Activity 1 – The Russian Revolution

I. **Watch the first part of the video clip** The Russian Revolution 1917 (00:00 – 05:43) **Complete the following paragraph with the missing information. Be careful with your *spelling*.**



By the end of the 19th century, Russia had been a vast empire ruled by tsars. In **(1)** ..... , Tsar Nicholas II took power, ignoring he would be the last one in a long dynasty. The social inequality was dramatic, with the lower class living in **(2)** ..... and suffering difficult situations, whereas the upper class (the royal family and the **(3)** .....) lived unworried in luxury. This injustice led to the first social movement in the country, resulting in the creation of a national assembly called **(4)** ..... The power was divided now between the Tsar and the people's representatives, but the assembly had limited powers and it met neither the Tsar nor the reformers' expectations. Only less than a decade later, World War One broke out, and the country sank into a new **(5)** .....

WWI was disastrous for the Russian Empire. Soldiers were suffering heavy defeats at the war front, while their homeland had food **(6)** ..... and its economy was collapsing. The people blamed the Tsar for the crisis and started a revolution, in which women, workers, students, and even soldiers that had been ordered to suppress the movement participated. After one week of continuous and aggressive displays of rejection of tsarist rule, Nicholas II decided to **(7)** ..... ; this marked the end of three centuries of ruling by the Romanov dynasty.

With the imperial power officially dissolved, the Russian people could finally hope for a government based on democracy and justice. A Provisional Government was instituted, which would govern while a new constitution was created. However, the Provisional Government secretly shared power with the Petrograd **(8)** ..... , an elected council that controlled the military, transport and communication systems. This council, mostly supporters of the Menshevik party, agreed to keep participating actively in the war and honour the **(9)** ..... made to the Allies; but this decision eventually would favour a smaller political party, the **(10)** ..... , led by Vladimir Lenin, who strongly opposed what he called "the imperialist war."

II. **Watch the second part of the video clip** The Russian Revolution 1917 (05:43 – 12:42) **Decide if the following statements are True or False.**

		True	False
1	Lenin's demand of redistribution of lands is a good example of Socialist thinking.	•	•
2	The Bolshevik party found it difficult to gain support from the Russian people.	•	•
3	The government severely repressed any public display of disagreement on the involvement of Russia in the war.	•	•

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4	The people's support to the Bolsheviks helped prevent armed conflicts in the capital and get them a majority in the Petrograd Soviet.	•	•
5	In October, 1917, Lenin organized the Bolshevik Revolution and forced the national assembly to give up power.	•	•
6	The Bolsheviks' hold on power after the revolution was accepted peacefully	•	•
7	Since his abdication and until the Bolshevik Revolution, Nicholas II and his family had lived freely somewhere else in Russia.	•	•
8	The royal family were killed to prevent the Tsar from taking back the power.	•	•
9	During the civil war in Russia, more civilians than soldiers were killed.	•	•
10	The objectives of the first revolution (February) were finally met after the second revolution (October).	•	•

Some interesting facts about the Russian Revolution

- In 1914, the name of the capital city of St. Petersburg was officially changed to the more Slavic sounding *Petrograd* because St. Petersburg sounded "too German."
- The February Revolution actually took place in March according to the modern Gregorian calendar; at the time Russia was still using the Julian calendar, which was still in February. The Julian calendar is used by the Eastern Orthodox clergy, and in 1917 it was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar.
- Women were the first to hit the streets. Starving, exhausted, and angry, a series of meetings and rallies were held for International Women's Day as a part of the unrest.
- In withdrawing from the war, Russia ceded a large portion of their territory to Germany in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The conditions were harsh; when the Germans later argued that the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the war was stringent, the Allies responded that Versailles was far laxer than Brest-Litovsk.
- The Bolsheviks moved the capital from Petrograd to Moscow in 1918, due to it being a more centralized location for the territory they directly controlled.

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