A2 Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964

Past Questions workbook

How to use this booklet

Your Russia and Cold War teachers will discuss what they want you to do in each Cold War lesson (now that your coursework is finished). This booklet has a page for each examination question that has been asked about our course since the change of course in 2010. For each question there is a section from the guidance given to examiners for marking it, and a section from the examiner’s report on each question.

Each page also contains a section where you can record what you have learned about answering each question.

Tackling past questions is an excellent way of revising. You could be doing several things in any order:

* Reading the examiner’s remarks;
* Planning an answer to the question;
* Using your notes to find the evidence you’ll need to answer each question;
* Sending a plan to a friend for constructive criticism.

Before you get going – please note the advice that the Chief Examiner has given to his exam markers for the last year:

**“Candidates are expected to demonstrate understanding of the issues in each of their selected questions over a period of at least a hundred years (unless an individual question specifies a slightly shorter period.) Candidates are reminded of the synoptic nature of the Unit. Answers are required to demonstrate understanding of the processes of *historical continuity, development and change across the full breadth of the period studied”.***

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| Exam  Season | Government | Repression & Reform | Opposition | Agriculture | Industry | Condition of the Workers | Leadership | Turning Points (in government) | Strange Beasts |
| Specimen | \*A | \* | \* | \*A | \*A | \*A |  |  |  |
| Jan 10 | \* |  |  | \* |  |  | \*A |  | \*A |
| June 10 |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |
| Jan 11 | \* |  |  | \*A | \*A |  |  | \* |  |
| June 11 | \* / \*A |  |  | \* | \*A |  | \*A |  |  |
| Jan 12 |  |  | \* | \*A | \*A | \*A |  |  |  |
| June 12 | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |
| Jan 13 | \* |  |  | \*AA |  | \*AA | \* |  | \*A |

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| Uniformly  Glossary of key terms that have come up in past questions | *Consistent – no change in nature or character. No change or diversity chronologically, or within a group, period, or place.*  Eg, How far do you agree that life for the peasants was uniformly bleak in the period 1855 to 1964? |
| Transformed | *Fundamental change. Would suggest a significant change in important aspects of the issue in question.*  Eg, Assess the view that the condition of the peasantry was transformed in the period 1855 to 1964. |
| Economic | *Economic History is a study of “the use of resources, land, labour and capital” D.C.Coleman.*  Eg How what extent did Russian people lose more than they gained from economic and social changes during the period 1855 to 1964? |
| Socially | *Social History is a branch of History that focuses on the interaction of the differing groups in society.*  Eg How different socially and economically was Tsarist Russia (1855-1917) from Communist Russia (1918-1964)? |
| Modernise | *In the context of this course to create a state capable of competing as a Great Power. This means industrialisation, but it also means in terms of the military, politics, society, agriculture or technology.*  Eg, “All Russia’s rulers tried to modernise Russia.”  How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |
| Successful | *To achieve one’s aims. IE here this is asking you did the rulers achieve what they aimed to do.*  Eg, Assess the view that economic change in Russia was more successful under Stalin than any other ruler in the period from 1855 to 1964. |
| Aims | *Things (policies?) that the ruler sets out to achieve.*  Eg, Assess the view that all the rulers of Russia had similar aims domestic policy in the domestic policy in the period 1855 to 1964. |
| (In)effective | *(Un)successfully achieve your aims.*  Eg, How effective was the opposition to government in Russia throughout the period from 1855 to 1964? |
| Working Class | In the context of this course this means the peasants and the proletariat (urban working class)  Eg, Assess the view that Russia’s communist leaders did less than the Tsars to improve the lives of the working class in the period 1855 to 1964. |
| Turning Point | *A turning point in government is an event that marks a distinct shift in the nature, path, or character of rule. It would also be something that is irreversible, and has wide reaching and lasting effects.*  Eg, How far do you agree that the October Revolution of 1917 was the most important turning point in the development of Russian government from 1855 to 1964? |
| Change | *A change is a shift in pace, speed or effectiveness of the same or a similar policy or issue. It suggests something that is more reversible or less permanent in nature.*  Eg, Assess the view that the 1905 revolution changed Russian government more than other events in the period from 1855 to 1964  IE CHANGE DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUAL A TURNING POINT |

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| Jan 10 (1) | ‘The nature of Russian government was changed more by Stalin than by any other ruler.’ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the phrase ‘the nature of Russian government’ in their answers. Candidates may argue either for or against Stalin as having changed the nature of Russian government most, but must do so comparatively in the context of other rulers and leaders. Candidates may argue that the highly dictatorial nature of the Stalinist regime justifies this view and are likely to support this by reference to events such as the terror and the purges. Others may argue that this represented continuity with the nature of much previous Russian government, even if the scale was much greater. Many candidates may show awareness that some historians see great continuity between Lenin and Stalin whereas others view Stalin as significantly different from Lenin. This could be very usefully debated. Candidates may argue in favour of Alexander II because of the emancipation of the serfs and his other reforms such as the zemstva. Candidates may argue in favour of Alexander III because of ‘the Reaction’ though many will see this as a reversion to traditional autocracy. Candidates may argue that the end of over 300 years of Romanov rule in February 1917 was the most significant turning point in the nature of Russian government as it ended the 304 year old Romanov dynasty, but may argue that ultimately this led to the replacement of ‘Romanov Tsars’ by ‘red Tsars’. Many candidates will undoubtedly argue that October 1917 and the triumph of Bolshevism significantly changed the nature of Russian government as it crushed all possibility that a liberal democracy might emerge in Russia. Candidates may argue that Khrushchev’s secret speech of 1956 and his subsequent de-stalinisation marked a significant change in the nature of Russian government.

**Examiner’s Report**

It has become a regular feature of questions that deal with Russian governments for candidates to focus too much on anything that occurred and to dismiss the development of government as incidental. Unfortunately, this session was no different. Candidates must realise that economic reforms such as emancipation of the peasantry, collectivisation and five-year plans only become relevant when they are linked to political, administrative and ideological methods and changes in government. Some wanted to include foreign policy and wars or else failed to show how a concern for the welfare of the people was linked to government; the same applied to sections on social policies. Several candidates assessed each Russian ruler between 1855 and 1964 (though many stopped in 1956) but without drawing any comparisons with Stalin or making him the reference point of a synthesis. Those candidates who did discuss repression, the fate of opposition, ideology, political parties, the absence of democracy, one party state, the 1936 Constitution, and compared developments under Stalin with changes under other rulers, scored well. 1861, 1881, 1905 and 1917 were seen as alternative pivotal moments.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 10 (2) | Assess the view that all the rulers of Russia had similar aims in domestic policy in the period from 1855 to 1964 |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the phrase ‘similar aims in domestic policy’ in their answers. Candidates are likely to want to argue both for and against this assertion. Candidates may well argue that retention of power, whether autocratic or dictatorial, and the crushing of opposition were priorities for all the rulers even if some were singularly unsuccessful in achieving those goals. Candidates may well argue that the modernisation of Russia was an aim for all the rulers, though candidates are likely to differentiate between rulers such as Alexander III and Stalin in terms of motives and extent. Candidates may however wish to argue that the communist rulers had very different core priorities to the Tsars in terms of political ideology and social priorities; others may contend that this should have been the case but that rulers, especially Stalin (though some will also indict Lenin). Candidates may argue that the Tsars were not uniform in their core aims; they are likely to see Alexander II as having different priorities to his successors, citing emancipation and the other reforms of the 1860s in support. Candidates may also argue that the communist rulers were not uniform in their core aims either; they are likely to argue that Khrushchev had very different priorities to Stalin, citing de-stalinisation as support. Candidates may well understand that whether Lenin and Stalin had similar aims is subject to historical debate.

**Examiner’s Report**

This question generally worked well. Some candidates made hard work of the question by ignoring ‘similar aims’ and ran through a narrative of everything that happened. Many wrote about motives, so rehearsing recent past questions on this theme; and some described policy areas and outcomes. But most candidates could focus on a range of aims, though often comparisons were limited in scope. A significant number talked about foreign policy as linked with involvement in wars. This might have been all right if the argument had been linked to domestic issues but, sadly, this was seldom the case. The better ones picked up on the desire to modernise and to remain in power but more could have been made of repression and the handling of opposition. Here economic goals – surprisingly – got less coverage than in many answers to Q. 10.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 10 (3) | Assess the view that the lives of the peasants in Russia did not improve in the period from 1855 to 1964. |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the phrases ‘lives of the peasants’ and ’did not improve’ in their answers. Candidates may well consider how valid the phrase ’did not improve’ is. Candidates may argue that some rulers, for example Alexander II and Khrushchev made a sustained attempt to improve the lives of the people. Some candidates may argue that despite the brutality, Lenin and even Stalin did do some things that improved the lives of the people. Arguably the communists did much more to introduce social reform, for example in the sphere of education, than the Tsars. Candidates may also argue that there was little real improvement in the lives of the people. For example, peasants were serfs under the Romanovs until 1861, but candidates may argue that there was little real improvement and / or that collectivization was a ‘second serfdom’. Before and after 1917 there was harsh treatment of the peasantry by both regimes; ‘squeezed dry’ to finance industrialization. Famine hit, e.g. 1891, 1921 & 1932, regardless of regime, although arguably Stalin’s denial of the famine of the 1930s made its impact worse. Control over their lives, whether exercised through the Mir, the Land Captains & the Kolkhoz was a common feature, although distinctions may clearly be made. Candidates may use the systematic Russification of the non-Russian peasants both before and after 1917 as another clear example of there being no significant change. Candidates may also wish to argue that there were times when rulers did improve the lives of the peasants, but that these improvements were most typically temporary rather than embedded. For example, the peasants were given glimpses of reform, e.g. the Peasants Land Bank from the 1880s, the Decree on Land in 1917 and the NEP from 1921. All of these changes led to improvements, albeit temporary, in their living and working conditions. Both regimes had a temporary Kulak policy under Stolypin from 1906 & under the NEP from 1921-28 as peasants were encouraged to ‘enrich themselves’.

**Examiner’s Report**

This was a very popular question which produced a range of responses. All focused on peasants (or peasents and pheasants!). Good candidates used a thematic framework (land issues, finance, repression, working and living conditions) and were able to distinguish between different types of peasants and so recognise that their lives varied from era to era; there was no uniform development. Some saw significant improvements under the soviets but only better essays referred to the educational, health and social progress made after 1945. Some believed that major changes for the better occurred under Alexander II, Lenin and Khrushchev but the rule of Alexander III, Nicholas II and Stalin were times of regression. Themes that were addressed included opportunities, land ownership, freedoms (or the reverse), religious and social welfare – less was said about the attitudes of the state, exploitation, taxation, grain seizures. Few discussed the First World War and Provisional Government, and there were some alarming gaps of knowledge concerning Stolypin and the NEP. Descriptive and chronological approaches characterised weaker answers which often had some novel things to say about Emancipation.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| June 10 (1) | How far do you agree that the October Revolution of 1917 was the most important  turning point in the development of Russian government in the period from 1855 to  1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the phrase ‘most important turning point’ and ‘the development of Russian government’ in their answers. Candidates may argue either for or against the communist takeover in 1917 as the most important turning point, but must do so comparatively in the context of other turning points. What follows is not an exclusive list, but consideration could be given to defeat in the Crimean War in 1856, the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the 1905 Revolution, the February Revolution of 1917, Stalin’s gaining total power by 1929 or Stalin’s death in 1953 and replacement by Khrushchev by 1956. For example, candidates might argue that the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 marked the end of any hope of meaningful reform from above by the Romanov dynasty, and set the Romanovs on course for revolution and their downfall. Candidates may argue that February 1917 was the most significant turning point as it ended the 304 year old Romanov dynasty, but may argue that ultimately this led to the replacement of ‘Romanov Tsars’ by ‘red Tsars’. Many candidates will undoubtedly argue that October 1917 and the triumph of Bolshevism was the most important turning point as it crushed all possibility that a liberal democracy might emerge in Russia and transformed Russia into the Soviet Union – the world’s first communist state. Candidates however may well consider that Lenin’s death in 1924 was the most significant turning point, perverting the true course of the Russian Revolution because Stalin succeeded Lenin. Candidates who argue this are likely to suggest that Stalin’s victory in the ensuing power struggle led Russia down a very different road than that being paved by Lenin. Other candidates may use a counter-argument based on more recent archival evidence to suggest that there was significant continuity between Lenin and Stalin and argue this. Candidates may argue that Khrushchev’s secret speech of 1956 and subsequent de-stalinisation marked a significant turning point in the development of Russian government.

**Examiner’s Report**

Candidates needed to focus on October 1917 as a turning point in the development of Russian **government**. While some viewed the October Revolution as just one of several turning points, many regarded ‘government’ to be anything of significance that happened in Russia. This was a common weakness in many essays and resulted in candidates assessing government policies, focusing a great deal on economic and social developments, and seriously unbalancing their essays. Thus there were many detailed accounts of Stalin’s economic policies but without any explanation to link them to the question. The better ones kept such coverage brief and linked it to a salient feature of government (e.g. centralisation or the power and directing authority of the state). A surprisingly large number confused the February and October Revolutions and often conflated the two events. Where candidates did struggle was in setting up a comparative analysis and evaluation of turning points. Often this vital area got lost or was reduced to a highly sequential, at times chronological, approach. The best candidates assessed the ideology, structure, organisation and tools of government across the period, and were aware of major changes as well as continuity within and between Tsarist and Communist regimes. Institutions, personnel, support for rulers, opposition and its fate, nationalities, sources of authority and power were often handled with some considerable skill.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**



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| June 10 (2) | Assess the view that Russia’s communist leaders did less than the Tsars to improve  the lives of the working class in the period from 1855 to 1964. |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the living and working conditions of Russia’s industrial and urban working class. Candidates should compare the experience of the working class under the tsars with their experience under the communists. Candidates may wish to compare the expectations the working class had from their ‘Little Fathers’ with their expectations under the Bolsheviks. Some candidates may compare and contrast Marxist ideology with the actual experience of life in the USSR. Candidates are likely to compare the impact of industrialization on the lives of the people, both before and after 1917. Similarities could include the grim experience of industrialization experienced by the proletariat, both as a consequence of Witte’s ‘Great Spurt’ and Stalin’s Five Year Plans. Candidates may wish to compare the scale of the suffering under Lenin and Stalin with that experienced before 1917. Candidates may argue that the working peoples gained benefits from Soviet rule, for example in the sphere of education. Candidates are likely to limit their evaluation of life for the proletariat under the Tsars from around 1890 as there were comparatively few urban workers prior to Witte’s ‘Great Spurt’. However, some candidates may deal with the whole period from 1855 as there were serfs working in factories prior to Emancipation in 1861. Candidates may treat Russia’s peasants as part of their discussions as the growing proletariat consisted largely of urbanised peasants, but the main focus should involve a consideration of the experience of Russia’s industrial working class or proletariat and candidates who fail to discuss the industrial and urban workers should not be put into Levels (i) or (ii) or (iii) .

**Examiner’s Report**

Candidates frequently turned this question into one about the treatment of the Russian peasantry and while many peasants did indeed become ‘working class’, living in towns and working in factories, many candidates knew little about how industrial developments affected the lives of Russians. Others made perfunctory references to the industrial workers, relying on assertions and generalisations. The better candidates were clearly able to make the necessary distinctions and focus on the question at hand. Several candidates were very well informed on employment statistics in the Stalinist period and housing and working conditions. The best answers examined living and working conditions, personal freedom, civil rights and electoral opportunities, social and cultural changes, especially in health and educational opportunities, how the lives of women improved over the period, and made effective contrasts between the Tsarist and Communist periods. Such answers were often detailed, using good illustrative knowledge about living and working conditions, prices and wages, working hours and practices, trade unions, factories and the demands of the state. Many gave good assessments of life under Stalin and Khrushchev but knowledge of developments under Alexander III and Nicholas II was less assured and, surprisingly, few analysed changes under the Provisional Government. Strong essays organised ideas thematically; weaker responses tended to adopt a chronological and descriptive approach.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**



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| June 10 (3) | ‘Opposition to Russian governments was ineffective in the period from 1855 to  1964.’ How far do you agree with this view? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

No set conclusions are to be expected, but candidates must answer the question and address the theme over the full period. Candidates should focus on the phrase ‘opposition to Russian governments was ineffective’ in their answers. Candidates may argue that for much of the period this view can be justified. In support they are likely to cite examples such as Stalinist terror, Lenin’s victory in the Civil War and crushing of the Kronstadt Uprising and the silencing of opposition under Alexander III. Candidates may also argue that the crushing of the 1905 Revolution illustrates this view. However many candidates may argue that opposition under the Tsars was increasingly effective. This can be supported in the reign of Alexander II by the emergence of a wide range of opposition groups such as the Narodniks and the Peoples’ Will. His assassination may be used to illustrate effective opposition (although some candidates may argue that the only consequence was his replacement by a far more effective autocrat in Alexander III). Candidates may view the reign of Alexander III as a temporary setback to opposition and see the 1905 Revolution as a dress rehearsal and narrow escape for Nicholas II.

Candidates may argue that by 1917 opposition groups such as the SRs, the Mensheviks and the Cadets were increasingly effective. Candidates are very likely to support this by reference to the abdication of Nicholas II and consequent end to the Romanov dynasty. Candidates are very likely to argue that in 1917 the Bolsheviks emerged as an extremely effective opposition group and are likely to support this by reference to the roles of Lenin and Trotsky. Candidates may argue that under communism opposition was much less effective. They are likely to understand that Lenin’s banning of factions and Stalin’s terror led to a situation when opposition even within the communist party was perilous! Candidates may argue that ‘the Thaw’ under Khrushchev led to a situation where within the party opposition could flourish; they may well use Khrushchev’s enforced resignation to support this argument.

**Examiner’s Report**

This question was generally well answered. Not everyone agreed with the premise and cited February and October 1917 as prime examples when opposition groups overthrew the ruling government. Some answers made good use of the successes (1881, 1905, 1917 and the Civil War for the Communists) to evaluate why, nevertheless, so often, opposition failed. Most candidates did address the heart of the question, assessing the occasional successes and setting them against the very frequent failures. The best candidates examined a range of opposition groups and parties, assessed their aims, organisation and following, and set any limitations in the context of their subsequent failure. Most attributed their failure to government pre-emptive methods but also noted that there were opposition factions within governing administrations, notably those of Lenin and Stalin. Weaker candidates tended to describe rather than assess their ineffectiveness, focused too much on government repression and presented a limited range of examples and explanations. Some wrote about the actual effects of opposition on rulers, making links to issues of motives and aims (a past recent question area). Such answers needed something at the very least about the fate of opposition to secure a reasonable reward. Surprisingly, many did not actually identify opposition groups that much – although some unwisely included opposition from foreign powers in particular the Hungarian uprising – and more could have been made of the importance of the Civil War.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**



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| Jan 11 (1) | Assess the view that the 1905 Revolution changed Russian government more than other events in the period from 1855 to 1964. |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on ‘the 1905 Revolution’ and the extent to which it led to changes in Russian government in their answers. Candidates may argue either for or against the importance of the 1905 Revolution but must do so comparatively in the context of other events. What follows is not an exclusive list, but consideration could be given to the effects of the Crimean War, the reforms of Alexander II, in particular the establishment of Zemstva, the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the Statute of State Security and Land Captains introduced by Alexander III, the First World War, the February Revolution of 1917, the October Revolution of 1917, Stalin’s victory in the 1920s power struggle and his death in 1953. Examiners must not expect to find reference to all these examples in candidate answers and candidates may select other events in their answers. Candidates may argue that the 1905 Revolution changed Russian government because Bloody Sunday was a pivotal moment when Russians lost faith in their Tsar. They may argue that the main impact of the Revolution was the issue of the October Manifesto and the consequent abandonment of autocracy through elections to the Duma. Candidates may however argue that the Fundamental Laws and the rigging of the elections to the 3rd and 4th Dumas suggest that little of substance really changed. Candidates may argue that the First World War was the event with the most important impact on the development of Russian government because it was the horrific impact of the war both at the front and at home that sealed the fate of the Romanovs and, in turn, the Provisional Government. Arguably the appeal of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and the triumph of Lenin were directly related to the impact of the First World War. Candidates may argue that the end of over 300 years of Romanov rule in February 1917 was the event with the most important impact as it ended the 304 year old Romanov dynasty. It could also be argued that ultimately this led to the replacement of ‘Romanov Tsars’ by ‘Red Tsars’. Many candidates will undoubtedly argue that October 1917 and the triumph of Bolshevism was the event with the most important impact as it crushed all possibility that a liberal democracy might emerge in Russia and transformed Russia into the Soviet Union – the world’s first communist state. Some candidates may well consider that Lenin’s death in 1924 was the event with the most important impact, perverting the true course of the Russian Revolution because Stalin succeeded Lenin. Candidates who argue this are likely to suggest that Stalin’s victory in the ensuing power struggle led Russia down a very different road than that being paved by Lenin. Other candidates may use a counter-argument based on more recent archival evidence to suggest that there was significant continuity between Lenin and Stalin and argue accordingly. Candidates may argue that Khrushchev’s secret speech of 1956 and subsequent de-stalinisation was the event with the most important impact on the development of Russian government though others may argue that the continuation of communism way beyond 1964 somewhat negates that view.

**Examiner’s Report**

A popular question. Knowledge of the 1905 Revolution varied although most candidates had something to say about the October Manifesto, the Fundamental Laws and the Dumas. The focus of the essay should have been on changes in Russian governments during the period but many answers focused on policies and reforms. Weak essays offered only a limited assessment of the 1905 Revolution before turning to agricultural and industrial policies, without linking them to the nature of the governments responsible for directing them. Some essays confused the 1905 and 1917 revolutions and many candidates did not get beyond 1917 or 1924. Better essays compared the 1905 Revolution with other key events, notably the more liberal autocracy of Alexander II, the repressive autocracy of Alexander III, the liberal democracy in 1917, the veiled dictatorship under Lenin, totalitarianism under Stalin and the more liberal decentralised regime under Khrushchev. Their essays reflected core themes in government: autocracy; governmental machinery, institutions, personnel; decision-making capabilities; one party as against a multi-party system; repression and controls, linked to the defeat of opposition; the limited existence of representative bodies.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 11 (2) | Assess the view that economic change in Russia was more successful under Stalin than any other ruler in the period from 1855 to 1964. |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on ‘economic change’ and whether it was more successful under Stalin in their answers. Candidates may focus on the reasons for the economic development of Russia from 1855 to 1964. A relative comparison of Russia’s economic development under the Tsars from 1855 – 1917 and under communism may be undertaken. In support of the view in the question candidates are likely to focus on the achievements of the Five Year Plans both before and after the Second World War. Candidates may argue that Russia’s victory in the Second World War (as opposed to their defeats in most other wars during this period) and Russia’s emergence as a global super-power in the Cold War are adequate testament to the significance of Stalin’s role in Russian industrialisation. Any answers that are limited to the importance of Stalin’s role in terms of economic change within Russia are likely to be imbalanced. Candidates should compare and contrast the roles of others, for example Alexander II, Lenin and Witte (in the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II) in order to fully answer the question. For example, candidates may well argue that Alexander II’s Emancipation Edict of 1861 enabled much of the economic change that followed to happen, though others may argue that its economic impact on the lives of most peasants was insignificant. Witte’s ‘Great Spurt’ accomplished a great deal in terms of modernizing the economy in the 1890s. The NEP made important progress in terms of development after the economic low point of 1921. Candidates may also choose to argue that economic change under Stalin was only successful in terms of industrial might and that the consequences of collectivisation and the Five Year Plans were dreadful for many Russians. Some candidates may make a case for the economic reforms and achievements of Khrushchev and refer to his Five Year Plan, Seven Year Plan and Virgin Lands Scheme.

**Examiner’s Report**

A popular question but not consistently well answered. How to measure ‘successfully’ was the key to a good essay. Most candidates wrote about Stalin’s industrial and agricultural reforms, and some had excellent statistical data in support. Many also considered the social effects of his economic reforms. The better or best responses set out Stalin’s policies, using selected statistics and details, and compared them with Alexander II, Witte, Stolypin, Lenin and Khrushchev – though Stolypin, Lenin and Khrushchev did not always get the coverage they might have warranted. Some candidates tended to list without much cross-referencing, though the best did the last and adjudged degrees of success and change. For some, not enough was made of the linkage of aims to outcomes in assessing success levels. Knowledge of economic change under the Tsars was often less convincing apart from references to the Emancipation Decree, Witte’s ‘Great Spurt’ and the building of the Trans-Siberian railway, and many weaker answers also interpreted economic change under Stalin far too narrowly and often only wrote about the Five Year Plans in very vague terms.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 11 (3) | ‘Communists and Tsars ruled Russia in the same way.’ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on the similarities and differences between the ways in which the Communists and the Tsars ruled Russia in this period. Candidates may well choose to concentrate predominantly on a comparison between the Tsars and the communists as rulers, but the most successful answers may involve comparisons between the individual rulers within each period. Arguments in favour of overall similarity might include autocratic/dictatorial government, the use of terror, centralized control of the economy and brief periods of reform. Comparisons could also be made at a personal level, for example between Alexander III and Stalin. Both regimes tended only to reform under pressure. The regimes ruled in similar ways, but there were considerable differences of scale (eg in terms of economic progress, urbanisation & the use of terror). A case could be made for arguing that the communists were a more ruthless and efficient twentieth century variant of Russian authoritarianism. In terms of arguing that there was more difference than similarity in the ways in which Russia was governed by the Tsars and the communists, arguments might include the very different ideologies, the fate of the old elite & the attitudes towards religion and the Orthodox Church. In terms of comparisons between the individual rulers within each period there was little in terms of continuity in terms of how Alexander II governed Russia from 1855 (beyond his desire to uphold the principle of autocracy) and Alexander III’s approach to government which was in significant contrast to his father’s. On the other hand there was a great deal of continuity between the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II in intent (though rather less in terms of outcome!). In terms of the communist period, the most interesting debate for candidates is the extent to which Stalinism was Leninism’s baby; did Stalin take the government of Russia down different paths to those being paved by Lenin? Candidates may consider the period of Lenin’s rule and to what extent he aimed to set up a harsh dictatorial regime. And of course, particular reforms implemented by Khrushchev after 1956 may be usefully contrasted with the ethos of centralisation which had coloured Stalin’s later years in power.

**Examiner’s Report**

Most candidates agreed with the premise and there were several good answers. Better essays showed how Russia was ruled in various ways, tried to evaluate the extent of similarity or difference and were cognisant of both continuity and change. A comparison of the means and methods by which Russia was ruled lay at the heart of their answers. Common areas of assessment included: repression, terror, the removal of opponents, propaganda, controls; the use of reforms; ideas on decision-making; methods of rule via varying degrees of autocracy and dictatorship, occasional conciliation and gestures towards reformers. Similarity was much better addressed than difference. Weaker answers focused too much on economic and social policies, or with not enough of a link to ‘ruled’ to justify their inclusion. Some stressed the role of repression and terror at the expense of other methods. The difference between Capitalism and Communism as economic systems was rarely mentioned and knowledge of Lenin was at times very thin.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| June 11 (1) | Assess the view that the condition of the peasantry in Russia was transformed in  the period from 1855 to 1964. |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on the similarities and differences between the condition of the peasantry and the treatment that the peasants received, both before and after 1917. Transformed is the key word in this title; candidates may well consider how valid this premise is. Candidates may well argue against the condition of the peasantry being transformed. It could be argued that the peasantry made little progress in many ways during this period and that predominantly their living and working conditions remained bleak. Peasants were only serfs under the Romanovs, but some candidates may argue that there was little real improvement and / or that collectivization was a ‘second serfdom’. Before and after 1917 there was harsh treatment of the peasantry by both regimes; in both periods they were ‘squeezed dry’ to finance industrialization. Famine hit, e.g. 1891, 1921 & 1932, regardless of regime, although arguably Stalin’s denial of the famine of the 1930s made its impact worse. Control over their lives, whether exercised through the Mir, the Land Captains or the Kolkhoz was a common feature, although distinctions may clearly be made. However there were periods of reform both before and after 1917 that should enable candidates to successfully support the view in the question. The peasants were given glimpses of reform, e.g. Emancipation in 1861, the Peasants Land Bank from the 1880s, the Decree on Land in 1917 and the NEP from 1921. All of these changes led to improvements, although some were temporary, in their living and working conditions. Both regimes had a temporary Kulak policy under Stolypin from 1906 & under the NEP from 1921-28 as peasants were encouraged to ‘enrich themselves’. Arguably the communists did much more to introduce social reform, for example in the sphere of education, than the Tsars. Candidates may argue that whilst some peasants suffered dreadfully under Stalin because of collectivisation and de-kulakisation the survivors had significantly better health care and education than their predecessors. And their prospects were further enhanced by Khrushchev’s Virgin Lands Scheme.

**Examiner’s Report**

The best candidates followed a purely thematic approach which led to the use of much synthesis. Most challenged the statement and were able to identify instances of continuity rather than change. Chronological routes work far less well than thematic since, all too often, comparative analysis was omitted or added as an after-thought. There seemed to be a good depth of knowledge from many, although some seemed rather hazy over Lenin and the reasons for the NEP. The vast majority made a good attempt at this question and were able to come to a supported conclusion. Some candidates seemed to have been coached into an emphasis on synthesis and were able to link the different regimes, but offered very limited factual evidence in support. The key word that candidates needed to focus on was transformed, and this was overlooked by some - who simply discussed change and continuity and appeared to assume that change was the same as transformed. Quite often candidates wanted to assess whether life was bleak or miserable, as has been asked in previous questions. This is an important message for candidates who want to achieve the high levels: they must focus on the key word or phrase in the question. Better answers were thematic, whereas weaker candidates just went through the rulers one at a time.Some students overlooked Stalin or Stolypin, and many responses neglected the post-Stalin years, whilst others seemed to be desperate to talk about industry and the proletariat. Too many candidates were unable to differentiate between the better off peasants and the rest. Far too many wrote about the kulaks and their fate in the early 1930s without saying when and how this class of peasant came into existence thereby overlooking a key element in the transformation of peasant life in this period. Alexander II and Stalin were seen as having the biggest impact on peasant life. Living and working conditions featured, often well; repression was a major theme; the attitudes of the State and its rulers, exploitation , military demands, fiscal pressures, the nature of state-driven reforms, featured, more unevenly. More could have been made of the better or even good times, the improvements (educational, health, life expectancy, working practices and conditions, even areas of welfare), set against the obviously bad times. Collectivisation still needs to be examined more closely. A few candidates spotted generational issues in all this, with younger peasants more receptive to state-led changes. Much is written about political areas but it is moot point just how much those areas really mattered to most peasants. Overall, many cogent arguments for change or continuity in the condition of the peasantry were put forward – although only a minority really got to grips with the ‘transformation’ as mentioned in the question. This was a surprise as change and continuity is at the core of the unit and put in such extreme language one would think that the question form would prompt a direct engagement of this aspect of the mark scheme.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| June 11 (2) | ‘The communist rulers were effective autocrats; the Tsars were not.’ How far do you  agree with this view of Russian government in the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on the relative effectiveness of the communists and the Romanov Tsars as autocratic or dictatorial rulers of Russia. Candidates are likely to define their criteria for assessing the effectiveness of Russian rulers in this period and will then judge the rulers against them. The following list is not exclusive but obvious criteria might include the extent of the ruler’s personal power and authority and how effectively they dealt with opposition, the extent to which they successfully implemented their policies or the extent to which they were able to develop the power and international standing of the Russian state.

Candidates can be expected to refer to the Okhrana, OGPU, NKVD, KGB and other secret services. Candidates who do not restrict themselves to a narrow definition of effectiveness are likely to be more successful! Candidates may well choose predominantly to concentrate on a comparison between the Tsars and the communists as rulers, but candidates may make comparisons between the individual rulers within each period. When arguing in support of the view in the question, candidates are likely to argue that Lenin and Stalin were ‘effective autocrats’. Lenin seized power in 1917 and successfully defended his revolution during the Civil War. Other parties were all banned, as were factions within the Communist Party. Candidates could argue that Stalin was even more effective, for example arguing that his economic policies in the 1930s enabled the USSR to successfully survive Barbarossa and emerge victorious in the Great Fatherland War. Candidates may argue that his ‘effectiveness’ was achieved at horrific expense and with needless brutality.

Candidates are also likely to argue in support of the view in the question that neither Alexander II nor Nicholas II were ‘effective autocrats’ – the former was faced with a rising tide of opposition from the early 1870s whilst the latter was forced to abdicate in 1917 and butchered the following year with the rest of his family. Candidates may argue that Alexander II was effective because of the successful implementation of sweeping reforms, for example emancipation of the serfs, in the 1860s. When arguing against the view in the question, candidates are likely to be able to differentiate between the relative effectiveness of the individual Tsars. Candidates may well see Alexander III as an effective autocrat, although it can be argued that his repressive and reactionary policies were effective in the short-term but, as Trotsky put it, ‘bequeathed a revolution’ to his son and successor, Nicholas II. Candidates may argue that Alexander III achieved very little for Russia or his dynasty despite his apparent reassertion of autocratic control. Candidates may also argue that Khrushchev was far from an ‘effective autocrat’ using his overthrow and forced retirement in 1964 and the failure of policies such as the Virgin Lands scheme as obvious examples.

**Examiner’s Report**

This question was again very popular. The best candidates cross-referenced the Tsars and the commissars and made good use of synthesis. Weaker candidates simply adopted a chronological approach and listed the policies of the rulers. Good candidates outlined what an effective autocrat was, and then produced a thematic study assessing each of these criteria in turn - drawing on the appropriate leaders. However, some struggled with ‘effective autocrat’ and just considered whether they were effective *leaders* or not. Weaker students just discussed the leaders one at a time, and therefore missed the issue in the question about who was *more* effective. Most agreed with the statement but tended to assess who was most autocratic rather than how effective they were. Once again, as with Question 7, few listed criteria against which effectiveness could be assessed. Those that were weather tended to offload prepared material or else follow too descriptive a route. The key to a good answer here was close comparison, repression, the use of the secret police, methods and agencies, terror and fear, ideologies, the use of state power, the use of reforms the nature of support, set against how opposition was dealt with. Some good answers did interrogate teh nature of power and the sources of rulers’ authority and some assessed performance in wars, however, it was only the best candidates who were able to establish a meaningful criteria to assess how effective leaders were – many responses simply took ‘effective’ to mean ‘successful’ autocrats. There were a number of answers which had a narrow focus on repression. Some candidates discussed the economy, but did not make the jump they might, of arguing that such and such a leader – such as Stalin – was more effective because autocracy allowed a more effective implementation of economic policy.

T**hree Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| June 11 (3) | ‘All Russia’s rulers tried to modernise Russia.’ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates should focus on the phrases ‘all Russia’s rulers’ and ‘tried to modernise Russia’ in their answers. ‘All’ and ‘tried’ are key words that most successful answers are likely to address. Candidates should argue both for and against the view in the question. Candidates may argue that all of Russia’s rulers modernised Russia using examples such as those that follow:

* Alexander II Emancipation of the serfs and other reforms (e.g. Zemstva and Trial by Jury)
* Alexander III Peasants Land Bank / appointed Witte (start of his ‘Great Spurt’)
* Nicholas II Witte’s Great Spurt / the October Manifesto of 1905 / Stolypin’s Reforms
* Provisional Gov. Planned democratisation
* Lenin Decree on Land / War Communism / NEP
* Stalin Five Year Plans and Collectivisation
* Khrushchev Secret Speech / Virgin Lands / Space Race

Some candidates may focus on the social changes such as education, health, housing, religion and the position of women in society.

Clearly answers of the very highest quality can be written without considering all of these events, but the most able candidates will demonstrate a breadth of vision and a good understanding of the ways in which most rulers tried to modernise Russia. However, the assertion that all rulers tried to modernise Russia will be challenged by most candidates. When arguing against this view, candidates may argue that neither Alexander II nor Nicholas II tried to modernise Russia. They are likely to focus on their determination to uphold autocracy, the influence of Pobeodonotsev and his desire to keep ‘Russia in a frozen state’. They may argue that the appointment of Witte by Alexander IlI and the continuation of the Great Spurt under Nicholas II were purely because of the need to modernise the Russian Armed forces and that any other aspects of modernisation were unintended by-products. Candidates may argue that some rulers were at times forced into modernising policies because of adverse circumstances, eg the Crimean War or the Russo-Japanese War, or to ensure their regime’s survival. Candidates may argue that Nicholas II was not trying to modernise Russia when introducing reforms from 1905; he was simply trying to keep his throne. Some candidates may also challenge the motives of other rulers when modernising; for example they may argue that the maintenance of autocracy was a key driver in Alexander II’s decision to emancipate the serfs and that most of his other social reforms had to be implemented once the serfs were no longer under the jurisdiction of the landowners. Some candidates may argue that the short-lived Provisional Government may have intended to modernise Russia but fell because it singularly failed to do so.

**Examiner’s Report**

The best candidates not only distinguished deliberate attempts to modernise as opposed to pragmatism, but failed and successful attempts at modernisation. Most agreed that Stalin was the main one to modernise, but few candidates picked up on the reluctance of Alexander III and Nicholas II to modernise at all. As with all responses on this paper, good answers were thematic. They clearly assessed issues such as political or economic modernisation, and therefore could make sophisticated judgements. For example seeing modernisation in one way, but not in others. This also promoted synthesis - with a number of good candidates seeing connections between Stalin & Alexander III, for example. A number overlooked ‘tried to’ and just discussed whether they did modernise or not. Most confusion revolved around Lenin, and the Provisional Government was almost universally dismissed. As with previous questions in this section, some candidates just went through the leaders one at a time and effectively listed what they did. Those who did argue usually suggested that Alexander II and the communists made significant changes, whereas Alexander III and Nicholas II were the most reactionary. A pleasing number of answers looked at social changes that are often overlooked such as education, divorce, abortion and healthcare. Some looked at the question as one about motives and at the desire or need to modernise set against other factors such as ideological imperatives, personal survival, genuineness in reforms, military needs (etc). Others assessed degrees of modernisation, outcomes set against aims. Often the two overlapped. ‘Catching up with the West’ and ‘war as the locomotive of change’ featured quite often. Economic areas were usually covered, often thoroughly, though with some imbalance between agriculture and industry (often reflecting, of course, rulers’ priorities). Political areas were discussed, with better responses noting the divergence between economic modernisation and political non-modernisation, Knowledge regarding modernisation was generally good with most candidates being able to draw examples from right across the period.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 12 (1) | ‘Lenin was more successful in dealing with opposition than any other ruler of Russia in the period from 1855 to 1964.’ How far do you agree with this view? |

**Markscheme guidance**

Candidates may well argue that Lenin was the most successful because he cut a swath through the other parties that aspired to power in 1917 and successfully defended his revolution during the Civil War. He created the world’s first communist state and died with his party securely in power. Other parties were all banned, as were factions within the Communist Party. However, candidates must also consider whether other rulers dealt with opposition more successfully than Lenin did. Candidates who adopt a comparative approach and demonstrate synthesis throughout the essay are likely to be most successful. Most candidates are likely to concentrate their alternative arguments on Alexander III and Stalin when considering whether Lenin was the most successful ruler at dealing with opposition. Candidates may well see Alexander III and Stalin as more successful at dealing with opposition than either Alexander II (who faced a growing tide of opposition and was ultimately assassinated) or Nicholas II (under whom the Romanov dynasty ended) or Khrushchev (who was forced to retire by the Central Committee in 1964) or Prince Lvov/Kerensky who were swept aside in 1917. Candidates who choose to differentiate between dealing with opponents and dealing with the reasons for opposition may see Alexander II in a different light. They may wish to argue that the granting of concessions was a more successful way of dealing with opposition than ruthless repression. It can be argued that Alexander III’s imposition of ‘the reaction’ from 1881 bequeathed Nicholas II a revolution. Stalin defeated all of his rivals during the power struggle with consummate skill and exterminated real and imagined opponents with bloodcurdling efficiency for the next 25 years and his chilling terror may well lead candidates to argue that he, rather than Lenin, was the most successful ruler at dealing with opposition.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 12 (2) | ‘The development of Russian government was influenced more by war than any other factor.’ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates may argue that the development of Russian government was influenced more by war than any other factor using a variety of evidence. The horrific impact of the First World War, both at the front and at home, sealed the fate of the Romanovs and, in turn, the Provisional Government in 1917. Arguably the appeal of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and the triumph of Lenin were directly related to the impact of the First World War. War can therefore be viewed as the prime cause of the end of autocratic government and the failure of the temporary move towards constitutional government. Candidates may argue that October 1917 and the triumph of Bolshevism crushed all possibility that a liberal democracy might emerge in Russia and transformed Russia into the Soviet Union – the world’s first communist state. Defeat in the Crimean War can be seen as the trigger for Alexander II’s programme of reform and the introduction of Zemstva as a new system of local government post-Emancipation. Similarly the Russo-Japanese War led to Nicholas II’s announcement of the October Manifesto and the formation of the Duma. In a pure sense, this was the abandonment of absolutism. Arguably, victory in the Second World War entrenched Stalin’s dictatorial power and had a brutal impact on the government of many of the outlying ‘republics’ of the USSR.

However, candidates may choose to argue that these developments in Russian Government had other causes. The impact of the First World War was not the only cause of either of the revolutions of 1917 for example. Candidates may choose to argue that the revolutions themselves were multi-causal and that they rather than war had the most important impact on the development of Russian government in this period. The personality of Nicholas II and the tactics of Lenin also played their part. Indeed, candidates are likely to argue that a variety of other people had a significant impact on developments of Russian Government, for example from Alexander II to Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev. Some candidates may well consider that Stalin’s rise to power had a very important influence on Russian government. Candidates who argue this are likely to suggest that Stalin led Russia down a very different road than that being paved by Lenin. Other candidates may use a counter-argument based on more recent archival evidence to suggest that there was significant continuity between Lenin and Stalin. Candidates may argue that Khrushchev’s secret speech of 1956 and subsequent de-stalinisation had an important influence on the development of Russian government though the continuation of communism way beyond 1964 somewhat negates that view.

What follows is not an exclusive list, but consideration could be given to the impact of key individuals (for example rulers/ministers) or key events (for example assassinations / revolutions / introduction of significant policy changes). Candidates must focus on how their chosen factors influenced the development of government. Economic reforms such as emancipation of the peasantry, collectivisation and five-year plans only become relevant when they are linked to political, administrative and ideological methods and changes in government. Candidates who discuss aspects of Russian government such as reform and repression, the fate of opposition, changes in ideology, the absence of democracy, the one party state and compare the relative influence of war and other factors on these developments are most likely to be successful. Examiners must not expect to find reference to all these aspects in candidates’ answers and candidates may select other factors in their answers.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

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| Jan 12 (3) | To what extent did Russian people lose more than they gained from economic and social changes during the period from 1855 to 1964? |

**Markscheme Guidance**

Candidates are likely to focus on the main economic and social changes during the period; weaker responses are likely to give particular attention to developments after 1917 whereas better responses should present a balanced assessment of the whole period. How candidates define ‘lost’ and ‘gained’ in their assessment and the variety of examples used to illustrate ‘Russian people’ could determine the quality of the essay. Some candidates may adopt a chronological approach, which will need frequent cross-referencing while others, who assess the effects of economic and social changes on different groups of Russians, are likely to produce a more effective synthesis. Most candidates are likely to discuss the emancipation of the serfs but better responses should assess the extent to which people were advantaged and disadvantaged by the changes from 1861 to 1917. The impact of industrial developments on urban and rural people, particularly resulting from Witte’s ‘Great Spurt’, may appear in some essays and some candidates may also consider the minority nationalities in the Russian Empire, most of whom endured consistent suffering for much of the period in question. References to War Communism, NEP, Five Year Plans, Collectivisation, Seven Year Plans and the Virgin Land policy may figure in most essays to underline the extent that Russians both gained and lost in the period from 1917 to 1964. Considerable emphasis is likely to be put on changes during Stalin’s regime and candidates may argue that any material gains were often at the expense of personal liberty. Some candidates will examine how far different social and economic groups benefited under the communists, perhaps assessing peasants, industrial and urban workers, merchants and landowners, and fluctuations in people’s standard of living and working conditions. Better responses might examine how far women gained after 1917, consider the way in which religious groups were affected, and discuss developments in education, particularly under Stalin and Khrushchev. The best essays are likely to suggest that some people gained and some people lost as a result of economic and social changes, and that beneficial experiences were not uniform and often short-lived. For example, the kulaks gained under Nicholas II and Lenin but lost a great deal under Stalin; and many city and urban workers gained materially during the 1930s but rural workers on the kolkhoz suffered intermittent famine and persistent hardship. Candidates are likely to conclude that while a minority of people ‘gained’ at some stage during the period, most Russians ‘lost’ rather more as a result of economic and social changes.

**Three Things I have learned from the guidance and report**

**Past questions**

On the next few pages you have three questions for each theme you’ve been taught in the Russia course. The aim of this is to familiarise yourself with the styles and types of questions you could be faced with in the exam and to give you a useful resource to help with planning and revising for the exam. Work with others as well to share and discuss your ideas and further develop your understanding of the questions.

1. Identify the key terms from each set of three questions;
2. Compare the three questions in each topic and explain how they are different from each other; and
3. Plan answers to these questions. Perhaps start with the one you would be most concerned about if faced with in the exam.

Peasantry and Agriculture

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| Jan10 | Assess the view that the lives of the peasants in Russia did not improve in the period from 1855 to 1964 |
| Jan11 | Assess the view that economic change in Russia was more successful under Stalin than any other ruler in the period from 1855 to 1964 |
| Jun 11 | Assess the view that the condition of the peasantry in Russia was transformed in the period 1855 to 1964 |

Industry

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| Jan11 | Assess the view that economic change in Russia was more successful under Stalin than any other ruler in the period from 1855 to 1964 |
| Jun11 | “All Russia’s rulers tried to modernise Russia.” How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855-1964? |
| Jan 04 | How far do you agree that the credit for industrialising Russia in the period 1855 to 1964 can only be given to Stalin? |

Condition of the workers

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| Jun 09 | Assess the view that the urban working classes of Russia were treated worse by the Communist rulers than by the Tsars during this period. |
| Jan 10 | How far do you agree that the working class of Russia suffered more under Communist rule than they did under the Tsars in the period 1855 to 1964? |
| Jun 08 | Assess the view that Alexander II did more to improve living and working conditions in Russia than any other ruler in the period 1855 to 1964 |

Government

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| Specimen | How different socially and economically was Tsarist Russia (1855-1917) from Communist Russia (1918-1964) |
| Jan 11 | “Communists and Tsars ruled Russia in the same way.” How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |
| Jan 12 | “The development of Russian government was influenced more by war than any other factor.” How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? |

Repression and Reform

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| Jan 02 | Why did the rulers of Russia so often resort to repression in the period 1855 to 1964? |
| Jan 09 | “Reluctant reformers” How far do you agree with this view of the rulers of Russia in the period from 1855 to 1964? |
| Specimen | Lenin described the Tsarist Russian Empire as a “prison of the peoples.” To what extent could that verdict be equally applied to Russia throughout the period from 1855 to 1964? |

Opposition

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| Jan 10 | Explain why opposition to Russian Governments was so rarely successful in the period 1855 to 1964 |
| Jun 07 | “Alexander III was more successful at dealing with opposition than other ruler of Russia in the period 1855 to 1964.” How far do you agree with this view? |
| Jan 02 | Why were the opponents to the Tsars ultimately more successful than those who opposed the Communist regime after 1917? |

Leadership

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| Jun 03 | Was Stalin the most successful ruler of Russia in the period 1855 to 1964? |
| Jan 10 (old) | “Lenin was the ruler who did most to transform Russia in the period from 1855 to 1964.” How far do you agree with this view? |
| Jan 10 (new) | Assess the view that all the rulers of Russia had similar aims in their domestic policy in the period from 1855 to 1964. |

Turning points

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| Jun 10 | How far do you agree that the October Revolution of 1917 was the most important turning point in the development of Russian Government in the period from 1855 to 1964? |
| Jan 11 | Assess the view that the 1905 revolution changed Russian government more than other events in the period from 1855 to 1964 |
| Jan 06 | How far do you agree that the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 was the most important turning point in the development of Russian government in the period from 1855 to 1964? |