

Option 2B Russia 1914–39

All key topics must be taught

Key Topic 1 The Tsarist regime and its collapse 1914–17

- The nature of Tsarist rule.
- The impact of the First World War.
- The fall of the Tsar.

Amplification of content

Russia in 1914, the weaknesses of Nicholas II, discontent among peasants and town workers and the growth of opposition, Rasputin.

Military defeat, Tannenberg, Masurian Lakes, the appointment of the Tsar as commander in chief, food shortages, inflation, transport problems and political upheaval.

The events in Petrograd in February 1917, the mutiny in the army. The Petrograd Soviet. The Tsar's absence and abdication.

Key Topic 2 Bolshevik takeover and consolidation 1917–24

- The Provisional Government.
- Imposing Bolshevik control 1917–21.
- Creating a new society 1918–24.

Amplification of content

The establishment of the Provisional Government, its weaknesses and failures. The significance of the Kornilov Revolt. Lenin's return and activities and the growth in support for the Bolshevik Party.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in the October/November Revolution, reasons for their success and the roles of Trotsky and Lenin. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the 'Red Terror'; the reasons for, events and effects of, the Civil War 1918–22, and reasons for Bolshevik victory.

The early Bolshevik decrees, the Constituent Assembly, War Communism and its unpopularity, the Kronstadt Mutiny and the New Economic Policy.

Key Topic 3 The nature of Stalin's dictatorship 1924–39

- The struggle for power 1924–28.
- The use of terror in the 1930s.
- Propaganda and censorship.

Amplification of content

Stalin's strengths and the weaknesses and mistakes of his rivals, especially Trotsky, and how Stalin gradually removed these rivals.

The use of terror, especially the reasons for, nature of, and consequences of the purges, the importance of the show trials and the work of the secret police.

The cult of Stalin, official culture and control of education and the 1936 Constitution.

Key Topic 4 Economic and social changes 1928–39

- Collectivisation.
- Industrialisation.
- Life in the Soviet Union.

Amplification of content

Stalin's reasons for change in agriculture, the organisation of collectives, mechanisation, widespread opposition and the attack on the kulaks. The successes and failures of collectivisation.

Stalin's motives for rapid industrialisation, Gosplan, Five-Year Plans, the Stakhanovite movement and the achievements of industrialisation.

Living and working conditions, the differing experiences of social groups, ethnic minorities and the changing role of women.