The first five-year plan

Ideological causes

- Stalin believed socialism was only possible in a highly industrialised nation.
- He believed that the revolution should serve the working class.
- He wanted to replace the 'bourgeois specialists' who managed industry throughout the NEP with 'red specialists' who were educated by the communist government from working class.
- Stalin quoted 'In 10 years at most we must make good the distance which separates us from the advanced capitalist countries.'

Political causes

- Stalin was no longer content to be seen as Lenin's pupil – in 1929 on his 50th birthday he made a speech about Lenin's mistakes (he made clear that Lenin's Russia was over and Stalin's Russia was beginning.)
- He was concerned that Russia would be unable to defend itself against capitalist nations. Russia needed to develop iron, steel, oil and coal industries for modern welfare.

Economic causes

- In response to failure of the NEP, he needed to industrialise Russia – the amount of iron, steel and copper produced during the NEP never exceeded that during the Tsar's rule.
- Improvements in production of commodities such as crude oil and coal left Russia significantly behind Germany, France and other Western nations.
- NEP wasn't producing results fast enough.

Setting up the First Five-Year Plan

- Series of targets drawn up by the government officials working for an organisation called Gosplan. A state planning committee.
- The plan was so extensive, it covered three large volumes – all targets were set centrally. Officials often had little knowledge of the factories they were made responsible for.
- The plan had many drafts. The first one was set in 1927 and had ambitious targets for coal, iron and steel. Each draft was more and more unrealistic.
- The government demanded production with no idea of how to achieve it or what to do with the materials produced.

'Command Economy' – a system based on a series of central orders.

Stalin's priorities and the foundation industries

- He had an unsophisticated understanding of industry – he described coal, iron and steel as 'basic, decisive branches of industry.'
- He believed that if he was to industrialise Russia he needed to start with those heavy industries.
- Stalin prized physical and mental strength, he had little time for the 'bourgeois luxury' easy life.