Create two columns in your journal. Label the first column “Questions” and the second “New Knowledge.” First, list questions you have about Russian history and culture. Then, as you read this chapter, record the answers.

Chapter Overview  Visit the Glencoe World Geography Web site at txgeography.glencoe.com and click on Chapter Overviews—Chapter 15 to preview information about the cultural geography of the region.
Population Patterns

A Geographic View

Russian Heartland

I have come back to Mother Russia, the old heartland from which had sprung the Russian Empire and its successor, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. . . . A modern land in many ways, yet profoundly tied to the past. . . . There is [today] a new quest for the much trampled Russian culture, for the “soul” that writers lauded for its breadth and warmth. The old love of the gentle landscape that ‘spreads out evenly across half the world,’ as [the writer] Nikolay Gogol saw it in [his novel] Dead Souls, blooms anew—in the form of anger over polluted rivers and smoky vistas.

—Mike Edwards, “Mother Russia on a New Course,” National Geographic, February 1991

Over the centuries Russia’s borders moved beyond Moscow to include vast territories inhabited by people of different ethnic backgrounds. Today, the citizens of Russia are not one people, but many. Each of the diverse groups within the country has its own cultural traditions, history, and language. In this section you will learn about the various culture groups of Russia—from the Arctic peoples in the north to the peoples of the Caucasus region in the south.

Russia’s Ethnic Diversity

Russia has one of the widest varieties of ethnic groups in the world—in fact, more than a hundred! An ethnic group shares a common ancestry, language, religion, or set of customs, or a combination of these things. Despite Russia’s ethnic diversity, more than 80 percent of the population are ethnic Russians, people who follow Russian customs and speak Russian as their first language. The percentage of
the population that is not ethnic Russian usually became part of Russia’s population as a result of conquest. This fact has made it difficult for some groups to consider themselves truly Russian.

Culture

Ethnic Regions

Over the centuries Russia grew from a small territory to a gigantic empire that stretched from the plains of Europe to the waters of the Pacific Ocean. In the process, many non-Russian ethnic groups came under its control. In some cases ethnic groups were concentrated in a single area. During the Soviet era, regional political boundaries often reflected the locations of major ethnic groups, or nationalities. In 1991, after the Soviet breakup, several of these larger republics, including Russia, became independent countries. Today 32 ethnic groups have their own republics or administrative territories within Russia.

The Slavs

Ethnic Russians are a part of a larger ethnic group known as Slavs, a family that also includes Poles, Serbs, Ukrainians, and other eastern Europeans.

Throughout Russia’s history the Russian Slavs have dominated the country’s politics and culture. Most Slavs practice Eastern Orthodoxy, a form of Christianity brought to Russia from the eastern Mediterranean area. Russian national identity has long been tied to the Slav, or ethnic Russian, culture.
Although more than 100 languages are spoken in Russia today, Russian is the country’s official language. Ethnic Russians generally speak only this language, while people belonging to other ethnic groups speak both their own languages and Russian.

Turkic Peoples

Russia’s second-largest family of ethnic groups, the Turkic peoples, live in the Caucasus area, in Siberia, and in the middle Volga area. Although Turkic peoples are mainly Muslims, their ethnicity is based primarily on language.

The Turkic peoples of Russia include the Tatars, Chuvash, Bashkirs, and Sakha. The most numerous of these groups are the Tatars, about one-third of whom live in Tatarstan (TA•tuhr•STAN) in east-central Russia. The Tatar population there, however, is growing rapidly, as this observer reveals:

“Tatars make up 48 percent of Tatarstan’s 3.7 million population. Russians are 43 percent. The ratio is close, but the Russians are worried... [T]he Tatar birthrate is 40 percent higher than the Russian, and efforts to revive Tatar ways... will surely erode Russian influence.”


Russia has ruled Tatarstan since the mid-1500s. In 1994, however, the Russian government granted Tatarstan a limited amount of sovereignty (SAH•vuh•ruhn•tee), or self-rule. The government hopes that this arrangement will dampen any desire the people of Tatarstan may have to separate from Russia.

Caucasian Peoples

Another large group of diverse peoples is classified as Caucasian (kaw•KAY•zhuhn) because they live in the Caucasus region of southeastern Russia. Mainly Muslims, the Caucasian peoples have similar languages and cultures, but local dialects often make communication among them difficult. Caucasian groups such as the Chechens, Dagestanis, and Ingushetians today are demanding independence or at least local self-rule.

Population Density and Distribution

Russia is the sixth most populous country in the world, after China, India, the United States, Indonesia, and Brazil. Russia does not, however, have a large population relative to its land area.

Population and the Environment

With a population of about 144.4 million people and an area of about 6.6 million square miles (about 17.1 million sq. km), Russia’s average population density is about 22 people per square mile (9 per sq. km). Compare this figure with that of the United States, where an average of 77 people live within a square mile (30 per sq. km), and you can begin to appreciate how sparsely populated parts of Russia are.

Averages alone, however, can be misleading. About 75 percent of all Russians live in the area between the Belarus and Ukraine borders and the Ural Mountains, making the population density of European Russia about 120 people per square mile (46 per sq. km). Meanwhile, Russia’s largest eastern republic, Sakha, averages less than 1 person per square mile.
By contrast, the more densely settled European Russia includes the region’s industrialized cities, many of which are connected by waterways. The major industrial city is Moscow, Russia’s capital. Other industrial centers include St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Kazan, Perm, Volgograd, and Yekaterinburg. Since 1990, urban population growth in most industrialized centers has leveled off or decreased, particularly in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants.

**Population Trends**
During the Soviet era, many ethnic Russians migrated to non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union. In the 1970s this trend began to reverse. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, more ethnic Russians have returned to their homeland. Most have settled in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and southwestern Russia. Because of this trend, the number of immigrants to Russia has been greater than the number of Russians leaving the country.

Still, Russia is currently experiencing a population crisis because of a rise in illnesses as the quality and availability of health care have declined. Since 1992 the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births. During the 1990s, male life expectancy dropped from 64 years to 59 years, but is expected to rise slowly in the 2000s. During the same time period, female life expectancy decreased from 74 years to 72 years. Infant mortality during this period rose from 17.4 deaths per 1,000 births to 19 per 1,000 births. One of the tasks facing Russia in the years ahead is to improve health care.
History and Government

A Geographic View

End of an Era

The Bolshevik dream finally ended with Mikhail Gorbachev’s program of glasnost, or openness, which allowed citizens to speak freely for the first time in decades. All the carefully constructed “truths” began to unravel, and there was no turning back. Gorbachev’s era passed. Russia’s President, Boris Yeltsin, outlawed the Communist Party by signing a few pieces of paper. The Bolsheviks surrendered without a shot.


Mikhail Gorbachev saw firsthand both the costs and benefits of political change, even changes that come with democratic reforms. As the last Soviet leader, Gorbachev tried to reform the Soviet system, but his efforts failed to prevent its collapse. The history of Russia, once the dominant republic of the Soviet Union, is a story of the rise and fall of great empires. Monarchs, Communist Party officials, and democratic politicians—as well as foreign invaders—have all shaped Russia’s national character.

Early Peoples and States

Russia’s historical roots go back to the a.d. 600s, when Slav farmers, hunters, and fishers settled near the waterways of the North European Plain. Over time, the Slavs separated into distinct cultural groups. The West Slavs eventually became the Poles, Czechs,
and Slovaks. The South Slavs became the Bulgarians, Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes. The East Slavs became the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. These East Slav peoples remained settled along the Dnieper (NE•puhr) River in the west and the Volga River in the east.

**Kievan Rus**

During the 800s Scandinavian warriors called the Varangians settled among the Slavs living near the Dnieper and Volga Rivers. Within a century the Varangians had adopted the Slav language and many Slav customs and had organized the Slav communities into a loose union of city-states known as Kievan Rus. Ruled by princes, the leading city-state, Kiev, controlled a prosperous trading route, using Russia’s western rivers as a link between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.

Eventually, fighting among the city-states weakened Kievan Rus. Then, in the early 1200s, Mongol invaders from Central Asia conquered Kiev and many of the Slav territories. Although the Mongols allowed the Slavs self-rule, they continued to control the area for more than 200 years. During this period the Slav territories still remained in contact with western and central Europe. However, they
followed their own distinctive cultural path based on the traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy.

**The Rise of Russia**

When the Mongols first overran Kiev, many Slavs fled into nearby forests, and some of them later settled along the Moskva River to the northeast. In time one of their settlements grew into the city of Moscow, which became the center of a territory called Muscovy (muh•SKOH•vee). Muscovy was linked by rivers to major trade routes and surrounded by lands good for farming and trapping fur-bearing animals.

For about two centuries, Muscovy’s princes kept peace with the Mongols. Their territory grew in power as the princes helped the Mongols collect taxes from other Slav territories. By the late 1400s, however, the Muscovites became strong enough to refuse payments to the Mongols and to drive them out. Following this triumph, Muscovy’s Prince Ivan III brought many Slav territories under his control, thus earning the title “the Great.” Ivan’s expanded realm eventually became known as Russia. In the heart of Moscow, Ivan built a huge fortress, called the Kremlin, and filled it with churches and palaces.

In 1533 Ivan the Great’s grandson, Ivan IV, became Russia’s first crowned czar (ZAHR), or supreme ruler. Called Ivan the Terrible, Ivan IV crushed all opposition to his power and expanded his realm’s borders.

After Ivan’s reign, however, the country faced foreign invasion, economic decline, and social upheaval. When the Romanov dynasty came to power in 1613, the government gradually tightened its grip on the people. By 1650 many peasants had become serfs, a virtually enslaved workforce bound to the land and under the control of nobility.

**Romanov Czars**

While Russia struggled through chaos and harsh rule, western Europe moved forward and left Russia behind, especially in the areas of science and technology. Then in the late 1600s, Czar Peter I—known as Peter the Great—came to power determined to modernize Russia. Under him, Russia enlarged its territory, built a strong military, and developed trade with Europe. To acquire seaports, Peter gained land along the Baltic Sea from Sweden. He also strengthened Russia’s control of Siberia.

A new capital—St. Petersburg—was carved out of the wilderness. Built along the Gulf of Finland, St. Petersburg provided access to the Baltic Sea and gave Russia a “window to the West.” Since most of Russia’s other ports were icebound for almost half the year, St. Petersburg became a major port.

During the late 1700s, Empress Catherine the Great continued to expand Russia’s empire and gained a long-sought-after warm-water port on the Black Sea. By that time the Russian nobility had adopted western European ways—for example, using French instead of Russian as their primary language. As a result, a cultural gap developed between the nobility and Russia’s serfs, who followed traditional Russian ways. Meanwhile, poverty and heavy work fell even more harshly on the serfs. Russia’s great expansion also brought
under its rule many non-Russians, including Poles, Ukrainians, Estonians, Baltic Germans, Jews, and Tatars in Crimea near the Black Sea.

**The Russian Revolution**

The 1800s saw a long cycle of popular discontent, half-hearted political reforms, and governmental repression. Inspired by the American and French Revolutions, educated Russians wanted to make Russian society more open. The government, however, held on tightly to power, and reforms were limited. Czar Alexander II freed the serfs in 1861, but they had no education and few ways to earn a living. Industrialization drew some peasants from the country to the cities, where they worked long hours in poor conditions for meager wages.

At the same time, non-Russian peoples were facing prejudice and hostility. Spurred by increasing nationalism, the government introduced the policy of **Russification**, which required everyone to speak Russian and follow Eastern Orthodox Christianity. People who refused were often persecuted. Harsh treatment was directed especially toward Jews, who were often blamed for Russia’s problems.

Frustrated and discontented, many Russian thinkers and workers were attracted to **socialism**, a belief that calls for greater economic equality in society. Some Russians especially liked the socialist ideas of German philosopher Karl Marx. Marx advocated public ownership of all land and a classless society with an equal sharing of wealth. He claimed that continual struggle between the wealthy and working classes would lead to a worldwide revolution. This revolution, he thought, would be led by workers and end the power of the wealthy.

In the early 1900s, discontent with the iron rule of the czars spilled into the streets. Strikes and demonstrations in 1905 nearly ended the reign of Czar Nicholas II. One event, called Bloody Sunday, began with a peaceful crowd of workers desiring better working conditions and personal freedoms marching toward the czar’s palace in St. Petersburg. The march ended abruptly when soldiers fired into the marchers, killing nearly 1,000 people.

Twelve years later, in 1917, the hardships of World War I brought even larger numbers of workers into the streets of the capital. With soldiers joining them, the workers demanded “bread and freedom.” Finally, Nicholas II was forced to give up his throne, ending the rule of the czars in Russia.

**The Soviet Era**

The Russian Revolution of March 1917 established a representative government, but it was too weak to control the passion for change that had swept Russia. In November of that year, the **Bolsheviks**, a revolutionary group led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, seized control. The victorious Bolsheviks believed in **communism**, a philosophy based on Karl Marx’s ideas that called for the violent overthrow of government and the creation of a new society led by workers.

Promising the Russian people “Peace, Land, and Bread!” the Bolsheviks withdrew Russia from World War I, surrendering much territory to Germany. They used their complete hold on political power to take over industry, direct food distribution, establish an eight-hour workday, and reform the army. Not all Russians supported the Bolsheviks. To maintain power, the Bolsheviks dealt harshly with their opponents. A civil war soon divided the country, pitting the Bolshevik Red Army against the anti-Bolshevik White Army.

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**Fabergé Eggs**

Russian goldsmith and jeweler Peter Carl Fabergé created imaginative jeweled and enameled Easter eggs for the czars of Russia and other royalty in Europe and Asia. The eggs were often created to mark important events, such as coronations and marriages. Each egg was unique and contained a tiny surprise inside.
had destructive nuclear weapons, outright conflict was avoided. Instead, the two countries used as “weapons” propaganda, the threat of force, and economic aid to developing countries.

The Soviet Breakup

During the Cold War, the Soviet economy weakened while many other economies grew. Soviet workers struggled with economic hardships, yet their leaders enjoyed great privileges. By the 1980s it was clear that communism was failing.

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev, a reform-minded official, assumed power in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was keenly aware of the abuses of the past—Joseph Stalin had imprisoned both his grandfathers. Although Gorbachev remained a dedicated communist, he began a policy of economic restructuring called perestroika (peh•uh•STROY•kuh) and a policy of greater political openness called glasnost (GLAZ•nohst). Gorbachev’s reforms, however, failed to save the Soviet Union.

Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other communist countries overthrew their communist rulers in 1989. Meanwhile, nationalist fervor was rising in

A Superpower

During World War II, the growth of industry—and the fierce Russian winter—helped the Russians push out the invading Germans, but at great cost. More than 27 million Russian soldiers and civilians died as a result of the war. At the war’s end in 1945, the Soviet Union controlled much of eastern Europe. By 1949 most of the countries in the region had become Soviet satellites, countries controlled by the Soviet Union. These satellite states, notably East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, strengthened the Soviet Union’s military and supplied critically needed raw materials, such as coal and iron ore, as well as manufactured goods.

For the next four decades, the Soviet Union and the United States were engaged in the Cold War, the struggle between the two competing systems—communist and capitalist—for world influence and power. Since each country

History

The Soviet Union

In 1921 the Bolsheviks, now known as Communists, won the civil war. The following year they established a new country, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or the Soviet Union, with Moscow as the capital. Under the Communists the Soviet Union gradually gained back Ukraine, Belorussia (now Belarus), much of the Caucasus region, and a large part of Central Asia.

After Lenin’s death in 1924, Joseph Stalin, a leading Communist Party official, began a five-year climb to power. Defeating his rivals, Stalin set about making the Soviet Union into a powerful industrial giant by ruthlessly taking control of farms and factories. Millions either were killed or died as a result of hunger, physical hardships, or the brutal conditions in labor camps. Stalin also eliminated from the party and the military those people who might threaten his power.

A Superpower

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

World Explorer

Lenin’s Plan

Lenin and the Bolsheviks promised to build an economy in which each citizen shared equally in the wealth.

Place

What conditions led many people to identify with the promises of Lenin?
The coup collapsed, and Gorbachev remained the leader of the Soviet Union. By year’s end, however, all the remaining Soviet republics had declared independence. Boris Yeltsin remained president of Russia, the largest of the former Soviet republics. Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991, and they eventually were joined by other former republics. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev’s presidency ended, and the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

A New Russia

Boris Yeltsin assumed the leadership of a devastated Russia. The economy was in shambles, and ethnic conflicts threatened the Caucasus region.

On the first day... few Russians knew that Yeltsin was resisting... [Yeltsin] sent faxes to Borovoy’s office. ... Brokers copied them and spread leaflets. ... Citizens... threw up barricades as tanks took positions... ‘The [secret police] came to arrest the Xerox machines,’ Borovoy said, ‘but we had already taken them to a safer place.’


Red Square, Moscow A retired Russian colonel confronts an anti-communist demonstrator in the early 1990s.

Place How did Gorbachev seek to reform the Soviet system?

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A New Russia

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A Market Economy

On the economic front, Russia began moving from a command economy to a market economy. This transition caused massive unemployment as outdated and inefficient factories were closed and agriculture was restructured. By 2000, however, the Russian economy began to improve. The rate of inflation, at an unbelievable high of 1,500 percent in 1992, fell below 20 percent by 1997. In addition, Russia’s currency, the ruble, which had been sharply losing value on international markets, began to stabilize.

Separatist Movements

After the fall of the Soviet Union, separatist movements and ethnic conflict threatened Russia’s stability. Beginning in the 1990s, Tatarstan, Dagestan, Chechnya, and other Russian ethnic territories demanded greater self-rule or sought a complete break from Moscow. Although some conflicts have been settled by compromise, often violence or full-scale war has erupted. The bloody war between the Russian government and separatist forces in Chechnya is a tragic example. In 1991 the Chechens declared their independence. Fearing Russia’s breakup if other groups did the same, Boris Yeltsin sent Russian troops into Chechnya in 1994. Under Yeltsin’s successor, Vladimir Putin, Russia claimed to control much of the territory. Chechen resistance, however, continued in rural areas. By 2001 about 335,000 people had been displaced by the conflict, and Chechens faced severe food shortages.

The years of warfare have ravaged Chechnya’s civilian population and the area’s oil-based economy. The conflict has also drained economic-development funds from the rest of Russia.

TAKS Practice

Checking for Understanding

1. Define czar, serf, Russification, socialism, Bolshevik, communism, satellite, Cold War, perestroika, glasnost.

2. Main Ideas List the key events in Russia or in the Soviet Union during each of the following time periods: Kievan Rus, Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Russia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>Dates and Key Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kievan Rus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Thinking

3. Making Inferences Why do you think Russians have almost always had a centralized government? What problems do you think the government had as Russia grew?

4. Comparing and Contrasting How was the government during czarist rule and the Soviet era similar? Different?

5. Predicting Consequences How might Russia be affected if separatist groups gain independence?

Analyzing Maps

6. Human-Environment Interaction Look at the map of Russia’s changing borders on page 368. What geographic factors encouraged Russian expansion?

Applying Geography

7. Geography and History Think about ways that physical geography influenced the Russian people’s history and culture. Write an essay explaining the impact of geography on one of Russia’s ethnic groups.
EASTWARD HO? Opening the Russian frontier meant traveling east—far east. But Conestoga wagons could not have crossed the frozen lands of Siberia. Encompassing more than half of Russia’s total area, Siberia dwarfs the American West and ranks as one of Earth’s coldest climates. Only the Trans-Siberian Railroad could accomplish Russia’s eastward expansion.

Czar Alexander III approved plans for the railroad that would link the European and Asian parts of the Russian Empire and bring eastern lands under Russia’s control. Construction of the world’s longest railroad began in 1891. The builders hoped to connect Moscow to the port city of Vladivostok, on the Sea of Japan, by 1900. The distance between the cities is nearly 6,000 miles (9,650 km).

Get Me to Vladivostok on Time
Huge construction problems loomed from the start. Siberia’s severe climate and rugged topography slowed progress. By the expected end date of 1900, two unfinished segments remained. The first was the section around Lake Baikal, the world’s deepest freshwater lake. To lay track around the lake’s southern tip, bridges spanning hundreds of gorges and 33 tunnels through...
As a temporary solution, an icebreaking steam ferry about the size of a football field carried rail cars and up to 800 passengers at a time across Lake Baikal. Farther down the line, passengers and freight were loaded onto riverboats—ice sledges in winter—for the 1,400-mile (2,250-km) trip along the rivers whose banks had yet to be conquered by rail.

Eager to complete an east-west railway, Russia negotiated an alternate route through Chinese-controlled Manchuria that bypassed the Shilka and Amur Rivers. Completion of this shortcut, along with the Lake Baikal segment in 1904, made travel by rail between Moscow and Vladivostok possible for the first time. Twelve years later, the original route within Russia was completed.

A Driving Force
The railroad opened Russia’s interior to homesteaders and developers who exploited Siberia’s vast store of raw materials—including coal, timber, and gold. During World War II, rail cars carried supplies to the front and moved hundreds of factories from western sites in the Soviet Union to safer sites east of the Ural Mountains.

Since the 1950s much of the line has been electrified. From start to finish, passengers can make the trip in slightly less than a week across seven time zones.

Looking Ahead
Today the Trans-Siberian Railroad shows signs of wear. With Russia’s political turmoil and shaky economy, passenger and freight traffic have steadily declined. Worker morale is low. Will the railroad withstand Russia’s upheavals? If the railroad falls apart, how might that affect Russia’s future?
Cultures and Lifestyles

A Geographic View

A Cultural Center

. . . [T]oday’s Russian aristocracy of entrepreneurs and artists . . . [feel] nostalgia for a Russia long gone—an age of glittering accomplishment when St. Petersburg reigned as a world center of music, ballet, and literature. . . . Reflecting that legacy, the city counts some 30 theaters devoted to the performing arts. . . . Under communist rule, the arts . . . were lavishly subsidized. The Bolsheviks may have made Moscow the political capital of the Soviet Union, but St. Petersburg remained its cultural rival—a position Petersburgers are resolved to maintain.


Russia’s adjustment to a new government and economic system has had a profound effect on all Russians. As they move into a new era, Russia’s people are also looking for a cultural renewal. Now that the Soviet state no longer dictates their personal lives, millions of Russians are rediscovering their faiths and traditions, reeducating themselves, and expressing themselves creatively.

Religion in Russia

The Eastern Orthodox Church had been central to Russian culture for a thousand years before the communist revolution in 1917. After acquiring power, the Soviet government strictly discouraged religious practices. It actively promoted atheism (AY•thee•ih•zuhm), or the belief that there is no God or other supreme being, in schools and other public institutions. In the late 1980s, however, the government began to relax its restrictions on religion.
After the Soviet breakup, many Russians returned to religious practices. However, the influx of many foreign missionaries from Western Christian denominations prompted lawmakers in 1997 to place restrictions on the activities of newly established religious groups. Only Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism were allowed full liberty as traditional religions of Russia.

History

Christianity in Russia

In 988 Prince Vladimir, leader of Kievan Rus, adopted Eastern Orthodox Christianity as Russia’s official religion. By 1453 the Byzantine Empire, the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church, had fallen, and Russia asserted its claim as leader of the Orthodox Christian world.

During the 1900s the Soviet government weakened Orthodoxy’s influence, but today the Russian Orthodox Church is enjoying a resurgence. Most Russians who claim a religious affiliation belong to the Russian branch of the Orthodox Church. The faithful have repaired or rebuilt many of the churches that were looted or destroyed during Soviet times. Like some other Eastern Orthodox churches, the Russian Church has a spiritual leader called a patriarch (PAY•tree•AHRK) and uses icons, or religious images or symbols, in its religious practices.

Despite recent government efforts to restore the dominant position of Eastern Orthodoxy and restrict other denominations, Russia is also home to many other Christian groups, including Roman Catholics and Protestants. Persecuted during the Soviet era along with members of all other religions, these groups have reemerged since the 1980s.

Islam

Islam, the second-largest religion in Russia, is also enjoying a rebirth. Islam is practiced mostly by people living in the southern regions of Russia, particularly in the Caucasus region and in areas north of Kazakhstan. Most Russian Muslims belong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number of Followers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>25,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>14,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions</td>
<td>1,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonreligious</td>
<td>103,800,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: World Almanac, 2001; Britannica Book of the Year, 2000

1. Interpreting Graphs How many more Christians than Muslims live in Russia?

2. Applying Geography Skills Why do you think there is such a large percentage of nonreligious people in Russia?
to the Sunni branch of Islam. Sunni Islam is also practiced by people in most Arab countries of Southwest Asia as well as Turkey and Afghanistan. Some citizens of Russia also practice other forms of Islam, including Sufism, which is a deeply spiritual branch of Islam.

**Buddhism**

Russia has two ethnic republics that are mainly Buddhist. Kalmykia (kal•MIH•kee•uh), near the Caspian Sea in the southwest, and Buryatia, near Lake Baikal in south-central Russia, together have nearly half a million Buddhists. For this reason Buddhism is accepted in today’s Russia as a traditional religion.

**Education**

During the 1900s education in Russia showed significant advances. Today the country’s literacy rate is nearly 100 percent in most urban areas populated by ethnic Russians. This high rate is largely the result of the Soviet emphasis on free but mandatory education. During the Soviet era, the education system favored military, science, and engineering studies rather than language, history, and literature. This educational focus produced generations of technology-focused government officials. They, along with prominent educators, writers, and artists, made up the Soviet intelligentsia (in•TEH• luh•JEHN•see•uh), or intellectual elite. In contrast, doctors and teachers were among the lowest-paid professionals in Soviet society.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the curriculum in Russia’s schools changed dramatically. Communist teachings disappeared, and schools emphasized a more objective and less authoritarian approach to learning. Today students in Russia have a choice of several different kinds of high schools, including traditional schools, schools specializing in elective studies such as languages, university preparatory schools, and alternative schools with experimental programs.

Unfortunately, Russia’s unstable economy has severely limited budgets for schools. Many schools are overcrowded and in disrepair. Frustrated teachers...
often abandon teaching because of low pay, lack of respect, and low morale. In an unstable economy, many young people focus on earning money rather than getting an education. Still, Russian students and teachers are reexamining Russia’s traditions in education and the arts.

**Health Care**

Disease, lifestyle choices such as smoking tobacco and drinking alcoholic beverages, and inefficient health care systems all threaten the well-being of Russia’s people. Russian birthrates fell after World War II because of the massive loss of life in the war. This drop, coupled with an aging population in the 1990s, is shrinking Russia’s population, but the trend may be slowing. Male life expectancy in Russia is expected to rise slowly in the 2000s, moving from a low of 59 years in the late 1990s, compared with 74 years in the United States during the same period. However, infertility in Russia is increasing by more than 3 percent a year, and 75 percent of all pregnant women develop serious health problems. Concern about increasing rates of infectious disease, such as tuberculosis, typhoid, and diphtheria, has led some countries to carefully screen Russian immigrants.

Today the Russian health care system is struggling to meet people’s needs. Privatization has helped, but the government still owns and manages many clinics and hospitals, and these are often inefficient. Doctors and nurses are giving up their professions because they can earn more money as cab drivers or store clerks. Better insurance funding and wiser health care management are among the many reforms needed to improve health care in Russia.

**The Arts**

Russians revere their artists, musicians, and writers not only for their creativity but also for their courage in expressing themselves in the face of censorship. Modern Russians are still devoted to their long and rich cultural heritage.

**Russia’s Artistic Golden Age**

Before the late 1600s, Russian architects and artists often found inspiration in religion. They built beautiful churches, crowned with onion-shaped domes and filled with icons of Jesus, Mary, and the saints as well as wall paintings of biblical stories. When Peter the Great introduced western European culture to Russia in the early 1700s, Russian arts began to focus on nonreligious themes. By the early 1800s, Russia had entered an artistic golden age that lasted into the 1900s.

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**CHART STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000)</th>
<th>Life Expectancy Male</th>
<th>Life Expectancy Female</th>
<th>Rate of Natural Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>–0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>–0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>–0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2001 World Population Data Sheet*

**Geography Skills for Life**

1. **Interpreting Charts** Which country has the highest infant mortality rate?

2. **Applying Geography Skills** How are infant mortality rates and life expectancy related to the general state of health in a country?
Russian painters such as Ilya Repin, Wassily Kandinsky, and Marc Chagall contributed to the wealth of Russian art. Composers Pyotr (Peter) Tchaikovsky, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, and Modest Mussorgsky revolutionized Russian classical music and created memorable ballets. Many of their compositions used themes from Russian folk music. Today the Bolshoi and Kirov ballet companies are world famous for their stunning performances of traditional Russian ballet.

Russian literature owes a great debt to poets such as Alexander Pushkin, Boris Pasternak, and Anna Akhmatova, who wrote eloquently about their private lives and about historical events. Novelists of the 1800s, such as Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, became known for epic works filled with vivid characters caught up in the struggle between good and evil or between love and hate. These two literary giants also focused on social and political injustices of life under the czars. Tolstoy’s War and Peace and Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment still captivate readers today.

**Government**

**Culture and the Soviets**

After 1917 the Soviet government severely limited individual artistic expression. It believed that all artists had the duty to glorify the achievements of Soviet communism in their works. This approach to art was called socialist realism. Writers, painters, and other artists who did not follow government guidelines were severely punished. The writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for example, was banished to a succession of labor camps and finally expelled from the country. He described the horrors of the labor camps in his famous work, The Gulag Archipelago.

**Instrument Spotlight**

The **balalaika** appeared in Russia during the 1600s and was based on a two-string Tatar instrument from the 1200s. The instrument is crafted of pine in a rounded or triangular shape, and it has three strings, which are strummed or plucked. Balalaikas are often played in folk groups along with accordions, guitars, zithers, and percussion instruments. Today there is a wide range of balalaikas in different sizes, ranging from soprano to bass.
Post-Soviet Arts

Beginning in the mid-1980s, activity in the arts renewed, as loosening government controls allowed the printing of previously unpublished works and new materials. During the height of Soviet repression, some of these works had been smuggled from Russia and printed in other countries. In 1989, a journalist from the United States noted the frenzy of cultural activity that came with the dawn of freedom:

“On [Moscow’s] Arbat pedestrian mall, would-be Pushkins and Pasternaks peddle their autographed poetry for a ruble or more a page. . . . More than 200 experimental studio theaters have sprouted in Moscow alone. The cultural explosion has been felt as far away as the Pacific port of Nakhodka, where local artists set up a puppet theater workshop, and in Yaroslavl in the Soviet heartland, scene of a rollicking street festival celebrating the arts.”


Life and Leisure

Daily life has always been difficult for ordinary people in Russia. During Soviet times apartment dwellers often found residential buildings crowded. Because of shortages of consumer goods, people spent many hours trying to purchase daily staples. Today, although some Russians are prospering and are building new homes in suburbs, others still live in crowded apartments and find it hard to pay the high prices charged for certain goods. Despite the frustrations, urban life offers many opportunities for people to enjoy the arts and culture. Reading, playing chess, and attending concerts, the ballet, and the theater all provide popular entertainment.

Both in cities and rural areas, Russians enjoy relaxing at mealtime with family and close friends. Sports, both amateur and professional, are quite popular with all age groups. Russia’s tennis, track and field, and ice hockey athletes have had remarkable success in international events, as have figure skaters and gymnasts.

In the Soviet era, holidays were celebrated to honor Soviet workers or Soviet history. On May 1, the traditional workers’ holiday known as May Day, great parades passed through Red Square, a large open area next to the Kremlin.

Today Russians observe May Day more as a spring festival than as a workers’ holiday. Traditional religious holidays also have reemerged. In 1991, Christmas, celebrated by Eastern Orthodox Christians, became an official holiday in Russia for the first time since 1918.

Aspects of Russian Culture

Religion  Education  Health Care  The Arts

Checking for Understanding

1. Define atheism, patriarch, icon, pogrom, intelligentsia, socialist realism.

2. Main Ideas Create a graphic organizer like the one below, and use it to fill in the key details for each aspect of Russian culture today.

Critical Thinking

3. Making Inferences Why do you think Russian lawmakers have restricted activity by religious groups other than Russia’s four traditional religions?

4. Comparing and Contrasting What was the education system like during the Soviet era, and what is it like today?

5. Making Generalizations How have Russian artists, musicians, and writers inspired the Russian people during difficult times?

Analyzing Graphs

6. Region Study the graph of religions in Russia on page 377. What percentage of people living in Russia today is Muslim? What percentage is nonreligious?

Applying Geography

7. Influence of Location In which part of Russia do most Russian followers of Islam live? Why do you think this is so? Write a paragraph to explain your reasoning.
Learning the Skill

Knowing whether you are reading a primary or secondary source is important for evaluating the information. A primary source has the advantage of firsthand knowledge of an event. A secondary source often benefits from a broader perspective on the event.

Primary sources may include letters, interviews with eyewitnesses, photographs, and historical documents. Secondary sources rely on primary sources to create a broader picture. History books, encyclopedias, and documentary films are examples of secondary sources.

To analyze primary and secondary sources, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did the source witness the event, or just gather information about it?
- When was the account written? At the time of, or after the event?
- Is the account valid? Do emotions, opinions, and biases influence the account?
- How useful is the source? What kind of information does the source provide, and what questions are left unanswered?

Practicing the Skill

Read the following excerpt about the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, and then answer the questions.

“A tall iron gate surrounded the palace. One of the gates had not been locked. We saw this and opened the gate wide…. Like a wave of black lava, we moved into the palace, followed by workers and soldiers. There was no resistance, none at all. They surrendered their weapons. We arrested the members of the … government.”


1. What information does the source provide?
2. What is the writer’s relationship to the information?
3. Is the source a primary or secondary source? How do you know?
SUMMARY & STUDY GUIDE

SECTION 1  
**Population Patterns** (pp. 363–366)

**Terms to Know**
- ethnic group
- nationality
- sovereignty

**Key Points**
- More than 80 percent of Russia’s population is ethnic Russian, and the remainder comprises about 100 different ethnic groups.
- Although more than 100 different languages are spoken in Russia, Russian is the official language.
- Russia is experiencing a population crisis, largely the result of health care problems.
- Russia’s population is unevenly distributed, with 75 percent of Russians living west of the Urals.

**Organizing Your Notes**
Create an outline similar to the one started below to help you organize important details from this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Russia’s Ethnic Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Ethnic Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Slavs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 2  
History and Government** (pp. 367–373)

**Terms to Know**
- czar
- serf
- Russification
- socialism
- Bolshevik
- communism
- satellite
- Cold War
- perestroika
- glasnost

**Key Points**
- Kievan Rus, an early Slavic state, grew out of settlements of Slavs and Varangians.
- Under the czars Russia expanded its territory and became an enormous empire.
- In 1917 a revolution overthrew Czar Nicholas II. Later that year, the Bolsheviks, under Lenin, seized power.
- In 1922 the Communists formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or Soviet Union.
- In December 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and was replaced by Russia and other independent republics.

**Organizing Your Notes**
Organize your notes for this section by listing the important events under each century of Russian history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800–1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800–1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901–Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 3  
Cultures and Lifestyles** (pp. 376–381)

**Terms to Know**
- atheism
- patriarch
- icon
- pogrom
- intelligentsia
- socialist realism

**Key Points**
- Since the Soviet Union’s collapse, many Russians have resumed their religious practices.
- Post-Soviet Russian schools are more open to new ideas and methods, but they face low budgets, overcrowding, and disrepair.
- Russia’s artistic golden age began in the 1800s. After 1917 the Soviet government severely restricted certain kinds of artistic expression.
- Today Russians’ respect for culture, traditions, and the arts has increased as a result of the new freedoms.

**Organizing Your Notes**
Create web diagrams like the one below to help you organize your notes for this section. Make separate diagrams for Religion, Education, Health Care, and the Arts.
Critical Thinking

1. **Drawing Conclusions** Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The Soviet Union was a 74-year-long experiment that failed.”

2. **Making Inferences** Why do you think many people in Russia have returned to earlier traditions?

3. **Finding and Summarizing the Main Idea** Fill in four key events in Russian history in the order they occurred, on a flowchart. Then explain why each event was a turning point in Russia’s history.

Reviewing Key Terms

Write the key term that best completes each of the following sentences. Refer to the Terms to Know in the Summary & Study Guide on page 383.

1. A person who was part of the revolutionary group led by Lenin was called a(n) ________.
2. A(n) ________ ruled Russia at the time of the Russian Revolution.
3. The ________ is the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.
4. The Soviet Union’s intellectual elite was called the ________.
5. A religious symbol is called a(n) ________.
6. The Russian term for restructuring is ________.
7. The Russian term for political openness is ________.
8. A peasant worker who farmed a plot of land that was owned by someone else was called a(n) ________.
9. ________ is the belief that there is no God or supreme being.

Reviewing Facts

**SECTION 1**

1. Which ethnic group forms the majority in Russia?
2. Where do most of Russia’s people live?

**SECTION 2**

3. How did princes and czars change Russia’s territory?
4. What were the major goals and events of the Soviet era?

**SECTION 3**

5. What major religions are found in Russia?
6. How have education and health care changed since the Soviet breakup?

**Locating Places**

Russia: Physical-Political Geography

Match the letters on the map with the places and physical features of Russia. Write your answers on a sheet of paper.

- St. Petersburg
- Baltic Sea
- Barents Sea
- Volga River
- Moscow
- Yenisey River
- Yekaterinburg
- Black Sea

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**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

**Unit 5**

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Using the Regional Atlas

Refer to the Regional Atlas on pages 338–341.

1. **Human-Environment Interaction** Which important rivers have helped in Russia’s development?

2. **Place** What physical processes have affected migration and patterns of settlement in Russia?

**Thinking Like a Geographer**

Russia’s population is spread unevenly across an enormous country. What physical features influence population density? How might human action affect population density? Design and draw a chart of elements that encourage population and those that discourage it.

**Problem-Solving Activity**

**Contemporary Issues Case Study** Choose one aspect of Russian culture today in which Russian and foreign cultural traits have converged, or come together. Research your topic in news magazines and newspapers or on the Internet to find a specific example, such as growth of U.S.-based fast-food restaurants or the spread of Western religions. Then write a one-page essay describing your example.

**GeoJournal**

**Summarizing** Return to the chart you made in your GeoJournal before you started reading this chapter. Write a brief summary of what you learned about Russia from reading the textbook. Use your chart, the textbook, and the Internet to prepare your summary.

**Technology Activity**

**Using the Internet for Research** The Soviet government required all artists to portray communism in a positive way. Use the Internet to locate examples of socialist realism in Russian art. Develop a brochure to educate people about this style of art. Download examples, and use them as illustrations in your brochure.

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**TAKS Test Practice**

Read the quote by Zina Popova below, and then choose the best answer for each of the following multiple-choice questions. If you have trouble answering the questions, use the process of elimination to narrow your choices.

“That hero stuff was a millstone around [my mother’s] neck. Mama told me she knew nothing about Lenin and Marxism when she joined the revolutionaries. They were spurred by hunger. My mother believed in the myth of the October Revolution but only for a few years. Then there was no exit. She put in her time, like most of the others.”

—Zina Popova, in “The Bolshevik Revolution,” *National Geographic*, October 1992

1. The quote above could be used by a geographer to learn more about a country’s
   A cultural geography.
   B foreign policy.
   C ethnic minorities.
   D physical geography.

2. Zina Popova’s perspective on the Bolshevik Revolution comes from
   F the Communist Party.
   G her own experience.
   H her mother.
   J a reference book.

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Test-Taking Tip

In answering questions about quotations, make sure that you have a clear understanding of the quote. Also make sure that you understand the perspective of the person being quoted. Often, as in this case, you can find this information after the person’s name.