The Russian Revolution took place in 1917 when the peasants and working class people of Russia revolted against the government of Tsar Nicholas II. They were led by Vladimir Lenin and a group of revolutionaries called the Bolsheviks. The new communist government created the country of the Soviet Union.

The Russian Tsars
Before the revolution, Russia was ruled by a powerful monarch called the Tsar. The Tsar had total power in Russia. He commanded the army, owned much of the land, and even controlled the church.

During the period of time before the Russian Revolution, life for the working class people and the peasants was very difficult. They worked for little pay, often went without food, and were exposed to dangerous working conditions. The aristocrat class treated the peasants like slaves, giving them few rights under the law and treating them almost like animals.

Bloody Sunday
A major event leading to the Russian Revolution took place on January 22, 1905. A large number of workers were marching to the Tsar's palace in order to present a petition for better working conditions. They were fired upon by soldiers and many of them were killed or injured. This day is called Bloody Sunday.

Before Bloody Sunday, many peasants and working class people respected the Tsar and thought that he was on their side. They blamed their troubles on the government, not on the Tsar. However, after the shootings, the Tsar was perceived as an enemy of the working class and the desire for revolution began to spread.

World War I
In 1914, World War I began and Russia was at war with Germany. A huge Russian army was formed by forcing working class and peasant men to join. Although the Russian army had great numbers, the soldiers were not equipped or trained to fight. Many of them were sent into battle without shoes, food, and even weapons. Over the next three years, nearly 2 million Russian soldiers were killed in battle and nearly another 5 million were wounded. The Russian people blamed the Tsar for entering the war and getting so many of their young men killed.

The February Revolution
The people of Russia first revolted in early 1917. The revolution began when a number of workers decided to strike. Many of these workers got together during the strike to discuss politics. They began to riot. The Tsar, Nicholas II, ordered the army to suppress the riot. However, many of the soldiers refused to fire on the Russian people and the army began to revolt against the Tsar.

After a few days of riots, the army turned against the Tsar. Nicholas II was forced to give up his throne and a new government took over. The government was run by two political parties: the Petrograd Soviet (representing the workers and soldiers) and the Provisional Government (the traditional government without the Tsar).

The result of the February Revolution was that Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. He was very unpopular and in fact, his entire family and servants were all murdered. The First World War was going very badly for Russia and people blamed the Tsar.
Bolshevik Revolution
Over the next several months the two sides ruled Russia. One of the main groups of the Petrograd Soviet was a group called the Bolsheviks. They were led by Vladimir Lenin and believed that the new Russian government should be a Marxist (communist) government. In October of 1917, Lenin took full control of the government in what is called the Bolshevik Revolution. Russia was now the first communist country in the world.

The Bolsheviks were popular among the workers and the soldiers. This is mainly because Lenin promised to end the war immediately. His slogans were: "Peace! Bread! Land!" and "All Power to the Soviets!"

A man named Joseph Stalin joined up with the Bolshevik revolutionaries. This was an underground group of people who were led by Vladimir Lenin.

In a communist country, the Government controls means of production, individuals have no right to private property, and the government is trusted to distribute everything fairly.

Lenin’s Death
In 1924, Vladimir Lenin died and after his death, there were two contenders for his position: Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Leon Trotsky was quick minded, had intelligent speeches, and his military skill during the civil war had gained him a lot of support - so it seemed like he was succeeding and heading towards a victory. Stalin was an insignificant figure during that time, being only the editor of the propaganda newspaper, but he knew the more outstanding people in the party and got to know them better. Stalin was also scheming plots to insult Trotsky and bring himself to power. He succeeded and Stalin won over the people and took over as sole leader of the Soviet Union.

Industrialization
Stalin then proposed a plan of his own - Socialism in one Country. What this basically meant was that in order to strengthen the Soviet Union, Stalin decided that the country should move away from agriculture and become industrialized. He had factories built throughout the country.

Labour Camps
Before Stalin’s reign and during the 19th century, the Russian government deported around 1.2 million prisoners to Siberia. Soon after Joseph Stalin’s leadership, he reopened labour camps and opponents of his regime were sent to what became known as Gulags. These were probably the worst of the labour camps located in north-eastern Siberia where temperatures drop to -90 degrees during the winter. It is estimated that around 50 million perished in Soviet Gulags between 1930 and 1950. People who were sent to the Gulags included peasants who were accused of criminal activities, anyone who opposed the establishment of collective farms (poor and middle class peasants, and Kulaks – rich peasants), and a large numbers of other cultures and nationalities in Russia.

Power Struggle Continues
Between 1925 and 1928, Trotsky was gradually pushed from power by Stalin. Trotsky continued to write and criticize Joseph Stalin and the Soviet government. He made an article that called all people to change the government, which was a clear act of treason, especially against Stalin. When he held street...
demonstrations opposing Stalin, he was completely expelled from the party.

In October 1927, Trotsky was exiled to the very remote area located in present-day Kazakhstan. Apparently, that was not far enough for Stalin, so in February, 1929, Trotsky was banished entirely from the Soviet Union. Over the next seven years, he lived in Turkey, France and Norway, before arriving in Mexico City.

Five-year Plan

In order to strengthen the Soviet Union and increase food supply, Stalin decided that the country should implement the First Five-Year Plan. This called for the organization of peasants into units that the authorities could easily control, so he organized all the peasants' lands and animals into collective farms and state farms and he restricted the peasants' movement from these farms. Although the program was designed to affect all peasants, Stalin sought to eliminate the wealthiest peasants, known as Kulaks. Peasants slaughtered their cows and pigs rather than turn them over to the collective farms. The state forced reluctant peasants, deported Kulaks, and active rebels to Siberia. Starvation was widespread as food was controlled by Stalin.

Secret Police

Stalin had a group of secret police called "Cheka"—and they are still called that today—who would rule the land with an iron fist, apprehending and killing anyone who was against Stalin's regime. The secret police remained the most powerful and feared Soviet institution throughout the Stalinist period.

Kirov

Kirov was a rising star in the Communist Party of the 1930s and he supported Stalin and the Russian dictatorship. Then, he sneakily opposed the extreme measures Stalin was forcing upon the people. His popularity in Petersburg coupled with some speeches he gave made him appear to be a rival to Stalin, but rivals were something Stalin could not tolerate. Suspiciously, he was murdered on a cold December day in 1934. The aftermath of Kirov's death is more important than the death itself as Kirov's death triggered show trials, purges, and the death of thousands and perhaps millions of people. After Kirov's death, Stalin would praise him even naming a class of battleship after him; meanwhile, Stalin likely had something to do with his murder.

The Cult of Stalin

Like a religious worship, a cult of Stalin was formed. Stalin was like a godlike leader to the people. He was praised in the newspapers, books, films, and posters. Poems published praised his actions and speeches praised his skills, modesty, wisdom, and brilliance. People who attended Stalin's speeches were careful to applaud long and loudly, as the person who stopped first would most likely be arrested as it showed great disrespect and disloyalty.

Purges and Murder

Stalin was one of the most brutal leaders in world history. He had anyone that didn't agree with him killed. He also caused famines in areas of the country so people he wanted dead would starve. Throughout his rule he would order purges where millions of people he thought were against him would be killed or put into slave labor camps. Historians aren't sure how many people
he had killed, but they estimate between 20 to 40 million.

Terror Climax
Terror was climaxing in Stalin’s labor camps and concentration camps. There was censorship put on anything that might reflect badly on Stalin. Propaganda was everywhere - pictures, statues, continuous praise, and applause. Places were named after Stalin and mother’s taught their children that Stalin was 'the wisest man of the age. Also, history books and photographs were changed to make Stalin the hero of the Revolution.

On 20 August 1940, Trotsky was attacked in his home in Mexico with an ice axe by a “secret police” agent. The blow was poorly delivered and failed to kill Trotsky instantly; witnesses stated that Trotsky spat on the agent and began struggling fiercely with him. Hearing the commotion, Trotsky's bodyguards burst into the room and nearly killed the agent, but Trotsky stopped them, stating that the assassin should be made to answer questions. Trotsky was taken to a hospital, operated on, and survived for more than a day; he died at the age of 60 on 21 August 1940 as a result of severe brain damage. Trotsky's last words were: "I will not survive this attack. Stalin has finally accomplished the task he attempted unsuccessfully before."

World War II
At the start of World War II, Stalin formed an alliance with Adolf Hitler and Germany. However, Hitler hated Stalin and the Germans made a surprise attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. In order to fight off the Germans, Stalin joined the Allies of Britain and the United States. After a terrible war, where many on both sides died, the Germans were defeated.

After World War II, Stalin set up puppet governments in the Eastern European countries that the Soviet Union had "freed" from Germany. These governments were run by the Soviet Union. This started the Cold War between the two world superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States.

Results
Stalin’s greatest test was yet to come because in World War II, in June 1941, Germany and its allies invaded the Soviet Union, a country with which it had signed a non-aggression pact. After four years of brutal warfare, the Soviet Union emerged victorious as one of the world's two superpowers, the other being the United States.

Joseph Stalin, 73 years of age, had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died at 9:50 p.m. on March 5, 1953. Stalin's body was placed on temporary display in the Hall of Columns where thousands of people lined up in the snow to see it. The crowds were so dense and chaotic outside that some people were trampled, others rammed against traffic lights, and some others choked to death. It is estimated that 500 people lost their lives while trying to get a glimpse of Stalin's corpse. At noon, came a loud roar - whistles, bells, guns, and sirens were blown in honor of Stalin.
Integrating quotes is a very important skill that you will need to learn in order to be successful in this course. An integrated quote is when you take part of a text and integrate it into your own sentence. Here are some ways you can integrate quotes:

**Question:** What is a Tsar?

**Answer A, with integrated quote:**

A Tsar is a leader in Russia who controlled “the army,…the land, and…the church” (1).

**Answer B, with integrated quote:**

A Tsar is a “powerful monarch [who]…had total power [of everything] in Russia” (1).

**Answer C, with integrated quote:**

“The army,…the land, and…the church” were all controlled by a Tsar, who “had total power in Russia” (1).

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**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete sentences and integrate a quote into each response. Make sure to pay careful attention to where your punctuation goes. Each question is worth 3 marks, 1 mark for integrated quote, 1 mark for your own words, and 1 mark for the credit. **Total: 30 marks**

1. What is Bloody Sunday?
2. What happened during the February Revolution?
3. What was the Bolshevik Revolution?
4. How did Stalin become the leader of the Soviet Union?
5. What are Gulags and Kulaks?
6. What happened when Trotsky continued to scrutinize Stalin’s regime?
7. Explain Stalin’s Five-year Plan.
8. What was the secret police?
9. Why was Kirov’s death so significant?
10. What happened between Stalin and Hitler?