

Analysis

Tsar Nicholas's fall from power

[This activity was designed by Stuart Foster & Chris Macdonald and is taken from *History Resource* (Spring 1989)].

This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.

Cut out the cards. They contain a large number of suggestions as to why Tsar Nicholas fell from power. You may wish to add ideas of your own.

1. Take out any ideas which you feel did not in any way contribute to Nicholas's fall. Explain your reasoning.
2. **Categories:** Place the cards into piles of associated suggestions (e.g. causes linked to WWI). This is the 'analysis' element of the game – you are sorting the facts into general 'causes'. Do any of the cards apply to more than one 'cause'?
3. **Evaluation:** talk through HOW each of the cards helped lose Nicholas his throne. 'Weigh' the importance of each on a scale of 1-5. Explain your decisions. Are any of the causes beginning to look more important than others?
4. **Ranking:** Based on your evaluation of the factors, place the causes in order of importance. Is there any cause which underlies all/ most/ some of the others?
5. Use your deliberations to plan an essay: "The First World War toppled Nicholas from his throne'. Do you agree?"

In 1906 the Tsar had agreed to set up the Duma. The Duma had no real powers and could only advise the Tsar.	The army was poorly organized and ill-equipped. As the war went on soldiers began to desert in their thousands.
The Russian people began to lose faith in the Tsar's ability to rule by 1917.	The Tsar did not understand the hardships faced by the workers and peasants of Russia.
The Tsar was a poor leader of the army. He had no military experience.	The Tsar took bad advice from the Tsarina Alexandra and Rasputin.
Opposition parties began to grow. They criticized the Tsar and some talked of revolution.	The Okrana (secret police) was harsh and ruthless. This upset many ordinary Russian people.
War casualties were terrible. By 1916 five million Russian soldiers had been killed or wounded.	During the war food prices in the cities rose very quickly but wages fell.

<p>Most Russian peasants lived lives of hardship and poverty.</p>	<p>The number of strikes by workers greatly increased after 1912.</p>
<p>The government failed to rule the country effectively during the war. There was a shortage of food and fuel in the cities.</p>	<p>Nicholas II had never wanted to be Tsar. He was a shy man who found it difficult to talk to his ministers.</p>
<p>The Tsar was an autocrat. He believed that he had been appointed by God. He saw it as his duty to pass on his power and position to his son.</p>	<p>The civil service was very inefficient and corrupt. If you wanted anything done it usually involved bribing an official.</p>
<p>Rasputin claimed he could work wonders and even help heal people with incurable illnesses.</p>	<p>During the war it became more and more difficult to get the food grown in the countryside into the towns.</p>
<p>In 1915 and 1916 the Russian armies faced one smashing defeat after another.</p>	<p>In March 1917 90 000 people went on strike in Petrograd. They demonstrated against shortages of bread and fuel.</p>
<p>The Tsarina Alexandra was German.</p>	<p>Newspapers were censored.</p>
<p>The peasants and workers made up over 90 per cent of the population of the country but they owned only 10 per cent of the wealth.</p>	<p>The Tsar was a very weak man who could easily have his mind changed by officials.</p>
<p>The Tsar's son and heir Alexis had a rare blood disease called haemophilia.</p>	<p>On 12 March 1917 police and soldiers joined the rioting crowds in Petrograd.</p>
<p>From 1915 to 1917 Alexandra was in charge of the government at home.</p>	<p>People who spoke out against the government faced imprisonment, exile in Siberia and even death.</p>
<p>The Tsar spent as much time with his family as possible. He found government of the country boring and often did not bother to read the papers he was sent.</p>	<p>In 1915 Russia was a poor country compared with Germany or Britain. For every Russian factory there were over 100 in Germany.</p>