

Name: _____

The Fall of the Soviet Union Webquest and Video Analysis- Key

Directions: Complete the following questions using resources from the links listed below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9HjvHZfCUI> (Crash Course Video)

http://www.coldwar.org/articles/90s/fall_of_the_soviet_union.asp (Cold War Mueum)



To begin this assignment, start the Crash Course Video: USA vs USSR Fight! The Cold War at the 9:01 mark and then answer the following questions.

1. How did government policies prove bad for the economy of the Soviet Union?
 - **Collectivized agriculture stymied production and led to famine.**
 - **Suppression of dissent and traditional cultures made people angry.**
2. Which individual is most responsible for the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War?
 - **Mikhail Gorbachev was the most responsible.**

3. What policies did Mikhail Gorbachev introduce, which eventually doomed the Soviet system?
 - Gorbachev introduced perestroika and glasnost.

4. What did these two policies change about the Soviet Union?
 - These two policies opened up the Soviet Union's political and economic systems.
 - Local elections were allowed to be contested, less restricted civil society groups, and less censorship.
 - There was more autonomy for the Soviet Republics, more non-state run businesses, and more autonomy for state run farms.

5. What did glasnost impact in the Soviet Union specifically?
 - Glasnost led to more information from the west and less censorship.
 - This led to a lot of censorship when people realized how much nicer the West was.

6. What events signalled the end of communist in East Germany?
 - The Berlin Wall came down in 1989.
 - East Germany united with West Germany in 1990.

7. What other former Soviet satellite countries saw communism come to an end?
 - Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

For the next section of this assignment, proceed to the Cold War Museum website listed on the front page, read the article, and answer the following questions.

8. When the Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991, how many countries emerged from the former superpower?
 - Fifteen separate countries.

9. Which nation had the Soviet Union inherited territory from when it was formed in 1917?
 - The Soviet Union was built on approximately the same territory as the Russian Empire.

10. What political group formed the Soviet Union? What kind of government did they establish?

- The Bolsheviks created one state based on a centralized economic and political system.
- This state, was eventually transformed into a totalitarian state, in which the Communist leadership had complete control over the country.

11. Why did the Soviet Union suffer eventual economic decline?

- The Soviets underestimated the degree to which the non-Russian ethnic groups in the country would resist assimilation into a Russianized State.
- Their economic planning failed to meet the needs of the State, which was caught up in a vicious arms race with the United States.
- The ideology of Communism, which the Soviet Government worked to instill in the hearts and minds of its population, never took firm root.

12. What was the economic and political situation in the Soviet Union in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power?

- The country was in a situation of severe stagnation, with deep economic and political problems which sorely needed to be addressed and overcome.

13. What were the policies of perestroika and glasnost created to address specifically?

- Glasnost created freedom of speech.
- Perestroika was economic reform- known as rebuilding.

14. What did Gorbachev not plan on when he introduced perestroika and glasnost?

- By giving people complete freedom of expression, he was unwittingly unleashing emotions and political feelings that had been pent up for decades, and which proved to be extremely powerful when brought out into the open.

15. Why did the citizens of the Soviet Union use their newly declared freedom of expression to criticize Gorbachev and his government?

- The policy of economic reform did not have the immediate results Gorbachev had hoped for and had publicly predicted.
- The Soviet people used their newly allotted freedom of speech to criticize Gorbachev for his failure to improve the economy.

16. Which Soviet Republics began the call for independence?

- The Baltic Republics of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

17. Why was Gorbachev faced with a no-win scenario after republics began demanding independence?

- He did not want to crack down too severely on the participants in these movements.
- At the same time, it became increasingly evident that allowing them to run their course would spell disaster for the Soviet Union- it would completely collapse if all of the periphery republics also demanded independence.



The Soviet Union as it appeared in 1989- the individual republics of the Soviet Union have been included on this map.

18. What dispute erupted between the Armenian and Azerbaijan Republics?

- In the Armenian-populated autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabagh, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Armenian population of this region demanded that they be granted the right to secede and join the Republic of Armenia.
- Massive demonstrations were held in Armenia in solidarity with the secessionists in Nagorno-Karabagh.

19. How did Gorbachev respond to this conflict? What was the outcome of the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

- The Gorbachev government refused to allow the population of Nagorno-Karabagh to secede.
- The situation developed into a violent territorial dispute, eventually degenerating into an all-out war which continues today.

20. What other Soviet Republics began experiencing nationalist movements?

- Nationalist movements emerged in Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Byelorussia, and the Central Asian republics.

21. What last ditch effort was attempted to save the Soviet Union in August 1991?

- A group of "hard-line" Communists organized a coup d'état.
- They kidnapped Gorbachev, and then, on August 19 of 1991, they announced on state television that Gorbachev was very ill and would no longer be able to govern.

22. How did the citizens of the Soviet Union respond to the coup?

- The country went into an uproar.
- Massive protests were staged in Moscow, Leningrad, and many of the other major cities of the Soviet Union.

23. Why did the coup eventually fail?

- The coup organizers tried to bring in the military to quell the protestors.
- The soldiers themselves rebelled, saying that they could not fire on their fellow countrymen.
- After three days of massive protest, the coup organizers surrendered, realizing that without the cooperation of the military, they did not have the power to overcome the power of the entire population of the country.

24. Following the demonstrations of the "August days," what was the only outcome the citizens of the Soviet Union would accept?

- The population would accept nothing less than democracy.

25. When did Gorbachev resign as the leader of the Soviet Union? What ceased to exist?

- Gorbachev resigned on December 25, 1991.
- By January, the Soviet Union no longer existed.

26. What replaced the Soviet Union?

- The “Commonwealth of Independent Republics” was composed of most of the independent countries of the former Soviet Union.

27. How did the Commonwealth of Independent Republics function differently than the Soviet Union?

- The member countries had complete political independence.
- They were linked to other Commonwealth countries by economic, and, in some cases, military ties.



The successor states of the Soviet Union

28. What enormous task were the successor states of the Soviet Union faced with after the fall of the USSR?

- They must develop their economies, reorganize their political systems, and, in many cases, settle bitter territorial disputes.