

What shifts in superpowers have occurred in the last century?

Communism vs. Capitalism

	Communism (USSR)	Capitalism (USA)
Economy	A centrally planned economy which shuns the private and individual ownership of land or any resources. All means of production and resources are instead owned by the state with everything being shared.	A free market economy where people were free to set up their own businesses, keep profits, compete and work for whoever they like.
Freedom	Asks one to put society before themselves.	Gives importance to the aspirations of individuals.
Society	Advocates a classless society in which everyone is equal, where all men and women are placed on an equal footing.	Promotes class distribution as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer under pure capitalism.

CASE STUDY: The USSR

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a communist ruled union with a regime that existed from 1922 until 1991. Russia was the largest country in the union in terms of both land area and population size as well as holding much of the political and economic power.

The USSR collapsed in 1991 when reforms made in 1985 by the then president of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev increased the freedom of speech and allowed capitalism to occur within the union. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 ended the symbol of the Cold War superpowers leading, and the increasing revolt against the communist system lead to the communist party giving up their monopoly on power.

Reasons why the USSR rose to become a superpower	Reasons for the collapse of the USSR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By land area the USSR was the largest country in the world, covering 11 different time zones, containing over 100 distinct nationalities within its border. - The political and economic system was highly centralised. The economy was highly regulated and controlled, with a 5 year plan being set up with a series of targets that were to be met. - After the Second World War Russia was left in ruin with their economy and industry devastated. Many people were starving in the cities. However when Joseph Stalin took over leadership of the USSR in 1992 he increased industry and ensured the state took over agriculture, feeding those that were starving in the cities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A stagnating economy was one reasons for the USSRs downfall. The highly centralised economy became too big for managers to control. As a result it diminished their economy, resulting in economic policies failing and figures being falsified. - The use of excessive military force in order to control the people meant that there was a lack of spending in key series such as housing, healthcare and education. There was also a severe lack of spending in infrastructure. - Much of the Soviet public began to become irritated by the increasingly secretive government. As a result President Gorbachev attempted to compensate by being committed to openness (glasnost). However this backfired when the Soviet public learned of recent atrocities, cover ups, mistakes in leadership and social and healthcare failures. This further eroded the support for the communist regime in the USSR.

