

Name Class Date

Enrichment: Josef Stalin

Directions Read the biography below. Answer the questions and complete the activity that follows.

Josef Stalin was born in 1879 in Georgia. His father was a shoemaker and his mother was a clothes washer. His name was originally Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili. As an adult he took the name *Stalin*, meaning "man of steel." Stalin became interested in revolutionary ideas as a young man. He took part in many strikes and demonstrations. As a result, he was arrested seven times. Stalin joined the Bolsheviks, and in 1912 Lenin gave him a place on the Central Committee. During the Russian Revolution, Stalin played an important role and gained high office in the revolutionary government.

After Lenin died in 1924, Stalin gradually wiped out his rivals. He ordered them killed or forced them to leave. Stalin increased his control over the Soviet government until he was acting as a dictator. In 1928, he put his first Five-Year Plan into place. The policy of collectivizing, or combining, farms proved to be a disaster. It caused the deaths of as many as ten million people. Stalin also forced people to build factories and industrialize, which created problems such as pollution. In addition, during the 1930s, Stalin persecuted educated people. He was afraid that they would challenge his authority.



At the start of World War II, Stalin was an ally of Hitler. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Stalin joined the Allies. After the war ended in 1945, he forced the nations of Eastern Europe to set up communist governments friendly to the Soviet Union. These actions caused the Cold War with the West. By the time Stalin died in 1953, he had left behind economic and political disasters that would last for decades.

1. In what ways did Stalin affect the Soviet Union?

2. Why do you think he chose the name Stalin? What did he want it to convey?

3. **Activity** Create a timeline of Stalin's life.