



Pearson

# **INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEVEL HISTORY**

**Unit 2 WHI02**

**Breadth Study with Source Evaluation**

**Topic Guide**

**Option 1C Russia, 1917-91 from Lenin to  
Yeltsin**

# Introduction

## Unit 2 – Breadth Study with Source Evaluation

This topic booklet has been written to support teachers delivering **Option 1C Russia, 1917-91 from Lenin to Yeltsin** of the 2015 International Advanced Level History [specification](#).

This Guide includes some additional content guidance; a scheme of work and a list of suggested resources for students and for teachers.

All the options are focused on breadth requiring a broad knowledge and understanding of an extended timescale. This explains the organisation of the specification into four key topic areas of study, each of which has a theme running through the whole timescale. This is in contrast to Units 1 and 3 where the key topics are separated by a different chronology.

Within each key topic, two areas of nominated study are marked in bold italics. The sources for the two questions in Section A will be derived from these nominated areas.

Assessment details such as assessment rationale, Assessment Objectives, question styles and examples and mark schemes are in the ***Getting Started*** guide available on the IAL History web page [here](#).

Question papers and mark schemes with indicative content are also available on-line and are published following each examination session [here](#). This will allow centres to build up a bank of assessment materials.

Principal Examiner Reports for each Paper Option are written for each examination session. These Reports give feedback on overall candidate performance and usually include example response with commentaries reflecting the Level of Response achieved. Principal Examiner reports with Exemplification are available [here](#).

## **Option 1C: Russia, 1917-91**

### **Overview**

The option is divided into four key topics defined by a theme across the chronology. Although they are defined separately, students should be aware of linkages between them. For example, Key Topic 1 is focussed on the Communist government of the new Soviet State that had previously been Imperial Russia. Clearly crucial areas were closely linked to other key topics such the purges mentioned in KT1 and the secret police and the elimination of opponents mentioned in KT3. The Social developments of KT4 are closely linked to the economic changes which form the basis of KT2. The focus of this unit is on the key developments in over three quarters of a century from October Revolution of 1917 to the downfall of the Communist regime in 1991. The focus of the unit is essentially on breadth and hence the four thematic topics which each run from 1917 to 1991.

Students must have a sufficient grasp of content detail within the delimited key topics to be able to answer questions that target knowledge and understanding of the themes in breadth (AO1), requiring comparisons, contrasts and appreciation of significance, causation and change. In addition, students must develop a sufficient sense of period to contextualise and analyse and evaluate sources rooted in the nominated topic areas shown in bold italics (AO2).

Like many other areas of historical study, this option does require a sound grasp of historical geography. An appreciation of the sheer size of the Soviet Union and its varied nature is important.

## **Key Topic 1. Communist government in the USSR, 1917-91**

This begins in October 1917 with the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petersburg and Moscow. Over the next four years a one-party state evolved with terror as a crucial element in its existence. Students need to be aware of how and why this came about, including the central influence of Lenin and the relationship between challenges to Bolshevik rule and the creation of dictatorship, for example: the CHEKA, a security police, were founded in December 1917 and their powers steadily extended. The democratically- elected Constituent Assembly met in January 1918 and after a day was dissolved by force. After victory in the brutal civil war Russia became a one party state in March 1921 at the 10th Communist Party Congress. Within the Party, power was steadily concentrated into the central institutions namely the Secretariat, Orgburo and Politburo.

A study of the power struggle after the death of Lenin is not required, but students should be aware of the growth and extent of Stalin's power after he achieved supremacy in 1928. Links between this theme and key topic 3 should be made. Students should be aware of the ruthless removal of Stalin's opponents in the 1930s and the creation of a full terror state and a cult of the new leader's personality.

Finally students should study the thirty eight years after Stalin's death and be aware of the attempt of successive leaders to preserve the Communist dictatorship, making links with key topic 3 to consider the extent to which this was without the degree of terror and leader worship associated with Stalin. They should understand the attempts under Khrushchev and Gorbachev to reform and liberalise the system and the role the latter attempt played in bringing it crashing down. The events of June to August 1991 are a key nominated area of study where contextual knowledge is required. Students should also be able to consider how far the intervening period of Brezhnev and his successors represented stability and/ or stagnation and how far pressures for change increased. This is closely linked with KT2 and 3.

## **Key Topic 2 Industrial and agricultural change, 1917-91**

This covers the shifting attempts to control the economy of Russia under the Communist regime. Clearly there should be some understanding of the Marxist ideology that Lenin and his associates brought to their task. Students need to understand the idea of a 'command economy' and why the Bolsheviks disliked the idea of a 'market' or 'free economy'. However, there should also be an awareness of how far circumstances rather than a rigid belief system often drove policy changes whether in the adoption of War Communism during the Civil War or in the retreat that was the New Economic policy of 1921.

The reason for Stalin's rejection of NEP, and his embrace of planned industrial expansion and collectivisation of agriculture, should be understood. Students should appreciate the nature of industrial and agricultural change and what drove it, for example, the economic basis and the influence of political rivalries, defence needs, Marxist ideology and, after 1945, recovery from war. They should also be able to assess the consequences, for example the achievements in terms of break-neck industrialisation and the human cost in terms of deaths and suffering. Agricultural collectivisation and its impact are nominated areas of

study where contextual knowledge is required. The details of change in, and dislocation of, agriculture and industry during the war years is not specified and questions overlapping the war period do not require knowledge of the economy in this period, only of post-war recovery.

The changing priorities for industry and agriculture in the years after Stalin to 1991 should be understood. Students should be aware of attempts to deal with problems, for example, bureaucratic controls, the lack of real incentives and shortages of consumer goods. They should understand the nature and impact of the economic policies in the areas specified, including the Virgin Land's Scheme, and be aware of the extent to which pace of reform varied over the period. They should understand the position of the economy after 1964 and the impact of Gorbachev's attempts at economic reform after 1985.

### **Key Topic 3. Control of the people, 1917-91**

Students should appreciate the linkage between this focus on control and the two previous key topics, for example that the essence of the 'command economy' was control and control of the people underpinned the dictatorship of the Communist Party. They should appreciate the way in which, and extent to which, the state promoted the official ideology, Marxist-Leninism and the extent to which rival belief systems like other religions were intermittently persecuted with varying degrees of harshness. They should understand the extent to which media in all its forms was controlled, subject to Marxist theory and the perceived needs of the state. They should appreciate the nature of the personality cult of Stalin, making links with key topic 2.

In considering how control of the people was maintained, students should appreciate the nature of the extensive terror apparatus, its establishment under Lenin, development under Stalin and the roles of Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria in controlling it. Students should appreciate the degree of liberalisation under Khrushchev but also, after 1964, the continued, more subtle, persecution of dissidents and potential dissidents, including when Andropov headed the KGB under Brezhnev and then ascended briefly to the leadership of the USSR just before his death.

Students should be aware that culture and the arts were all subjected to control and their direction determined by the patronage of the state. They should appreciate the extent to which initially in the 1920s there was a flowering of new styles as the new revolutionary government encouraged Proletkult and the avant-garde and the extent to which under Stalin 'Socialist Realism' affected all areas of the visual arts, literature and even music. They should appreciate how far the liberalisation of the 1950s brought new tensions and appreciate clashes between artists and government throughout the period. The impact of the breakdown of controls under Gorbachev is an area of nominated study. This refers to control of the people and is not limited to aspects of culture.

## **Key Topic 4 Social Developments, 1917-91**

Students should be able to assess the nature of social benefits including job security and housing provision and the extent to which these changed over the period and succeeded in promoting a stable society in the years 1953-85. They should consider the impact of social reform in the Gorbachev era, including, for example, the attempts to restrict alcohol consumption which proved unpopular.

Students should understand the changing position of women over the period, be aware of the theoretical advances and be able to assess the position in reality, including the beginning of political and legal equality and the extent to which there was an increase in women entering the workplace. Changes under Lenin and Stalin is a nominated area of study. The implications of their policies for women and family life should be understood, for example that abortion and divorce became available on demand before changes in the Stalin era - a tightening of the laws in 1936 relating to divorce and abortion and the impact of conservative measures in the 1944 Family Code. The impact of the Second World War on women's work and lifestyles should also be appreciated. Students should be aware of changes in attitudes and policies towards the family after 1953 and appreciate differing lifestyles in town and country throughout the period.

Students should be able to consider how far the Soviet state achieved success in education and be aware of changes in approach, for example with new ideas being widely embraced in the 1920s followed by a return to traditional discipline and approaches in the 1930s. The improvement in literacy by 1941 should be understood. Students should also appreciate the implications of changes after 1945, for example that there were considerable achievements in the promotion of higher education, particularly in the field of technical education. They should be aware of the extent to which the curriculum was state controlled and shaped by Marxist ideology, making links to the control of the people in key topic 3.

## Example Scheme of Work

The Scheme of Work included in this section is an **EXAMPLE** only and do not need to be followed, However, they may be useful to use when working through the specification for the first time.

Content		
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Communist government in the USSR, 1917–91</b>	Establishing Communist Party control 1917–24
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the establishment of communist control in Russia.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The creation of a one-party state and the party congress of 1921; the nature of government under Lenin; the growing centralisation of power.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Michael Lynch, <i>Reaction and Revolution 1894–1924</i> (Hodder, 2005).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> The nature of this control is important for students to understand from the outset in order to be able to measure later change and continuity. It is not a requirement for students to study the events of the Russian revolution on this course. The nature of government under Lenin is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions.</p>		
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Communist government in the USSR, 1917–91</b>	Stalin in power 1928–53
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand Stalin’s approach to maintaining power.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The elimination of opponents in government and party; the purges of the 1930s; Stalin’s power over party and state.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAMs Question 2. b. Gregory and K. Killin, <i>Stalin’s Russia 1924-53</i> (Collins, 2012).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Note that the SAMs Question 2 does require some material from later in the course, but students could offer a plan for what they could use from the first two weeks in order to start to develop their essay skills.</p>		

<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Communist government in the USSR, 1917–91</b>	Reform, stability, stagnation and collapse
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the development of communist government in the years 1953-82.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Khrushchev's attempts to reform government including de-Stalinisation; the return to stability under Brezhnev 1964–82.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> 'Meet the Historians' podcasts: episode 1: Professor Bill Taubman on Khrushchev and episode 5: Professor John Keep on Brezhnev. Martin McCauley, <i>The Khrushchev Era 1953-64</i> (Routledge 1995)</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Although this is not a nominated area of the specification, source skills can still be practised. A good example of a source that could be used to practice the skills whilst also delivering content is the Secret Speech.</p>		
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Communist government in the USSR, 1917–91</b>	Reform, stability, stagnation and collapse
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the development of Communist government in the years 1982-91.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Growing political stagnation; the impact of Gorbachev and the policies of <i>perestroika and glasnost</i>; the significance of Yeltsin's election in June 1991 and the failed coup of August</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> D. Marples, <i>The Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1985-1991</i> (Routledge 2004). 'Meet the Historians' podcast, episode 3: Dr Martin McCauley on the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. Episode 24 of <i>The Cold War – Conclusions</i> (CNN TV).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> The significance of Yeltsin's election in June 1991 and the failed coup of August is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions. Aim to draw together the key strands that characterise the rise and fall of communism in the Soviet Union.</p>		

<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Industrial and agricultural change, 1917–91</b>	Towards a command economy 1917–28
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the state of the economy and the changing policies towards it 1917-28.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The nationalisation of industry; War Communism and the New Economic Policy; state control of industry and agriculture.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> <i>Lenin in Power</i> (History Today September 2006).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Ensure that the differences between War Communism and NEP are securely understood as well as the reasons for changing policies – this will ensure that a firm foundation is established before examining the changing economic situation of the rest of the period.</p>		
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Industrial and agricultural change, 1917–91</b>	Industry and agriculture in the Stalin era
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand Stalin’s industrial policies and how the Soviet Union was preparing for the Second World War.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The Five-Year Plans and industrial change 1928-41; preparing for war</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> C. Culpin and J Grant, <i>Stalin and the Soviet Union</i> (Longman 1998).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Ensure that students are clear about the changing priorities and focus of the Five-Year Plans. They should be able to establish the successes and failures of the plans.</p>		

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Industrial and agricultural change, 1917–91</b>	Industry and agriculture in the Stalin era
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand Stalin’s agricultural policy and how the Soviet Union recovered from the Second World War</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Agricultural collectivisation and its impact, including the destruction of the ‘kulaks’; recovery from war after 1945.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAM’s Question 1a. <i>The Harvest of Despair</i> (International Historic Films) considers the Ukraine Famine. Episode 2 <i>The Cold War – Iron Curtain</i> (CNN TV) contains useful footage of the economic position of the Soviet Union in 1945.</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Agricultural collectivisation and its impact, including the destruction of the ‘kulaks’ is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions. Using the SAMs question provides the opportunity to practice the sources skills that are required for this unit.</p>		
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Industrial and agricultural change, 1917–91</b>	Changing priorities for industry and agriculture 1953–91
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the development of the Soviet economy in the years 1953-91.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The promotion of light industry, chemicals and consumer goods; investment in agriculture and the Virgin Lands Scheme; the limited attempts at reform after 1964; relative economic decline; the impact of Gorbachev’s attempts at economic reform 1985-91.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAMs Question 4. <i>The Soviet Economy – an Experiment that was Bound to Fail?</i> (History Review, 2005).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Relative economic decline and The impact of Gorbachev’s attempts at economic reform 1985-91 is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions.</p>		

<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Control of the people, 1917–91</b>	Media, propaganda and religion
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the methods used by the state to control media, propaganda and religion.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> State control of mass media and propaganda; the personality cult of Stalin; the treatment of religion under Stalin and Khrushchev; Brezhnev’s tightening of controls.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Derrick Murphy and Terry Morris, <i>Russia 1855–1964</i> (Collins, 2008). This material would be suitable to use as the basis of a group research project. Students could be allocated specific elements within the topic and present their findings to each other.</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Do make sure that the content goes beyond Stalin – it should range across the period.</p>		
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Control of the people, 1917–91</b>	The secret police
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the role of the secret police from 1917-1964.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Attacks on opponents of the government; the roles of Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria; liberalisation under Khrushchev 1953–64.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAMs – essay Question 2. Jane Jenkins, <i>Years of Russia, the USSR and the Collapse of Soviet Communism</i> (Hodder 2008).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Liberalisation under Khrushchev 1953–64 is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions. Note that the SAMs question requires students to re-visit aspects of Stalin’s career that were studied in the early part of this unit. You may already have asked them to produce a limited response to this question if you wanted to introduce essay skills earlier.</p>		

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Control of the people, 1917–91</b>	The secret police
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the role of the secret police from 1965-1991.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Suppression of dissidents 1965–82, including the significance of Andropov; the continued monitoring of popular discontent 1982–91.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAMs essay Question 3. R. Service, <i>A History of Modern Russia: From Tsardom to the Twenty-First Century</i>, Robert Service (Penguin 2009).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> This provides an opportunity to check that students are making progress in their approach to essay writing.</p>		
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Control of the people, 1917–91</b>	The state and cultural change
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the role of the arts in the Soviet Union across time.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Proletkult, avant-garde and Socialist Realism, 1917–53; nonconformity from the 1950s; clashes between artists and the government to 1985; the impact of the breakdown of traditional controls 1985–91.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Chris Corin and Terry Fiehn, <i>Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin</i> (Hodder 2002). This is another possible area for groups to engage in research tasks and then share findings. Different aspects of arts and culture could be allocated to different groups.</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> The impact of the breakdown of traditional controls 1985–91 is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions.</p>		

<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Social developments, 1917–91</b>	Social security
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the key elements of social security.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Full employment, housing and social benefits 1917–53; Khrushchev, Brezhnev and the promotion of a stable society 1953–85; the impact of social reform 1985–91.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Peter Oxley, <i>Russia 1855–1991: From Tsars to Commissars</i> (OUP 2001).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Students should start to link the various elements of social development together in order to build a larger picture of everyday life for Soviet citizens throughout the period.</p>		
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Social developments, 1917–91</b>	Women and the family
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand the position of women.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> The changing status of women under Lenin and Stalin; contrasting lifestyles of women in town and country; the impact of the Second World War.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> SAMs Question 1B. Chris Corin and Terry Fiehn, <i>Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin</i> (Hodder 2002).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> The changing status of women under Lenin and Stalin is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions. The focus of question 1b is different to that of 1a, so check that students are clear about those differences.</p>		

<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Social developments, 1917–91</b>	Women and the family
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand policy towards the family and towards education.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> Changing government attitudes and policies towards the family as a social unit since 1953; the changing approaches to education in the 1920s and 30s; the reduction of illiteracy to 1941.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Peter Oxley, <i>Russia 1855–1991: From Tsars to Commissars</i> (OUP 2001).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> The changing approaches to education in the 1920s and 30s is a nominated area of specification content which means that it can be examined through the use of source questions.</p>		
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Social developments, 1917–91</b>	Education and young people
<p><b>Aim:</b> Students to understand policy towards education.</p> <p><b>Topics covered:</b> State control of the curriculum and the role of Marxist ideology in shaping educational changes post-1945; the growth and achievements of Soviet higher education to 1991.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> Peter Kenez, <i>A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End</i> (Cambridge University Press 2006).</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Aim to consider the combined impact of all the policies that pertain to social developments across the period. Education during the dislocation of the war years is not required by the specification, but students should be able to deal with the patterns of change in the period as whole – 1917-91.</p>		

<b>Week 17</b>	<b>Revision</b>
<p><b>Topics:</b> Weeks 1-8 of this unit.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> The programme of revision will depend on the perceived gaps in the student's knowledge and skills.</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Examiners often find that students need to look beyond the face value of sources; aim to include as many sources for discussion as possible using the generic level description in the markscheme as a guide to the skills and understanding the students need.</p>	
<b>Week 18</b>	<b>Revision</b>
<p><b>Topics:</b> Weeks 9-16 of this unit.</p> <p><b>Suggested activities/resources:</b> The programme of revision will depend on the perceived gaps in the student's knowledge and skills.</p> <p><b>Teaching points to note:</b> Students often have difficulty in dealing with overarching chronology. A useful way to tackle this and to develop revision is via the use of timelines.</p>	

[Resource mapping on IAL History web page.](#)

## Resources

### Option 1C Russia, 1917-91 from Lenin to Yeltsin

Chris Corin and Terry Fiehn, *Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin* (SHP, Hodder Education, 2002)

Robin Bunce and Laura Gallagher *Stalin's Russia 1924-1953* (Pearson 2008)

Michael Lynch, *Stalin's Russia* (Hodder 2008)

Peter Oxley, *Russia 1855-1991: From Tsars to Commissars* (Oxford University Press, 2001)