

# Dialectical and Historical Materialism Study Guide

## I. Marxist Dialectical Method

- A. Feature One: Nature Connected and Determined
  - 1. Phenomena are naturally connected with, dependent on, and determined by each other.
- B. Feature Two: Nature is a State of Continuous Motion and Change
  - 1. Continuous motion and change.
  - 2. A constant state of renewal, arising, and developing.
  - 3. A constant state of fading, disintegrating, and dying away.
- C. Feature Three: Natural Quantitative Change Leads to Qualitative Change
  - 1. Small and gradual quantitative change can cause leaps of qualitative change from one stage to another.
  - 2. Process of development is not uniform nor a circle, but a line. Moving forward from an old qualitative stage to a new qualitative stage.
- D. Feature Four: Contradictions Inherent in Nature
  - 1. Internal contradictions are naturally present in all things and phenomena
    - a) All have positive and negative sides
    - b) Past and future
    - c) Something fading away and developing
  - 2. The process of development happens due to contradictions; their struggles, conflicts, and resolutions
    - a) History must be viewed through the lens of "what contradictions gave rise to this?"
    - b) No contradiction is isolated
    - c) Contradictions start, struggle, and resolve but give birth to new contradictions in doing so.

## Questions

- 1. Take the example of a tree. You see its leaves are falling off of the branches.
  - a. What do you conclude from this? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. According to which principle feature(s) of the Marxist Dialectical Method does your reasoning apply?











## IV. Historical Materialism, *Part B*

- A. The First Feature of Production
  - 1. Production is constantly changing (*Feature Three of Dialectical Method*)
  - 2. Change in the Mode of Production results in a change in the Social System
    - a) The way people live and think are determined by the Mode of Production they live under
- B. The Second Feature of Production
  - 1. Production's changes and developments begins with the Forces of Production
    - a) Specifically with the Instruments of Production
  - 2. Relations to Production change following a change in the Forces of Production
- C. The Third Feature of Production
  - 1. Rise of the new Mode of Production starts within the old Mode of Production
  - 2. Transition to the new Mode of Production is "accidental"
    - a) Productive Forces are improved for convenience
      - (1) Systemic change is not considered
    - b) Humans don't get to choose their Mode of Production when born
      - (1) Can't go backwards in time
      - (2) You either slow or quicken the transition to the new Mode of Production

The character of Productive Forces under capitalism is socialized, yet the Relations to Production is privatized. *This is the core contradiction within capitalism.* Revolution is the destroying of existing Relations of Production to create *new* Relations of Production that are congruent with the character of the Productive Forces.

### Questions

- 1. Give an example of the First Feature of Production.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Why do the instruments of production lead changes in the Mode of Production?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. What is an example of the Third Feature of Production?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. What would it take to transform our Capitalist Mode of Production into a Socialist Mode of Production?