

Task 2: True or False

- Nicholas II was a democratic ruler.
- Russia was a modern, industrial society in 1900.
- The Tsar had absolute power.
- The Russian Empire included many different ethnic groups.

Correct the false statements and rewrite them to be true.

■ Worksheet 3: Comparative Thinking

Objective: Begin comparing the different contexts of Charles III (our current King) and Nicholas II.

Task: Compare and Contrast

Theme	Charles III (England)	Nicholas II (Russia)
Type of Government		
Belief in Divine Right?		
Challenges Faced		
Type of Leader - what can you say about their personality and how they lead?		

Discussion Questions:

1. How are Charles III and Nicholas II similar? How are they different?

Worksheet 2: The February Revolution

By the end of this worksheet, you should be able to:

Explain the causes of the February Revolution.

Describe the key events of the Revolution.

Please read the information below then answer the following questions.

Causes of the February Revolution

1. Social and Economic Discontent

Russia was a deeply unequal society, with the majority of the population being peasants living in poverty. Industrialisation had brought about poor working conditions, long hours, and low wages for the urban working class. By 1917, widespread dissatisfaction had reached a boiling point, especially in major cities like Petrograd.

2. World War I

The First World War had a devastating effect on Russia. The military suffered enormous casualties, with over 4 million Russian soldiers dead by early 1917. The war also placed immense strain on the Russian economy, leading to severe **food shortages, inflation**, and the breakdown of **transport systems**. Morale among soldiers and civilians plummeted.

3. Political Incompetence

Tsar Nicholas II was widely viewed as out of touch and indecisive. His decision to take direct command of the army in 1915 meant he was held personally responsible for Russia's military failures. At the same time, he left the government in the hands of his wife, **Tsarina Alexandra**, who was unpopular and heavily influenced by **Rasputin**, a mystic monk viewed with suspicion by many Russians.

4. Failure of Reforms

Although some reform had been introduced after the 1905 Revolution, such as the Duma (parliament), it had very limited power. The Tsar continued to rule autocratically, ignoring public opinion and suppressing dissent. Calls for political reform had grown louder by 1917, but the Tsar refused to compromise.

Key Events of the February Revolution

The revolution unfolded quickly and unexpectedly over just a few days in late February (early March in the Gregorian calendar - which we use today) 1917:

23 February: Demonstrations began in Petrograd on **International Women's Day**, initially over food shortages. These quickly turned political as workers joined in, demanding an end to the war and autocracy.

25–26 February: Strikes spread across Petrograd. The Tsar ordered troops to fire on protesters, but **many soldiers refused**, and some joined the demonstrators instead.

27 February: The **Petrograd Garrison** **mutinied**, and the capital effectively fell into revolutionary hands. Crowds seized weapons, freed political prisoners, and took over government buildings.

1–2 March: The Duma **formed the Provisional Committee**, and revolutionary leaders formed the **Petrograd Soviet**. Under pressure, Tsar Nicholas II **abdicated** on 2 March in favor of his brother Michael, who declined the throne—effectively ending the Romanov dynasty.

Continued Instability

The February Revolution did not solve Russia's major problems. The war continued, economic hardship worsened, and political authority was fragmented. This instability would ultimately lead to the **October Revolution**, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks (Communists) seized power.

Historical Debate

Historians continue to debate whether the February Revolution was:

A **spontaneous uprising** driven by popular discontent and war fatigue,

Or the result of **long-term structural weaknesses** and government failure,

Or even a **revolution of the streets**, caused by ordinary workers and soldiers rather than any organized political party.

What is clear is that the February Revolution was a dramatic turning point—bringing an end to centuries of autocracy and setting Russia on a path toward communism, civil war, and transformation into the Soviet Union.

True or False?

Indicate whether the following statements are **True (T)** or **False (F)**: If they are false - correct the statement.

- The February Revolution was primarily planned by the Bolsheviks.
- Food shortages and cold weather contributed to unrest in Petrograd.
- Tsar Nicholas II willingly abdicated to preserve the monarchy.
- The Provisional Government replaced the Tsarist regime immediately after the revolution.
- International involvement was a major cause of the February Revolution.

Timeline Task

Fill in the missing events in the timeline below using the word bank.

Timeline of February 1917:

23 February: International Women's Day protests begin in _____.

26 February: Tsar orders troops to fire on protestors. Some soldiers begin to _____.

27 February: Petrograd Garrison mutinies; weapons are seized.

2 March: Tsar Nicholas II _____ the throne.

2 March: The _____ **Government** is formed.

Source Analysis

"I cannot and will not reign over a people who have ceased to trust me. I therefore abdicate the throne..."

— Tsar Nicholas II, March 1917

Questions:

- What reasons does the Tsar give for his abdication?
- Do you think this source shows a full picture of the events? Why or why not?
- How might different groups in Russian society have reacted to his abdication?