

Grade: Excellence

For Excellence, the standard requires students to comprehensively research an historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders, using primary and secondary sources.

This involves following a research process, making analytical and critical annotations that include assessment of the reliability of selected evidence, showing initiative in the gathering and selecting of relevant evidence, and evaluating the research process by making analytical comments about the process or findings.

This student has provided a detailed paragraph discussing the importance of Russia's 1917 October revolution. A single focus question has been developed from preliminary reading. They have recorded the details of all sources used, organised the evidence logically using a template, and selected comprehensive evidence from primary and secondary sources. The depth and nature of the evidence provided for the research proposal helps to contribute to the overall Excellence requirement of 'comprehensive research.'

The student provided 10 sources, 4 of which are primary sources and 2 of which are chapters from academic texts. These are engaged with fully, as exemplified by the three sources in this partial exemplar.

Annotations, while longer than what is required, are often critical and analytical, with frequent assessment of the source reliability. These include; consideration of perspectives, bias, the agenda of the source, author expertise, experience and credentials, the gaps in the evidence, consideration of the comparative usefulness of the sources, and corroboration of source material.

Across the full research, the student showed initiative when persevering with difficult sources such as the several items of primary evidence, Trotsky's "The history of the Russian revolution", and other academically challenging texts.

The evaluation makes several analytical comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the research process, with direct consideration of the impact these had on the validity of the findings. The evaluative comments show an awareness of what contributes to valid and balanced research outcomes. This includes discussion of how primary and secondary sources worked in collaboration to allow for depth and breadth in the research findings, how the research methodology may have created an unintentional narrowing of the findings, and the impact of personal bias on the selection of sources.

My historical event or place is The Russian Revolution

Research proposal:

Write a paragraph establishing the importance of the topic and the wider historical context that surrounds it.

This topic is very important as it would be the event which helped to eventually kick off the Cold War. Without this period of revolution in Russia, the country would have remained in a backward, weak position under the Tsarist regime, compared to the rapid industrial growth which had began in Europe a few decades earlier. The revolution stemmed from a multitude of different reasons, including the Tsars ineptitude and inability to change, the backwards state of the Russian economy, and Russia's disastrous involvement in WWI. The revolution was hugely consequential in Russian history, causing a long period of civil war in the years after. Following the Russian Revolution and the state's conversion to communism (or at least attempt at moving towards true communism), Russia split away from the rest of the West under the leadership of Stalin kicking off the Cold War between Russia's communism and the USA's liberalism. This ideological conflict has greatly shaped our world today, with the eventual failure of the USSR cementing liberalisms dominance in the world.

Preliminary Reading

Find 3-4 broad sources about your topic and copy the source information below, as well as a very short summary of key information that you pulled out of the reading to help you formulate your inquiry question

Source Details	Key information/summary
https://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/october-revolution/	Explains the events of the October Revolution.
Analysing the Russian Revolution - Richard Malone	Complete overview of the events before, during, and after the two revolutions of 1917.
https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Russian_Revolution	Another, slightly more brief overview.

FQ: What political and economic factors in Russia acted as a catalyst for the October revolution?"

Possible Sources of Information

Below include the source details for sources that you intend to use as part of your inquiry. Write down how this source will be useful, providing specific evidence.

October Manifesto	This source will be useful as it displays the
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	undemocratic nature of the Tsarist regime, as well as their inability for change due to opposing pressures of Russian aristocracy and workers.
Emancipation of the Serfs	This source will be useful as it displays the true extent of the backwardness of the Russian economy - had serfdom until very recently in Russian history. The source also explains why the revolution was so hard fought, as the working class and Bolsheviks only made up a minority to the huge amounts of peasants, they were only able to achieve the revolution due to the ineptitude of the Tsar, and the weakness of the Provisional Government.
The April Theses	This source will be useful as it displays the beliefs of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, helping us to understand why the revolution came in the shape that it did. This source combined with the the Soviet order No 1 also helps to show us the crisis of dual authority that Russia found itself in during the period between the two revolutions of 1917.

Source: Primary/Secondary source (Delete one) Author, <u>Title</u> , Date Published Or Author, <u>url</u> , Date Accessed	October Manifesto 1905 Primary source Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/events/1905/october-manifesto.htm , 27/9/2023
Evidence:	<p>This source is a copy of the reforms made by Tsar Nicholas II following the 1905 revolution in Russia. This period of unrest has been described by Lenin as “The Great Dress Rehearsal”, and attributes many of the successes of the 1917 revolutions to this first attempt.</p> <p>The document starts out by describing the recent unrest around Russia. However the source then states that the Tsar has the “wisdom and authority”, to put the rioting to an end. This framing of the Tsar as the saviour is interesting as the unrest was largely due to the unpopularity and autocratic nature of the Tsarist regime.</p> <p>This document outlines the reforms made following the unrest. The reforms are centred around creating a Duma, or parliament, and extending voting rights in this parliament to all Russian citizens. What the source fails to mention is the absolute power the Tsar would continue to hold following the erection of the Duma, as the Tsar still held veto power, and was able to dissolve parliament at any time he saw fit.</p> <p>This lack of real change coming from these reforms largely contributed to the revolutions in 1917, which finally overthrew the Tsar. This is because while the workers were not the majority in Russia, which is usually required for a workers’ revolution, the Russian people, particularly the</p>

<p>Comparison: How does the evidence in this source compare to others?</p>	<p>peasantry, had been oppressed for long enough to overthrow the Tsar, and when the provisional government did not provide any real progress, they were overthrown too.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Comparison:</p> <p>The evidence displayed in this source lines up well with my other sources surrounding the fall of the Tsarist regime. The source below, from the Imperial War Museum, points to this autocratic nature of the Tsarist regime as one of the reasons for the February revolution, which would of course flow into the October Revolution. The backwards and anti-democratic nature of the regime which we can see in this source is also clear in my source of the Emancipation of the Serfs, in which the source describes the regimes' inability to make real change.</p>
<p>Reliability of Source: You should consider the following: Evidence: (Depth, Range, Gaps, Primary sources/Statistics, Logic of Argument) Author/s: (Qualifications, Experience, Perspective/bias)</p>	<p>This is a moderately reliable source. While it is a government document, meaning it does hold some weight and significance, it was also issued by the Tsar, an autocratic regime interested only in holding onto power. The Duma described in this document was created following the reforms, however it mainly represented the elite few in Russia, and was still at the behest of the Tsar's absolute power. These reforms were simply an attempt by the regime to placate the people and end the period of unrest, and so it contains misinformation and lies. It is very possible that this description of how the Duma would function is inaccurate. The Tsar portrays themselves as the heroes and saviours of Russia throughout the source, putting an end to the unrest without taking responsibility for causing it in the first place. As it was written by the Tsarist regime, in order to save themselves from revolution, it is written very much in the regime's favour, attempting to paint them in the light of Russia's heroes.</p>
<p>Copy of Evidence: (Highlight evidence relevant to the FQ)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Manifesto on the Improvement of the State Order</p> <p>We, Nicholas II, By the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., proclaim to all Our loyal subjects:</p> <p>Rioting and disturbances in the capitals [i.e. St. Petersburg and the old capital, Moscow] and in many localities of Our Empire fill Our heart with great and heavy grief. The well-being of the Russian Sovereign is inseparable from the well-being of the nation, and the nation's sorrow is his sorrow. The disturbances that have taken place may cause grave tension in the nation and may threaten the integrity and unity of Our state.</p> <p>By the great vow of service as tsar We are obliged to use every resource of wisdom and of Our authority to bring a speedy end to unrest that is dangerous to Our state. We have ordered the responsible authorities to take measures to terminate direct manifestations of disorder, lawlessness, and violence and to protect peaceful people who quietly seek to fulfill their duties. To carry out successfully the general measures that we have conceived to restore peace to the life of the state, We believe that it is essential to coordinate activities at the highest level of government.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We require the government dutifully to execute our unshakeable will:</p> <p>(1.) To grant to the population the essential foundations of civil freedom, based on the principles of genuine inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.</p>

<p>Author/s: (Qualifications, Experience, Perspective/bias)</p>	<p>great western systems of governance are. The IWM has a high level of expertise on the subject. The IWM is one of the most respected organisations focussed on the history of conflicts, based in the UK. The IWM functions as an Independent Research organisation, collaborating often with the academic community.</p> <p>This source is comparatively less useful than Trotsky's "The history of the Russian revolution" as it does not have the depth of insight or primacy to the event as Trotsky did. While it gives broad overview of aspects, Trotsky provides a much more detailed and complex landscape of Russia in the lead up to the October Revolution.</p>
<p>Copy of Evidence: (Highlight evidence relevant to the FQ)</p>	<p>At the time of the revolution Russia was an autocracy, with Tsar Nicholas II holding absolute power over his people. Its political, social and economic structures were extremely backward in comparison to other countries in Europe. Food shortages and military failures at the start of the twentieth century had caused strikes and riots that were often brutally suppressed. The 1905 Revolution had led to some reforms, including the establishment of a State Duma (legislative assembly), but there was still no real democracy in Russia.</p> <p>Russia's entry into the First World War was initially supported by most Russians. However its infrastructure struggled to cope with the demands of war. Russia's industry depended almost entirely on foreign imports. When Germany and its Turkish allies blockaded Russia's Eastern ports, its railway, electricity and supply systems broke down. There were not enough laborers to collect the harvests and there were serious food shortages.</p> <p>The war was going badly for Russia with a string of defeats. In 1915, the Tsar attempted to boost moral by taking personal command of the army. This move had disastrous results. The Tsar was a poor military leader and he was now blamed for every defeat. He had also left his wife, the German-born Tsarina Alexandra, in charge at home. The Tsarina was very unpopular and seemed to be under the control of the equally unpopular mystic Grigori Rasputin.</p> <p>[The student continues to provide extracts of the source with specific evidence "selected" form the extract through the use of highlighting.]</p>

<p>Source: Primary/Secondary source (Delete one) Author, <u>Title</u>, Date Published Or Author, <u>url</u>, Date Accessed</p>	<p>Primary</p> <p>Vladimir Lenin, The April Theses, 10/10/2023</p>
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>Comparison: How does the evidence in this source compare to others?</p>	<p>This article contains Lenin's famous April Theses, which he read at two meetings of the All-Russia Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, on April 4, 1917, following his return from exile. The Theses were a list of ten directives issued by Lenin, aimed at his fellow Bolsheviks. The Theses are important in understanding what took place in between the two revolutions of 1917. During this time Bolsheviks like Lenin and others would return to Russia, intensifying the push for revolution.</p> <p>Lenin's call for Russia to remove itself from WW1 is one that can be seen echoed across almost all of my sources focussed on the time period directly around the Russian Revolution. This anti-war stance was one of the most important reasons for the February Revolution, as the people overthrew the Tsar partially as an attempt to remove Russia from the war. When the Provisional Government decided to continue Russia's involvement, despite the huge economic</p>

	<p>and social issues the war was causing in Russia, the people began to rally behind Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Lenin's emphasis of the importance of the Soviets in the revolution can also be seen again in my Trotsky's source, "History of the Russian Revolution", in which Trotsky describes how the Bolsheviks would never have been able to make the insurrection happen without the backing of the Soviet, and vice versa.</p>
<p>Reliability of Source: You should consider the following: Evidence: (Depth, Range, Gaps, Primary sources/Statistics, Logic of Argument) Author/s: (Qualifications, Experience, Perspective/bias)</p>	<p>This is a reasonably reliable source, providing valuable insight into the beliefs of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, helping us to understand the political climate in Russia leading up to the October revolution. The article was written by Lenin, the leader of the revolutionary Bolshevik party and an incredibly important and influential political theorist. However what the source lacks is showing viewpoints from multiple or less biased perspectives on the issues discussed. This one strong look into Lenin and the Bolsheviks beliefs is still very useful, and this lack of multiple perspectives is something that applies to almost every primary source. This source is far from neutral. It was aimed to spread the message and beliefs of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and so lacks any kind neutrality.</p> <p>This source is more useful than the 1905 Manifesto due to its more direct relevance to the focus question pertaining to the October Revolution. In saying that, using the two primary sources in collaboration with each other helps to build greater understanding of why the October revolution was able to succeed.</p>
<p>Copy of Evidence: (Highlight evidence relevant to the FQ)</p>	<p>[...]</p> <h2>THESES</h2> <p>1) In our attitude towards the war, which under the new [provisional] government of Lvov and Co. unquestionably remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government, not the slightest concession to "revolutionary defencism" is permissible.</p> <p>The class-conscious proletariat can give its consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: (a) that the power pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deed and not in word; (c) that a complete break be effected in actual fact with all capitalist interests.</p> <p>In view of the undoubted honesty of those broad sections of the mass believers in revolutionary defencism who accept the war only as a necessity, and not as a means of conquest, in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary with particular thoroughness, persistence and patience to explain their error to them, to explain the inseparable connection existing between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that without overthrowing capital it is impossible to end the war by a truly democratic peace, a peace not imposed by violence.</p> <p>The most widespread campaign for this view must be organised in the army at the front.</p> <p>Fraternisation.</p> <p>2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its second</p>

stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.

This transition is characterised, on the one hand, by a maximum of legally recognised rights (Russia is now the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence towards the masses, and, finally, by their unreasoning trust in the government of capitalists, those worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to the special conditions of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

3) No support for the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure in place of the impermissible, illusion-breeding “demand” that this government, a government of capitalists, should cease to be an imperialist government.

4) Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies our Party is in a minority, so far a small minority, as against a bloc of all the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements, from the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries down to the Organising Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), Steklov, etc., etc., who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and spread that influence among the proletariat.

The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, as long as this government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent explanation of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.
[....]

5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers’, Agricultural Labourers’ and Peasants’ Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy.[1]

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker. [...]

[The student continues to provide extracts of the source with specific evidence “selected” from the extract through the use of highlighting.]

Evaluation:

Strengths:

I believe that there are two main strengths that can be seen throughout my research process: my comprehensive overview of the events leading to the October Revolution, with each source being dedicated to one of these causes, and my balanced use of primary and secondary sources.

This comprehensive look at the causes of the October Revolution is a result of pre-reading about the overall revolution, before carefully planning out which events and aspects I felt needed to be included in the project. This pre-reading and planning was essential to the overall success of my research process, as without it I would not have known where to start, or what was important to include. The result of this planning is that I have a wide range of events displayed in my research project which all contribute some cause to the October Revolution, helping to increase the validity of my findings, as every piece of information is relevant and necessary. However, one issue that this planning could cause is preventing me from being able to branch out and go down various different rabbit holes I may have encountered throughout the research process. This attitude of rigidity and focus on the big picture that I brought into the project may have prevented me from making the project as detailed and nuanced as it could have been.

My balanced use of primary and secondary sources throughout this project has also helped to increase the validity of my findings. Throughout the research process, I made use of a combination of primary and secondary sources, in order to gain a variety of perspectives on the issue - that of those involved in the October revolution, as well as historians and journalists writing about the revolution after the fact, knowing the outcomes and bigger picture of the revolution. This is important as primary sources, while very useful in giving us an idea of the viewpoint of someone involved in the issue, either as a leader or a civilian, what primary sources fail to do is to give us the bigger picture. On the other hand, secondary sources can be very useful in getting a full overview of the event from an expert, making use of all of the information from the event and collating primary sources together in order to give a true understanding of the overall event. This mixture of detail and bigger picture helps to increase the validity of my findings, as the secondary sources provide the greater context to the primary sources, while the primary sources help to make our understanding of the secondary sources much more detailed.

Weaknesses:

One major weakness I have noticed in my research process was my failure to include a wide enough variety of sources with different political positions or perspectives. While my sources are - for the most part - passably neutral, if they have political bias it tends to lean to the left. This could be a result of a few different things; my own political beliefs and biases, the abundance of left wing sources on the Russian revolution when compared to right wing sources, or, most importantly, the left wing sources that I came across being much more in depth and accurate than their right wing counterparts. This is because it is in the right wing's interests to misrepresent certain aspects of the Russian revolution, as the Bolsheviks are political enemies to the right. While I could have still made use of these heavily right-leaning

sources, and simply noted in the reliability sections their right wing bias, I felt that the right wing sources were often inaccurate to the point that they were actually hindering my research process, and reducing the validity of my findings. The only solution to this issue would have been to find sources that were neither left nor right wing, however no source is truly neutral. Therefore while this lack of range in political perspective is a weakness in my research process, and contributes to the weakening of the validity of my findings, in this case it was the lesser of the two evils.

A second major weakness present in my research process was my indecisiveness in picking a focus question, with which to centre my research around. During my research process, my focus question changed multiple times, as I struggled to decide what the best way to put my research aim into words was. While at the time this did not have major ramifications for the quality of my research, looking back now I can see how this indecisiveness contributed to the inclusion of sources that ended up being less relevant than I originally thought. One perfect example of this is my source on the Emancipation of the Serfs. When I first decided I wanted to use a source on this topic, my focus question was focussed around both the February and October Revolutions. As the emancipation was a perfect example of the institutional crisis the Tsarist regime had faced, I thought that it was an important event to include in the project. However, when I changed my focus question to solely centre around the October Revolution, the emancipation decreased in relevance to my question. While it is still relevant to the October Revolution in a roundabout way, through the February revolution, and an example of why the Tsarist regime, and by extension the Provisional Government, was unpopular, it was not as important as it originally was. This same story goes for multiple of my sources, albeit to a lesser extent. This lack of relevance in certain sources could have a negative impact on the validity of my findings, as the less relevant sources take up space which could have been filled by sources more relevant to the question, either on events that are not currently included at all, or by sources that provide greater detail on the most important aspects of the revolution.

Improvements:

One major improvement I would make to my research process if I were to undertake another similar project would be to be more decisive on my focus question from the beginning, or not start the project until I was completely happy with the question. This is due to the weaknesses in this project as a result of my indecisiveness as I described above. While I had decided to simply power through the issue of being unsure of my focus question at the beginning of this project, due to time constraints, I believe that if I had properly and conclusively decided on a question from the start I would have saved even more time later on. This would have both lessened the time constraints as discussed below, as well as overall improving the validity and effectiveness of my research.

The second improvement I would make would be to use my time much more efficiently. This project took me so long, and yet still feels slightly rushed, due to my ineffective use of time. I spent hours reading sources that I didn't end up using, deliberating on what events I wanted to include in my project, and what ratio of primary and secondary sources to use. While this careful planning did have benefits to my project, as I discussed above, I definitely could have planned this project to the same extent in a much shorter period of time. This would have given me more time to properly analyse each source's content and reliably, resulting in an overall improvement in the validity of my findings.