

Character cards

1. Prince Georgy Lvov (1861-1925)

A Russian aristocrat and member of the liberal-democratic Kadets party. You sat in the Duma from its formation in 1906 and also were involved in charitable causes and war relief. You become prime minister in the Provisional Government between March and July 1917.

2. Anton Denikin (1872-1947)

You are a general in the Tsarist Imperial Army (later you will become an important White commander during the Civil War). Like General Kornilov, who you support, you come from peasant stock but rose through army ranks.

3. A striking worker in Petrograd

You are an industrial worker who grew up in the countryside but moved to Petrograd for work and a better life. You are fed up with the overcrowding and poor living conditions. You have been on strike since January 1917. You want the war to end. You are also hungry and spend most of your time in queues for bread.

4. Grigory Zinoviev (1883-1936)

You are a founding member of the Bolsheviks. You returned to Russia with Lenin in April 1917 but will oppose Lenin's push for an armed revolution in October.

5. A Russian peasant

You live in a commune. You farm a small strip of land allocated to you by the peasant council (called the *mir*). You cannot read or write. In your village over 10% of the men have been killed in the war.

6. Fyodor Raskolnikov (1892-1939)

You are a socialist naval officer stationed at Kronstadt, a Baltic naval base on the outskirts of Petrograd. You are also a member of the Bolsheviks. You led your men in support of the March revolution.

7. Karl Marx (1818-1883)

You are a German political philosopher. Your ideas provided the backdrop for a revolution in Russia. Your theory is that mankind moves through a series of socio-economic phases, defined by ownership of capital and 'class struggle'. Your condemnation of capitalism and your theory of revolution became a beacon for left-wing political movements across Europe – including the Social Democrats, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks.

8. Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918)

You are a Marxist revolutionary and a founding member of the Social Democrats (SDs). Although you voted with Lenin at the 1903 SD congress, you later opposed the Bolsheviks on many issues. You support the war effort and think that the February Revolution is premature. You dismiss Lenin's influence and consider him a German agent.

9. Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918)

You are the Tsar and a member of the Romanov dynasty that has ruled Russia for more than three centuries. You are not unintelligent, but you are deeply religious and easily influenced by those around you, particularly your wife Alexandra. The war has exposed Russia's lack of economic development and military modernisation, and your decision to take personal command of the army has meant you are blamed for all the failings.

10. Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916)

You are a Siberian-born faith healer and close friend of the royal family. You have convinced the Tsarina that you could help her son, Alexei who is chronically ill [*we now know he suffered from haemophilia*]. When not with the royals, you are usually engaged in drunken parties or carousing with low-rent prostitutes. You have considerable political influence over Alexandra, particularly after the Tsar left for war in 1915.

11. Pavel Milyukov (1859-1943)

You are the founder and leader of the Kadets. You are a historian and academic, and sat in the State Duma, where you strongly criticised the Tsarist government. You are best known for your April 1917 telegram to the Allies, promising to keep Russia in the war until its completion. The public backlash forced your resignation from the Provisional Government.

12. Tsarina Alexandra (1872-1918)

You are the wife of the Tsar, Nicholas II. You were born in Germany and married your second cousin (you are both related to Queen Victoria!). You are a strong-willed and sometimes obstinate and exert considerable influence over Nicholas. You urged him to maintain the autocracy and impose his will over Russia. You are famous for your infatuation and devotion to Rasputin.

13. Julius Martov (1873-1923)

You are an influential Russian Marxist and the most prominent member of the Mensheviks. You joined the Social Democrats in 1900 and, with your friend Lenin, founded the party newspaper *Iskra*. Your collaboration with Lenin diminished following the 1903 party split and you became the de facto leader of the Mensheviks. You argued the party should agitate against bourgeois government but not directly attempt to overthrow it. Unlike right-wing elements in the Menshevik movement, you opposed the war.

14. Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869-1939)

You are Lenin's wife and a notable Bolshevik revolutionary in your own right. You met Lenin in 1894 and married him four years later, during one of his periods in exile in Siberia. A member of the Social Democrats from the outset, you voted with Lenin at the 1903 party congress and thus became part of the Bolshevik faction. However, you do not always agree with Lenin and you later believe his call for an October 1917 revolution was premature.

15. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940)

You are a leading socialist writer, thinker and organiser and the second most influential revolutionary after Lenin. You attended the 1903 Social Democratic party congress, where you sided with Julius Martov and the Mensheviks. However you later attempted to reconcile and reunite the party's divided factions. You made important contributions to the 1905 Revolution, particularly in the formation and organisation of the St Petersburg Soviet. You were then arrested and forced into exile, before escaping abroad. You returned to Russia in 1917 and over the course of the year begin to align with Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

16. Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970)

You are a left-wing political leader. You trained as a lawyer and provided advice to individuals who had been mistreated by the government. In 1912 you were elected to the Duma as a member of the Trudovik party and quickly took a lead role into investigations into the Lena River shootings. In March 1917 you were appointed Minister of Justice in the new Provisional Government, the only socialist in the cabinet. A series of government breakdowns will enable you to rise to War Minister (May) and then Prime Minister (July), largely because of your ambition and brilliant oratory. But your support for the war and your failed June Offensive will make you a target for more radical socialists.

17. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953)

Although you will eventually become known as the ruthless dictator who dominated Russia from the late 1920s until your death in 1953, your role in the Russian Revolution was comparatively minor! Born in Georgia, you began training for the priesthood but were expelled from the seminary before graduating. You became a Marxist and joined Lenin's Bolshevik faction in 1903. Your early contribution to Bolshevism was largely practical: you raised funds for the movement by extortion or robbing banks; at other times you were involved in the production and dissemination of propaganda. This naturally made you a wanted man and you spent much of the decade before 1917 either in prison or in exile. After the abdication of the Tsar, you return to Petrograd and muscle your way into the editorship of *Pravda*. In your first editorials you pledge your support to the Provisional Government, but after April you will support Lenin and the planned overthrow of the government.

18. Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924)

You are the leader of the Bolsheviks and will be the key instigator of the October Revolution. In 1895 you were forced out of Russia and into exile (you spent time in London, Paris, Munich and Geneva). In 1902 you published *What is to Be Done?* – a cry for better organisation and discipline in Marxist revolutionary groups. The following year you put these ideas into practice by forcing a split in the Social Democrats, Russia's largest Marxist party, into the Mensheviks and your own faction, dubbed the Bolsheviks ('majority'). The abdication of the Tsar in 1917 allowed you to return to Russia. You arrive in April, and take command of the situation by issuing the *April Theses*, which demand 'Peace, Bread and Land' for the people, a boycott of the Provisional Government, and socialist revolution at the earliest opportunity.

19. Lavr Kornilov (1870-1918)

You are a leading general in the Tsarist Imperial Army, best known for conspiring against the Kerensky government in August 1917. Politically, you are conservative, nationalist and bitterly opposed to socialism. You lost faith in both the Tsarist and Provisional Governments because both had shown themselves incapable of managing the war effort and crushing radicalism.

20. Petr Stolypin (1862-1911)

You are the politician and minister who led the Tsarist counter-revolution after 1905. You responded to the 1905 Revolution by ordering the repression of militant workers and political groups. Your actions increased government executions to such an extent that the hangman's noose was dubbed 'Stolypin's necktie'. You also initiated land reforms and manipulated Russia's electoral laws to dilute anti-Tsarist dissent in the Duma.

21. Sergei Witte (1849-1915)

You are a politician known mainly for your economic reforms and his liberal political views. In 1892 you were recruited into Tsar Alexander III's ministry and given responsibility for transport, communications and finance. You undertook several important economic reforms, including a state monopoly on vodka production, the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the introduction of the gold standard and incentives to attract foreign investment in industrial projects. Your changes facilitated the rapid expansion of Russia's industrial sector, though they made you unpopular with the conservative elite. You advised the Tsar to introduce liberal political reforms, including a constitution and an elected assembly (Duma).

22. Georgy Gapon (1870-1906)

You are an Orthodox priest and political agitator who contributed to political unrest in 1904-5. You worked as a teacher; and organised charitable relief for the city's poor, including industrial workers and their families. You were recruited by the Okhrana (the Tsar's secret police) to organise a zubatovshchina (state-run workers' association) but your real loyalties were with suffering workers and by 1904 you were organising factory workers into militant sections. In January 1905 you drafted a petition of workers' demands for presentation to the Tsar. This petition was being carried by protestors when they were gunned down by imperial troops on 'Bloody Sunday'. You later condemned the Tsar's response to this violence and openly called for revolution.

23. Inessa Armand (1874-1920)

You are a (female!) French socialist who provided support to Lenin during his exile in Paris. You returned to Russia with him in April 1917 and became active in the new Soviet government, heading up the Zhenotdel women's department. Letters between you and Lenin suggest a close personal relationship!

24. Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952)

You are arguably the leading female socialist revolutionary. You joined the Social Democrats in 1899, and worked with industrial labour groups. You witnessed the events of 'Bloody Sunday' in 1905. After the outbreak of war, you spent time in several European countries, attempting to convince socialist groups to oppose the war. You joined the Bolshevik movement in 1915 and will support Lenin's call for revolution in October 1917.

25. Lev Kamenev (1883-1936)

You are a long-serving Bolshevik and one of two Bolshevik leaders who will oppose Lenin's wish to seize power in October 1917.

26. Alexander Kolchak (1874-1920)

You are an admiral and the commander of the Tsar's Black Sea Fleet during the Great War. Later you will become the 'supreme commander' of the White Armies in the Civil War.

27. A war widow

You live in a commune with your three children. Your husband was conscripted into the army and was killed in 1915. You farm a small strip of land allocated to you by the peasant council (called the *mir*) and should receive a war pension from the government. This has not be paid for months and you and your children are now starving.

28. Fyodor Dubasov (1845-1912)

You are a Tsarist naval officer known for your violent suppression of urban and peasant uprisings. In 1905 you were appointed governor-general of Moscow, which was gripped by unrest and insurrection. You moved armed troops and artillery into the city and ordered them to fire on large mobs, killing hundreds.

29. A soldier in the Petrograd garrison

You are a member of the Volhynian Guards, an infantry regiment of the Russian Imperial Guard. You took part in the failed invasion of East Prussia in 1914 and saw thousands of your comrades killed and injured. When the Tsar ordered your regiment to fire into the unarmed crowds in March 1917 you fired into the air. You then took part in the mutiny in your garrison, killing an officer.

30. Female worker in Petrograd

You are a textile worker. You took part in the International Women's Day march for 'bread and peace' in March 1917, demanding an end to the war and the food shortages.

Teaching notes

This active learning activity is set just after the March 1917 revolution (although some characters will make an appearance from beyond the grave!). It brings together key characters to mingle and discuss the momentous events that have just occurred.

The majority of the character cards refer to specific historical figures (the information has been adapted from alphahistory.com: <http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/russian-revolution-whos-who-a-k/>).

Main activity

There are 30 role cards for this activity. The cards in **bold** are the most suitable for lower ability students. If your class has fewer students then simply remove the less significant characters from the role-play.

Each student takes on the role of a key person in the Russian Revolution. Photographs of the characters can be found in the PDF picture pack which accompanies this resource. Due to copyright restrictions we cannot publish the photographs of five of the characters, but you could substitute our 'avatars' with your own image.

Students could stick the picture of their character on their front during this task. They also need to memorise their character, then move around the room and meet some other characters (you may find it easiest if you move desks at this point to clear some space!).

- For each person they talk to, they need to find out:
 - who they are
 - that person's attitude to:
 - ✓ the **war**
 - ✓ the **Tsar**
 - ✓ the **February revolution**
 - that person's hopes for the future.
- They should also consider the **similarities and differences** between the people they meet.
- Each student should mingle with **at least five** other people.

Active learning

- Ask your students to arrange themselves into groups with others they are most similar to. Discuss:
 - What are the similarities between them?
 - What makes them different?
 - Which people have been hard to categorise? Why is this?
 - Who do they like and who do they dislike?

Homework suggestion

Students could further research 'their' character and create a display poster with a picture and brief description.