defeats and long siege turned initial surge of patriotism in 1904 into hostility and opposition to government; lost against “inferior” nation (smaller etc.)
- Highlights problems of autocracy – weaknesses of Tsar Nicholas II highlighted as well as the problems of a lack of democratically elected government. All the reasons for losses can be linked back to the failings of the Tsar and government.
- Created a genuine opposition movement –stimulates revolution and renews cries for a National Assembly (democratically elected government body)

### SPARK EVENT –BLOOD SUNDAY 1905

Bloody Sunday 1905

**A priest - Father George Gapon led a peaceful march to present a petition to the Tsar. Their demands:**

- (1) An 8-hour day and freedom to organize trade unions.
- (2) Improved working conditions, free medical aid, higher wages for women workers.
- (3) Elections to be held for a constituent assembly by universal, equal and secret suffrage.
- (4) Freedom of speech, press, association and religion.
- (5) An end to the war with Japan.



The march set off peacefully on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January 1905. The crowd was believed to have been between 50,000 and 100,000 and included women and children. As the protest neared the Winter Palace, troops were ordered to charge by cavalry and the troops opened fire. It is estimated that up to 500 were wounded and 200 dead.

##### WHAT HAPPENED POST BLOODY SUNDAY?

### The granting of concessions (compromises) - the October Manifesto (Oct 1905)

- October Manifesto - Calmed Liberals – promise of creation of Duma (Parliament). Promised range of civil rights, freedom of speech, legalising of trade unions. Their appetite for change was satisfied (temporarily at least). They wanted to regain control of the direction of the revolution and this helped them to do this.
- October Manifesto - Promise of trade union legalisation bought off less radical workers. This meant that workers right should be protected.
- Divide and conquer – now the Liberals were bought off, that was one less group to oppose the Tsar and began to reduce threat of remaining groups

### Use of repression to crush opposition

- Due to concessions like October Manifesto, by Nov-Dec 1905 the workers were the only major group still opposing the Tsar which made rebellions easier to crush.
- The Tsar's supporters - the 'Black Hundreds' were ordered to: 'fire no blanks, and spare no bullets' in forcing workers back into factories
- Black Hundreds - rounded up and whipped peasants, attacked revolutionaries leading to 300 arrested incl. students and nationalist groups such as Poles and Jews
- Army – some troops had been recalled from Russo-Japanese war to help crush opposition. Used against Dec 1905 strikers = 1000 dead.

### Fundamental Laws 1906 and Duma

- A year later that Tsar issues the Fundamental Laws – these undo compromises given in October Manifesto
- Fundamental Laws introduced as a limit on October Manifesto – states no law can come into force with Tsar's approval = disables some of powers of Duma (Parliament)
- During the course of the Dumas 1906-1914, Tsar manages to increasingly paralyse the powers of the Duma and limit how far they can challenge his rule. He is able to dissolve them if they pose any threat, next he alters electoral laws in time for 3<sup>rd</sup> Duma which increases nobility numbers elected and so they begin to approve more and more of the Tsar's reforms. The Duma gradually becomes useless as it only contains Tsar's supporters.

### Why did the 1905 Revolution 'fail' ?

- Readiness of the Liberals and Peasants to accept the government's political and economic bribes showed that neither of these groups were genuinely ready for revolution.
- Army, despite disasters in war, remained largely loyal and returned home to crush soviets.
- Was this ever genuinely an attempt at revolution or just a protest against problems that, when addressed by the Tsar (or so he made it seem), fizzled out? All they wanted was compromises and they got them so it finished there?



### **THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO 1905 (CREATED TO TRY TO END 1905 ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION)**

**To end the revolution attempt in 1905, Nicholas II agrees to changes including a Duma (parliament) = October Manifesto 1905**

**However, he then issues the Fundamental Laws (1906) which brought back Tsarist control, limiting their power = unhappiness with Tsar grows**

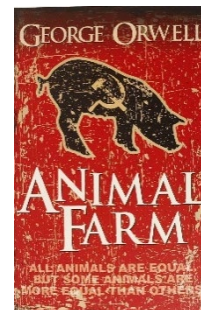
### Why did Nicholas II agree to issue the October Manifesto?

1. Calm the Liberals – get them onside and neutralise them as opposition
2. Buy off the peasantry (promised end to mortgage repayments)
3. Calm some of the less radical workers
4. Minimise opposition from the press
5. Undermine support for revolutionary groups e.g. Bolsheviks

<p>Summarise the Russo-Japanese War</p>	
<p>What happened during Bloody Sunday and why did it happen?</p>	
<p>Describe the key features of the October Manifesto – include what it was promising and what it was not</p>	
<p>Why did the 1905 Revolution fail?  How did the Tsar reestablish control?</p>	

As your final task to prepare for the course I would like you to read a story book!

Animal Farm by George Orwell is seen as a wonderful metaphor for Russian history during this period. The story is about a farm where the animals rise up and take control - over time they begin to question whether their new leaders are acting in their interests or have they become similar to the leaders they had risen up against in the past.



This book is a short story, and very cheap on Amazon – around £3. It is a great way of wrapping your head round the whole course in a very easy to read story style. It is also a story that helps you think about society and morality and so will help if you also study English Literature, RE, or Psychology to name a few. If you are struggling to get hold of a copy, then please email Mr. Murray and he has a few copies he can send you.

As you read please answer the questions below, each are designed to get you think about the themes and meaning of the book. I've also put the characters below (it was turned into an animated film in the 90s) so you can keep a visual reminder of them as you read.

<p><b><u>Chapter 1</u></b> How does Old Major describe life on the farm?</p> <p>What makes life so unfair for the animals, according to Old Major?</p>	<p><b><u>Chapter 2</u></b> What does SugarCandy Mountain represent?</p> <p>What are the rules of the farm?</p>
<p><b><u>Chapter 3</u></b> What is the point of the Sunday meetings and flag ceremony?</p> <p>How are the pigs beginning to take advantage of their status?</p>	<p><b><u>Chapter 4</u></b> What are the stories spread by Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick?</p> <p>Who organizes the fight against Mr. Jones?</p>
<p><b><u>Chapter 5</u></b> What are the positives and negatives of Squealer, Snowball and Napoleon?</p> <p>How does Napoleon win the debate on the windmill?</p> <p>How does Napoleon re-write History to suit the present?</p>	<p><b><u>Chapter 6</u></b> How has the interaction between pigs and other animals changed?</p> <p>How have the rules painted on the barn changed?</p> <p>What role does Snowball play in Animal Farm?</p>



<p><b>Chapter 7</b> What is Snowball blamed for on Animal Farm?</p> <p>What is odd about the confessions made by the animals?</p>	<p><b>Chapter 8</b> What are the problems with Foxwood and Pinchfield farms?</p> <p>How does war with the other farms help Napoleon?</p>
<p><b>Chapter 9</b> Why does Napoleon want the songs and the parades after the windmill is destroyed, what is their purpose?</p> <p>What gives Boxer the strength to keep going despite all the setbacks – what is his dream for the future?</p>	<p><b>Chapter 10</b> How has Napoleon gained control of the animals' thoughts and memories by Chapter 10?</p> <p>How has the meaning of 'equal' changed since Old Major mentioned it at the start of the book?</p> <p>What is meant by the last line where the animals are comparing the pigs like Napoleon, and the humans?</p>



Snowball



Napoleon



Squealer



Mr Jones



Boxer



Old Major



Benjamin



Clover



Muriel

# Read Watch Listen Research

A great way to understand the context of the Russian people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is to learn more about them in a variety of ways not simply learning their History from textbooks. Therefore, on top of the activities we have asked you to complete, you **could** pick some of these resources and read, watch or listen to them to help you.

<u>READ</u>	<u>WATCH</u>
<p><b>1984 – George Orwell</b> – Another dystopian fiction book like Animal Farm but, based more closely on Stalin or other dictator’s rule. Big focus on controlling thought and memory to control society.</p> <p><b>Russia’s 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Journey in 100 stories – Michael Khodarkovsky</b> - A history of Russia through lots of personal stories.</p> <p><b>A Gentleman in Moscow – Amor Knowles</b> – A fictional book about a former Duke who, after the Revolution must live in a single hotel room. Great for showing how the February and October Revolutions changed society so much in Russia</p>	<p><b>Dr. Zhivago</b> – Absolute classic film charting Dr. Zhivago’s life through WW1, the revolutions and beyond. Obviously dated but a classic and spans the full period.</p> <p><b>Animal Farm</b> – As mentioned it was turned into a cartoon in the 90’s. Available on YouTube. Please try read the book instead of watching the film, it’s so much better, but if you must - the film is on YouTube.</p> <p><b>Russia with Simon Reeve – Available on BBC IPlayer.</b> Episode 3 is the only one that is directly linked to the course, but it gives a good insight into the Russian mindset and how that was created after the revolution.</p>
<u>LISTEN</u>	<u>RESEARCH</u>
<p><b>GCSEPOD</b> – Oh yes, just when you thought you were done with it forever! If you go to the history page and go to EITHER ‘Russia 1894-1945: From Tsarism to Communism’ or go to ‘Supplementary Resources’ there are a number of sections called ‘SR Russia. Avoid material related to Stalin as he isn’t studied until Y13, focus on Lenin and Russia pre-1914</p> <p><b>History Extra podcast</b> – there are podcast on Russian Tsars (everything you need to know) and Russian Revolution (everything you need to know)</p> <p><b>Real Dictators podcast</b> – There is a 4 part series of podcasts on Vladimir Lenin, the first episode was released 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 2022 so scroll down to find these.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.orlandofiges.info/index.php">http://www.orlandofiges.info/index.php</a> Orlando Figes is THE premier historian on the Russian Revolution. Here he goes through this in detail using his book frequently. You only really need to look at Section 1 as our course begins with Section 2.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zp94jxs">https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zp94jxs</a> The standard website for GCSE revision. You only need to look at the first two sections as our course begins with the topics covered in Section 3</p>

**Enjoy your time before A-Levels start, but also please try use this time wisely! Everyone discusses the jump between GCSE and A-Level being a difficult one. If you get into the habit of doing nothing, lying in bed until 3pm then that transition into 6<sup>th</sup> Form will be so much harder.**

**If you have any problems with any of this work, or if any of it confuses you and you need to discuss it – contact Mr. Murray or Miss Humphreys on Microsoft Teams or by email**