

Suits card sort

How well did Stalin create a dictatorship?

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

The cards on the page following represent 27 ways in which Stalin controlled Russia 1924-1941. But how effective were they?

Print off and cut out the cards. Then, in discussion with others, sort them into four piles:

- ♣ — clubs (those that worked by force, fear and violence)
- ♥ — hearts (those that worked by making people love Stalin)
- ♠ — spades (those that worked by providing people with jobs and activities)
- ♦ — diamonds (those that worked by giving people benefits and making them prosperous)

When you have finished, sort the cards again, this time into those that affected:

highly effective – some positive effect – no real benefit – counterproductive

There are no right or wrong answers; you need to discuss and argue your way to a consensus. Key in your discussion will be:

- how it worked to encourage people to be obedient and loyal to the government
- how well it worked in securing obedience and loyalty.

When you have finished, discuss these three key questions:

1. How do you measure the 'effectiveness' of a means of control?
2. Which in your opinion was the most effective measure?
3. How complete, overall, was Stalin's control of Russia by 1941?

Stalin was General Secretary of the Communist Party	Stalin was genial, pleasant and liked a laugh	Stalin pretended to be a follower of Lenin's ideas
Stalin organised the 'Lenin Levy'	Stalin argued for 'socialism in one country'	The 1936 Constitution subjected the government entirely to the control of the Communist Party
Stalin was First Secretary of the Communist Party, Chairman of the Politburo and Chairman of the <i>Sovnarkom</i>	Stalin used the NKVD to enforce the Terror	Stalin set up a Gulag of labour camps in Siberia
790,000 executions	Show trials tried and disgraced Stalin's enemies in public	Informers
All writers had to be members of the Union of Soviet Writers	Both the Christian and Muslim religions were persecuted	5 million kulaks were 'eliminated'
The Purge of the government (1108 out of 1966 delegates to the Party Congress)	The Purge of the Soviet armed forces (81 out of 103 generals and admirals)	The Purge of 1 million members of the Communist Party
There was full employment – everyone had a job	Good health care, free crèches, free university and training courses	Loyal 'apparatchiks' (party officials) got the best jobs, flats, etc.
The cult of Stalin – statues, paintings, banners, poems and applause	All art had to follow the rules of 'Socialist realism', celebrating the proletariat	Novelists had to write Communist stories with a happy ending
Schoolchildren were taught that Stalin was the Great Leader	Stalin changed history textbooks to make himself look more important and 'wrote out' disgraced leaders from history	Russification tried to destroy national identities