**A-LEVEL TRANSITION WORK ON RUSSIA**

***Context***

One half of your A-Level course will focus on 19th & 20th C Russian History. The course begins in 1855. The purpose of these tasks is to encourage you to gain some useful background knowledge by researching what life was like for people in Russia at this time and to allow you to find out about the political, social and economic context. Winston Churchill described Russia as ‘a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma’ and the A-Level history course involves the study of an unfamiliar period of history. This is an opportunity for you to broaden your individual wider reading and to do some independent research into what it was like to live in a society dominated by the Tsars and with a very different way of life to our own. The key questions underpinning the Russia course are…

* How was Russia governed and how did political authority change and develop?
* Why did opposition develop and how effective was it?
* How and with what results did the economy develop and change?
* What was the extent of social and cultural change?
* How important were ideas and ideology?
* How important was the role of individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

***Task 1 – The Romonovs***

***Produce a short factfile on the following key rulers of Russia (key dates, events of reign, achievements etc)***

Ivan the Terrible (married a Romanov)

Peter the Great

Catherine the Great

Alexander I

Nicholas I

***Task 2 – Make a “Rough Guide” booklet about Russia in 1855. This would benefit from including pictures and diagrams too. Research the following topics for your booklet:***

* ***POLITICS.*** How was Russia governed in 1855? Research the role of the *Tsa*r, the *mir,* the nobility and the Church. What armed forces did Russia possess and how were they organised? Who were Russia’s foreign allies? Who were Russia’s key foreign enemies? What was happening in the Crimea by 1855?
* ***SOCIETY.*** Living conditions for people in Russia in 1855. How large was the population? How was the population distributed? What were houses like? What jobs did people do? How was life different for rich and poor?
* ***ECONOMY.*** How rich was Russia? What can you find out about the currency? What were Russia’s main industries? Who did Russia trade with? What was imported? What was exported? Why was the Middle Class so small?
* ***RELIGION.*** How was the Church organised? Who were the key people in the church hierarchy? How popular was the Orthodox Church What did people believe in? How did people worship? How did the Church affect everyday life?

***Task 3***

***Engaging with historical fiction. Read one of the following books (or any other work of historical fiction set in Russia of your choice).***

***The ‘heavyweights’***

* *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy
* *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy
* *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
* *Dr Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak

***‘More manageable’***

* *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turganev
* *The Cherry Orchard (& other plays)* by Anton Chekhov
* *The Death of Ivan Ilyich (&other stories*) by Leo Tolstoy
* *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovisch* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
* *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles

**Optional extras**

Watch War and Peace on Clickview

**Textbook**

You will need to buy a textbook – we **do not** have a set of these in school so you will be expected to bring it in for lessons. Look out for 2nd hand copies – they do tend to get snapped up (perhaps put it on an EBay search) the author is Sally Waller.

A book cover of a building

Description automatically generated