Who Sets the Plan?

Trace how economic control can become political control.

TOT.C.1.6.B "Describe how state ownership of means of production, including centralized economic planning, leads to an authoritarian state which restricts individual freedoms."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline examples of state control over production, circle limits on people's freedoms, and number the steps that connect the two.

Planning and Power in Stalin's Soviet Union

(1) In the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s, the state owned most factories, mines, and railways. Officials in Moscow wrote five-year plans that set targets for steel, coal, and other goods. Imagine a manager at a state-owned shoe factory receiving a required output target. The manager could not simply switch to making more winter boots after hearing that nearby families needed them. Changing production required approval and supplies from planners, who decided where leather and machines would go. Control over workplaces and supplies gave government officials power over both the economy and the people who depended on it.

(2) Meeting the plan became a political demand, not just a business goal. Factory managers had to report results to state officials, and workers faced pressure to meet targets, even when supplies arrived late. Stalin's government punished some people it accused of sabotage when production fell short. Independent unions and opposition parties could not freely challenge these policies. State control of most major employers also made it difficult for workers to seek a job outside the planned system. When the same government set targets, controlled jobs, and punished criticism, disagreement carried serious risks.

(3) State control also reached farms. The government forced many farm families into collective farms and required deliveries of grain at state-set levels. Officials seized grain even during severe shortages, contributing to famine, especially in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. Authorities restricted travel for many rural people and censored reports about the crisis. These actions show a chain of power: control of land and food enabled officials to enforce the plan, while police power and censorship limited people's ability to resist or speak openly. Public ownership alone does not guarantee dictatorship, but concentrated economic and political power made these restrictions possible in Stalin's Soviet Union.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did state ownership and central planning limit the shoe factory manager's ability to respond to local needs?

2. How did the government's treatment of missed production targets make it risky to challenge the plan?

3. How did control of farms and grain help officials restrict people's freedoms?

4. Why does the passage say public ownership alone does not guarantee dictatorship? What other government powers made Stalin's state authoritarian?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a government takes over every local bus company and sets all routes through a central plan. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain how officials might use that control, together with political power, to limit two different freedoms, and show the cause-and-effect steps.

ANSWER KEY

Who Sets the Plan?

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.1.6.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline examples of state control over production, circle limits on people's freedoms, and number the steps that connect the two. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did state ownership and central planning limit the shoe factory manager's ability to respond to local needs?	**The manager could not change production to make more winter boots without planners' approval and the supplies they controlled.**
2	How did the government's treatment of missed production targets make it risky to challenge the plan?	**The government punished some people accused of sabotage when production fell short, while independent unions and opposition parties could not freely challenge its policies.**
3	How did control of farms and grain help officials restrict people's freedoms?	**Officials forced families into collective farms and required grain deliveries. They also restricted many rural people's travel and censored reports about shortages, limiting resistance and open discussion.**
4	Why does the passage say public ownership alone does not guarantee dictatorship? What other government powers made Stalin's state authoritarian?	**Ownership gave officials economic control, but the state also used police power, punishment, censorship, and limits on political opposition to enforce its plans and restrict freedoms.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The government owns every bus and assigns routes through a central plan. Officials could cancel service to a district where residents organize protests, making it harder for them to gather downtown. Because no independent company can add a route, riders have few other bus options. If police punish drivers who refuse the order, workers may fear speaking against the policy. Ownership and planning make these controls easier, but the deliberate denial of service and punishment create the restrictions.

Accept other passage-supported cause-and-effect explanations. For Your Turn, look for two distinct freedoms and an explanation of how political enforcement, not ownership alone, restricts them.