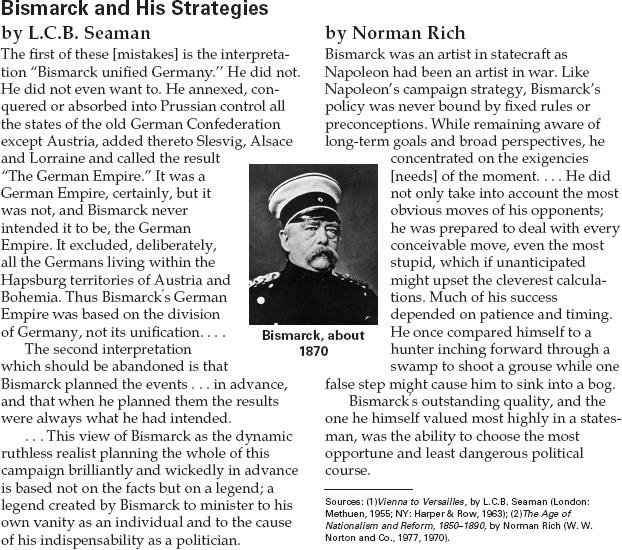
Name Class Date

3-28

While German chancellor Otto von Bismarck is usually credited with unifying  
Germany, opinions about him differ. Below, two modern historians comment on  
Bismarck and his political accomplishments. ♦ *As you read, think about the point of  
view each writer presents. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*



66-RU-004-3

**1.** Why does Seaman say that the empire  
Bismarck created was not really a unified  
German empire?

**2.** What does each of the writers say about  
Bismarck’s methods of planning and carrying  
out strategy?

**3. Identify Fact Versus Opinion** Which of the  
passages appears to be based more on fact  
and which appears to be based more on  
opinion? Explain your answer.

co

**28**

Name Class Date

3-29-1

The idea of a unified Italy gained strength under Napoleon, and harsh rule by  
Austria led to revolution. One outspoken leader for Italian unity was the composer  
Giuseppe Verdi, whose words and music inspired many patriots. ♦ *As you read, think  
about the influence that artists can have on history and politics. Then, on a separate sheet of  
paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)**

Few great musicians have been as deeply  
involved in politics as the composer Giuseppe  
Verdi was in the movement for Italian unity  
and freedom from Austrian rule. The theme  
of liberty and opposition to tyranny runs  
through his operas and choral works. Many  
of Verdi’s operas faced censorship by the  
Austrian government, who would not let  
them be presented because the plots  
portrayed rulers as unjust or showed  
other ideas they thought “danger-  
ous.” Sometimes Verdi rewrote to  
satisfy the censors, but the message  
usually still came through.

In *Nabucco* (1842), Verdi’s first  
successful opera, a chorus of  
captives in the ancient Babylon of  
Nebuchadnezzar sing movingly about  
their hopes for freedom. Italian patri-  
ots borrowed the song, and it remains a  
favorite patriotic song in Italy. Even the  
letters of Verdi’s name became part of the  
Italian nationalist movement. The crowds  
that shouted “Viva Verdi” were using a  
widely understood shorthand phrase for  
“Viva Vittorio Emmanuale Rei de Italia”  
(Long live Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy).

The small village where Verdi was born in  
1813 was part of Napoleon’s conquests in  
Italy, but soon came under Austrian rule after

Napoleon’s defeat a few years later. Verdi’s  
family was poor, and he received his first  
music lessons from the village organist. A  
wealthy local merchant recognized his talent,  
and at 18, Verdi went to Milan to study. His  
first works—which failed—were produced at  
the famous La Scala opera house, but so were  
many later successes.

By the time he was in his thirties,  
Verdi was the outstanding composer  
of Italian operas. Audiences loved his  
dramatic stories, strong characters,  
and stirring melodies. His career  
continued for fifty years, and he  
became internationally famous.  
When Italy achieved unity in 1860,  
Verdi served briefly in its parliament at  
the urging of Count Cavour, but soon  
went back to concentrating on music.  
Some of Verdi’s best-loved operas are  
*Rigoletto* (1851), *La traviata*, (1853), and *Aïda*(1871). *Aïda* was set in Egypt, and was com-  
missioned by the ruler of Egypt to celebrate  
the opening of the Suez Canal. Verdi adapted  
several of Shakespeare’s plays into operas,  
including *Otello (*1887) and his last opera,  
*Falstaff*, written when he was 80 years old. He  
also wrote religious choral works. His great  
1874 *Requiem* [Mass for the dead] honored an  
Italian patriot, Alessandro Manzoni.

66-RU-004-3

**1.** How did Verdi’s work add to the cause of  
Italian unity?

**2.** What double meaning did the cheer “Viva  
Verdi” have for the crowds who used it?

1. **Predict Consequences** What kind of effects  
   do you think censorship can have on the  
   work of artists, writers, and musicians? How  
   do you think it affected Verdi’s work?

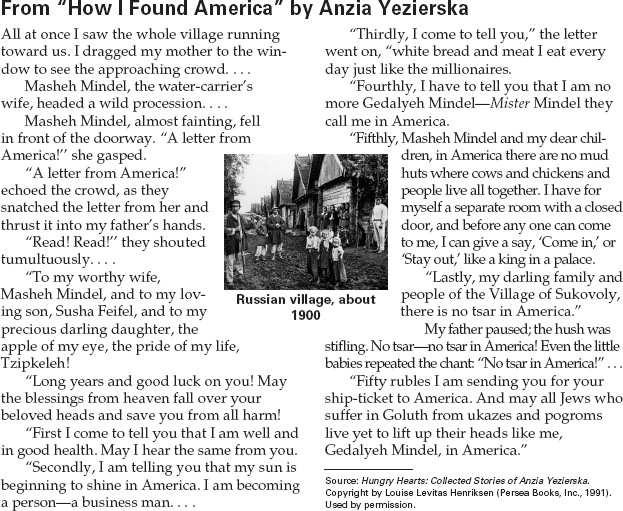
co

**29**

Name Class Date

30

Harsh conditions and brutal pogroms drove many Jews to flee tsarist Russia in the late  
1800s. One emigrant was Anzia Yezierska (1885–1970), who settled in New York City  
and became an American citizen. Later, she drew on her experiences to write *Hungry  
Hearts,* a collection of short stories*.* In this excerpt from a story in the collection, the  
narrator recounts the excitement in a small Russian village caused by the arrival of a  
letter from America. ♦ *As you read, notice the reaction of the family and villagers to the  
letter. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*



66-RU-004-3

**1.** What role does the narrator’s father seem to  
play in the village?

**2.** Do you think a letter from America was a  
common occurrence? Why or why not?

**3. Draw Conclusions** What reasons for emigrat-  
ing to America are clear from Mindel’s letter?

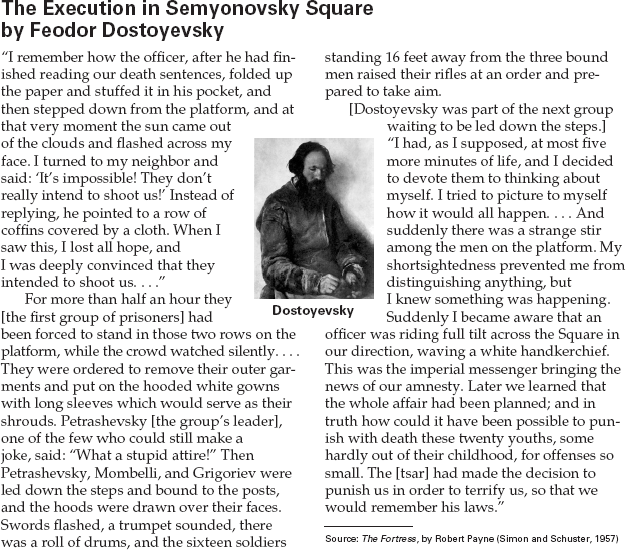
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**30**

Name Class Date

31a

Tsar Nicholas I feared the new ideas that swept Europe after the revolutions of 1848  
and dealt harshly with liberal groups. The young writer Feodor Dostoyevsky, a  
member of one such group, was arrested in St. Petersburg in 1849 and sentenced to  
death. Here is his story, told partly through letters he wrote to a friend. ♦ *As you  
read, think about the kind of government that could treat its citizens this way. Then, on a  
separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*



66-RU-004-3

1. What convinced Dostoyevsky that he and  
his friends were really going to be shot?

**2. Identify Assumptions** What did the tsar  
intend this staged execution to achieve?  
What does this show about the tsar’s ideas?

**3. Activity** Suppose that you are a foreigner  
from a democratic country, visiting Russia in  
1849. Draw an editorial cartoon commenting  
on this incident and what it shows about  
Nicholas’s rule.