Power and Plans

Stalin's political and economic changes, 1927 to 1939

SS24.WH.9a "Describe how Joseph Stalin sought to consolidate his own rule and strengthen socialism in the Soviet Union from 1927 to 1939."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions Stalin used to secure his rule, circle policies he used to build a state-run socialist economy, and put a star beside a cost of either.

Stalin Reshapes the Soviet Union

1 By 1927, Joseph Stalin had gained influence within the Communist Party, but rivals still challenged him. He used his position as party general secretary to place supporters in powerful jobs. By 1929, he had pushed major opponents, including Leon Trotsky, out of power. Newspapers and posters praised Stalin as a wise leader, while open criticism became dangerous. These moves helped him control the party and shape what Soviet citizens heard about his rule.

2 Stalin also wanted the Soviet state to control the economy. In 1928, his first Five-Year Plan set ambitious targets for coal, steel, and factories. The government directed investment toward heavy industry, often at the expense of everyday goods. Starting in 1929, officials forced many farmers into large collective farms and seized grain for the state. Stalin expected these changes to replace private farming and fund industrial growth. Resistance met punishment, and severe famine struck several regions, especially Ukraine, in 1932 and 1933.

3 During the Great Purge of 1936 to 1938, Stalin used police arrests and staged trials to remove people he called enemies. Some accused officials confessed under pressure; many were executed or sent to forced labor camps. Fear discouraged opposition, even inside the party. By 1939, the state controlled most factories and farms, and Soviet industry had expanded. Yet production targets and political terror brought immense suffering. Stalin's economic policies strengthened state control, while his attacks on rivals made his personal power harder to challenge.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Stalin's use of party jobs help him secure his rule?

2. How was the first Five-Year Plan meant to strengthen the Soviet state-run economy?

3. How did collective farms increase state control, and what was one cost?

4. How did the Great Purge strengthen Stalin's personal power?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word museum label titled "Power and Change." Explain how one political tactic and two economic policies helped Stalin pursue different goals from 1927 to 1939, and include one human cost. Connect your ideas rather than listing facts.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Plans

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.9a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions Stalin used to secure his rule, circle policies he used to build a state-run socialist economy, and put a star beside a cost of either. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Stalin's use of party jobs help him secure his rule?	**He placed supporters in powerful jobs, making it harder for rivals to challenge him.**
2	How was the first Five-Year Plan meant to strengthen the Soviet state-run economy?	**It set targets for coal, steel, and factories and directed investment toward heavy industry.**
3	How did collective farms increase state control, and what was one cost?	**They replaced private farming and let officials seize grain. Farmers faced punishment for resisting, and severe famine struck several regions.**
4	How did the Great Purge strengthen Stalin's personal power?	**Arrests and staged trials removed people Stalin called enemies, while fear discouraged further opposition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Power and Change

Stalin's rule depended on both control of people and control of production. He placed loyal supporters in party jobs, making it harder for rivals to oppose him. His Five-Year Plan pushed factories to produce more steel and coal, while collective farms put agriculture under state direction and supplied grain. These policies aimed to build a state-run socialist economy, but they also caused suffering. Farmers who resisted collectivization faced punishment, and severe famine struck Ukraine and other regions.

Accept other passage-supported political tactics, economic policies, and human costs. The museum label should distinguish Stalin's personal power from state control of the economy and explain how its examples served those goals.