

Notes: History of Russia

Establishment: The Slavs

- Lacked political unity
- Few natural barriers to protect them from invasions
- By 800s, Slavic groups had established towns in the western portion of Russia (Ukraine)

The Rise of Russia

- The First Russian State
 - Early 800s, Vikings discovered the rivers of Russia were a good trade route
 - Trading posts included Kiev and Novgorod
- The Mongol Invasion
 - Fierce rulers from Asia who defeated the Vikings (who were weakened by civil war and lacking strong leadership)
 - By 1240, Russia part of the Mongol Empire; Slavic princes had to pay tribute to Mongols, which kept Russia poor
 - [Because Russia was cut off from the West by the Mongols, Russia did not take part in the Renaissance](#)
- The Rise of Moscow
 - 1480 Ivan III refused to pay tribute, declared himself the leader of Russia and the defender of its church (Eastern Orthodox), and took the title of czar/tzar (emperor)

Russia Becomes a World Power

Czars established an [autocracy](#) – a country governed by a single ruler who has unlimited power

- Peter the Great
 - Became czar in 1682 (part of the Romanov family)
 - Modernized and westernize Russia (factories, schools, etc.)
 - Russia's border extended down to the Caspian Sea and to the Baltic Sea; Built St. Petersburg
- Imperial Russia
 - Empire grew the most under Catherine the Great and the two czars after her (mid to late 1700s)
 - Extended borders again
 - Did nothing to help the peasants in Russia
- Russia Expands Its Empire
 - Lost Crimean War in 1856
 - Added land (from China and Central Asia)
- Life Under the Czars
 - Huge gap between upper classes and ordinary people

The Fall of the Czars

- 1855 Alexander II becomes czar

- 1861 Alexander II freed the serfs and gave them their own land; Alexander III reversed many of his father's reforms – harsh ruler
- 1894 Nicholas II becomes czar
- 1905 Unrest grew; workers demanded reform; “Bloody Sunday” – Nicholas II forced to establish the Duma (congress)

The Rise of the Soviet Union

- March 1917 – Russian people began to riot (food and fuel shortages); czar forced to give up throne and a weak government took over
- November 1917 – Vladimir Lenin takes power; Russia withdraws from WW I; Communism is established in 1922 after three years of civil war
Communism – Government should own the farms and factories; everyone should share the work equally and receive an equal share of the rewards