

History A-Level (Russia): Final Revision Run-Through

1. You have two sections to your paper – Section A (1x 30-mark extract question) and Section B (2x 25-mark questions)
2. For Section A:
 - a. spend about 10-15 minutes planning and about 40-45 minutes writing
 - b. identify the question focus for the extracts question
 - c. identify the main argument (and one-two supporting quotes) for each extract
 - d. identify 2-3 points each to support and challenge the argument *from your own knowledge*
 - e. write 2 paragraphs per extract, ending with a one-sentence balanced judgement on how **convincing** its argument is
3. For Section B:
 - a. answer **two questions only** out of three and choose your strongest two questions
 - b. spend about 5 minutes planning and about 35-40 minutes writing
 - c. identify the relevant theme (power/authority, society, economy, culture)
 - d. decide on 3 clear factors to discuss
 - e. decide on your thesis statement before you begin writing

Section A: Using your knowledge of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to...

...the authority of the Tsar, c. 1894 to 1917.

Extract A: Abraham Ascher, *Stalin: A Beginner's Guide* (2016)

Tsar Nicholas II, who ascended the throne in 1894, possessed none of the qualities necessary for effective leadership. He did not understand that even rulers who claim absolute power need to gain the confidence of large sectors of the population. Although moderately intelligent, he lacked the personal drive and vision to take charge of the government, to familiarize himself with the workings of his administration, and to instill a sense of purpose and direction into the ministers and the bureaucracy. He was narrow-minded and prejudiced, incapable of tolerating people who did not fit into his conception of a true Russian, a fatal flaw in a country composed of over a hundred ethnic groups with a wide range of cultures, languages, and religions. Nicholas also could not bear the word 'intelligentsia', which he considered 'repulsive' because many of its members tended to oppose autocratic rule. The Tsar was convinced that except for the intelligentsia most people in the Empire were deeply devoted to him.

...social change in Russia before 1917.

Extract A: David L. Hoffmann, *The Stalinist Era* (2018)

Although nascent industrial growth boosted the country's economy, it did little to ease social tensions. In fact, the early stages of industrialization and urbanization only made differences in wealth and status more glaring. Whereas for centuries peasants had lived in poverty, their misery had been dispersed across an enormous rural expanse. Industrial workers crammed into urban slums and tenements were far more visible, and the

contrast between the workers' poverty and the wealth of urban nobles and merchants highlighted the country's social polarization. Dangerous factory conditions, long hours, and low wages further added to workers' discontent. Workers' proximity to one another also offered greater possibilities of collective organizing and political action. The tsarist government increasingly saw the growing working class not only as a social problem but as a political threat as well.

...Communist attitudes towards culture, c. 1924-1941.

Extract A: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire* (2001)

The Soviet state created not just a dozen large national republics, but tens of thousands of national territories scattered across the entire expanse of the Soviet Union. New national elites were trained and promoted to leadership positions in the government, schools, and industrial enterprises of these newly formed territories. In each territory, the national language was declared the official language of government. In dozens of cases, this necessitated the creation of a written language where one did not yet exist. The Soviet state financed the mass production of books, journals, newspapers, movies, operas, museums, folk music ensembles, and other cultural output in the non-Russian languages. Nothing comparable to it had been attempted before, and [...] no multiethnic state has subsequently matched the scope of Soviet Affirmative Action.

...the economy of the USSR after World War Two.

Extract A: Geoffrey Swain, *Khrushchev* (2016)

Khrushchev was a reform communist at home, but he was very much a traditional communist when it came to confrontation with the West. Khrushchev had hoped that a combination of reductions in conventional military forces and the targeted development of rocket forces could reduce the overall spending on defence. As the international situation worsened over the future of Berlin and the Cold War arms race developed, it was clear that the consumer economy could not be stimulated by simply reducing expenditure on arms. The dilemma seemed insoluble. In October 1962, Khrushchev's plan to achieve nuclear parity on the cheap by deploying short range missiles in Cuba fell apart.

Section B

Previous question stems:

- "Statement". Assess the validity of this view...
- How significant was/were...
- How effective was/were...
- How successful was/were...
- To what extent were...

How significant was the Emancipation of the Serfs to Russia's economic development, c. 1855-1894?

How significant was the Emancipation of the Serfs to cultural change in Russia, c. 1855-1894?

How significant was the Emancipation of the Serfs to Russia's social transformation, c. 1855-1894?

How effective was the Emancipation of the Serfs in bringing about Russia's economic development, c. 1855-1894?

1. "Power and authority in Russia was hardly altered by the assassination of 1881."
Assess the validity of this view for the years c. 1861-1894.
2. How successful were the Great Reforms, c. 1861-1881, in solving the problems of Russia's rulers?
3. How effective was state intervention in developing Russia's economy, c. 1862-1903?
4. "Urbanisation was the main contributing factor to developments in culture in Russia, c. 1861-1914". Assess the validity of this view.
5. How significant was cultural to securing Communist authority in the USSR, c. 1917-1941?
6. To what extent did war drive social change in the USSR, c. 1914-1945?
7. How far was cultural freedom possible in the USSR, 1941-1964?
8. "The beliefs underpinning Soviet politics looked very different under Khrushchev to under Lenin." Assess this validity of this view of the periods 1917-1924 and 1956-1964.