



# 7th Grade World History

Lesson # 39, May 14, 2020



I can compare and contrast the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev and those of Alexander II.

# Supplies Needed

Paper  
and  
pencil



Internet  
access



Your  
brain



## Warm Up:

The Cold War lasted for most of the 20th Century. Although there were several conflicts that resulted because of the political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.), it was actually a war of ideologies. Think back to what you learned about Stalin and Khrushchev.



Now, pretend that you are an U.S. politician during the Cold War. Write a brief paragraph explaining why U.S. President Ronald Reagan was correct when he called the policies of the U.S.S.R. the “aggressive impulses of an evil empire”.



## Warm Up:

President Reagan was right when he said that the Soviet Union had the “aggressive impulses of an evil empire”. It started when Stalin put puppet governments in place, creating the Eastern Bloc. Stalin also instituted the Berlin Blockade and had his political rivals at home sent to gulags or executed.



Khrushchev oversaw the building of the Berlin Wall which cut East Berlin off from West Berlin and separated families. He also placed nuclear missiles in Cuba that could hit almost the entire U.S. in less than 30 minutes. Clearly the Soviet Union was an aggressive, “evil empire”.



# Warm Up:

Use Google to find the definition for each of these words

1. Eastern Bloc/Satellite nations-
2. Perestroika-
3. Glasnost-
4. Summit -
5. Bureaucrat-
6. Hardliners-

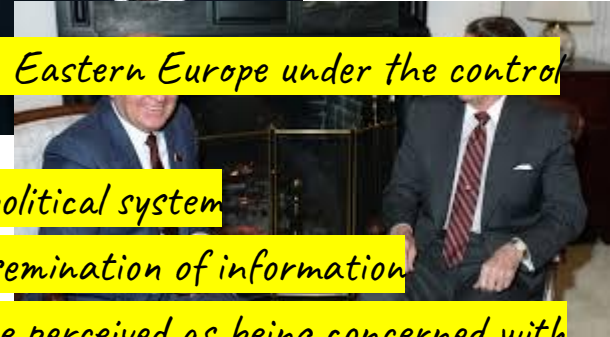


# Warm Up:

Use Google to find the definition for each of these words



1. Eastern Bloc/Satellite nations- *the group of communist states of Eastern Europe under the control of the U.S.S.R.*
2. Perestroika- *policy of restructuring or reforming the economic and political system*
3. Glasnost- *policy of more open consultative government and wider dissemination of information*
4. Bureaucrat- *an official in a government department, in particular one perceived as being concerned with procedural correctness at the expense of people's needs*
5. Hardliners- *a member of a group, typically a political group, who adheres uncompromisingly to a set of ideas or policies.*



# Activity 1: Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and the end of the Cold War

The reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev started a thaw in the Cold War. Boris Yeltsin finished the dismantling of the Soviet Union. Watch the video to get a quick overview of how the world changed at the closing of the 20th century.

If you were living in the U.S.S.R. during this time, how would you feel about Gorbachev and Yeltsin?





# Activity 1: Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and the end of the Cold War

*I think I would have liked Gorbachev. He allowed people to speak out about the government and brought Pizza Hut to Russia. He also allowed free elections to begin.*

*Even though Yeltsin went behind Gorbachev's back, I would have liked him too. He helped make Russia a new nation with freedom for the people.*



## Activity 2: Perestroika: Gorbachev's reforms

Visit History.com's page about [Perestroika](#) and read about the reform movement of Mikhail Gorbachev. On your paper, answer the following questions.



1. How did Perestroika contribute to the collapse of the U.S.S.R.?
2. What did Gorbachev do for businesses?
3. Why did this outrage Soviet bureaucrats?
4. Describe how Gorbachev tried to create a balance between relaxing restrictions on trade and pressure from hardliners.
5. How did his economic reforms backfire?
6. Describe the political reforms under Perestroika.
7. What major international events occurred because of Perestroika?
8. What were the results of Gorbachev's policy of Perestroika?

## Activity 2: Perestroika: Gorbachev's reforms



1. *The reforms of Perestroika were sudden, and combined with instability in the Soviet Union, led to its collapse.*
2. *He loosened centralized control allowing people to decide what to make and how much to charge for their products.*
3. *It went against the strict price controls and took power from high-ranking officials.*
4. *Gorbachev removed restrictions on foreign trade to bypass the bureaucratic system. He encouraged Western investment, however he required the new businesses to be majority Russian owned. He showed restraint towards laborers on strike but reversed this when pressured by hardliners.*

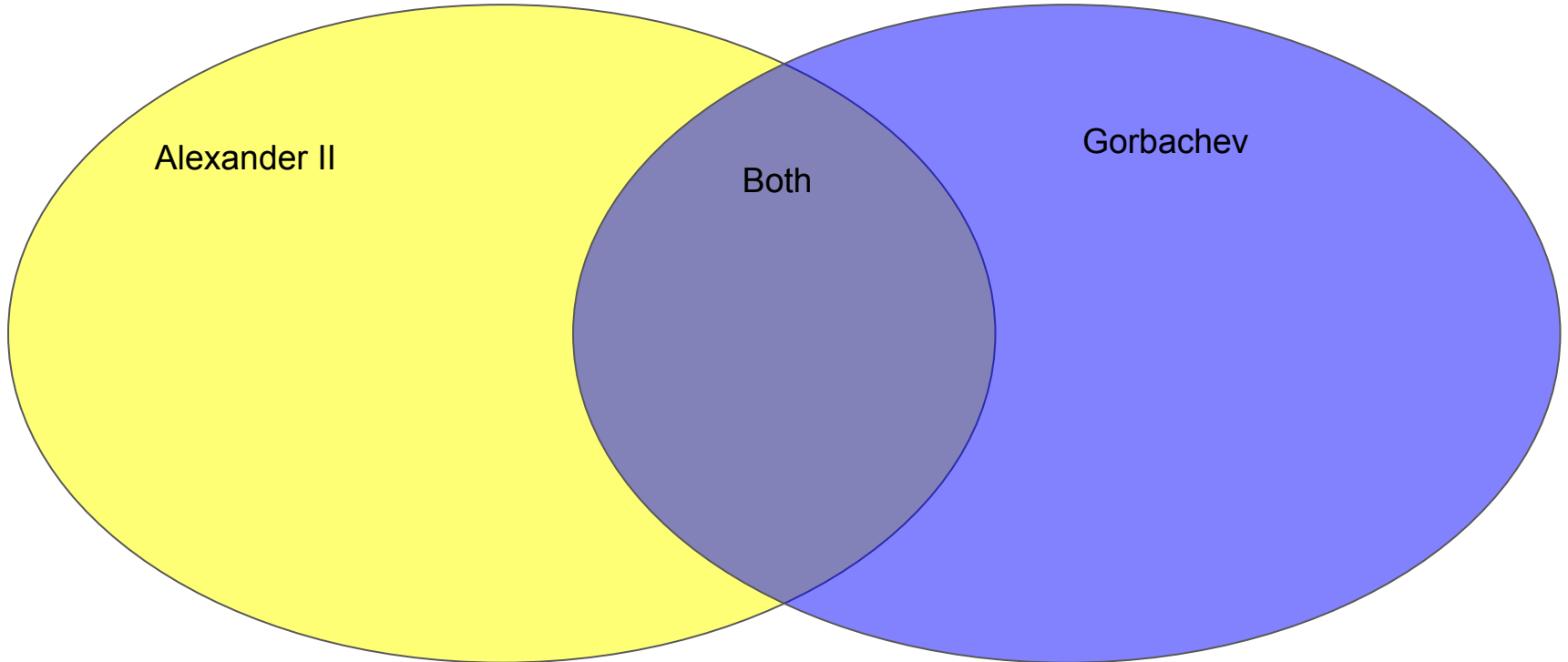
## Activity 2: Perestroika: Gorbachev's reforms



5. *Farmers started charging more than people could afford. Higher wages led to inflation. He was criticized for both moving too fast and not fast enough.*
6. *He held truly democratic elections in 1988. Former dissidents and prisoners were elected to the new congress. The media was free to report openly about the elections and the government.*
7. *Gorbachev ended the war in Afghanistan. He built relationships with foreign leaders. He signed the 1987 INF Treaty with President Reagan.*
8. *Because he chose not to interfere in other countries, relatively peaceful revolutions happened in Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989. In 1991, hardliners attempted a coup that failed. But Gorbachev eventually resigned in December 1991.*

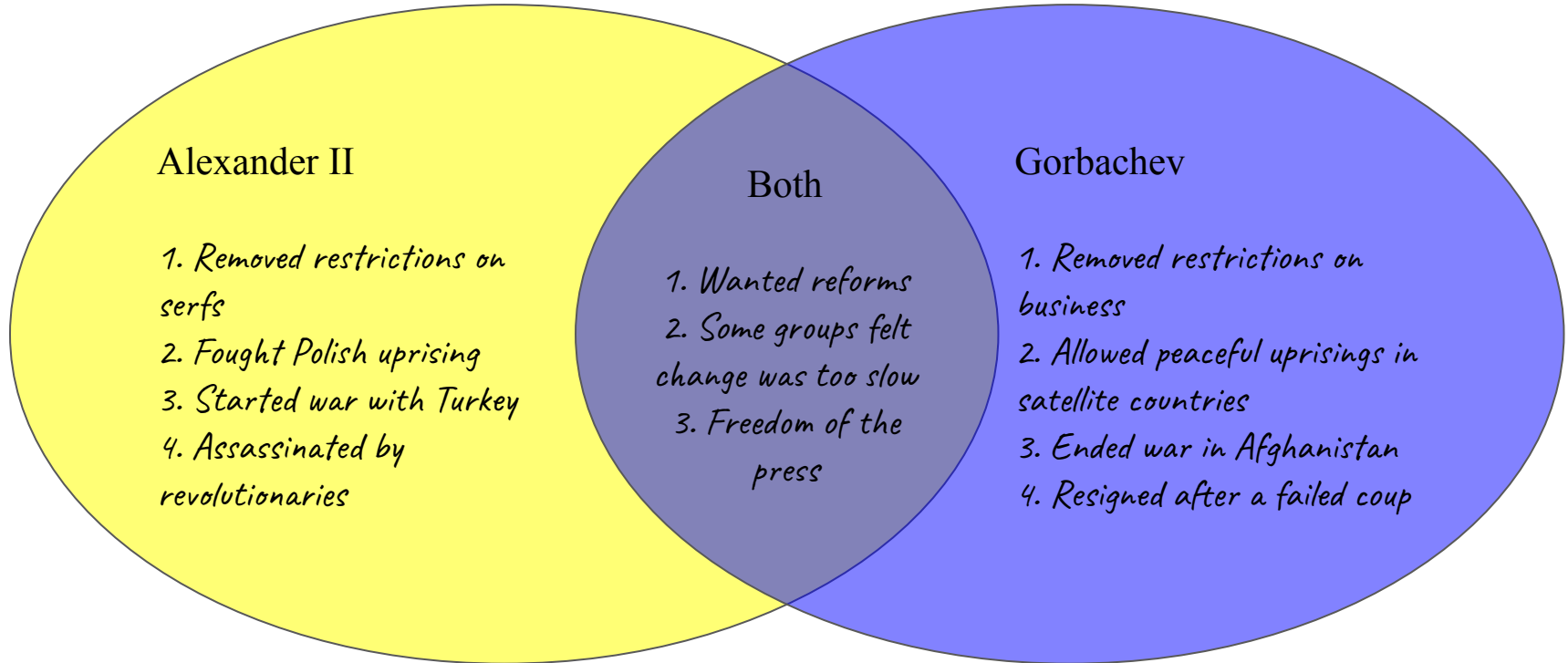
# Activity 3: Compare and Contrast Gorbachev/Alexander II

Think back to what you learned about Alexander II. Compare and contrast him with Gorbachev by copying the Venn diagram and filling it in.



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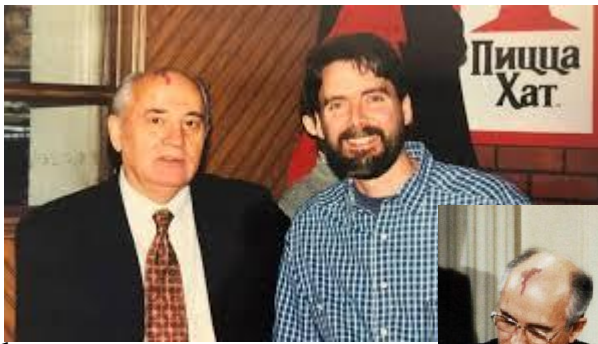


# Wrap up

Alexander II's reforms eventually failed and he was assassinated.

Mikhail Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and is considered one of Russia's best leaders.

Why do you think Gorbachev's reforms worked despite facing similar opposition as Alexander II?



## Wrap up: (possible answer)

*Alexander II and Mikhail Gorbachev were both opposed by hardliners who lost power due to their reforms and revolutionaries who felt the reforms were too slow. But Gorbachev was more successful because he didn't use the army to enforce any of his policies. He signed a nuclear treaty with the U.S., let the satellite nations determine their own future, and allowed protesters to speak and even run for congress.*





# Extend Your Learning

To learn more about the end of the U.S.S.R., watch this video from History Matters. It describes the failed August Putsch (violent revolution).

