



# The Russian Empire

**BEFORE YOU READ**

In the last section, you read about the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions and the French Revolution.

In this section, you will learn about the Russian Empire from the early days of Ivan the Terrible to the Russian Revolution.

**AS YOU READ**

Copy this chart to take notes about the Russian Empire.

Influences	New Ideas	People/Achievements	Events/Effects
<i>The Russian Empire</i>			

**TERMS & NAMES**

**czar** in Russia, the title for emperor

**Ivan the Terrible** the first czar of Russia, crowned in 1547, whose rule of 37 years was marked by constant war

**Peter the Great** ruler of Russia from 1682 to 1725, who brought many improvements from Europe

**Catherine the Great** ruler of Russia from 1762 to 1796, who made Russia one of Europe's most powerful nations

**Russian Revolution** the 1917 revolution that removed the Russian monarchy from power after it had ruled for 400 years

**Russia Rules Itself** (pages 318–319)**Who were the early rulers of Russia?**

Russia's huge landmass is located in both Europe and Asia. It is the world's largest nation. The continents of Europe and Asia have helped shape Russia's history.

Russia was conquered in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Mongols from eastern Asia. The Mongols ruled for about 200 years until Russia broke free. The western city of Moscow was the most important urban center in Russia at this time.

Ivan IV, nicknamed **Ivan the Terrible**, was Russia's first **czar**, or emperor. He was crowned in 1547 at the age of 16. He had a reputation for cruelty, especially toward Russia's enemies. Russia was constantly at war during the 37 years of his rule.

Beginning with the reign of Ivan the Terrible, Russia had an *unlimited government*. The czars were often in conflict with the Russian nobles, whom they viewed as a threat to their control. Many Russian nobles and church leaders who opposed Ivan the Terrible were killed.

Russia's peasants also suffered under the first czars. They were forced to become *serfs* and could not leave the farms where they worked.

**1. What was Russia like when it was ruled by Ivan the Terrible?**


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**The Expansion of Russia**

(pages 319–320)

**How did Peter the Great and Catherine the Great change Russia?**

Russia expanded greatly during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, under the rule of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. These rulers gained new territory by conquering neighboring peoples.

**Peter the Great** ruled Russia from 1682 to 1725. He built a new capital on the Baltic Sea. on land he had won from a war with Sweden. He called the city St. Petersburg. He thought of this new capital as Russia's "window on the west."

Peter wanted to have closer ties with Western Europe. He was interested in the Scientific Revolution and wanted to modernize and strengthen Russia by using its ideas and inven-

tions. Peter made several reforms of the army and the government. He built new schools. He required Russians to adopt European styles of dress. These reforms helped Russia, but life for the Russian peasants remained unchanged.

**Catherine the Great** ruled from 1762 until 1796. Under her rule, the present-day countries of Ukraine and Belarus were added to Russia's empire. Like Peter the Great, Catherine was also interested in the culture of Western Europe. She built new schools and new towns. She expanded trade and encouraged art, science, and literature.

Russia became a powerful nation during Catherine's reign. The peasants, however, continued in their misery. When they rebelled in the 1770s, Catherine crushed their revolt.

## 2. What two things did Peter the Great and Catherine the Great have in common?

### A Divided Russia (pages 320–321)

#### **What caused conflict within 19th century Russia?**

Russia entered the 19th century as a divided nation. The many peasants were poor, and the few nobles were wealthy. Conflict and political revolution would eventually arise from this division.

Western Europe was a strong influence in Russia. Many Russian nobles spoke French at home, and they sent their children to schools in Germany and France. Russians were exposed to the idea that a nation's government should reflect the wishes of its citizens.

Most Russian nobles supported the czar and were army officers or government officials. In 1825, however, one group of nobles tried to gain more power and replace the government. Their attempt failed.

The Russian serfs were still very poor, without land or money of their own. In 1861, Czar Alexander II decided to free the serfs. He hoped

that this would help his country compete with Western Europe. The serfs were heavily taxed, however. Often, the land they were given was not good for farming.

Other Russians, including university students, artists, and writers, were unhappy as well. They protested the government's treatment of the serfs. Some tried to overthrow the government. Also, workers in the cities complained about low pay and poor working conditions. In 1905, government troops shot a group of workers who had marched to the royal palace in St. Petersburg with a list of demands. As news of "Bloody Sunday" spread, Russians became even angrier with the government and czar.

## 3. What did Russia's serfs and workers in the cities have in common?

### The End of the Russian Empire

(page 322)

#### **What caused the end of czarist Russia?**

Nicholas II was the czar of Russia when World War I began in 1914. Nicholas did not want war, but he could not keep his country out of the battle. Russia fought with the United Kingdom and France against Germany and its allies. It suffered terrible losses.

The **Russian Revolution** began when food shortages in the cities led to strikes by workers. Revolutionaries organized the workers. The Russian army revolted as well, and Nicholas was forced from power in 1917.

The revolutionaries held Nicholas II and his family (the Romanovs) in prison. The Romanovs had ruled for more than 300 years, and czars had ruled Russia for nearly 400 years. When, on July 17, 1918, the Romanovs were all shot to death, czarist Russia was no more.

## 4. How did the Russian Revolution begin?