

Preparation for A Level History- Paper 1 Tsarist and Communist Russia Task 2:

Evaluating historical extracts [historians' interpretations or viewpoints of the past]

1. Read the extract below. Here Service is giving his interpretation [viewpoint] of what Russia was like in 1855
2. Highlight where you can see Service's opinion in the text [note- historian's never use the pronoun 'I' in their writing, so what may appear to be fact is actually opinion!]
3. Summarise in no more than two sentences what you think Service is arguing about Russia in 1855.
4. Using the photocopied chapter add evidence that supports Service's argument to the first column and evidence that challenges Service's argument to the second column
5. Once you have collected all of your evidence reach a judgement on how convincing you think Service's argument is and then explain your reasons for this in the box at the bottom.

Extract A – Robert Service, *History of Modern Russia*, 1997

The Russian Empire was deeply divided between the government and the Tsar's subjects; between the capital and the provinces; between the educated and the uneducated; between Western and Russian ideas; between rich and poor; between privilege and oppression; between contemporary fashion and old custom. Most people (and over 90% of the Emperor's subjects were born and bred in the countryside) felt that a chasm divided them from the world inhabited by the ruling elites. Russia was an empire but national consciousness was only patchily developed and local loyalties and traditions retained the greatest influence. Except in times of war, most Russians were motivated by Christian belief, peasant customs, village loyalties and reverence for the Tsar rather than feelings of nationhood. The Tsar and the Church hierarchy wanted obedience and they had the authority to secure that.

Summarise Service's argument here:

Evidence that supports [agrees with] Service's argument	Evidence that challenges [disagrees with] Service's argument

How convincing is the argument- explain your decision and refer to the evidence you have found

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