

THE GROWTH OF RUSSIA

In the early years of its history, Russia was conquered and reconquered many times by peoples from Asia and Europe. For nearly two thousand years, control of the country changed hands among such groups as the Cimmerians, Scythians, Goths, and Huns.

By the 800's, many towns had appeared. One of them was Kiev, which was ruled by a prince. Other princes governed regions called "principalities" that surrounded Kiev. Located on a busy trade route, Kiev soon gained a position of importance and power. The city's ruler came to be known as the "grand prince," a rank above other princes. Armies of the grand prince defended Russia against attack by invading tribes. One grand prince converted the Russian people to Christianity. People had previously worshiped idols.

As the centuries passed, Kiev's power declined and a series of wars broke out between rival princes. These wars seriously weakened Russia and made it possible for Mongols from Asia to conquer the country in the 1200's. Batu, a descendant of the great warrior Genghis Khan, swept into Russia with an army of 200,000 soldiers. Towns were destroyed, including Kiev, and many lives lost. The Mongols made Russia a part of their huge empire and called it the "Golden Horde." Russian princes had to pay heavy taxes and were forced to serve in Mongol armies. People who were not loyal to the invaders were slaughtered.

During these years, the Renaissance brought great changes to Europe. Towns grew in size and number and trade increased. Advances were made in science, education, and the arts. But because of Mongol control, Russia remained cut-off from the outside world and the achievements of the Renaissance. Life for most Russians continued as it was before the Mongol invasion. There was still a grand prince and lesser princes. The grand prince ruled Moscow, which had replaced Kiev as the leading Russian city. Moscow's power continued to grow until the Mongols, weakened by clashes amongst themselves, were finally driven from the country.

With the Mongols gone, the grand prince of Moscow took the title "czar" and became supreme ruler of Russia. Ivan IV, the first czar, ruled for 37 years. During his reign, peasants were forced to farm the land under slave-like conditions. Wars were fought and new lands added to Russian territory. Ivan organized a secret police force and had it arrest and kill princes and wealthy landowners who he feared might overthrow his government. Ivan's distrust of those around him also resulted in the burning of numerous towns and villages and the murder of various church officials. Ivan seemed to suffer from lapses of insanity. At one point, he even killed a son with his own hands. These treacherous deeds earned him the nickname "Ivan the Terrible."



Following Ivan's death, Russia suffered through a difficult period known as the "Time of Troubles." These years were marked by poor leadership from weak czars, assassinations, an invasion by Poland, political turmoil, and civil war. During the civil war, peasant rebellions broke out across the country. "Cossacks," people living on the frontier, battled landowners. Well-to-do aristocrats sometimes came under attack. The civil war finally ended when the Russian people united to drive out the Polish army that was threatening their country.

Michael Romanov was then elected czar, since no royal heirs to the throne remained. The Romanov family governed Russia for three hundred years. Their leadership ended with the Revolution of 1917, after which the country no longer was ruled by a czar.

Romanov leaders of the 1600's and 1700's included Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Under Peter the Great, Russia became a strong military power, expanded its territory through wars with Turkey, Sweden, and Persia, established trade with China, opened its doors to Western ways, and put down rebellions by serfs. New industries were started, roads and canals built, and schools opened. Peter also changed the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg in the hope it would mean closer contact with Western Europe's advanced civilization.

Catherine the Great added more territory to the country, built schools and hospitals, vaccinated people against smallpox, increased religious freedom, improved education among women, and encouraged talented people from other lands to come to Russia. But most reforms only benefited the upper classes. The majority of people remained very poor. Serfs continued to live a dreary life with long working hours and miserable living conditions. Peasant revolts were quickly crushed. Little evidence of freedom could be found anywhere.

Compared with Spain, France, and England, Russia had not yet developed into a unified nation-state. The rich and Westernized upper classes lived a life far different from the masses of poor. A large number of ethnic groups spoke different languages and had different customs. Religious beliefs further divided the people. The only real force holding the country together was the strong-armed rule of the czar.

Directions: The words in the following list have been omitted from the story about Russia that you have read. Without looking at the story, write the words in the appropriate spaces below.

municipalities	Mongols	Huns	Golden Horde	Century of Conflict
Christianity	Renaissance	Asia	territory	Ivan the Terrible
Michael Romanov	Civil War	reforms	idols	Catherine the Great
nation-state	czar	Batu	principalities	Cossacks
Revolution of 1917	St. Petersburg	trade	Russia	peasants
freedom	Reformation	grand prince	king	Time of Troubles
wealthy landowners	Moscow	Russian people	Western ways	ethnic groups

In the early years of its history, Russia was conquered and reconquered many times by peoples from (1)_____ and Europe. For nearly two thousand years, control of the country changed hands among such groups as the Cimmerians, Scythians, Goths, and (2)_____.

By the 800's, many towns had appeared. One of them was Kiev, which was ruled by a prince. Other princes governed regions called (3)"_____" that surrounded Kiev. Located on a busy trade route, Kiev soon gained a position of importance and power. The city's ruler came to be known as the (4)"_____", a rank above other princes. Armies of the grand prince defended Russia against attack by invading tribes. One grand prince converted the Russian people to (5)_____. People had previously worshiped (6)_____.

As the centuries passed, Kiev's power declined and a series of wars broke out between rival princes. These wars seriously weakened Russia and made it possible for (7)_____ from Asia to conquer the country in the 1200's. (8)_____, a descendant of the great warrior Genghis Khan, swept into Russia with an army of 200,000 soldiers. Towns were destroyed, including Kiev, and many lives lost. The Mongols made Russia a part of their huge empire and called it the (9)"_____." Russian princes had to pay heavy taxes and were forced to serve in Mongol armies. People who were not loyal to the invaders were slaughtered.

During these years, the (10)_____ brought great changes to Europe. Towns grew in size and number and trade increased. Advances were made in science, education, and the arts. But because of Mongol control, (11)_____ remained cut-off from the outside world and the achievements of the Renaissance. Life for most Russians continued as it was before the Mongol invasion. There was still a grand prince and lesser princes. The grand prince ruled (12)_____, which had replaced Kiev as the leading Russian city. Moscow's power continued to grow until the Mongols, weakened by clashes amongst themselves, were finally driven from the country.

With the Mongols gone, the grand prince of Moscow took the title (13)"_____" and became supreme ruler of Russia. Ivan IV, the first czar, ruled for 37 years. During his reign, (14)_____ were forced to farm the land under slave-like conditions. Wars were fought and new lands added to Russian territory. Ivan organized a secret police force and had it arrest and kill princes and (15)_____ who he feared might overthrow his government. Ivan's distrust of those around him also resulted in the burning of numerous towns and villages and the murder of various church officials. Ivan seemed to suffer from lapses of insanity. At one point, he even killed a son with his own hands. These treacherous deeds earned him the nickname (16)"_____."

Following Ivan's death, Russia suffered through a difficult period known as the (17) "_____." These years were marked by poor leadership from weak czars, assassinations, an invasion by Poland, political turmoil, and civil war. During the civil war, peasant rebellions broke out across the country. (18) "_____", people living on the frontier, battled landowners. Well-to-do aristocrats sometimes came under attack. The civil war finally ended when the (19) _____ united to drive out the Polish army that was threatening their country.

(20) _____ was then elected czar, since no royal heirs to the throne remained. The Romanov family governed Russia for three hundred years. Their leadership ended with the (21) _____, after which the country no longer was ruled by a czar.

Romanov leaders of the 1600's and 1700's included Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Under Peter the Great, Russia became a strong military power, expanded its (22) _____ through wars with Turkey, Sweden, and Persia, established (23) _____ with China, opened its doors to (24) _____, and put down rebellions by serfs. New industries were started, roads and canals built, and schools opened. Peter also changed the capital from Moscow to (25) _____ in the hope it would mean closer contact with Western Europe's advanced civilization.

(26) _____ added more territory to the country, built schools and hospitals, vaccinated people against smallpox, increased religious freedom, improved education among women, and encouraged talented people from other lands to come to Russia. But most (27) _____ only benefited the upper classes. The majority of people remained very poor. Serfs continued to live a dreary life with long working hours and miserable living conditions. Peasant revolts were quickly crushed. Little evidence of (28) _____ could be found anywhere.

Compared with Spain, France, and England, Russia had not yet developed into a unified (29) _____. The rich and Westernized upper classes lived a life far different from the masses of poor. A large number of (30) _____ spoke different languages and had different customs. Religious beliefs further divided the people. The only real force holding the country together was the strong-armed rule of the czar.