

Helping the Class Analyze a Primary Source Image

As a group, follow the steps below to prepare to teach the class about this image related to the Russian Revolution.



Russia was slow to industrialize, so by 1900 about 80 percent of Russians were still rural peasants living in severe poverty. Although serfdom had been abolished in 1861, this did nothing to ease the poverty of most Russians. The poor conditions faced by the peasantry made them much more likely to support revolution.

Step 1: Learn about your assigned image.

- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 2 of the Student Text: “Russia Under the Czars” and “The Beginnings of Unrest.”
- Complete the Reading Notes questions for the portions of text you just read. Record answers in your notebook.
- Finally, conduct research on the Internet to learn at least two more interesting details about your assigned image or this time period during the Russian Revolution.

Step 2: Brainstorm questions.

- Within your group, figure out what the class should know after analyzing this image. The class will need to be able to complete three tasks:
 - a) identify important details in the image
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- Write a series of at least 10 questions to help the class complete those three tasks. Start with a few simple questions. Then build to more complex questions that link to people, places, and concepts in the Student Text.
- Write your 10 (or more) questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Step 3: Plan your questions.

- Carefully plan the order in which each group member will present and which questions they will ask. All group member must ask at least one question during the presentation.
- Put your questions in order so they go from easy to more complex. For example, ask this question first: “Describe the image.” Next, ask: “What are the people in the image doing?” Then, ask “Why do you think the people are taking these actions?”

Step 4: Rehearse.

- Take turns having one group member ask the questions while the other group members pretend to be the class answering the questions.
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Czar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 by a left-wing terrorist group known as the People's Will. This group came to believe that terrorist acts were the best way to force political reform and bring about the overthrow of the czarist autocracy. The czar was killed by a bomb thrown by a member of the People's Will as he drove through the streets of St. Petersburg.

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- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 2 of the Student Text: “Revolutionary Movements” and “The Last Czars.”
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The socialist philosophy of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party was based on the ideas of the 19th century thinkers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In 1903, a dispute over how to best apply Marxist ideas in Russia split the party into two factions. Lenin led the Bolshevik faction. Here Lenin speaks at an unveiling of a sculpture of Marx and Engels in 1918.

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- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 3 of the Student Text: “Moving Toward Revolution,” “The Rise of Political Parties,” and “Marxism and Leninism.”
- Complete the Reading Notes questions for the portions of text you just read. Record answers in your notebook.
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In 1905, Russian troops opened fire into a crowd of peaceful protesters in St. Petersburg, killing more than 100 people. The massacre came to be known as Bloody Sunday. This event, along with news of Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, sparked the Revolution of 1905.

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- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 3 of the Student Text: “The Revolution of 1905” and “Reform, Repressions, and Continued Unrest.”
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The demonstrations in Petrograd that began the February Revolution were sparked by female factory workers protesting bread shortages. Male workers, students, teachers, soldiers, and members of the middle class soon took to the streets as well. Here, demonstrators burn a portrait of the czar.

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- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 4 of the Student Text: “The Bolsheviks Take Control,” “The February Revolution,” and “Dual Power.”
- Complete the Reading Notes questions for the portions of text you just read. Record answers in your notebook.
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In September 1917, Bolsheviks gained control of the Petrograd Soviet. In October, they succeeded in overthrowing the Provisional Government. This is a painting of the meeting on October 26, 1917, in which the Bolshevik-dominated Soviet government installed Lenin as chairman.

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- Then take turns reading aloud the following portion from Section 4 of the Student Text: “The October Revolution.”
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This Bolshevik propaganda poster from 1919 is entitled “Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge.” It uses the visual language of avant-garde modernism to convey a simple but powerful message about the Russian Civil War. In the poster, the red wedge symbolizes the Bolsheviks, who are penetrating and defeating their opponents, the Whites, during the Russian Civil War.

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- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portion from Section 4 of the Student Text: “Civil War.”
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As part of Lenin's War Communism policy, peasants were forced to provide food to the Red Army. The government also took charge of all food distribution. This resulted in severe food shortages. This 1919 image shows a starving woman collapsing on the street.

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- Carefully review the image and read the caption.
- Then take turns reading aloud the following portions from Section 4 of the Student Text: "War Communism and the Red Terror" and "New Policies and New Leadership."
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Tokens for Rock, Scissors, Paper Game

