

Name _____ Date _____

DBQ 11: Evaluating Joseph Stalin

(Adapted from *Document-Based Assessment for Global History*, Walch Education)

Historical Context:

Joseph Stalin is one of the most controversial leaders in world history. Between 1928 and 1941 he transformed the Soviet Union into a modern superpower. His rule is characterized by collectivized agriculture, rapid industrialization, great purges, and the extermination of opposition.

- **Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying documents in Part A. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view. Be sure to:
 1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
 2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions which follow each document.
 3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
 4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
 5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside of the documents.

Question: Evaluate the rule of Stalin in the Soviet Union, taking into consideration the changes made and the methods used.

- **Part A:** The following documents provide information about Stalin and the Soviet Union. Examine the documents carefully, and answer the questions that follow.

Document 1

Stalin launched his first Five-Year Plan in 1928 by setting up a planned, or command, economy. In this speech, Stalin arouses Russian pride to motivate the people.

To slow down would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind are beaten. But we do not want to be beaten! One feature of the old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness. . . .

So you want our Socialist fatherland to be beaten? . . . If you don't want this, you must end our backwardness. You must develop a real Bolshevik tempo [speed] in building our Socialist economy. There is no other road.

We lag behind the advanced countries by fifty to a hundred years. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed.

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DBQ 20: Stalin: Evaluation of His Leadership (continued)

What is Stalin trying to do in his speech? What method is he using to accomplish his goal?

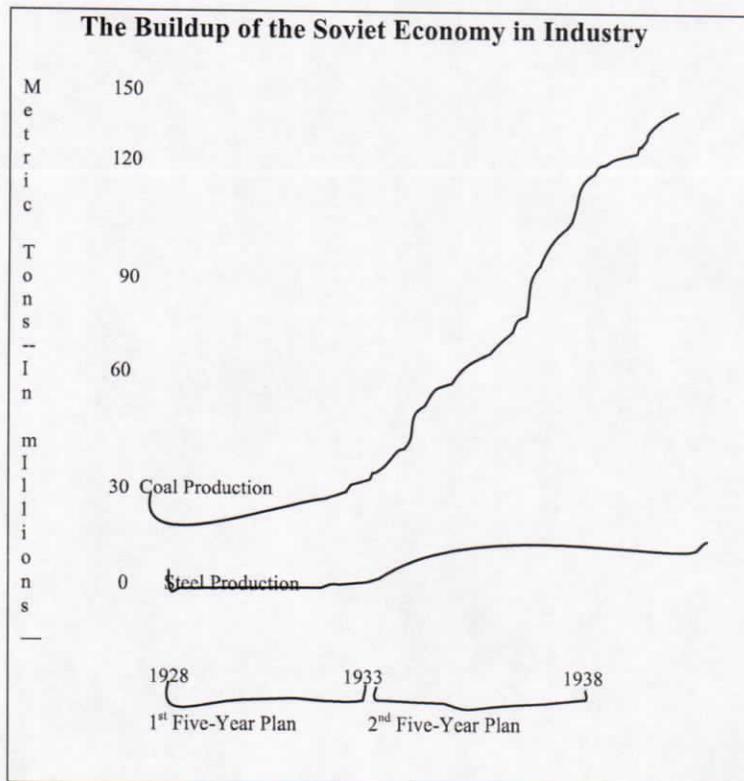
Document 2

Industry	1927 – 1928	Target for 1933
Electricity (milliard kWh)	5.05	17.0
Coal (million tonnes)	35.4	68.0
Oil (million tonnes)	11.7	19.0
Pig-iron (million tonnes)	3.3	8.0
Steel (million Tonnes)	4.0	8.3

What is the goal of this Five-Year Plan? For what specific areas were goals set? _____

Document 3

The following chart shows industrial production under the Five-Year Plans.



What does the chart show about Soviet industrial production? _____

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DBQ 20: Stalin: Evaluation of His Leadership (continued)

Document 4

In this excerpt from a 1929 speech delivered by Stalin, he explains the collectivization policy and the need to eliminate the kulaks (wealthy farmers).

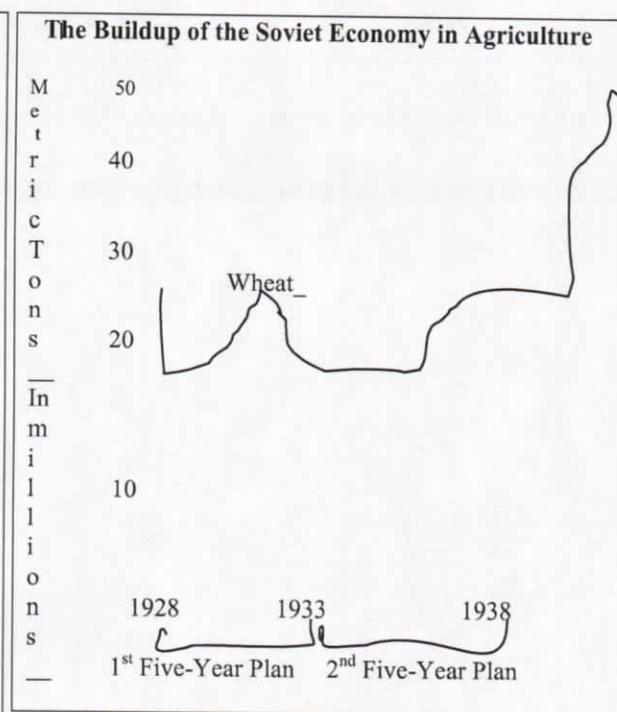
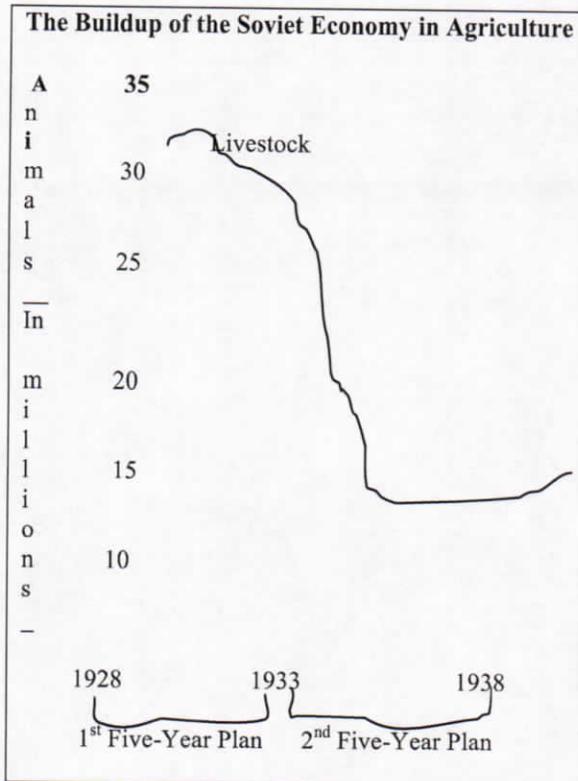
The solution lies in enlarging the agricultural units . . . and in changing the agricultural base of our national economy. . . the Socialist way, which is to set up collective farms and state farms which leads to the joining together of the small peasant farms into large collective farms, technically and scientifically equipped, and to the squeezing out of the capitalist elements from agriculture. . . Now we are able to carry on a determined offensive against the kulaks, to break their resistance, to eliminate them as a class and substitute for their output the output of the collective farms and state farms.

According to Stalin, why and how must agricultural production be increased? _____

Why must the kulaks be eliminated? _____

Document 5

The following illustrations show agricultural production during the First and Second Five-Year Plans.



What do the charts show about livestock numbers and grain production? _____

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DBQ 20: Stalin: Evaluation of His Leadership (continued)

Document 6

This excerpt, from “Forced Famine in the Ukraine: A Holocaust the West Forgot” by Adrian Karatnycky, was printed in The Wall Street Journal, on July 7, 1983.

Today, reliable academic estimates place the number of Ukrainian victims of starvation at 4.5 million to 7 million. . . . The famine was in part the by-product of Stalin’s relentless drive to collectivize Soviet agriculture. The famine was a clear result of the fact that between 1931 and 1933, while harvests were precipitously declining, Stalin’s commissars continued to . . . confiscate grain. Peasants were shot and deported as rich, landowning “kulaks”. . . . While the drive to collectivize agriculture was a wide-ranging phenomenon common to the entire U.S.S.R., only in the Ukraine did it assume a genocidal character. Indeed there can be no question that Stalin used the forced famine as part of a political strategy whose aim was to crush all vestiges of Ukrainian national sentiments.

According to this author, what were two explanations for the elimination of between 4.5 and 7 million Ukrainians between 1932 and 1933? _____

Document 7

In contrast to prior documents, this excerpt from The Land of Soviets, published in the U.S.S.R., gives another perspective of the collectivization.

The radical step forward by the majority of the peasantry towards a collective way of life was taking place against the backdrop of a bitter struggle between Soviet power and the kulaks. The [kulaks] stooped to all possible means to wreck the collectivization campaign. The murdered collective farm activists and Party and government officials sent to the villages to help the peasants; they set fire to collective farm buildings; they poisoned the cattle and destroyed farm machinery. . . . The Soviets had the right to banish them from their villages. . . . The exploiter class—the rural bourgeoisie—was finally abolished. . . .

In contrast, how does the Soviet author explain the actions taken against the kulaks? _____

(continued)

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DBQ 20: Stalin: Evaluation of His Leadership (continued)

Document 8

This excerpt, from *The Land of the Soviets*, published in the U.S.S.R., describes the results of the Five-Year Plans.

The fulfillment of the first and second Five-Year Plans strengthened the Soviet Union's economic position and turned it into a powerful industrial state. . . . In 1937 the industrial output of the USSR was 5.8 times larger than in 1913. The rate of industrial growth in the USSR considerably exceeded that of the capitalist countries. By 1937 the Soviet Union was the first country in Europe and the second in the world in the volume of industrial production. . . . Socialist industrialization was accompanied by the rapid growth of the working class, and made it possible to liquidate unemployment. In 1940 there were 9,971,000 industrial workers, which was nearly three times more than in 1928. The working class was also changing: its efficiency, technical and cultural levels were growing rapidly.

According to the Soviet author, what were the results of the Five-Year Plans? _____

Document 9

In this excerpt, the French ambassador to the Soviet Union described the public trials that were part of the "great purges" of Stalin.

I personally attended the second and third Moscow trials, those of 1937 and 1938. . . . Pyatakov [another defendant] arose . . . confessed . . . to a number of crimes. Did these "confessions" carry any share of truth? It is possible that the accused were hostile to Stalin's regime. . . . But the lessons they recited must have been forced from them . . . it is more likely that the GPU [secret police] touched each at his weak point. It is also probable that the accused gave in to some form of pressure. . . . Some would give in to save their families, others in the hope of saving their own lives.

According to the French ambassador, what happened at the trials? _____

(continued)

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DBQ 20: Stalin: Evaluation of His Leadership (continued)

Document 10

A Soviet poster was used to glorify Stalin.

It read, "Long live the great Stalin!"

- **Part B—Essay**

Evaluate the rule of Stalin in the Soviet Union, taking into consideration the changes made and the methods used.