

# World Geography

## Chapter 20

# Russia

# World Geography



## Chapter 20: Russia

Section 1: Regions of Russia

Section 2: Emergence of Russia

Section 3: Geographic Issues in Russia

# Regions of Russia



- **What are the main physical characteristics of Russia?**
- **How do location and climate affect ecosystems in Russia?**
- **How does Siberia offer opportunities and pose unique challenges?**



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# Physical Characteristics



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# Physical Characteristics



- **While mountains ring parts of Russia in the south and east, most of the land is fairly flat.**
- **The low Ural Mountains divide Europe and Asia, and contain valuable minerals.**
- **Waters from much of the land of the Urals ultimately pass into the Volga River, which is Europe's largest river.**
- **East of the Urals, several large rivers flow north into the Arctic Ocean.**



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**Far removed from any bodies of water, most parts of Russia have a subarctic or continental climate.**

## Tundra

- To the north, in a band that parallels the Arctic shoreline, is a zone of **tundra**.
- This area is dominated by very small plants and animals that are adapted to the polar conditions of the region.

## Steppes

- The **steppes** are broad open lands south of the tundra and forested zone..
- As in other natural grasslands, the deep roots of the grasses formed a very rich soil, which in Russia is called **chernozem**, or “black earth.”

## Taiga

- The **taiga** is a broad forested zone extending across Russia south of the tundra.
- Trees do not grow to great sizes in this area due to the harsh conditions.
- The region is a source of paper and wood products, and is also home to many different animals.



# Siberia



- **The Asian expanse of Russia is known as Siberia.**
- **Although efforts have been made to link Siberia with the rest of Russia, it remains a remote area with few human residents.**
- **Much of Siberia is cool and swampy, with a layer of permanently frozen soil, or **permafrost**.**
- **Modern high-rise buildings in Siberia are built on posts to prevent the permafrost from thawing and causing the buildings to collapse.**
- **Siberia is rich in gold, silver, platinum, zinc, petroleum, and natural gas.**
- **The harsh climate and terrain of Siberia make it difficult and expensive to reach areas with abundant natural resources.**



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# Section 1 Review



**In which ecosystem can chernozem be found?**

- a) tundra
- b) taiga
- c) steppe
- d) arctic

**How do the climate and terrain of Siberia affect the extraction of resources?**

- a) Resources are cheap and easy to extract.
- b) It is difficult and expensive to reach areas with abundant resources.
- c) Siberia has few natural resources.
- d) The climate and terrain have no effect on the extraction of resources.

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# Section 1 Review



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# Emergence of Russia



- **How did Russian territory expand under the czars?**
- **What economic and political conditions marked the Communist era?**
- **How did the end of Communist rule lead to changes in Russia?**



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# Russia Under the Czars



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# The Rise of Communism



- As a result of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the czar was forced to **abdicate**, and the Soviet Union was established.
- A Communist dictatorship was set up with a **command economy**, one in which a central authority decides which goods will be produced.
- Under Communism, the standard of living remained poor, and dissenters were sent to prisons or forced-labor camps, or were executed.
- Farmland was reorganized into state farms and collective farms, but with few incentives for workers, production remained low.
- Soviet policies emphasized the development of heavy industry.
- Germany invaded in 1941, but the Germans were slowly overcome by Russian troops, who took Berlin in 1945.
- After World War II, the Soviet Union competed for power with the United States in a struggle called the Cold War.



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# The End of Communist Rule



## Economic Reorganization

- In the late 1980s, Gorbachev instituted the policies of *glasnost*, or “openness,” and *perestroika*, or economic restructuring, to gradually change from a command system to private ownership.

## Political Change

- Given new freedoms, many people called for an end to communism and central government domination.
- Republics began to declare their independence in 1991.

## Planning for the Future

- Russia experienced many challenges in instituting democratic reforms.
- Economic hardships have made many yearn for the prosperity they see in western countries and also miss the security of the Communist system.
- Communists have attracted considerable support in elections.



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# Section 2 Review



**How did the creation of collective farms affect Soviet agriculture?**

- a) **Motivated farmers produced immense surpluses.**
- b) **With state support, farms were quickly modernized.**
- c) **With few incentives, farm production remained low.**
- d) **Soviet policies had no impact on agriculture.**

**What was the result of *glasnost* and perestroika?**

- a) **The Soviet economy quickly modernized.**
- b) **People called for an end to communism and central control.**
- c) **The Soviet government became more decentralized.**
- d) **The Soviets used the new economic power to build up their military.**

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# Section 2 Review



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# Geographic Issues in Russia



- **What are some defining characteristics of life in Russia today?**
- **How does ethnic turmoil challenge Russia?**
- **What methods of transportation are common in Russia?**
- **What economic and environmental problems does Russia face?**



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# Urban and Rural Life



- **Almost three fourths of Russia's people live in large cities, while traditional ways of life continue in rural areas.**
- **During the Soviet era, housing shortages in the cities were common, and several families often had to share an apartment.**
- **People are again free to enjoy the arts and music that had been censored by Soviet authorities.**
- **Despite economic problems, many Russians enjoy concerts, opera, and ballet performances.**



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# Ethnic Turmoil



- **About 25 million residents of Russia belong to non-Russian ethnic groups, a sizeable number of whom are from closely related Slavic groups like Ukrainians and Belarussians.**
- **The Caucasus region in southern Russia has the most unsettled collection of ethnic groups.**
- **Chechnya declared independence in 1991 and fought a guerrilla war against invading Russian forces for three years until forcing a cease-fire.**
- **The lull in fighting ended when Chechen forces started bombing Russian civilians in Dagestan, provoking another Russian invasion of Chechnya.**
- **Dagestan, with about 2 million people, has more than thirty ethnic groups, each with its own language.**



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# Transportation



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# Transportation



- **Russia's size and harsh climates make it difficult to maintain a good transportation system; road and air travel are impractical.**
- **Rivers historically have been important trade routes, even though most are frozen during the long Russian winters.**
- **Railroads are the most extensive and inexpensive transportation system in Russia, and a practical alternative to pipelines for oil.**



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# Economic and Environmental Problems



## Economic Problems

- When Russian leaders lifted price controls, prices skyrocketed and the **ruble** plummeted in value.
- The **black market** has grown as a result of financial instability.
- Attempts at privatization often faltered because of corruption or inefficiency.
- As a result of rising inflation and unemployment, the standard of living has dropped.
- The quality of health care has declined, and life expectancies have dropped significantly.

## Environmental Problems

- Intense industrialization depleted resources and damaged the environment.
- Many Siberian cities rank among Russia's most polluted cities.
- In some areas, lung cancer and respiratory infections occur in children at alarming rate.
- Industrial pollution threatened to harm bodies of water beyond repair.
- The country lacks people with technical expertise to address past problems, and economic troubles make environmental concerns a lower priority.



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# Section 3 Review



**What alternative to pipelines does Russia use to transport oil from Siberia?**

- a) tanker trucks on roadways
- b) ocean-going ships
- c) railroads
- d) airplane

**What happened after Russian leaders lifted price controls?**

- a) Prices dropped.
- b) Consumer goods became plentiful.
- c) Russian industries became more competitive.
- d) Prices skyrocketed.

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# Section 3 Review



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