

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS INTERACTIVE

Peer Assessment Sample Answer

This essay was written by a Year 11 pupil

Why did the Bolsheviks come to power in Russia in 1917? [10 marks]

Before the Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik party was not the most powerful or popular. The Bolsheviks came to power at an especially difficult time in Russian history. The Provisional Government was weak-willed, disorganised, and ripe for a Bolshevik coup.

The weakness of the Provisional Government did much to fuel the success of the Bolsheviks. In April 1917, Lenin returned to Russia and galvanized the small party of Bolsheviks into action using simple, yet powerful slogans such as 'Bread, Peace and Land!' It made promises that the peasant population could not resist. The Provisional Government continued the war, refused to allow peasants to seize the land and did not organise elections for a Constituent Assembly.

The worsening economic state under the Provisional Government also aided the Bolsheviks. 100 000 jobs were lost due to the closure of 568 factories in Petrograd alone. The lack of grain in the cities led the government to send punishment brigades into the countryside but this only served to further isolate the peasants and prices continued to rise. There was frustration among the peasants that since the March Revolution little had changed.

Although the Bolsheviks' demonstrations on the 4th July were quashed, the offensive proved to be another damaging move of the Provisional Government. From this, the Bolsheviks could capitalise on their own patriotic image. To make matters worse Kerensky started a fresh war offensive in July 1917. This failed too. Unfortunately, his popularity with the army itself did not improve. The soldiers remained decisively against war and the people wanted peace. In August 1917 General Kornilov attempted to remove Kerensky from power. Without the support of the army Kerensky armed the Bolsheviks in order to deal with Kornilov.

In the summer and autumn of 1917, Lenin concentrated on building support with the factory workers, publishing propaganda in Bolshevik newspapers and expanding membership of the Bolshevik Party. Leon Trotsky was instrumental to the military aspect of the Bolsheviks' success creating an army called the Red Guards by arming workers with guns. However, it cannot be denied that the Bolsheviks were lucky in terms of rival parties. The opposition was disorganised and became increasingly unpopular after the March Revolution for supporting the Provisional Government.

On 7th November 1917 the Bolshevik Red Guards led a second revolution against the Provisional Government by seizing control of stations, telephone exchanges, post offices, the national bank and the Winter Palace in Petrograd. By the end of November, Moscow and the Kremlin had fallen to the Bolsheviks. Now Lenin set about creating the world's first communist state.

So how much of the Bolsheviks' success was down to skill – and how much was the result of fortune and circumstance?

Peer Assessment Sample Answer Mark Grid

<u>What to look for</u>	✓ ☒	<u>What to look for</u>	✓ ☒	<u>Your overall Assessment</u>
Is there an introduction and conclusion?		Does it reach the word limit of at least 300 words?		<p style="color: red; margin: 0;"><u>Study the mark scheme carefully</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was good about the answer? 2. What level would you award this answer at? 3. What mark within the level would you give it? 4. Say why you gave it this level and mark? 5. How would you improve this answer?
Does it give reasons why the Bolsheviks came to power?		Are paragraphs (rather than lists, headings or bullet points) used?		
Does it give reasons the Provisional Government failed?		Does it use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar?		
Is there at least one example of explanation?		Does it provide detailed factual evidence (e.g. dates, names of individuals, references to specific events)?		