Crown Under Pressure

Trace unrest, revolution, and civil war in Russia.

MWH.C.6.3.A "Describe the growing political and social unrest under Czar Nicholas II and the collapse of the Romanov dynasty, exemplified by the emergence of the Bolshevik Movement and the Russian Civil War."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three causes of unrest, circle two choices by Nicholas II that weakened his rule, and number these holders of power in order: Nicholas II, the Provisional Government, and the Bolsheviks.

How the Romanov Dynasty Fell

1 In January 1905, workers marched toward the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg to petition Czar Nicholas II for better conditions. Soldiers fired on the crowd, and the killings helped spark strikes and protests across Russia. Nicholas promised an elected Duma, but he kept broad powers and later limited the Duma's influence. Many peasants still wanted land, while factory workers faced long hours and low wages. Political groups disagreed about solutions, yet anger at autocratic rule spread. Among them, the Bolsheviks argued that workers should seize power through revolution, rather than wait for the czar to grant lasting reforms.

2 When Russia entered World War I in 1914, military defeats, shortages, and rising prices deepened public frustration. Nicholas took command of the army in 1915, tying his reputation to its failures. In March 1917, workers and other protesters filled the streets of Petrograd, as St. Petersburg was then called. Soldiers sent to restore order joined the crowds instead. Without dependable troops or political support, Nicholas abdicated, ending Romanov rule after more than three centuries. A Provisional Government took office, but it continued the war and struggled to meet demands for food, land, and change. The monarchy had fallen; unrest had not.

3 The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, gained support with promises of peace, land, and bread. In November 1917, they overthrew the Provisional Government in Petrograd and claimed power. Their victory did not bring immediate stability. In the Russian Civil War, the Bolshevik Red Army fought White forces, a loose collection of groups that opposed Bolshevik rule. Foreign powers also intervened against the Bolsheviks. Fighting, hunger, and disease devastated communities. By 1922, the Reds had won, and the Soviet Union was formed. Russia had moved from an autocratic monarchy through a failed provisional government to a new one-party state.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Nicholas's promise of an elected Duma fail to end political unrest?

2. How did World War I and Nicholas's decision to command the army weaken his rule?

3. Why did the end of Romanov rule not end Russia's unrest?

4. How did the Bolsheviks' struggle for power change between November 1917 and the Civil War?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of 75 to 95 words explaining how two pressures on Nicholas's rule helped end the dynasty. Then contrast the Bolsheviks' takeover with their role in the Civil War, using at least one cause-and-effect link.

ANSWER KEY

Crown Under Pressure

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.6.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three causes of unrest, circle two choices by Nicholas II that weakened his rule, and number these holders of power in order: Nicholas II, the Provisional Government, and the Bolsheviks. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Nicholas's promise of an elected Duma fail to end political unrest?	**He kept broad powers and later limited the Duma's influence, so people seeking meaningful political change remained dissatisfied.**
2	How did World War I and Nicholas's decision to command the army weaken his rule?	**Defeats, shortages, and rising prices fueled frustration, while Nicholas's command tied his reputation to the army's failures.**
3	Why did the end of Romanov rule not end Russia's unrest?	**The Provisional Government continued the war and struggled to meet demands for food, land, and change.**
4	How did the Bolsheviks' struggle for power change between November 1917 and the Civil War?	**In November they overthrew the Provisional Government; during the Civil War, their Red Army fought forces opposed to Bolshevik rule.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Military defeats damaged confidence in Nicholas II, and food shortages fed public anger. His decision to command the army linked him to its failures. When protests spread in 1917, soldiers joined the crowds, and Nicholas abdicated. The Provisional Government continued the unpopular war, so demands for change remained strong. Promising peace, land, and bread, the Bolsheviks gained support and seized power from that government. During the Civil War, they fought to keep power against White forces. Their victory did not restore the monarchy. It led to a new one-party state.

Accept other passage-supported pressures, including low wages, demands for land, and limits on the Duma. Look for a clear distinction between ending Romanov rule, overthrowing the Provisional Government, and fighting to retain Bolshevik power.