

## Joseph Stalin

### Pre-Reading Warm Up Questions ☀

1. Do you know when the Russian revolution took place?
2. What is a dictator?
3. Why did Eastern Europe become Communist after the Second World War?
4. Do you know when and how long Joseph Stalin was leader of the Soviet Union?



Joseph Stalin was the **dictator** of the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1953.

Stalin was born in Georgia, a mountainous country in Asia. It later became part of the Soviet Union. He studied to be a priest, but was expelled from the seminary in 1899. He became a **revolutionary**, instead. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903 and **took part** in the 1917 Russian Revolution. The Russian monarchy was **defeated** and Russia became part of the Soviet Union.

In 1922, Stalin became the general secretary of the Russian Communist Party. He spent the next five years defeating his political rivals and becoming very powerful. By 1928, he was the dictator of the Soviet Union.

Over the next five years, he took control of the Soviet Union's farm lands and manufacturing industries. Millions of **peasant** farmers died when this happened. They either died of hunger or were executed by Stalin's troops. In the 1930s, Stalin had anyone he considered to be an enemy of his government killed, put in jail, or expelled from the country.

In 1938, Stalin agreed not to go to war against Nazi Germany. But after the Nazis **invaded** the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin became an **ally** of Great Britain and the United States. He took part in war conferences and planning. When the Nazis were defeated in 1945, Stalin was given control of East Germany and other freed countries in Eastern Europe.

Stalin continued his **harsh** treatment of his own people until his death in 1953. He also supported other Communist countries and worked to destroy democracies in the West.

In 1956, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union **criticized** Stalin's policies and his brutal treatment of its people. Many of the **victims** of his **policies** were helped and the leaders of the Soviet Union worked to free the country from Stalin's **influence**.

### COMPREHENSION

#### A. Match the information on the left with the correct date(s) on the right.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| ___ 1. Stalin joined the Bolshevik Party in...                                | A. 1941                  |
| ___ 2. The Russian Revolution took place in...                                | B. 1917                  |
| ___ 3. Stalin was dictator of the Soviet Union...                             | C. 1953                  |
| ___ 4. Stalin left the seminary in...   | D. 1945                  |
| ___ 5. Stalin became general secretary of the Russian Communist Party in...   | E. 1956                  |
| ___ 6. Stalin took control of the farmlands and manufacturing industries...   | F. 1903                  |
| ___ 7. The Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in...                               | G. from 1928 to 1953     |
| ___ 8. Stalin gained control of Eastern Europe in...                          | H. 1899                  |
| ___ 9. Stalin died in...  | I. between 1928 and 1933 |
| ___ 10. The Soviet Communist Party began to criticize Stalin's policies in... | J. 1922                  |

**B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.**

1. Why did Stalin not finish his studies to become a priest?
2. What did he do when he left the seminary?
3. Why did millions of peasant farmers die when Stalin took control of the farm lands?
4. How did Stalin deal with his enemies?
5. Stalin at first agreed not to fight against Nazi Germany. Why did he later become an ally of Britain?
6. How did the Soviet Party feel about Stalin after his death? What did the Party do to show this change in attitude?

**VOCABULARY REVIEW** 

**A. Find a word (or words) in the story to replace the underlined words in the following sentences.**

1. Stalin went to a college to learn to become a priest.
2. Stalin spent several years fighting his political enemies.
3. Many peasant farmers were killed by Stalin's soldiers.
4. Stalin made many of his enemies leave the country.
5. Stalin's treatment of his own people was very cruel.
6. The Russian royal family was defeated in the revolution.

**B. Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. dictator      | a. hard, cruel, rough   |
| _____ 2. revolutionary | b. enter a country by force   |
| _____ 3. took part     | c. person who is hurt or killed in an accident, a war, a crime, etc.        |
| _____ 4. defeat        | d. friend, supporter  |
| _____ 5. peasant       | e. rules, methods, principles   |
| _____ 6. invade        | f. person who has complete control of a country, usually by force           |
| _____ 7. ally          | g. participated, was a part of  |
| _____ 8. harsh         | h. a very poor person who works on the land                                 |
| _____ 9. criticize     | i. effect   |
| _____ 10. policies     | j. person who wants to make a complete change in government, often by force |
| _____ 11. victim       | k. find fault with, give a negative opinion                                 |
| _____ 12. influence    | l. win a victory  |



**DISCUSS** 

1. What do you think might have happened if Stalin had never left the seminary?
2. How is a dictator able to maintain absolute control over a country?
3. What is the meaning of the following expressions: "the cold war", "the iron curtain"?
4. How have the countries of the former Soviet Union changed since the fall of communism?

**ANSWER KEY****Please note:**

**The reading for this topic is also available in full-page format at the end of the lesson (page 4).**

**PRE-READING QUESTIONS**

1-5. Individual answers

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS****A. Matching**

1. F    2. B    3. G    4. H    5. J    6. I    7. A    8. D    9. C    10. E

**B. Written Answers**

1. Because he was expelled from the seminary.
2. Stalin joined the Bolshevik Party and took part in the 1917 Russian Revolution.
3. They either died of hunger or were executed by Stalin's troops.
4. Stalin had his enemies killed, put in jail, or expelled from the country.
5. Staling later became an ally of Britain because because Nazis invaded the Soviet Union.
6. The Soviet Party criticized Stalin's policies and his brutal treatment of its people. Many of the victims of his policies were helped and the leaders of the Soviet Union worked to free the country from Stalin's influence.

**VOCABULARY REVIEW****A. Find the words**

1. studied to be a priest at the seminary
2. rivals
3. executed
4. expelled from the country
5. harsh
6. monarchy

**B. Match the words**

1. f            2. j            3. g            4. l            5. h            6. b            7. d  
8. a            9. k            10. e            11. c            12. i

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