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Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

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The Gulag Archipelago is Solzhenitsyn's attempt to compile a literary-historical record of the vast system of prisons and labor camps that came into being shortly after the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917 and that underwent an enormous expansion during the rule of Stalin from 1924 to 1953. Various sections of the three volumes describe the arrest, interrogation, conviction, transportation, and imprisonment of the Gulag's victims by Soviet authorities over four decades. The work mingles historical exposition and Solzhenitsyn's own autobiographical accounts with the voluminous personal testimony of other inmates that he collected and committed to memory during his imprisonment. Upon publication of the first volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitsyn was immediately attacked in the Soviet press. Despite the intense interest in his fate that was shown in the West, he was arrested and charged with treason on February 12, 1974, and was exiled from the Soviet Union the following day.

Language Notes
Text: English (translation) Original Language: Russian
About the Author
Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn was born into a family of Cossack intellectuals in Kislovodsk, Russia, in 1918. He fought for the Soviet Union in World War II, achieving the rank of captain of artillery. In 1945 he was arrested for writing a letter in which he criticized Joseph Stalin and spent eight years in prisons and labor camps. In 1956 he was allowed to settle in Ryazan, in central Russia, where he became a mathematics teacher and began to write. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970. Following the publication of the first volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, he was exiled in 1974. His Soviet citizenship was restored in 1990 and he returned to Russia in 1994, where he now lives.