

Topic D4: Stalin's Russia, 1924-53

The focus here is on the broad developments in the USSR between the death of Lenin and the death of Stalin. The intention is to establish a basis on which students will be enabled to present historical explanations and assess the significance in their historical context of events, individuals, ideas, attitudes and beliefs and the ways in which they influenced behaviour and action. In order that they should have knowledge and understanding of political, social and economic changes in the USSR during the period, the aim is that students comprehend the nature of the USSR in 1924 and the agenda of the Communist Party and Stalin in particular in order to explore the impact of each on the other. The clarification of content indicates that questions will not be set which explicitly target the post war period of 1945-53 but students could draw on knowledge of these years to answer questions on repression or culture and the arts. Each main section also has a focus on the skills students need in order to communicate their understanding of historical explanation and significance.

It should be emphasised that this scheme is an example of what might be done, not a model which must be adopted. The assumption has been made that contact time for this Topic comprises 30 one-hour lessons. How these 30 hours could be distributed across an actual teaching programme is, of course, dependent upon the way an individual centre's timetable is constructed.

The content selected for this scheme is not prescribed as content to be assessed in the examination (except where it is actually detailed in the specification); instead it is illustrative of ways in which the required understandings may be developed. Furthermore, in the scheme outlined below, it is not suggested that each element should be given a standard unit of time.

1. 2 hours	<p>Introduction to the topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic geography and outline history of Russia; Tsarism and the Revolution.• Marxist-Leninism in theory and practice 1917-1923.
2. 7 hours	<p>The struggle for power, 1924-29:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The political issues: world revolution v socialism in one country; NEP v rapid industrialisation.• The shifting pattern of rivalry eg all against Trotsky, 1924-25; Zinoviev and Kamenev v Stalin and Bukharin 1925. <p>Essay-writing, quality of communication focus: writing a paragraph on a selected factor eg the importance of Stalin's control of the secretariat and/or to demonstrate the interaction of factors eg the issues of personality and policy.</p>
3. 7 hours	<p>Stalin's Revolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The collectivisation of agriculture: reasons, course and consequences.• The Plans: the First Five Year Plan 1928-32 - achievements and failures.• The Second Five Year Plan 1933-37: how did it differ from the first and why? How was it amended under the pressure of the growing German threat? The Third Five Year Plan: 1938-41 - focus on rearmament.• Social issues: urbanisation and its problems in the 1930s: education - shifting emphasis 1928-41: government policies regarding women and the family. <p>Essay-writing, quality of communication focus: planning an answer on causation eg why did the second five-year plan differ so markedly from the first consequence eg what social problems were caused by the five-year plans?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction of factors eg how was collectivisation seen as integral to

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	industrialisation.
4. 7 hours	<p>Political control and the mobilisation of the masses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leninist inheritance: a police state? The Congress of Victors and the Murder of Kirov 1934; Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria - the NKVD and the origins of the purges. • Appreciation of the controversy surrounding Kirov's murder explored through a mock trial of Stalin. • How far should the 1934 party congress be seen as the root cause of the purges of 1936-38? • Terror at its height 1936-38: show trials and mass murder; consequences of the purges for the economy, society and the army. The cult of personality; art in the service of the state, social realism. <p>Essay-writing, quality of communication focus: writing of extended paragraphs to explain particular events eg the trial of Bukharin in 1938 or to illustrate a grasp of key concepts such as 'social realism.'</p>
5. 7 hours	<p>The USSR and the World:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations with Nazi Germany and rearmament 1933-41: why was the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact signed in 1939? • The Nazi assault 1941-42: how far was Stalin responsible for the debacle? • Russian victory from Stalingrad to Berlin-war production: how was it possible to out-produce the Third Reich? • Lend lease - the extent of the debt to the USA? • The cost of the war - devastation and death; what was the scale of destruction? <p>Essay-writing, quality of communication focus: assessment: Russia in 1945 - in what sense had it become a super power?</p>