

Edexcel A level History – Transition Work from Year 11 to Year 12

Paper 1: USSR 1917-1991 – From Lenin to Yeltsin

This course is worth 30% of your A Level grade and will be studied twice a week in year 12. The exam will cover thematic questions and interpretations, and the course is taught in themes:

- Political structure: Communist governments 1917-1985
- Economic development: Industrial and agricultural change 1917-1985
- Political control: Control of the people 1917-1985
- Social developments 1917-1985
- Collapse of the USSR 1985-1991 – the basis of the interpretation question

Task 1: Capitalism vs Communism



Do some research and write a checklist – what are the key features of a Communist state? What are the key differences between Communism and Capitalism?

Try to divide these ideas into Political, Economic, and Social.

Communism	Capitalism

Q. Which kind of state would you prefer to live in – Communist or Capitalist? What advantages and disadvantages could you see for both?

Task 2: Documentary:

Watch the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV9G1QUIm7w> Epic History TV, the Russian Revolution

Make notes on what Russia was like under the Tsars and how the revolution came about.

- 1) Why was WWI a disaster for the Tsar?
- 2) What did people hope for after the February revolution?
- 3) Who were the Bolsheviks?
- 4) What were their key slogans?
- 5) What were Peoples' Soviets?
- 6) Who were the Red Guards?

Task 3: Soviet leaders factfiles

Leader	Early life and career	Dates in power	Policies (Political, Economic, Social)	What are they famous for?
Lenin				
Stalin				
Khrushchev				
Brezhnev				
Gorbachov				

Task 4: Historical interpretations

4 of the most important reasons for the collapse of the USSR were:

- Economic weakness and the failure of reforms (Perestroika)
- Failure to reform the Communist Party and the Soviet government (Glasnost)
- Nationalist resurgence in the late 1980s in Soviet republics and Eastern Europe
- The role of Gorbachev and Yeltsin as leaders

Listen to the lecture and take notes under headings for each of the above factors, focusing on how each is to blame:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKb87H2g6CM>

1. Which factor do you think contributed the most to the fall of the USSR?
2. How far do you agree with Professor William Taubmann?
3. What is a historical interpretation?
4. Why do historians have different interpretations about the past?
5. Why are historical interpretations useful to other historians?
6. Why, as historians, do we need to be careful when we use other historians to learn about the past?

Communist Russia – optional reading list

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

Videos:

Communism vs Socialism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrtDZ-LOXFW>

The Russian Revolution: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOTBJ381gSo>

Karl Marx: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FaOKNpAilM>

Stalin – Man of Steel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRkVq4sR_V8

Russian Civil War (5-part series):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dqmlIOBq_sQ&list=PL3H6z037pboFwKREwWrf4ELNDdiTLyhAN&index=4

Audiobooks and podcasts:

Judith Devlin on the Russian Revolution: <http://historyhub.ie/judith-devlin-the-russian-revolution>

The Movements, a podcast history of the masses: <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/the-movements-a-podcast-history>

BBC History Hour: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csvstw>

Websites and articles:

Overview: <https://www.history.com/topics/russia/russian-revolution>

Contemporary news reports: <https://www.bl.uk/russian-revolution/articles/reporting-the-russian-revolution>

Primary sources: <https://soviethistory.msu.edu/>

Stalin: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/11/understanding-stalin/380786/>

Lenin, a literary view: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/25/lenin-love-literature-russian-revolution-soviet-union-goethe>

Trotsky and Stalin: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/trotsky-struggle-against-stalin>

Gorbachev: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13669848>

Paper 2: The German Democratic Republic, 1949-1990

This course is worth 20% of your A Level grade and will be studied twice a week in year 12. The exam will cover depth questions and sources, and the course is taught roughly chronologically:

- Establishing and consolidating Communist rule in the GDR 1949-1961
- The development of the East German state 1961-1985
- Life in East Germany 1949-1985
- Growing crises and the collapse of communist rule in the GDR

Task 1: Context – the division of Germany

You may have studied Germany 1890-1945 at GCSE, and this course will see what happens in East Germany after the end of the war. Watch the video and make notes on:

- Why was Germany divided?
- Who decided how Germany was split up?
- Why did the Western parts of Germany unite?
- How did the divided Germany set up the Cold War?

Task 2: Timeline

Read through the article and make a timeline of the history of the GDR.

<https://alphahistory.com/coldwar/east-germany/>

Task 3: Ulbricht and the system of government

Complete your own research to create fact files on Ulbricht, the *Volkskammer*, the *Länderkammer*, the SED, and the Stasi

The German Democratic Republic – optional reading list

Videos:

Rise and fall lecture - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlynWuJo0LQ>

Life in East Germany - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjXsvz0yMI>

Audiobooks and podcasts:

The Rest is History: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/OPPbNibx5z72ERUpBc6QyC>

Radio GDR: <https://open.spotify.com/show/2Ks8oSyyC7Gwl6gN6YoyJ5>

Free Thinking: East Germany <https://open.spotify.com/show/2Ks8oSyyC7Gwl6gN6YoyJ5>

Films (if you happen to have the correct streaming service)

Goodbye Lenin: https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.b714e7aa-c14c-4b46-bc5a-721f50e20fd2?autoplay=0&ref=atv_cf_strg_wb

The Lives of Others: <https://www.amazon.com/Lives-Others-Martina-Gedeck/dp/B000V4NX04>

Websites and articles:

Overview: <https://www.historyhit.com/beyond-the-wall-east-germany-1949-1990/>

Life: <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/culture/gdr-east-germany>

Ulbricht: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Walter-Ulbricht>